



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN REPORT
August 15, 2005

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BEREA COLLEGE

Quality Enhancement Plan

Probation and Retention

August 15, 2005

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Executive Summary

The goal of Berea College's Quality Enhancement Plan is to address questions about probation and retention and to consider ways of improving relevant policies and structures related to academic probation and retention at the College. (Passed by the College and General Faculties, April 22, 2004)

This document contains an account of the work accomplished thus far as a part of the Berea College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The inherently iterative process of developing this Plan has involved many individuals and constituencies and has required the consideration of a wide range of issues related to probation and retention. Berea College's unique mission and the special challenge of helping its students overcome the disadvantages associated with their socio-economic backgrounds served as the foundation for this endeavor. Student learning provided the paradigmatic framework for examining the ways in which the College's policies, programs, and practices could be modified to better achieve its educational priorities.

This report is divided into three main sections: contexts, the Plan's development process, and the Plan itself. The first section reviews the historical, scholarly, and organizational contexts in which the QEP was developed. A review of the College's history shows that, although academic probation is a relatively recent feature of Berea's academic program, issues of retention and graduation have always been a challenge. Currently, freshman-to-sophomore retention rates have risen above 80% and graduation rates above 60%—these rates are already among the highest in the College's history. These rates are also near national averages. Considering the unique challenges that many Berea students face, these rates might be considered a substantial achievement. However, the QEP Team's review of the scholarly literature (and our own practices and policies) led to the conclusion that increasing the College's understanding of its students, what they need to know and be able to do to succeed in college, and how they learn will allow Berea College to further increase these rates. To accomplish these goals, however, will continue to require careful coordination and integration of effort across administrative and faculty governance committees and structures.

The second section of this report provides an account of the QEP's development. Over the past decade, the College has been engaged in many activities that are similar to

the QEP development process described in the SACS *Reaffirmation of Accreditation Handbook*. The process described in this section reflects the complexity and difficulty of developing a QEP that had broad support and also could significantly enhance student learning. The Berea College Reaffirmation Leadership Team helped the faculty select the QEP topic and then appointed a team of volunteers drawn from the College and General Faculties to conceptualize and develop the details of a QEP focused on retention and probation. In addition to these two groups, the Board of Trustees and the Student Government Association (through the SGA's active participation in the General Faculty) have been involved in the development of this Plan. The QEP itself will become a part of a broader initiative that has emerged from the College's strategic planning process. Next year, a "task force," called for by separate faculty action in the spring of 2005, will consider broader educational issues and implications as well as the particular actions described in the QEP. Also, programs and processes involved in the current QEP will need to be assigned to various administrative and faculty committees for continuing oversight and assessment.

The third and final section contains the QEP itself. The first several pages of this section describe the relationship between the QEP and student learning. While probation and retention could be approached in a variety of ways, the QEP Team found that using a student learning framework was both appropriate and helpful. The QEP model contains three phases: Correction, Intervention, and Prevention. The first of these phases, Correction, will require the College to find ways to engage and support students who have already encountered academic difficulty and are on academic probation. The primary means for both supporting these students and learning from their experiences is a newly developed quarter-credit course, GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success. What is learned from this phase will inform activities in the Plan's second phase, Intervention. The focus of the Intervention Phase will be on understanding the needs of students as they begin to encounter academic difficulty. This phase of the QEP will consider programs such as the current Early Intervention Program which supports individual students, and a Supplemental Instruction Program that will focus on academic courses with high failure rates. What is learned from both the first and second phases of the QEP, will allow the College to consider ways to reduce academic failures through

enhanced selection of candidates (i.e., the Prevention Phase). Berea's goal is to select from economically and academically qualified applicants those students who will benefit the most from Berea College's challenging program.

This QEP has already generated a great deal of conversation and activity on the Berea College campus. Approximately 20 sections of the GST 101 course were offered last year. Student performance data, as well as surveys of students and faculty members, have provided useful information concerning this program as well as more general institutional policies and practices. Based on information collected thus far, both policy and program implications have emerged, and the QEP Team will be recommending preliminary changes to appropriate administrators and faculty decision-making groups this fall. These preliminary analyses and recommendations are discussed in the final portions of the last section of this report.

Much has been accomplished through this process already, and useful perspectives and valuable insights have emerged. These "little victories" promise to provide momentum for the work ahead. The QEP Team is optimistic that, as this process continues, the institution will develop a fuller understanding of the ways in which ongoing attention to student learning can help to align institutional processes and programs with Berea College's goal of educating and inspiring leaders for Appalachia and beyond.

Section I – Contexts

History

As Berea College celebrates its 150th anniversary, it is appropriate to review and understand how academic probation policies developed at the institution and how this history has shaped present policy. Berea College’s mission is expressed in its “Great Commitments.” The first of these statements reads: “To provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from Appalachia, black and white, who have great promise and limited economic resources.” While this text was formally issued in 1969 and revised in 1993, the spirit of this commitment has animated the College since its inception in the nineteenth century. After the 1904 passage of the Day Law in Kentucky forbidding interracial education, the College has centered its efforts to provide education for the economically challenged non-African American students located in Appalachia. As recently as the early 1970’s, approximately 90% of the institution’s students came from a carefully drawn list of southern mountain counties. While African American students began to return to campus after the Commonwealth of Kentucky amended the Day Law in 1950, they often came from the mountain region as well. For much of the twentieth century, high school education in many rural Appalachian counties was difficult to obtain and often deficient in preparing students for a standard college curriculum.

The relative absence of public high schools in Appalachia provided an effective—if unnoticed—screening process for the College. Before World War II, many of the poorest and most isolated students did not have public high schools to attend. Quite often, the only alternative for them was one of the two hundred settlement and missionary high schools found in the region by 1920. These schools were often staffed by graduates from elite colleges and universities in the Northeast and Midwest. The result was that those students facing the biggest hurdles had educational, cultural, and social experiences that helped to prepare them for Berea College. The public high schools also acted as a filter by limiting the number of mountain students who took college preparatory classes. The result was that the applicants to Berea College were drawn from a very small proportion of the total potential student population in Appalachia.

One result of this screening process was that Berea College administrators and faculty expected students to welcome a rigorous curriculum and course of study, and they assumed that the students were academically prepared even if they were economically deprived. Unfortunately, this assumption was often incorrect. College records indicate that until 1926, students were not given sufficient assistance to compete at the college level. For example, the 202 members of the Freshman class of 1924 had shrunk to the appalling number of only 67 graduates—this includes many who graduated long after 1928. In fact, 28 out of the 67 graduated after experiencing some sort of interruption in their academic careers. Present scholars of higher education would not be surprised by these statistics. Students who come from substandard schools, the lower economic strata in American society, and who are the first in their family to attend college—as has often been the case with Berea College students—are often unable to persist to graduation. Before the 1960's, however, the College seemed to assume that its obligations were primarily to provide adequate facilities and well-trained faculty.

Apparently startled by the failures of the Class of 1924, Berea College began to offer greater assistance to individuals who were encountering difficulty. Starting with the 1926-1927 school year, all subsequent Berea College classes graduated 40% or more of the entering cohort except for three years during World War II. With the exception of those three years, the graduation rate at Berea College has fluctuated between 40% and 60% for three-quarters of a century. As the exception of the very low rates achieved during World War II indicate, these figures can be significantly influenced by national and international developments beyond the control of the College. For example, the three highest graduation rates attained during this period were those of the classes of 1937-1938 (62.1%), 1938-1939 (64.5%), and 1965-1966 (63.2%). The first two classes consisted of students who had matured during the Great Depression and perceived few economic alternatives to attending college at the beginning of their careers—males in the latter class also faced induction in the armed services in an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. While there may have been some other circumstances at work with these cohorts, these external developments undoubtedly played a prominent part in the relatively high retention rates. These findings should act as a caution to the QEP Team and the College that assessment of our QEP must take into account the external landscape

in which the College operates. Both retention and graduation rates may be influenced by factors beyond the scope of the QEP.

A careful reading of the official Berea College literature after 1930 makes it clear that the College recognized that its students faced special challenges that many of their college-bound contemporaries did not. The College sought to deal with this reality in a number of ways. Each new student was required to take a battery of daunting qualifying tests. These included tests in English Composition, English Literature, Geography, History and American Government, Algebra, and Geometry. If students scored in the bottom quintile of entering students on one of these tests, they were usually required to take a basic course—with no credit toward graduation—in that subject. If they had to take several of these courses, they were classified as “Basic” students rather than as Freshmen. The entering class in 1946-1947 had 77 “Basic” students out of a total class membership of 423. Thus, the College already had a plan to intervene very early in a student’s career if she or he seemed inadequately prepared academically.

A 1968 study by James Bobbitt compared students in these two cohorts and discovered that the Basic program offered some real assistance. When Bobbitt compared two samples of 126 students, he found that 70 (55.6%) of those students who had tested into Freshman status had survived eight semesters or more on campus. For the 126 students who been assigned Basics status, 56 (44.4%) of them had made it through eight or more semesters. By current grading standards, the mean grade point averages of the students at the time of their withdrawal or graduation was 2.6 for the Freshman students and 2.3 for the Basic group. Bobbitt concluded that better high school preparation was a predictor of greater academic success at Berea College, but that the College was able to help those who needed assistance to a significant degree.

These results need to be understood in the context of the educational policies of that time. Lower grades were mandated by the College grading system. Faculty members were required to assign grades on a modified bell curve. Unless small class size prohibited it, instructors were expected to assign 7% A, 23% B, 40% C, 23% D, and 7% F grades. Apparently, exceptions to this rule were not allowed. In addition, the grade of A received a value of 3 points, B received 2, C received 1, D received 0, and F received minus 2. The result was that students with low grades were penalized more than high

grades were rewarded. Entrance into the junior year was not automatic upon the completion of a required number of courses. Each year, the bottom quintile of the surviving Sophomore class “may be asked to withdraw” from the College—and apparently usually was. Those who were granted an exception were placed on probation. In addition, students who did not reach certain grade standards or did not maintain a C average after the Sophomore year could be suspended or placed on probation. When one considers the institutional challenges that struggling students faced at Berea College, the relatively strong performance of Basic students—noted above—is instructive.

In that same study, Bobbitt presented an interesting profile of the Berea College class of 1966. By College policy, 90% of the students came from the counties in southern Appalachia that the institution had identified as its territory. Only 10% of the students’ fathers had attended college and only 15% of the mothers. Only 10% of students came from urban areas and 54% graduated in high school classes of 75 or fewer students. Bobbitt noted that 140 of the 345 students came from families of five or more children—including six that had ten or more siblings. Virtually all of them claimed membership in recognized Protestant denominations except for a single Mennonite, a single Roman Catholic, and a single Muslim. For observers familiar with the southern Appalachian region at the time, this portrait rings true. Thus, the College could plan its policies with the knowledge that the vast majority of its students had had similar experiences and backgrounds. With all of these factors taken together— a relatively homogeneous student body of disadvantaged youth— the College felt under little compulsion to examine its retention policies because of its expectation that a large number of students would not persist to graduation—an expectation shared by many institutions of higher education at the time.

In the late 1970’s, significant changes were made in the curriculum at the College. A system of General Studies classes of an interdisciplinary nature was introduced in place of the traditional introductory courses in various disciplines. This new curriculum made the Basic program obsolete, and the College switched to offering Basic courses in only Mathematics and Composition and Reading. Two courses were offered in Math and two were offered in Writing. The change in the program did not change the need for this training among the students. During the 1981-82 school year, 34.2% of the incoming

class were assigned to English 015-016 sequences, and 73.8% of the students needed to take the Math 011 course. Over the next decade, incoming students were increasingly better prepared. Despite this, members of the class that appeared in Fall 1992 still contained 17.3% of its members who had to take English 015-016. Math 011 was still a major problem for new students with 37.1% unable to exempt themselves from this requirement.

In 1993, another General Studies curriculum was introduced that reduced reliance on basic or remedial courses even further. This new program combined the study of literature and composition in one class and content about Appalachia and African American culture and composition in another series of courses. Students who performed poorly in these first-year writing classes were enrolled in tutorials, which were very small classes that focused on writing and reading skills. Students were registered in tutorials based on teacher recommendation, self-selection, or performance on diagnostic essays. Tutorials met twice a week, were graded pass/fail, and carried one-half credit. About ten tutorial sections were offered every semester with enrollment ranging from 5-8 in each section. In 1999, after much discussion and evaluation of these courses, the faculty approved a new approach: these two courses would meet four times a week (allowing more time for writing instruction) and the Learning Center (formerly the Center for Effective Communication) would continue its offerings of peer tutoring sessions. The Learning Center continues to provide a combination of individual counseling and informal classes to assist those persons who experience difficulty with writing composition or various study techniques. Students with problems in Mathematics are still required to take self-paced and competency-based basic courses.

This recent history points out a significant change in perspective and a stubborn continuity at the College. Since the 1970's, the College has increasingly come to view large-scale attrition of students as being unacceptable. Efforts have been made to ensure that students are as well prepared as possible when they arrive and to provide them with as much assistance as possible after they enter the College. Unlike some previous faculties and administrations, the current staff hopes that failure is not inevitable for any entering student or groups of students. At the same time, many students come to Berea College not completely prepared to do college-level work. The complaint that students

cannot write was first voiced by a Greek in the fifth century before the Christian era, and Berea College faculty continue to make the same observation. The faculty members in the sciences are particularly critical of the mathematical preparation of our students. The result is that our students continue to be placed on probation and continue to be dismissed from Berea College for academic deficiencies. Competency examinations in recent years have shown that, although Berea College students' reading and writing are relatively strong, their mathematical training lags behind national norms. More recent developments will be discussed on pages 15-17 of the report.

This historical narrative reveals a number of important insights about Berea College students and the challenges they face. As has been true for 150 years, many Berea students do not receive sufficient training in basic skills before they reach our campus. While some modification of recruiting strategies may partially alleviate this problem, the College will be unable to entirely eliminate this challenge at any time in the foreseeable future. That is a consequence of our continued commitment to provide an education to at-risk students from Appalachian counties with inadequate educational structures.

It is also clear that until recently the College moved aggressively at the outset of a student's career to identify weaknesses and provided formal classes to help all students correct their weaknesses. For a variety of reasons, the College has discontinued some of the most intrusive features of these policies. Among these is a growing recognition that virtually all students would benefit from having more "skills-training" embedded in General Studies courses. At the same time, restrictive grading policies and many administrative hurdles have been removed. This means that students who do have poor grades early in their careers face a somewhat less daunting road than did their predecessors. Nevertheless, the failure of students to reach their full potential and graduate from Berea College is distressing to many at the institution. For this reason, the faculty voted to make academic probation and retention the problem to be addressed in the College's QEP initiative.

Literature Review

The issues surrounding student retention have been of interest to colleges and researchers for more than 70 years (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004), and since

the early 1980's, retention of students has become an ever-increasing challenge for colleges and universities (Lau, 2003). A plethora of research has increased knowledge on student success and retention (i.e., Astin, 1997; Tinto, 1975, 1986, & 1993). In spite of the empirical information about college student departures and the development of numerous strategies to retain students, the student departure rate during the past twenty years has remained at fairly consistent levels: first-year students at 20%, second-year students at 11%, and third- and fourth-year students combined at 9% (McClanahan, 2004). The departure rates are even higher for low-income and minority students (Carey, 2005a) and those whose parents did not graduate from college.

The reasons for freshman departures usually fall into one of the following categories: (a) factors beyond student control (e.g. finances, poor student-institution fit); (b) lack of academic preparedness or inability to assimilate into the college culture; (c) lack of motivation to succeed academically; (d) perceived failure of the institution to meet student learning and educational needs; and (e) student difficulty in making the transition from high school to college (Lau, 2003). Levitz, Noel, and Richter (1999) identify similar categories for all withdrawing students: personal, social, and academic reasons, and life and institutional issues. Another aspect of college life that contributes to student withdrawal rests with the fact that colleges generally over-rate or over-estimate new students' abilities in a variety of key areas that include students' (a) understanding of the culture of the college— both academic and social; (b) demonstration of the study and classroom behaviors that contribute to college academic success; (c) willingness to seek out and establish relationships with faculty; and (d) feelings of comfort with seeking help if and when needed (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999). Regardless of the reasons for leaving college, the student's departure before graduation affects not only the institution of higher education, but also has financial and social consequences for the student as well as society as a whole, especially in terms of lost economic and social benefits (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Carey, 2005b; Lau, 2003; McClanahan, 2004; Watts, 2001). There is no reason to believe that these negative consequences would be any less for Berea College students and the Appalachian communities from which they come.

Colleges and universities have adopted many strategies for helping students become successful and, in the process, increasing retention rates. The various academic

success and retention programs have many things in common, but institutions with the most effective academic success and retention programs tailor their programs specifically to the students they serve. These successful programs also connect their retention programs to the institutions' mission statements. Thus, tailoring to the student population and connecting to the institutional mission offer colleges the opportunity to take unique and innovative approaches to student academic success for increasing retention (Carey, 2005a; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Hammer, 2003; Tinto, 1993). Effective retention programs incorporate many of the key theoretical principles or statements postulated by Tinto (1975, 1986, & 1993). According to Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004), the most important principles included: (a) commitment of the institution to the students and their welfare; (b) adherence to a strong institutional integrity in that the institutions are committed to all students and strive to meet their stated mission and goals; and (c) development of mechanisms for supportive social and academic communities.

Recent research and analysis related to academic success and retention have focused on a wide range of variables such as academic ethic, aptitude, expectancy for success, learning strategies employed, motivation, personality characteristics, persistence, prior achievement, self-control, self-regulation of learning, study habits, and/or work drive. (i.e., Garavalis & Gredler, 2002; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Mansfield, Pinto, Parente, & Wortman, 2004; Nausmann, Bandalos, & Gutkin, 2002; Plant, Ericsson, & Hill, 2005; Reason, 2003; Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004). The role that grade point average plays in college retention is another variable that has been widely studied (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999; Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999; Reason, 2003). First-year college students with GPA's less than 2.0 are the most likely to withdraw from college (Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999). According to Levitz, Noel, and Richter (1999), the most effective and efficient way to boost graduation rates is to actively intervene during the freshmen year. By helping college students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be academically successful, more students will stay in college and will persist to graduation. Effective retention programs have direct intervention programs that help students understand, address, and, where possible, assume more control over their own academic success and learning.

Many colleges and universities have some type of freshman seminar course to address issues faced by incoming first-year students. These courses have generally been patterned after one of two models (Ryan & Glenn, 2004). One type of course, the active learning model, focuses on teaching students “active learning strategies” and helps them develop skills deemed essential for student success. The second type of course, the academic socialization model, focuses on assisting students in learning and integrating themselves into the “norms, values and rituals of academia.” The growth in popularity of these courses is often credited to John Gardner, head of the *Policy Center on the First Year of College* at Brevard College (1986). The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in Research Universities (1998) strongly supported the academic socialization course model and has also been supportive of the more recent theme-based academic socialization courses as well. However, a recent study (Ryan & Glenn, 2004) suggests that the learning strategies-based courses may be more effective in retaining both academically “able” and “less able” students as compared to a socialization-focused course. Ryan and Glenn (2004) suggest that the effectiveness of learning strategies-based courses to increase retention may reflect the greater need of minority and first-generation college students to gain academic skills providing them with a sense of increased academic preparedness.

The many factors that appear to play key roles in student persistence and success are spread between institutional administrators, faculty, and students themselves. Lau (2003) suggests that the role of institutional administrators is to help each student adjust to new learning and living environments and to accommodate the different learning needs, styles, and interests of its students. Providing academic support programs such as learning centers, first-year support/intervention programs and freshman seminar courses have clearly contributed to student success and retention.

The influence each student’s efforts make towards his/her college education should not be underestimated. Studies indicate that student accountability and learning motivation are critical in student success and persistence in the face of difficulty. “Student persistence to the completion of educational goals is a key indicator of student satisfaction and success,” (Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999, p. 31). Woosley’s (2003) research supports offering social programs for incoming students within the first few

weeks of their engagement at college, as social integration in a new environment tends to have a long-term positive impact on student retention. The idea that students have a social and academic responsibility to be active participants in their learning and education is mentioned repeatedly in the literature (i.e., Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). Research here at Berea College by Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2005) provides compelling evidence that student study time directly affects academic performance.

The ability to self-regulate one's learning and to delay gratification are key elements in academic success. Students who are not as academically successful as they could be benefit from learning how to plan their study time, set realistic goals, utilize effective learning strategies, monitor their learning and goal attainment, and persist when things are difficult (Plant, Ericsson, & Hill, 2005; Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). Mansfield, Pinto, Parente, and Wortman (2004) report that a student's level of self-control also affects academic success and retention. Students who score high on impulsivity, risk taking, and physical activity tend to perform less well academically (as measured by GPA). These researchers suggest that programs aimed at helping students learn to "recognize, monitor and regulate" self-defeating tendencies may help them improve their academic performance, leading to greater academic success and greater student retention.

Nausmann, Bandalos, and Gutkin (2003) analyzed data regarding first-generation college students and their academic success. For first-generation college students, the variable of expectancy for success had the greatest impact on GPA. Self-regulated learning variables can actively support this expectancy for academic success. The researchers conclude that the academic success of students, particularly first-generation college students, could be improved by increasing and enhancing the skills involved in the self-regulation of learning.

Recent approaches to support student academic success and increase retention are comprehensive in nature and involve all aspects of academic life. To be successful, adequate resources are necessary to provide training and support for the faculty and professional staff who influence students' engagement on campus. (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Moxley, Najor-Kurack, & Dumbrigue, 2001; Tinto, 1993). Overall, there is a growing body of research that shows successful retention programs are comprehensive in nature, tied to the institution's mission, are focused early in a student's

college career, tailored to the student's specific needs and goals, and provide opportunities for students to learn and acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for sustained academic success.

Governance

Implementing programs based on insights gained from College history and the scholarly literature is profoundly affected by the current organizational structure of Berea College. In many ways, the College is a traditional liberal arts campus. The faculty and staff are hired, evaluated, and divided into divisions, departments, and positions much like other private institutions of higher learning. Berea has a president, provost, academic dean, vice-presidents who have various responsibilities on campus, and more specialized offices that report to these College officers. The Board of Trustees, constituted like most other college governing boards across the country, has final authority at the institution.

Several of these officials have duties directly related to the enhancement of student learning. The President is the chief executive officer of the College and is charged with the general supervision and special oversight of the various departments of instruction. The Academic Vice President and Provost, the senior academic officer of the College, has administrative responsibility for planning, coordinating, and evaluating educational programs of the College. The Dean of the Faculty is the head of the College's teaching faculty and provides leadership for academic departments and programs, and, together the Dean of the Faculty and the Provost direct the recruitment, hiring, and professional development of the faculty. The Vice President for Labor and Student Life participates in the development, implementation, administration and assessment of student development policies. Each of these offices coordinates and oversees the work of other offices and committees as well as programs and services, many of which will play some role in the QEP effort.

An example of one of these offices is the Center for Learning, Teaching, Communication, and Research (the Learning Center). The coordinator, program assistant, faculty associates, and certified student consultants provide one-on-one and small-group discussions of writing projects. They also lead workshops and make class and group presentations on strategies for effective writing and increasing study effectiveness. The Learning Center offers a print and video library on writing and

reading as well as a webpage. This Center has worked closely with the College to make sure that the institution will have the resources to carry out its Quality Enhancement Plan.

Governance at Berea College is shaped by the formal commitments and the history of the institution. Inspired by its motto “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,” Berea College seeks to involve all members of the community in the educational process. This means that committees that frame College action and policies are selected from all segments of the institution and contain members of the faculty, staff, students, and administration. The reports of these committees are made available to members of all of these constituencies. Policy decisions often require approval of the whole College Faculty or the General Faculty, which includes most College Faculty and many staff, administrators, and student representatives. Some initiatives also are considered for action by the Student Government Association.

The Faculties are organized to conduct their affairs primarily through five program councils and their subordinate committees. Each of these councils is responsible either to the College or General Faculty, and any recommendations for substantive changes in policy are subject to approval by one or the other faculty body. The councils are: Academic Program, Faculty Status, General Affairs, Labor Forum, and Student Life. The Executive Council coordinates and oversees this structure. (The functions and composition of the Executive Council and the five program councils and their related committees are described on page 16 of the *Faculty Manual*.) Some portions of the QEP were submitted to the Academic Program Council (APC) for initial review and deliberation. The APC has:

comprehensive responsibility for the academic program, with specific responsibilities for curriculum planning, continual review of the current programs, policy development, and general supervision of practices, requirements, and services affecting academic affairs. The Council submits conclusions to the College Faculty as recommendations for adoption. (p. 17)

The two parts of this governance system that will be central to the implementation of particular aspects of this QEP are the APC and one of its constituent bodies, the Student Admissions and Academic Standing Committee (SAAS). The SAAS Committee monitors current policies and practices with regard to admission, scholarship, probation and suspension, and formulates policy recommendations for consideration by the APC. It

also decides on admission to the College for marginal applicants. The Committee also hears and renders decisions on cases of appeals by students on academic or convocation probation. Seven members comprise the Committee—four elected from the College Faculty representing each of the four divisions, one student, the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success, and the Associate Provost for Enrollment Management.

APC recommendations are brought to the College Faculty's monthly meetings. These meetings are combined meetings of the College Faculty and the General Faculty, and the agendas include issues that range from academic curriculum changes, to strategic initiatives, to community welfare issues (such as smoking on campus). At these meetings, issues are discussed in great detail by all present, and decisions are made on the basis of majority votes of those present. This inclusive organization ensures that all persons at the College have an opportunity (directly or through representation) to participate in deciding what policies will be pursued. Equally important, these same groups and individuals will have a say in developing the broad policy outlines for any proposed programs that emerge from the QEP. Finally, at faculty meetings, students, staff, administrators, and faculty will receive reports about assessment of these programs and make decisions about whether to modify or continue endeavors proposed as part of this QEP.

Berea College's initiatives in improving retention and reducing the number of students on probation illustrate how ideas from the scholarly literature, institutional history, and the broad-based governance structure shape its policies. With the installation of a new governance system in 1989, the College instituted a permanent Long Range Planning Committee. When Dr. Larry Shinn became President of Berea College in 1994, the Strategic Planning Committee was constituted with some permanent members and some other members were elected from the College and General Faculties. Meeting on a weekly basis during the academic year, the SPC produced a strategic plan entitled *Being and Becoming: Berea College in the 21st Century* in 1996. The final product was written with the idea that it would be the basis of a campus-wide discussion, and all constituencies at the College were fully informed of all the particulars in the document and given many opportunities to comment. Staff, students, administrators, and faculty attended many meetings and made numerous suggestions for changes, additions, and

deletions in the document. The SPC considered these comments and made appropriate changes. Finally, the entire document was submitted to the General and College Faculties for a discussion and decision. After an extended debate, the Faculties accepted the final document.

Part of the debate about *Being and Becoming* was the expressed desire for Berea to better accomplish its stated mission. An important part of that discussion was whether Berea College's retention and graduation rates suggested that the institution was doing all it could to promote student learning. Recognizing that this was a major concern, the SPC appointed a Retention Subcommittee in Fall 1996. The eight-person subcommittee included faculty, students, an associate dean, a person from the student life staff, and the institutional research director. Reporting in 1997, the subcommittee stated: "increased retention is one possible outcome of enhanced student programming, however, it is not in itself the goal. The major goal was to improve the quality of students' experiences which may lead to increased retention." Among the specific suggestions of the subcommittee was strengthening support through improvements in the first-year curriculum. By the Spring of 1998, the academic administration presented a retention report to trustees indicating that Berea College had a "serious" problem with retention and had taken the Subcommittee's recommendations seriously enough to look closely at first year General Studies courses, revise Berea's admissions processes, alter the Registration and Orientation Weekends, and create a mandatory advising program for freshmen advisers.

In 1998, the Subcommittee's work was continued by a newly-formed Committee on Student Experiences (COSE). COSE released a document in 2000 addressing the continued efforts to better understand student experiences as they related to retention and graduation. Among the specific issues that needed further examination were:

(a) expanding access to information resources through the Library and the Computer Center; (b) helping students make a successful transition from high school to college; (c) examining and modifying the General Studies Program; and (d) emphasizing education of the whole person and encouraging the continued practice of excellence in teaching. These broad issues would require extensive research and discussions. Thus, the present QEP extends work already begun, and it continues and perhaps deepens a commitment to making student learning the primary focus.

The result of the COSE investigation was the development of smaller groups that addressed individual pieces of the probation and retention question. A Dean's Committee—since moved into the Provost's Office—monitored and implemented probation and retention strategies that were tested and implemented at Berea College. Among those initiatives were the creation of Strategies for Academic Success (GST 101) and the Early Intervention program. The Intervention Phase will be introduced and assessed over a span of the five years we have to implement the QEP. We envision a sequence of interventions designed to improve the academic success of at-risk students. Each new intervention will build on the results of previous or related interventions. Systemic curricular, co-curricular, pedagogical, and personal factors will be examined. The College currently operates an Early Intervention Program wherein faculty and staff alert the Office of Academic Services of students whose academic or labor performance indicates risk of attrition or imminent placement on probationary status. The Early Intervention Program is a cornerstone of the Intervention Phase of our QEP. Data gathered through ongoing assessment of Phase I will be used to evaluate and modify the Early Intervention Program.

In a related development, the 2004-2005 revision of Berea College's Strategic Plan challenged the campus to answer: "What population of students does Berea College seek to serve and how can the College best serve them?" To explore this institutional priority, Berea College will form a Task Force on Student Success that elaborates and extends the initiative associated with Phase III of the QEP. This Task Force will have responsibility for exploring experimental, systemic, and targeted initiatives and pilot programs to enhance student success specifically related to the quality of student learning.

The QEP Team's work supports the efforts of this Task Force. Some shared membership will provide continuity. The Task Force, which is expected to complete its work in Academic Year 2005-2006, will have broad responsibility for providing programs to enhance learning opportunities for all Berea students. The QEP Team's work has focused specifically on students who were in danger of being placed on or who were already on probation. Its focus has been on assisting students at risk of attrition to develop essential academic/college success skills and strategies through such programs as

the Strategies for Academic Success course, the Early Intervention Program, academic advising, and other interventions in the academic, residential, and labor programs.

The QEP itself reflects a systematic approach to identifying students in need and actively engaging them in a process to increase their potential through learning. The Plan itself contemplates two additional phases: intervention and prevention. Using what we learn about the challenges facing the students who are currently on academic probation, the second phase will seek to develop and implement practices and policies that will encourage behaviors that may be effective in avoiding poor academic performance prior to the student being placed on probation. The College expects that these students will become much more effective learners than they had been in the past. The final phase of the Plan will involve using what is learned from the first two phases of the study to be able to better identify and select candidates who have the greatest potential to benefit from Berea's academic program.

Section II – The Development Process

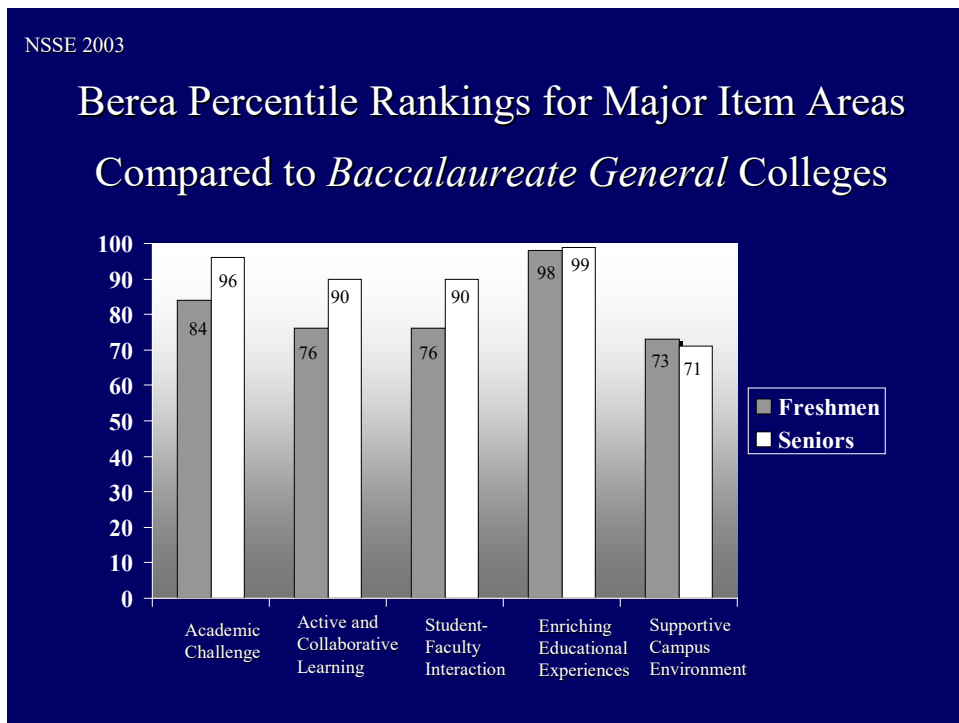
Introduction

Part III of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges' *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* describes the nature, purpose, and process for member institutions' development of their respective Quality Enhancement Plans (QEP). As the *Handbook* explains, the inclusion of this requirement in the reaffirmation process reflects the Commission's commitment "to the enhancement of the quality of higher education and to the proposition that student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning" (p. 21). In general, the new accreditation requirements and processes reflect a change from previous resource-oriented and compliance-based approaches to regional accreditation. The new process incorporates many aspects and a framework consistent with continuous quality improvement that became popular in higher education in the 1990's. It is important to recognize that this approach rests upon new assumptions and involves new methods of inquiry. In fact, the *Handbook* suggests that the "process for developing a QEP will differ among institutions, depending on such factors as size, campus culture, internal governance structures, mission, the focus of the QEP, physical and human resources..." (p. 23).

Before outlining the QEP development process at Berea College, it seems appropriate to briefly note some of the organizational and cultural factors that influenced the development of this Plan. Berea College is a "mission-driven" institution. Its commitment to providing a top quality liberal arts education to students with great academic promise but limited economic resources is deep and wide. Perhaps the single most distinctive characteristic of the College is that nearly 90% of its domestic students receive Pell grants. Similarly, the College's historic commitment to educating "black and white, men and women" continues to affect the nature and quality of faculty, staff, and student experiences. Berea College uses its large endowment to provide full-tuition scholarships for each enrolled student and also expects each student to work in a labor position for a minimum of 10 hours per week. Careful management of fiscal resources over the past decade has allowed the institution to survive market reversals and continue

to improve academic and residential facilities while sustaining a faculty-to-student ratio of approximately 11:1. Berea College is an institution with great educational capacity. Berea College is also a place where many care deeply about the institution, future directions, and current policies. Recent faculty survey data from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) indicated that Berea College faculty members are similar to their colleagues at other small private colleges in many respects. However, our faculty expressed more concern about the lack of academic preparation of our students than faculty members at other institutions.

This is despite the fact that, by traditional academic admissions standards, Berea College students have ACT scores and high school class rankings significantly higher than their cohort averages. Interestingly, data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) show that the academic demands of the current program are perceived by Berea College students as being quite challenging.



The HERI survey also indicated that faculty members at Berea may feel less respect from peers and express less satisfaction with administration than faculty members at other institutions. Thus, the Berea College Faculty tends to be cautious and prone to carefully scrutinize proposals for changes to educational programs or processes. In 2002, an initiative proposed by the Strategic Planning Committee suggesting the need for the

institution to align academic structures and processes with a “learning paradigm” (Barr and Tagg, 1995) and create a “culture of evidence” met with considerable opposition. However, the HERI data also showed that compared to faculty at other colleges, Berea’s faculty members are less resistant to the notion that the College should offer remedial work, more likely to think that teachers are rewarded for working with under-prepared students, and more likely to have taught a first-year seminar. Two years of rigorous faculty debate about General Education also attest to the faculty’s willingness to engage in academic debates across disciplinary boundaries. Taken together, these data suggest that the QEP and the various programs and efforts that emerge from this Plan will receive widespread discussion and engagement from faculty, students, and staff across campus.

Selection of a Topic - Leadership Team Activities

The Berea College Reaffirmation Leadership Team (BC Leadership Team) was composed of five individuals and a staff member who served as recorder and provided administrative support. All five members of the Team held administrative responsibilities, but all five were also voting members of the College Faculty (the President, Provost, Dean, a tenured faculty member and the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment). From its earliest meetings and consideration of the new SACS standards, the Team was aware of the importance of the QEP and the necessity of ensuring broad-based involvement of the community throughout the process.

In March, 2004 the BC Leadership Team sent a letter to all members of the College and General Faculties, other staff members, and students explaining the QEP development process and soliciting suggestions (Appendix I). In addition, the Dean contacted all academic department chairs separately and asked them to discuss ideas for potential projects within their respective departments. After reviewing approximately 40 suggestions that reflected a wide variety of perspectives and QEP alternatives, the BC Leadership Team developed brief proposals for four different topics (Learning through Service, Universal Access, Probation and Retention, and Health and Wellness Program— (Appendix II). After discussion of each of these alternatives, the College and General Faculties, which include twelve Student Government Association (SGA) Representatives, were asked to rate each proposal on its importance to the College’s mission and potential

to enhance student learning (Appendix III). Responses showed considerable support among the College and General Faculties for three of the alternatives (Appendix IV).

The BC Leadership Team carefully reviewed the results of this survey. The Team considered the potential costs and benefits of selecting each of the alternatives as the College's QEP. The project involving Probation and Retention emerged as the best choice, as it was a topic of great interest and also seemed to offer the opportunity for significant improvement in an area that was integral to the College's mission. While the ratings for three of the proposals were very similar, the number and diversity of faculty members who had volunteered to work on the Plan provided another reason for selecting Probation and Retention over the other alternatives. Support for the Wellness initiative was somewhat less than the other alternatives, although there was a group of individuals who expressed a willingness to work on the QEP Team if this topic was selected. While a QEP focusing on Universal Access (technology) had received relatively high ratings, only three faculty members expressed a willingness to serve on the Team to create a plan. Service-Learning received both high ratings and a relatively large number of volunteers. However, a closer look at the volunteers for the Service-Learning alternative revealed that it contained no tenured faculty members. The QEP proposal addressing Probation and Retention received the highest ratings for its potential to enhance student learning and also had the longest and most representative list of committee volunteers. Thus the BC Leadership Team selected this as the topic for the College's QEP and prepared a proposal to bring before the College and General Faculties at its April 22, 2004 meeting. There was lively discussion about this issue at the Faculty Meeting (Appendix V), but the proposal ("***The goal of the QEP is to address questions about probation and retention and to consider ways of improving relevant policies and structures related to academic probation and retention at the College***") was eventually passed by voice vote (by a wide margin).

Following the faculty's decision that Berea's QEP would focus on Probation and Retention, the BC Leadership Team selected a representative sample of faculty volunteers to form the QEP Team. It was important that the Team's composition reflect a broad balance of members of the College and General Faculties with administrators serving primarily as advisers and consultants. The Director of the Appalachian Center

and the Director of Admissions agreed to share the responsibilities of leading the Team. Members also included the Vice President for Labor and Student Life, the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success, the Chair of the Biology Department, and two untenured faculty members— one from the Education Department and the other from the Department of English, Theatre, and Speech Communication.

While the minutes of the BC Leadership Team reflect that it continued to exercise oversight for the process, the newly formed QEP Team itself took on the task of developing and refining the College's QEP. The Provost and Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment served as consultants and liaisons between the QEP Team and the BC Leadership Team. Members of both the BC Leadership Team and QEP Team were instrumental in coordinating the emerging QEP with activities of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Provost's Committee, and other, ongoing, administrative initiatives related to probation and retention. [Complete meeting minutes from both the QEP Team and the BC Leadership Team will be available in the SACS Conference Room during the visit.]

Additionally, shortly after the passage of the QEP motion by the College and General Faculties, the Dean and Provost arranged with the Chair of the Educational Policies Committee of the Board of Trustees to include a discussion of the College's QEP on the agenda of its May 7, 2004 meeting (Appendix VI). The QEP topic, as well as the process by which it was selected, were reviewed and endorsed by the trustees. In particular, the trustees expressed pleasure that the College would seek to further improve its rates of retention and graduation by better understanding student learning needs. At the Board of Trustees' spring meeting the following year, the Provost and Dean again discussed the College's QEP with the Educational Policies Committee of the Board of Trustees and again received their support.

Refinement and Development – QEP Team

As described in the previous section, a team of interested volunteers, reflecting a diversity of perspectives and experience from across campus, was appointed by the BC Leadership Team shortly after the College and General Faculties approved the Probation and Retention QEP. After a brief initial meeting, the QEP Team had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Gerald Lord, Associate Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges

at SACS, during his preliminary reaffirmation visit to the campus. At the May 19 meeting, the Team took stock of their charge, the resources available, and what their faculty colleagues expected them to produce. An extensive set of articles relating to academic probation and retention was assembled and maintained in the Provost's Office for the reference of Team members. It was decided that the QEP Team would devote the summer of 2004 to individual study and that it would then meet regularly throughout the next academic year. The QEP Team also noted with interest the faculty's approval of a new course, GST 101, proposed by the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success and saw that it would produce information germane to the development of a QEP concerning probation and retention.

Over the course of the 2004-05 Academic Year, the QEP Team met nearly 20 times under the leadership of its two co-chairs. A review of the minutes of these meetings reveals the breadth, depth, and diversity of the matters the Team considered. The QEP Team reviewed the literature and considered aspects of programs at other institutions such as Alverno College, Brevard College, Warren Wilson College, Western Carolina University, the University of Kentucky, and Virginia Tech. Members shared differing opinions and discussed a variety of alternative approaches to the development of Berea's QEP. As the *SACS Handbook* suggests: "an institution must be willing to experience substantial ambiguity and maintain flexibility in thinking during the creative process," (p. 26). The QEP Team learned that Berea College has made significant gains over recent years in retaining students with great academic promise but limited economic means. A set of 19 initiatives proposed by the Committee On Student Experience (COSE) in 2000 to increase retention at the College by reducing student dissatisfaction had achieved considerable success; retention had increased from about 70% in the late 90's to over 80% for the past four years. However, the QEP Team agreed that using student learning as a framework for considering probation and retention had the potential to help the College attain even greater success in achieving its mission of "educating and inspiring leaders for Appalachia and beyond." The College's commitment to empowering student learners by setting high but attainable expectations and standards would serve as a framework for better understanding issues relating to academic probation and retention. The QEP Team noted that the disadvantages faced by students

from economically depressed regions were particularly significant and apparently growing at a steady rate compared to their more affluent peers. The QEP Team also noted that many of the “best practices” for increasing retention such as having small classes, providing one-on-one advising, and developing a strongly supportive residential life program were already in place at Berea College. However, the QEP Team came to recognize from their review of the literature and the initial preliminary results of programs such as the GST 101 course that considerable opportunities for improvement remained. In essence, this QEP reflects their efforts to “connect the dots” and identify paths by which the institution can leverage its strengths to overcome the challenges inherent in its unique mission of serving students, black and white, with substantial economic need. Although the Plan begins with a focus on students who have already encountered serious academic difficulty, the Team recognized that many of the lessons learned from better understanding these students could improve educational programs and policies that affect all students.

Parallel Organizational Processes

Because the QEP’s topic is an integral part of the College’s mission, other administrators and committees continued to address issues related to probation and retention while the QEP Team was meeting and considering historical contexts and alternative approaches. One initiative that is relevant to this Plan was the proposal put forward by the Student Government Association and endorsed by the Academic Program Council that all students be provided with mid-term letter grades in all their courses. Previously, students had only received a mid-term report indicating that they were progressing satisfactorily. It became clear that some students with deficient grades (and thus on probation) at the end of the semester had not been aware of the scope of their academic problems until it was too late. This change in policy has provided both students and the administration with more timely information concerning each student’s academic performance. This, in turn, has allowed earlier identification of students at risk of being placed on academic probation and the provision of support during the semester.

Another program initiated by the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success began even before the topic of the QEP had been determined by the faculty. However, this program’s relevance to the QEP was so direct that it soon became a central

aspect of the QEP Team’s deliberations. As will be explained in the next section, this program was incorporated as the first of three distinct phases in the Plan. The General Studies 101 course was developed based on a model used by the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and a text entitled *On Course* authored by Skip Downing of Baltimore City Community College. The College Faculty provisionally approved the creation of this quarter-credit, graded course on academic success that would be offered to any student on academic probation. Ten faculty members volunteered to teach the course during the 2004 Fall Semester. Faculty members used a common text but employed a variety of approaches to directly engage and support these students by meeting with sections of 2 - 10 students for 1 - 2 hours over approximately 12 weeks of the Fall and Spring Semesters.

Strategic Planning Committee

The Quality Enhancement Plan will inform the work a Task Force created by the College’s Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) will be doing as part of the College’s newly approved revision of its strategic plan, *Being and Becoming*. This strategic plan includes seven strategic questions, one of which is directly related to the QEP. Strategic Question 2 asks: “*What population of students does Berea College seek to serve and how can the College best serve them?*” The text for this section reaffirms Berea’s historic commitment to serve, “students from Appalachia, black and white, men and women, (a) who have limited economic resources; and (b) whose ‘great promise’ is defined by significant potential for academic success and leadership...”

Representing the lowest one-third of the socioeconomic strata among college-bound students, Berea students’ “limited economic means” bring special challenges. Entering students are less likely to possess some of the skills essential for college success. Compared to the general cohort of students, fewer of them come from households where both parents reside, or counties where at least 5% of the population have earned college degrees. Fewer come from families where either parent has earned a college degree. Our students report rates of depression and anxiety at nearly twice the frequency of their peers entering other colleges. It is little wonder that a recent report from ACT indicated that socio-economic status can be as important as ACT score or high school class rank in predicting student academic performance and retention in college

(Lotkowski, Robbins & Noeth, 2004). As noted earlier in this report, Berea's curriculum and high academic standards are exceptionally challenging for many students. Other studies of low-income students have shown, however, that high academic standards *and* the provision of adequate support structures and learning environments that aid student achievement are keys to their eventual academic success. Thus, the following strategic initiative was adopted in February 2005 by the faculty in response to the strategic question of how Berea College can best serve the students it admits. The conversations within the QEP Team had clearly helped sensitize the whole campus community to these issues and fostered support for this critical initiative.

Berea College commits itself to provide its students with a high quality liberal arts education that maintains high academic standards. It also seeks to improve its capacity to help the students it seeks to serve by (a) studying the national literature and conducting studies of its particular population of students to better understand the academic, personal, and attitudinal characteristics of Berea students; (b) systematically identifying the diverse strengths and weaknesses that students bring with them to Berea, building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses; (c) assessing the effectiveness of Berea's current curriculum, teaching, advising, academic support, student services, and residential programs in addressing student preparedness; (d) creating the necessary academic, academic support, faculty/staff development, and residential/student-life structures and programs to better support students' academic and personal success; and (e) monitoring the progress of this initiative.

The net effect of this student success initiative is to reaffirm Berea's current admissions goals of supporting a diverse and low-income population of students primarily from Appalachia while providing institutional learning structures and support that enables such students to meet the demands of the high quality liberal arts education, with opportunities for study in pre-professional and professional programs, that Berea College provides.

To accomplish this institutional aim, Berea College will:

- 1. Focus its admissions program on: (a) exploring new ways of identifying students of "great promise"—including ways to measure their educational preparedness and motivation, (b) developing admissions materials to attract the most highly motivated and best prepared students, and (c) emphasizing Berea's high quality academic programs, its residential character, the Labor Program, its inclusive Christian traditions and practices, and its commitment to service and leadership development;*

2. *Assess the effects of the College's current educational structures (e.g., policies, programs, and practices) and culture (e.g., faculty and student roles, norms, and values) on student learning and achievement. Determine how well the College is achieving its aims of conducting excellent educational programs that provide opportunities to the students it seeks to serve. Retention and graduation rates will provide one set of measures of academic success but must be complemented by others that directly measure student performance; and*
3. *Ask the Executive Council to form a "Task Force on Student Success" that elaborates and extends the initiative outlined above. The Task Force is encouraged to explore experimental, systemic, and targeted initiatives and pilot projects to enhance student academic success. The Task Force will report back to the faculty each semester and seek to complete its work in one year (including the summer) and submit its recommendations to the College and General Faculties for action or to appropriate administrative or academic support offices for implementation.*

The Task Force on Student Success will have responsibility for exploring experimental, systemic, and targeted initiatives and pilot programs to enhance student success specifically related to student learning. The QEP Team's work has provided many resources and a conceptual framework for this larger initiative. Some shared membership will provide continuity between these two groups as well as other faculty and administrative groups such as the Strategic Planning Committee and the Provost's Committee. The Task Force, which is expected to complete its work in one year, will have broad responsibility for providing programs to enhance learning opportunities for all Berea students. The QEP Team's work focused specifically on students on probation. The actions listed in the first action item of the SPC plan include much of what the QEP Team has proposed to be the essence of its work in Phase III of its Plan. Similarly, the work done in support of Phase II of the QEP will be directly relevant to the SPC's second action item. However, the QEP remains distinctive because it provides necessary assistance for "at-risk" students to learn essential academic/college success skills and strategies through such programs as the Strategies for Academic Success course (GST 101), the Early Intervention Program, enhanced academic advising, and other interventions in the academic, residential, and labor programs outlined in the next section of this Plan.

QEP Team Executive Committee – Consolidation and Publication

It became apparent at the end of the 2004-05 Academic Year that, although the QEP Team had done a great deal of work, considerable work remained to be done organizing and drafting a document to submit for the On-Site Review Committee's inspection. The BC Leadership Team designated the two Co-Chairs of the QEP Team, the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success, and a senior faculty member to serve as the QEP Team Executive Committee and charged them with the responsibility of producing the required document.

The QEP Team Executive Committee expects to reconvene the entire QEP Team at the start of the 2005-2006 Academic Year. Several tasks remain to be accomplished during the month of September. This report needs to be disseminated and discussed across the campus and in particular by faculty and student groups. Coordination with key administrators and faculty decision-making groups will be required to ensure that the specific recommendations and proposals presented later in this report are moved forward to the entire faculty for their consideration and approval. Similarly the QEP Team will need to engage the Strategic Planning Committee to make arrangements for the establishment of the Task Force on Student Success that will inherit responsibility for some of the QEP initiatives and programs. In some respects the process of developing the QEP has served as a catalyst; it has helped make students' needs and opportunities for improvement more salient to the faculty and administration. Several inconsistencies and apparently irrational aspects of policies and programs have been identified through this process and are already being remedied, as will be discussed in the next section.

Section III - Berea College Quality Enhancement Plan

Relationship to Student Learning

The Berea College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to enhance retention (and graduation) rates by increasing our understanding of the ways in which academic probation and other factors affect student performance and persistence. It is important to note that the College's current graduation rate of just over 60% is near an historical high. While this rate is also near the national average for all colleges, it is remarkable that a college at which approximately 90% of the domestic students receive Pell grants would attain such a high graduation rate. Only students in approximately the bottom third of all those applying for federal aid to attend college are eligible for admission to Berea College. Median family income of all domestic first-year students has been below \$30,000/year for the past three years. Our students are less likely than others in their cohort to come from homes where both birth parents live (or where either parent is a college graduate); they are about twice as likely as their peers to report feelings of depression and anxiety; and many of them come from rural Appalachian counties in which less than 5% of the residents have earned college degrees. EDUCAUSE data suggest the odds are about 20:1 against children from families with incomes less than \$25,000/year earning a baccalaureate degree by the age of 23. In contrast, for children of families with incomes of \$75,000 or higher, the odds are about even that they will earn a college degree by age 23. Just over 75% of children of parents without college degrees attend college. However, slightly less than one third of those who do go to college from this group, graduate (National Center for Education Statistics, Postsecondary Education Transcript Study of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 reported at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/08/10/first>).

A recent article entitled *Class in America: Shadowy Lines That Still Divide* (*New York Times*, May 19, 2005) suggested the way in which class influences students' chances of admission and subsequent success in college: "But merit, it turns out, is at least partly class-based. Parents with money, education, and connections cultivate in their children the habits that the meritocracy rewards. When their children then succeed, their success is seen as *earned*." The following anonymous survey response from a

current Berea College student on academic probation as part of the assessment of the GST 101 course illustrates the challenge faced by students such as these.

“My parents never taught me the importance of education. Neither had graduated from high school, so I was not disciplined academically at home. I got yelled at a lot and told that I was not smart enough to become successful. After many years of being told by my mother that I was stupid and stubborn, it made me more stubborn and less inclined to do my studies and homework. I never fully understood the importance... Thus, I was a bad student who had too much pride to ask for help.”

By better understanding our students and finding ways to “cultivate in [them]... the habits that meritocracy rewards,” Berea College will be able to effectively provide some of its current at-risk students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that its graduates (and the graduates of other colleges and universities) already possess. To the extent that these students can learn how to learn in college, retention and graduation rates could increase beyond the 60% currently achieved at the College.

Berea College agrees with the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges’ assertion that student learning is the principal product of any institution of higher education. This emphasis on learning is especially pronounced at institutions dedicated to undergraduate liberal arts education like Berea College. The *American Heritage College Dictionary* defines learning as “the act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill.” Any consideration of an institution’s overall effect on student learning must involve both the quantity and quality of learning that occurs. We must ask “How many students are learning how much?” This QEP is intended to increase overall student learning by providing the support necessary for more students to meet Berea College’s high academic standards while holding these academic criteria constant.

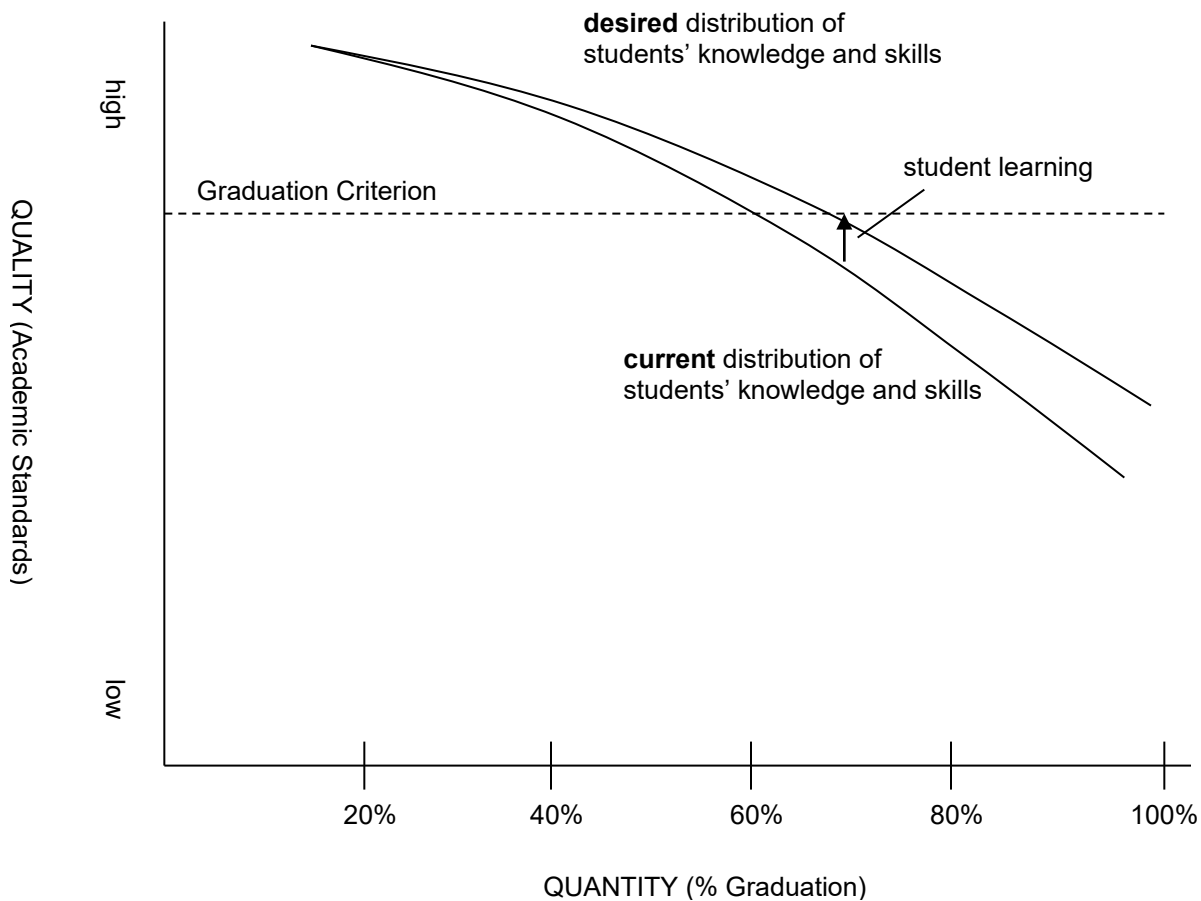
Students’ potential for academic success depends upon the individual student’s knowledge and skills, and these vary considerably from one student to the next. One way to use learning as a frame for considering the question of student attrition is to ask what knowledge and skills sets distinguish the students who persist to graduation from those who do not. This QEP assumes that these sets of knowledge and skills can be described, and once identified, can be learned by many of those who currently are unable to persist to graduation (Porter, 1991a, 1991b).

Figure 1. depicts a theoretical relationship between the quantity and quality of student learning and its effect on graduation rate. The vertical axis reflects educational standards or criteria (i.e., the quality of education). It includes various academic standards (number and type of courses required, demonstrated proficiencies required, grade point average, individual course requirements, etc.). The current criterion for graduation is depicted as a horizontal line on the graph. It reflects the cumulative and collective standard the College sets for what students must know and be able to do to complete their degree (e.g., all students must complete 33 courses, including the general studies core and an academic major, and earn a GPA of at least 2.00). These requirements and standards are distributed throughout the courses required for completion of general education as well as the various disciplinary majors the College offers. Graduation also requires students' mastery of knowledge and skills that are not explicitly listed in the syllabus of any particular course or the *College Catalog*. These include habits of mind and self-discipline that allow individual students to engage actively and responsibly in intellectual endeavors with others (viz., "the habits that meritocracy rewards"). The Berea QEP's success requires that the College's currently high general criterion for graduation remain unchanged.

The horizontal axis reflects the proportion (quantity) of students who will successfully graduate within six years of entering the College. The graph contains two curves reflecting hypothetical distributions of relevant skills and knowledge among our students. Each curve reflects the conceptual distribution of academic potential across all students who enter the College. The lower curve represents the current situation, and the other, slightly elevated curve represents the desired distribution this QEP will help the College to achieve. The point at which each curve intersects the horizontal graduation criterion line determines the graduation rate (i.e., about 60% for the current distribution and about 70% for the desired distribution). To the extent that student attrition is caused by student ignorance, lack of motivation, or lack of skill, increasing student learning (as shown by the curve labeled "desired distribution...") will raise the curve and shift the intersection with the graduation criterion line to the right. This graph shows that the QEP should enhance the learning of students at the lower (right) end of the distribution far more than for those who are already successful (on the upper left side of the current

distribution curve). This graph also suggests that some of the positive effects of this QEP will increase the learning of some students who ultimately may still be unable to graduate from Berea College. Thus, this QEP is about enhanced student learning, and increased retention and graduation are two of several potential indicators of the Plan’s success in enhancing student learning.

Figure 1.
Hypothetical Relationship between Graduation Rates,
Graduation Criteria and Student Learning



This QEP reflects a systematic approach to identifying students in need (i.e., those already on academic probation) and actively engaging them in a process to increase their potential through learning (viz., “correction”). The Plan itself contemplates two

additional phases: intervention and prevention. Using what we learn about the challenges facing students who are currently on academic probation, the second phase will develop and implement practices and policies that will encourage behaviors that may be effective in avoiding poor academic performance prior to the student being placed on probation. The final phase of the Plan will use what is learned from the two previous phases to identify and select candidates who have the greatest potential of benefiting from Berea College's particular liberal-arts-based, residential academic program.

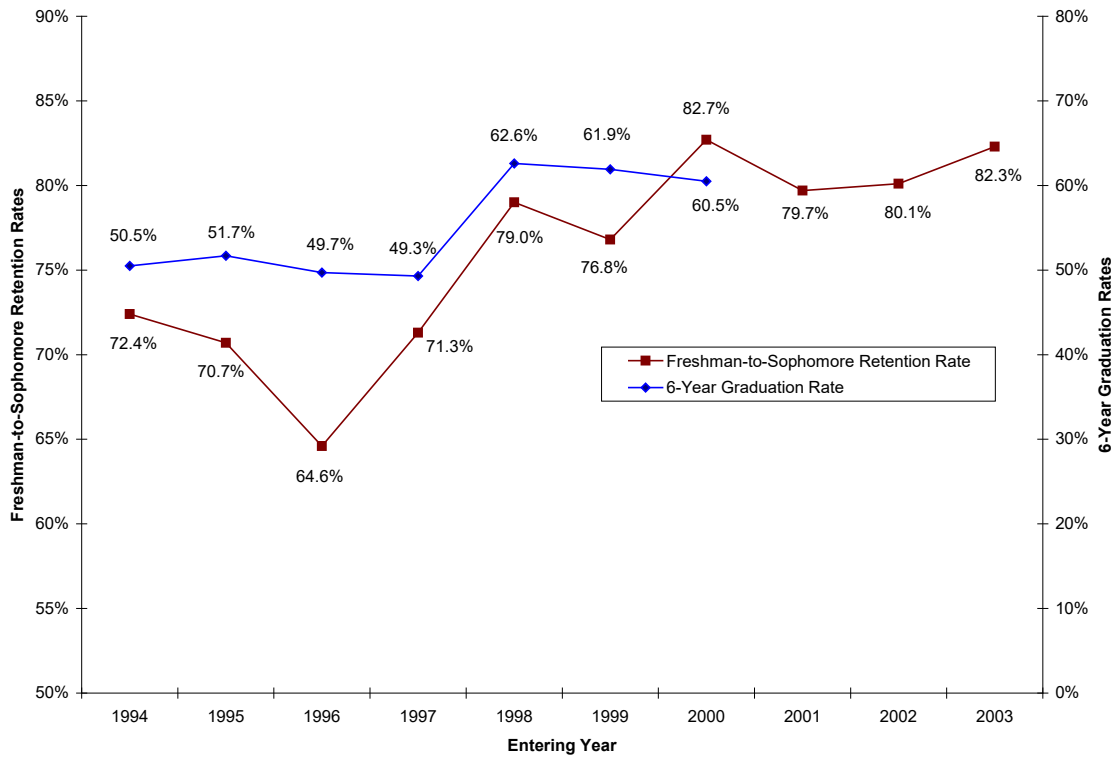
Thus far, the discussion of Berea's QEP has used the terms "retention" and "graduation" as though they were synonymous. Our literature review suggested that nationally, 20% of the students who enter college do not return to their school as sophomores the following year. Between the sophomore year and graduation, the additional loss is also approximately 20% (11% during the sophomore year and then 9% loss during the junior and senior years). This 1:1 loss ratio appears to be a consistent phenomenon across higher education and across institutions with differing missions serving diverse populations. Figure 2. reflects these respective percentages for Berea College for the past decade. It is important to note that the scale that corresponds to retention rates on the left side of the graph differs from the scale on the right side which reports graduation. This graph has been constructed in such a way that if the 1:1 loss ratio is obtained, the points indicating retention and graduation rate for a given year would be co-located. Thus, if 25% of the students were lost from a cohort arriving in one year, the retention rate would be 75%. If another 25% were lost over the following years (as the 1:1 ratio implies), then the graduation rate would be 50% (and these two points would be plotted at the same location on the graph).

A closer look at the College's recent history shown on the graph indicates that Berea College's data generally coincide with the assumption of a 1:1 student loss ratio, although losses in the first year are slightly higher than subsequent losses. This presentation also shows some interesting anomalies. For example, the cohort of 1996 sustained a 35% attrition rate which, had the ratio held true, would have resulted in a graduation rate of about 30% [$1.00 - (2 \times .35)$]. The fact that the actual graduation for this group was actually near 50% seems quite surprising. For whatever reason, it appears that many of the students that were lost during this cohort's first year at Berea were students

who would not have graduated, and thus there were far fewer subsequent losses than expected.

Figure 2.

Berea College Retention and Graduation Rates (Entering Cohorts 1994-2003)



NOTE: The 61.9% graduation rate for 1999 and 60.5% rate for 2000 are estimated rates.

Although the differences are not as great, the graph shows that for six of the last seven cohorts, the graduation rate has been better than would have been predicted from the respective freshman-to-sophomore retention rates. However, the cohort that entered in the year 2000 provides a counter example. If predictions are correct, for the first time in recent history, more students will have departed the College after the first year than during the first year (i.e., the graduation rate is less than would have been predicted by the 1:1 ratio). One interpretation of this result would be that the difference is so small, it simply occurred by chance. The 2000 cohort's 17.3% attrition rate in the first year would have predicted a 65.4% graduation rate. The rate estimated by the current students in this cohort who are still enrolled is about 5% (or 20 students) less than predicted. It is also

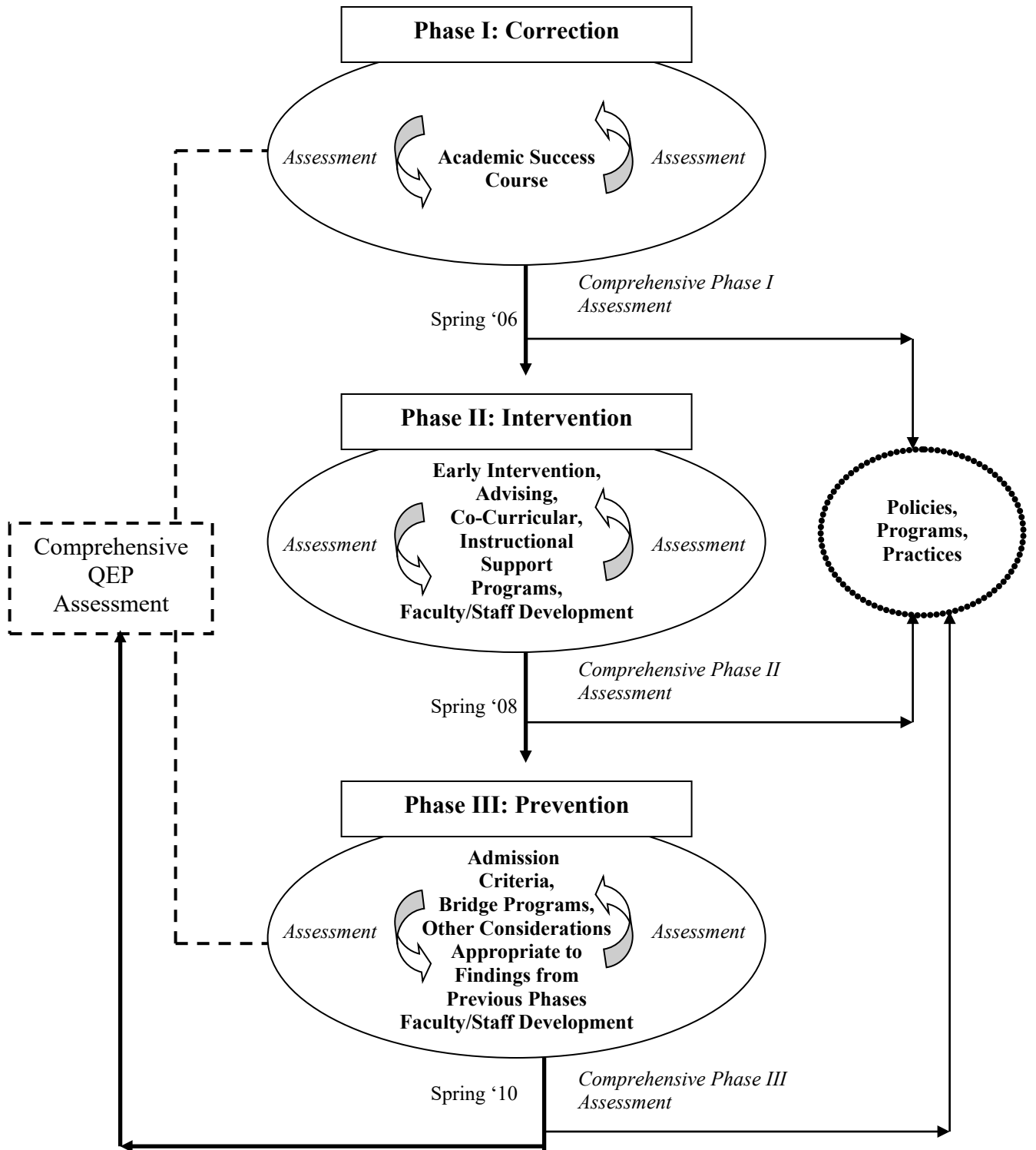
possible that retention for this cohort was actually “too high.” Perhaps some students who simply would not be able to graduate (because they were unable to complete an academic major) were retained. One function of a rigorous freshman year is to identify and eliminate the students who cannot be successful sooner rather than later (i.e., before they consume more of the institution’s limited resources). This, however, is not the general approach that Berea College has taken. Nonetheless, it is important to continue monitoring the results of analyses such as these and to pay closer attention should this result become a trend. This analysis suggests that interventions such as the GST 101 course in Phase I of Berea College’s proposed QEP seems better suited to address these issues than efforts focused solely on first year students. Because the GST 101 course serves students at all academic levels who are on probation, it is less likely to disrupt the retention ratio; it provides balanced assistance to all “at risk” students. These analyses are useful in helping the institution ask appropriate questions; they do not yet provide clear answers.

QEP Model

Berea College's QEP takes a systematic approach to both identifying students in need and actively engaging them in a process to increase their potential through learning. The Plan takes a three-phased experimental approach, focusing on students currently on academic probation (the correction phase); students who, during the course of their enrollment, are at significant risk of being placed on academic probation (the intervention phase); and candidates who apply for admission to the College with significant academic probation risk factors (the prevention phase). Moreover, the plan utilizes assessment and evaluation data to build upon existing programs and policies as well as create new support and intervention structures. The overall objective of Berea's QEP is to implement, in three phases over five years, a comprehensive student success program designed to equip students for successful engagement of the College's educational program. This student success program will enhance student learning through programs, services, and support structures intended to assist students in acquiring and developing essential academic and college success skills and strategies.

Figure 3. provides a conceptual depiction of the QEP, highlighting the formative and summative assessment process that will drive the Plan. Assessment and evaluation in each phase will inform current policies, practices, and programs as well as the revision of current and creation of new programming in subsequent phases. A final, comprehensive QEP assessment will inform the overall model, including the manner in which the three phases work toward the overarching QEP objective of enhancing student learning. The iterative nature of this process provides for a dynamic and fluid QEP that is responsive to student, institutional, and programmatic needs as they are manifest through the assessment and evaluation process.

**Figure 3,
QEP Conceptual Model**



QEP Phase Descriptions

Phase I: Correction

The correction phase is concerned with providing support and intentional intervention for students currently on academic probation. This phase utilizes an academic success course, GST 101, to provide a systematic approach to identify students with acute need (i.e., those already on academic probation) and actively engaging them in a process to increase their potential through learning (viz., “correction”).

GST 101

The GST 101 course, Strategies for Academic Success, was first taught during the Fall 2004 Term and continued during the Spring 2005 Term. Enrollment in the course is voluntary but open to all students on academic probation. The course is currently taught by various members of the College Faculty, including instructional and administrative members with appropriate academic credentials. Administrative oversight of the course is provided by the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success. During the Fall 2004 term, 78 students were on academic probation, and 64 students enrolled in the ten sections of the course. During the Spring 2005 Term, 107 students were on academic probation and 60 students enrolled in the nine sections of the course. In Fall 2004, students were automatically enrolled in the course. In Spring 2005 all students on academic probation were to have been strongly encouraged by their academic advisers to enroll in the course. In the Fall 2005 Semester, the course will again be offered on an experimental basis. During this third semester, data from all previous assessments will be used to evaluate the program, and recommendations will be made through appropriate administrators and faculty committees concerning the continuation of the program.

The objective of GST 101 is to better equip students, through the acquisition and development of particular skills and strategies, to engage the learning process in both curricular and co-curricular areas. As a result, students will become more engaged learners, better understand the reasons for their academic difficulties and, as a consequence, be less likely to return to probationary status and more likely to persist to graduation. While instructors are granted latitude in how they approach the course content and activities, there is a common text and thus common points of instruction and

support offered throughout the various sections. Commonalities include an emphasis on the importance of developing study skills, recognizing and responding to personal learning styles, time management, coping with personal and family challenges, taking personal responsibility and overcoming particular obstacles to success.

Assessment and Evaluation

During the fall 2005 term, the Strategies for Academic Success course (GST 101) will be assessed through the analysis of performance data, surveys, and other means to determine:

- if enrollment in the course is associated with increased academic success (i.e. increased likelihood of continued enrollment or return to good academic standing);
- which skills, strategies, and knowledge sets contribute most to student academic success;
- what aspects of the course contribute most to student academic success;
- what aspects of the course did not contribute to student academic success;
- what additions to the course may be necessary to increase student academic success;
- why students find themselves on academic probation;
- whether the course should be required for all students on academic probation; and
- whether the course should be offered on a voluntary basis to students not currently on academic probation.

This assessment is currently underway, with much data collection already complete. At the conclusion of the Spring 2006 Term, another comprehensive assessment will occur. Data from these assessments will be used to make final revisions to the course, determine faculty development and other delivery needs, and determine other appropriate program and support structures for Phase II of the Plan. This program will then be reviewed by the Academic Program Council and recommended for College Faculty approval if warranted by the evidence and deemed appropriate by the Council.

Current data analysis, while incomplete, suggests several modifications to current practices, programs, and policies. Areas of modification that the College may want to consider include:

- a greater role for the College’s Learning Center (perhaps in the development and delivery of GST 101);
- revision of the College’s academic probation policy; and
- particular consideration of current courses with high “D” and “F” rates.

The Berea College Learning Center provides support for learning and oral and written communication to the campus community. The Learning Center is staffed by both full-time and student employees, including a coordinator from the College Faculty. Given the staff’s collective expertise in areas of student learning, forging a partnership with the Learning Center may be beneficial to the GST 101 course as well as the overall delivery of the three-phased QEP. The fact that the Learning Center now reports directly to the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success, who also has administrative responsibility for the GST 101 course, will facilitate this process.

Current Berea College academic probation policy requires that students successfully complete at least 3 full-credit courses (earn a “D” or higher) and maintain a minimum grade point average dependent upon the number of full terms completed. However, to meet the terms of academic probation, students on academic probation must earn a grade of “C” or higher in at least 3 full-credit courses and return their GPA to minimum standards. Thus, the minimum standard for probationers is significantly higher than for non-probationers. The current policy is difficult for faculty as well as students to understand and appears unnecessarily punitive. Many students who do not quite meet the “terms of probation” appeal the decision and are reinstated. Changing the policy would reduce the need for some of these administrative appeals.

Currently, two Berea College courses have “D” and “F” rates greater than 30%. Pre-Calculus with Trigonometry (MATH 110) has a deficiency rate of 30.1% (see Appendix VII). The Mathematics Department evaluated the needs of students enrolled in this course and discovered that several advanced mathematics topics exceeded the needs of many students. As a result, a new course, Discrete Mathematics (MATH 105), has been developed and added to the curriculum as an alternative to MATH 110.

The second course, Anatomy I (BIO 101), has a “D” and “F” rate of 37.2%. The course is not required of Biology majors but is a required first-year course for Nursing majors. Students enrolled in BIO 101, who are concurrently enrolled in Basic Mathematics, have even higher failure rates than other students enrolled in the course. The relationship between Basic Mathematics’ completion and successful completion of BIO 101 should be explored, with the possibility of successful Basic Mathematics’ completion becoming a prerequisite for BIO 101 enrollment.

Additional areas of consideration related to the GST 101 course include identifying a faculty compensation model for the course (stipend and/or release time) and particular faculty development needs as they relate to GST 101 instruction. These matters will be taken up during the Summer and Fall of 2005 by the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success and other administrators.

A final comprehensive assessment of Phase I will occur in Spring 2006. Data from these assessments will be used to make final revisions to the course and to determine other appropriate program and support structures for Phase II of the Plan—Intervention.

Phase II: Intervention

The Intervention Phase is concerned with providing support and intervention for students at risk of being placed on academic probation. The cornerstone of the intervention phase will be the Early Intervention Program, which the College currently operates. Additionally, the Academic Advising Program, also under current operation, will be closely scrutinized during the Intervention Phase. This phase incorporates a systematic means of identifying students who are struggling through the Early Intervention Program and provides proactive interventions designed to help students identify difficulties and avoid academic probation.

Early Intervention Program

The College currently operates an Early Intervention Program that allows faculty and staff to alert the Office of Academic Services of students whose academic, social, and/or labor performance indicates risk of failure and/or imminent placement on probationary status. Academic Services staff then proceed with a series of “checks” that ask faculty and other staff members involved with the student to provide feedback on the

student's performance in their respective class or area of responsibility. The Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success provides administrative oversight for the program.

The objective of the Early Intervention Program is to provide support in areas where students are experiencing difficulty (academics, student life, labor) through both central (Academic Services) and departmental intervention. Through the use of electronic performance checks and ensuing conversations, students may be referred to the Learning Center, College Health Services, College Counseling Services, or other appropriate support programs and/or particular faculty and staff members.

Academic Advising Program

The College currently operates an extensive Academic Advising Program that depends upon College Faculty members and some staff to advise both first-year students and majors. Advisers are provided training, including a multi-day workshop each Spring Term. The Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success provides administrative oversight for this program as well. Academic advisers are expected to provide support and mentoring to students in addition to traditional course selection and registration assistance. Advisers work to facilitate and mediate student learning across disciplines and function areas and thus become central to students as they navigate the academic, social, and co-curricular environment. The objective of the Academic Advising Program is to facilitate a strong relationship, outside of the typical classroom environment, between students and members of the College Faculty. Given the personal nature of this program, advisers are ideally placed to intervene with students experiencing academic difficulties.

Assessment and Evaluation

Data gathered through ongoing assessment of Phase I will be used to reconsider and redesign the Early Intervention Program. Current assessment efforts have contributed to a consideration of the following program modifications:

- reducing redundant checks requested of faculty, labor supervisors, and Collegium members on a particular student;
- tracking the number of referred students who are already on academic probation and providing appropriate intervention;

- monitoring the progress of students enrolled in Basic Mathematics;
- creating a standardized form for gathering faculty and staff feedback; and
- creating a database for recording the results of various interventions.

More formal assessment procedures will occur during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Academic Years. Areas for future assessment and evaluation may include considerations of the check process itself, the process of referral to support departments and programs, and gathering feedback from referring departments/programs and the Academic Services Department. Assessment efforts will additionally focus on identifying salient student factors associated with academic success, as well as those associated with academic difficulties, such as academic input measures (test scores, rank in high school class, high school grade point average) and other non-academic factors (attitudinal measures, motivational factors).

Review and revision, as necessary, of the College's Academic Advising Program, including advisee assignment, adviser load and training, and related policies and procedures will occur based on the assessments done in Phase I and existing institutional data on the advising program (e.g., extensive student and faculty adviser surveys). Additionally, ongoing assessment efforts will inform the improvement of the advising process at the College. These assessments will be primarily formative in nature, occurring during the course of the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 Academic Years.

Additionally, data analyzed during Phase I and Phase II will be used to consider additional Phase II programming. The QEP Team's reading of the extant literature, review of institutional retention, probation, and student success data, and its extensive discussions over the past year suggest other potentially effective interventions in the academic, residential, and labor programs. Included are such things as earlier and enhanced interest, skills, and career exploration services; integrated learning communities or other residential/co-curricular programs; new services of the Learning Center; intervention training for labor supervisors; peer instruction and mentoring programs within discipline areas using the Labor Program; and the creation of supplemental instruction in courses with high failure rates. As adopted, these intervention programs will undergo regular formative and summative assessment to determine their efficacy,

make program improvements, and collect data pertinent to the design and implementation of Phase III— Prevention.

Phase III: Prevention

The prevention phase is concerned with identifying the candidates most likely to benefit from Berea College's educational program despite significant factors that would indicate elevated academic risks. Identification of these students will be largely dependent upon the assessment and evaluation efforts undertaken in Phase II. While institutional data suggest that previous academic deficits are correlated with academic difficulties (placement in Basic Mathematics, class rank below the 40%, ACT below 21), other non-academic factors need to be considered. Once identified, these factors, in combination with other academic measures, can be used to help entering at-risk students as well as inform the admission selection process. Students with academic deficits can be differentiated from other similar applicants by assessing these non-academic factors. Thus, the Admissions Decision Team will be better able to select students for admission who are more likely to succeed at Berea than their academic deficits may suggest. Moreover, students entering with significant risk factors can then be identified and targeted for specific support. The objective of the prevention phase is two-fold: first, to identify and offer admission to those students most likely to succeed at Berea, despite academic deficits, based on non-academic factors; and second to identify, prior to enrollment, those students most at risk for academic probation and actively engage them in a process designed to enhance their learning and thus reduce their risk of academic probation and attrition.

While it is difficult to speculate the form initiatives in this phase will take, the QEP Team has suggested several ideas. These include a summer bridge program for entering at-risk students and a revised and remodeled orientation program to include a first-year success course and/or preparation program. Final planning and consideration of Phase I and II data will occur during the Spring and Summer of 2008 with implementation of a unified Phase III program scheduled for Fall 2008.

Assessment and Evaluation

Formative Phase III assessment will occur during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Academic Years. While it is difficult to speculate what form these assessments may take,

dependent as they are upon program selection and implementation, programs will certainly be assessed to determine the following:

- what characteristics (especially non-cognitive factors such as emotional intelligence) identify applicants for admission who will perform better at Berea College than their academic credentials predict;
- what characteristics (especially non-cognitive factors) identify applicants for admission who will not perform as well at Berea College as their academic credentials predict;
- to what extent programming has assisted in mediating students' deficiencies (i.e. improved skills and strategies necessary for success);
- to what extent participation in prevention phase programming is correlated with increased academic success;
- what components of particular programs most contribute to student learning and academic success;
- what components of particular programs do not contribute to student learning and academic success; and
- what forms of faculty and staff development are required to enhance and improve student learning and Phase III efforts.

Efforts toward understanding particular risk factors will certainly continue as well, with considerations of academic and non-academic factors as they relate to student academic success. This phase, as previous phases, will undergo a comprehensive summative assessment at the conclusion of the 2010 Spring Term. At this time, overall phase programming will be considered in light of the Phase III objective as well as the overarching objective to enhance student learning.

Final QEP Assessment and Evaluation

General QEP assessment and evaluation will occur during the 2009-10 Academic Year. This assessment project will consider the entire, three-phased QEP in light of the initial QEP objective, which is to implement, in three phases over five years, a comprehensive student success program designed to equip students for successful engagement of the College's educational program. This student success program will enhance student learning through programs, services, and support structures intended to

assist students in acquiring and developing essential academic and college success skills and strategies.

Additionally, outcomes will be assessed for each phase as it relates to specific goals, such as:

- the number and percentage of students on probation;
- the number and percentage of students retained;
- correlations between program participation and academic success; and
- if and how learning has been enhanced through the QEP.

Additional areas of inquiry will most certainly arise during the process of assessing and evaluating each of the three phases of the QEP.

Results and Accomplishments

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), “Probation and Retention at Berea College” has been approved within our institutional governance structure. Elements of this Plan have already been in process within the institution. Berea’s commitment to a continuous examination of student success is evident. While earlier efforts addressed student satisfaction with services, Berea’s attention also focuses on providing a quality educational experience, while maintaining high standards for students with academic ability and limited financial resources. The institution has assumed and continues to refine its commitment to maintain an infrastructure to assure successful completion of a degree at Berea College. The construction and implementation of this QEP fulfills Berea’s institutional responsibility to offer effective support for student learning and move beyond student satisfaction. The overall objectives of the QEP outline a clear avenue whereby the College will demonstrate its commitment to student learning:

- design a comprehensive plan that integrates particular programs, services, and support entities aimed toward developing skills and strategies for success in college; and
- incrementally implement a five-year student success program that will position students for successful engagement of the College’s educational program of labor, learning, and service.

These objectives will be accomplished in a three-phased approach that devotes significant attention to students who are currently on academic probation (the Correction Phase); that

identifies students at risk for academic probation (the Intervention Phase); and provides an effective support system for admitting students who, despite significant academic probation risk factors, can achieve academic success if adequate support is provided (the Prevention Phase).

The Berea College learning experience is a multi-dimensional process. Ideally, as Berea students successfully matriculate through the system, the College will assess changes in their knowledge, thinking skills, and attitudes. The spirit of this triad of learning outcomes is integral to student learning at the collegiate level (Porter, 1991a). Berea's continuing challenge will be to measure in a meaningful way the changes that the College experience elicits regarding what students come to know, to think, and to feel. This is a challenge that Berea College needs to address for all of its students. By doing so, it will be possible to evaluate how effectively the College is meeting its aims of general education and other disciplinary content, the work ethic, and service. For students who are at risk of failing to graduate, particular attention is needed.

This QEP requires an integration of guiding principles to enhance the academic performance of at-risk students into the larger institutional framework to assure meaningful learning for all students. Faculty will play a key role in creating quality learning experiences for students. For example, greater pedagogical diversity that fosters collaborative learning (students' contributing to each other's learning, and group learning to increase satisfaction and student participation and to develop valuable interpersonal skills (Porter, 1991a) is needed. Faculty development, indirectly influenced by this QEP, must address these changes in pedagogy. Assessment parameters beyond this QEP will enable the College to monitor its progress in accomplishing this end. Further, this QEP will offer feedback to enable students to identify those factors under their control so that they may make successful progress toward graduation (Porter, 1991). Faculty should continue to help students understand the influence of beliefs that they possess and how these beliefs influence positively or negatively their (the students') ability to persist and succeed academically (Porter, 1991a). Faculty may also help all students, but particularly those who are at risk of academic failure, to understand that both "hard" and "soft" skills contribute to academic success (Downing, 2005).

This QEP will use qualitative and quantitative measures to ascertain changes in student knowledge, thinking skills, and attitudes as affected by their experience at Berea College. Although the emphasis in this Plan is on academic persistence and graduation as a measurement of success, implicit to the QEP is the recognition that learning is influenced by numerous factors beyond the formal classroom. Moreover, student decisions to leave Berea College, and other institutions of higher learning, are often associated with non-cognitive factors. The educational experience at Berea College is a holistic one that targets the head, the heart, and the hands through an integrated learning environment of labor, learning, and service. Consistent progression toward academic success requires a balance of academic/intellectual development and co-curricular involvement. However, in those instances in which an over-emphasis on co-curricular activities eclipses academic development, problems may manifest themselves within the formal classroom and diminish academic performance. Hence, Berea's aim for this QEP is to outline reasonable and clear expectations within its educational system that support student learning in a measurable way for those students at risk of academic failure. This model focuses on an integration of support elements within our current system. It is assumed that all students who are admitted to Berea College are capable of meeting its expectations and progressing successfully through the system. After all, the institution (administration, faculty, and staff) creates and maintains the educational systems that students experience (Porter, 2001). Hence, Berea students are not perceived from a "deficit model" of learning. Rather, the College assumes its responsibility to support all students it admits. This QEP will increase Berea's capacity to assess, develop, implement, and evaluate its progress toward accomplishing its objectives.

On the other hand, the College recognizes that the transition between high school and college, particularly during the first year, may be challenging for most students. Berea's QEP addresses many of the challenges cited in the literature and reflected in the College's internal data that prohibit quality student learning, impede academic success, and reduce the likelihood of the successful completion of a baccalaureate program. Student Life and the Collegium Residential Experience, which fosters the integrated learning environment illustrated through the Guided Learning Model at the College, will play a key role in addressing those transitional adjustments to our community with the

intent of reducing those factors within its control shown to impede student success (Committee on Student Experiences—COSE, 2000).

Berea’s Correction Phase addresses those students who are currently on probation. Table 1 highlights the suspensions and academic probation status for the 2004 Spring Term. Students on academic probation during this term will establish baseline data. These preliminary data represent academic status at the end of the 2003 Fall Term and student status through 2004 Spring Term. For all tables listed in this section of the report, preliminary data of the SAAS Committee and other records within the Office of Academic Services have been included. However, as the QEP is implemented, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will collect and summarize assessment data to assure that consistent assessment methods are used throughout the process.

Table 1—Baseline Data Analysis: The Number of Students at Berea College Experiencing Academic Difficulty for Spring Term 2004

Academic Suspension

Total # of Academic Suspensions (from Fall '03)	32	%
# of Students Reinstated on Probation after Appeal	13	40.6
# of Suspensions Upheld	7	21.9
# of Voluntary Departures from the College	12	37.5

Academic Probation

Total # of Students on Academic Probation	105	%
# of Students on First-time Probation	86	81.9
# of Students Continued on Probation From Previous Term	6	5.7
# of Students Reinstated From Suspension After Appeal	13	12.4

Table 2—Baseline Data Analysis: The Number of Students at Berea College Experiencing Academic Difficulty for Fall Term 2004

Academic Suspension

Total # of Academic Suspensions (from Spring '04)	_____	%
# of Students Reinstated on Probation After Appeal	19	
# of Suspensions Upheld	5	
# of Voluntary Departures From the College	_____	

Academic Probation

Total # of Students on Academic probation	82	%
# of Students on First-time Probation	48	58.5
# of Students Continued on Probation From Previous Term	15	18.3
# of Students Reinstated from Suspension After Appeal	19	23.2

Preliminary data from Spring Term 2005 (enrollment for degree-seeking, students placed on probation, reinstatement, students moving off probation) were unavailable for this report. However, these data will be available after September 1, 2005.

Prior to Fall 2004, the College did not offer an academic success course. Beginning Fall Term 2004, preliminary data reveal that 78 students were on academic probation. Of this number 65 (83.3%) enrolled in GST 101, Strategies for Academic Success; 14 students (17.9%) chose to not enroll in GST 101; 7 students (9%) withdrew from the College; and 11 students (14.1%) withdrew from the course prior to the end of the Term.

Berea’s Correction Phase accomplishments are highlighted by the construction, provisional approval, and implementation of a new course to support students placed on academic probation. The course entitled GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success was designed to afford students opportunities to enhance basic academic abilities. This is:

...a course designed to provide students with the necessary academic skills to achieve success in their academic and collegiate careers. Course requirements will be determined by the course coordinator— ¼ credit (1 semester hour credit).”

The course was initiated during Fall Term 2004. The text for the course was Skip Downing's *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life* (Fourth Edition), and additional teaching support—including companion materials:

- Student Web Site:
http://college.hmco.com/collegesurvival/downing/on_course/4e/students/index.html
- On Course Workshop Supporting Materials: <http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/>.
- Link to Self-Assessment
http://college.hmco.com/collegesurvival/downing/on_course/4e/students/assess/index.html
- Additional references that instructors used included the *St. Martin's Handbook*.

This course was developed with the understanding that an academic success course has the potential to improve a student's academic skills and to decrease the likelihood of a future repeated probationary status or academic suspension. A review of course syllabi revealed the following information to students who chose to enroll in GST 101:

By enrolling in this section of the course, you are choosing to take advantage of those opportunities to:

- learn effective strategies about making wise choices for academic, personal, and professional success; and
- become a stronger student academically, enhance your self-awareness, self-discipline, time management skills, creative abilities, critical thinking skills, and create a desire for life-long learning.

Students were encouraged but not required to enroll in the course if they were placed on academic probation during the Fall 2004 or Spring 2005. However, during the Fall Term all students were automatically enrolled in the course; in the Spring of 2005, letters were sent to students and their advisers strongly recommending that students on academic probation enroll in the course. Records were maintained by the course coordinator (the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success) for all those on probation, for those who enrolled in the course, and for those who chose not to enroll. Multiple sections, ten (65 students) and nine (62 students) were offered Fall 2004 and Spring 2005,

respectively. Classes met weekly. Instructors for both terms included full-time teaching faculty (6), staff (one team-taught section in Fall Term and one section during Spring Term), and administration (Academic Vice President and Provost, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, Assistant to the Vice President for Student Life, and the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success). Instructors for the class volunteered to teach and were supported by a modest stipend in Spring Term of 2005. Of the 127 students enrolled in the course for both terms, 104 students successfully completed the course (82%). The course was evaluated by the enrolled students through the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) at the end of each term. Additionally, an overall evaluation of the course was done by the course coordinator. Written faculty feedback was also a component of this review process. Refer to Appendix VIII for the survey instrument used; results will be available in the GST 101 Portfolio.

The OIRA also administered a separate survey which included items that provided an indication of the attributional style of students on probation whether enrolled in GST 101 or not. Responses from these two groups (enrollees and non-enrollees) were analyzed by the OIRA. Results from this survey were summarized during Spring Term 2005. Refer to Appendix IX for a copy of the survey instrument. A complete review of these results may be found in the *GST 101 Portfolio*. Responses were received from 54 of the 88 students enrolled in GST 101 (61%) and 26 of 36 (72%) students surveyed who did not enroll in the course (non-enrollees). For the 2004 Academic Year, 181 students were on academic probation. The results of the survey indicate that students on probation who completed the course were more likely than non-participants to attribute their academic difficulties to personal, internal causes. These internal attributions included items such as "my own motivation/effort and the time I committed to studying," "I didn't spend the time necessary to do good work," and "lack of effort on my part." Non-participants were more likely to attribute their academic difficulties to external factors, such as "un-engaging or inadequate teaching," "poor or unclear advising," and "my instructor expected too much of me."

The Database for Tracking/Monitoring Academic Probation Status

The objectives for establishing and maintaining this database are as follows:

- to establish a reliable data base containing performance data;

- to identify distinguishing characteristics of the population of students placed on probation;
- to correlate academic difficulty identified via the Early Intervention Program (labor performance, performance checks, or other intervention methods);
- to identify potential at-risk students, using admissions criteria and other parameters;
- to compare performance results of academic support (pre- and post-completion of GST 101);
- to examine the impact of GST 101 on the quality of student learning; and
- to measure attitudes/behaviors using attribution survey data to compare attitudes/behaviors of students not in academic difficulty.

Berea College Conceptual Framework for the QEP Database

Criterion Measure	Type of Data	Responsible Unit	Responsible Party
Monitor population(s) of students on academic probation for specific regular terms	Demographic	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv and Acad Success OAS staff --Linda Avery
Correlate academic difficulty identified via EIP	mid-term grades performance checks	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv and Acad Success; Linda Avery OAS professional and student labor staff
	labor performance social probation	Labor Program Student Life	Dean of Labor & staff Assoc. V.P. for Student Life & Collegium & Residential Life staff
	Special Learning needs and accommodations	Student Life	Sp. Learning Coordinator
Identify potential students at risk	Admissions criteria ACT/SAT scores Basic Math placement H.S. class rank--%	OAS	OAS staff and Assoc Provost for Adv and Acad Success
	Social probation status	Student Life	Assoc. V.P. for Student Life
	Labor probation status	Labor Program	Dean of Labor & staff
Compare performance results after completion of GST 101	Cumulative GPA Regular term status Course grade in GST 101	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv & Acad Succ OAS professional staff OAS student labor staff

Criterion Measure	Type of Data	Responsible Unit	Responsible Party
Measure retention rate by monitoring status at the College one year after completion of GST 101	Enrollment status one year after completing GST 101	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv & Acad Succ
	Cum GPA		
	Targeted grad date Degree audit		OAS staff: Connie Gardner & and Melinda Brown
Measure impact of GST 101 on quality of student learning	Cumulative GPA and quality points at the end of two terms Following completion of course	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv & Academic Success
	Student survey qualitative data	OIRA	Director, OIRA
	Faculty survey data	OAS	Assoc Prov for Adv & Acad Success
Compare and measure attitudes/ behaviors of students enrolled and not enrolled in GST 101; of students enrolled (on probation) and (non-enrolled) probation students	Attribution survey of	OIRA	Director, OIRA
	Student survey data		

Administrative Support for the GST 101 Course

After reviewing assessment data and performance of students (pre-course status, status immediately post-GST 101, and status two terms [one academic year] after probation), these data will be used to address the following issues:

- a long-term decision to retain, restructure, or abandon the GST 101 course;
- decisions about expanding the course to make it available to all entering students or as a transitional framework for a Freshman Orientation course;
- continued conversation with the Dean of the Faculty to establish a firm, but equitable, teaching load assignment for teaching faculty who choose to participate in the academic success course (a determination can be made about whether to offer the stipend and, if so, incorporate this amount into the operating budget of the College);
- philosophy for continued faculty development for instructors and/or academic advisers (for the initiation of the course, most instructors were also involved in academic advising); and
- continued conversation and negotiations with the Vice President for Labor and Student Life to involve academically-qualified Collegium members as instructors for the course (and determination of whether there will be a separate stipend and incorporate the line-item into the budget).

The Intervention Phase

The College recognizes that many factors influence a student's performance. Some of these factors include the transition from high school to college, labor assignments, residential life (on- or off-campus), family problems, interpersonal relationships, health-related issues, and other factors. Moreover, some students lack effective study habits and time management skills that are needed to cope with the rigors of college life. Without proper attention, these pressures, along with other factors, may lead to a decline in academic performance.

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) provides a means for reporting concerns about students so that assistance can be provided as needed. The program coordinator's role is to determine the extent of a student's problem and to work with the student, the

academic adviser, and other appropriate resources to provide needed support. This involves working closely with College Faculty, the Residential Life Collegium, labor supervisors, and many others on campus. During 2003-2004, the program was used 139 times to help ensure that the necessary support was given to students. Data gathered from performance checks will be used to (a) identify patterns of class and labor attendance; (b) identify patterns of short-term performance in class and/or labor, e.g., submitting assignments or not, timely submissions of assignments or not, missed assignments, quizzes, and tests; (c) identify patterns of participation within residential life; (d) make contact with academic adviser (regular or sporadic)—determine level of engagement of student in academic versus co-curricular activities; and (e) establish a framework for intervention. This Intervention Phase will utilize several services available on our campus. For more details of data and campus resources available, refer to the “Early Intervention Program Portfolio.” Compiled data from performance checks and other components of the EIP will include:

- demographics (name, class, gender, ethnic group, time on campus, place of residence, academic probation status, instructors for term, labor supervisor, academic adviser, and Collegium member);
- weekly compilation of number of performances checks completed;
- weekly compilation of classification of students and other demographic elements (courses, labor supervisor, instructors, students enrolled in Basic Math, etc.);
- records of monitoring and intervention plans;
- mid-term evaluations of academic performance, review performance check data, progress in Basic Math, if enrolled, and mid-term grades; follow-up with academic adviser; adviser to develop plan with student; collaboration with EIP coordinator; and
- scheduling mandatory meetings with EIP coordinator; consultation with Special Student Needs Coordinator, if needed; consultation and collaboration between Special Student Needs Coordinator and the Learning Center for special learning accommodations.

At the end of the term for those on academic probation, there will be a review of performance check data. Additional information available about labor status (probation

or suspension), final grades and progress made toward probationary conditions, change in status, and other data will be reviewed by the EIP coordinator. Results will be compiled for each term. Following this compilation and review, corrective action will be taken.

Policy Implications

Following is a recommendation for a change in policy concerning academic probation and suspension. The recommendation was drafted by the Provost and disseminated to members of the SAAS Committee and the QEP Team in June, 2005. Comments were solicited. Revisions will be made and the final version of the proposal will be presented to the Academic Program Council for consideration. The target date for moving the proposal to the College Faculty for voting action/adoption will be early in Fall Term 2005.

This document contains a recommendation to delete the current additional “terms of probation” standards and use a student’s failure to meet existing academic performance standards for two successive terms as the basis for academic suspension. It also recommends removal of a proviso that excuses students on probation from certain administrative sanctions if they enroll in GST 101.

Current Policy (Page 66-67 Student Handbook)

A. Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation at the end of any regular term for failure to satisfactorily complete three (3) full courses or for failure to maintain a cumulative minimum GPA as follows:

Number of Terms Completed	Minimum Required Cumulative GPA
1	1.50
2	1.67
3	1.85
4	2.00

To meet terms of academic probation, a student must:

- 1) Earn C (C- does not count) or higher grades in three full credit courses and earn grades sufficient to raise the cumulative GPA to the level required for the next regular term. If not, that student will be subject to suspension.
- 2) During the term of probation, students will be encouraged to enroll in and successfully complete an academic success course – GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success (.25 credit). Sanctions that prevent students from participating in academic programs such as study abroad, independent study, Team initiated-study, or internships will not be applied to those who enroll in GST 101.

B. Suspension

A student who fails to meet the terms of academic probation is subject to suspension for one regular academic term, after which time s/he is returned to “good standing” thereby permitting enrollment at another institution. However, suspended students are ineligible to apply for readmission to Berea College before the passage of two regular terms of absence. If extenuating circumstances clearly beyond the student’s control justify such action, a student may be continued on probation for subsequent terms. The SAAS Committee renders final decisions in these matters.

Recommended Policy:

A. Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation at the end of any regular term for failure to satisfactorily complete three (3) full courses or for failure to maintain a cumulative minimum GPA as follows:

Number of Terms Completed	Minimum Required Cumulative GPA
1	1.50
2	1.67
3	1.85
4	2.00

During the term of probation, students will be encouraged to enroll in and successfully complete an academic success course – GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success (.25 credit).

B. Suspension

A student whose academic performance places her or him on academic probation for two consecutive terms is subject to suspension. Normally, academic suspensions will be for one regular academic term, after which time the student is returned to “good standing” thereby permitting enrollment at another institution. However, suspended students are ineligible to apply for readmission to Berea College before the passage of two regular terms of absence. If extenuating circumstances clearly beyond the student’s control justify such action, a student may be continued on probation for subsequent terms. The SAAS Committee renders final decisions in these matters.

Rationale:

Setting “terms of academic probation” that differ from the academic performance necessary for students to avoid being placed on academic probation in the first place is confusing and unfair to students, is unnecessary to accomplish the goal of encouraging students to meet academic standards, and creates unnecessary work for the SAAS Committee in having to consider appeals from numerous students whose performance clearly indicates improvement and the potential for academic success but did not quite meet the current “terms of probation.”

Under current policy, the “terms of probation” are higher than the standards required for students to remain in good standing and avoid being placed on academic probation. For example, a first-year student who earns a B, a C, and a D in three full courses and B in a half-credit course would have a 2.14 GPA. This would be good enough to keep this student off probation. However, if the student was already on probation, these grades would cause the student to be suspended. In fact, even if the D grade had been a C- and the other three grades were all A’s (i.e., a semester GPA of 3.34), a student already on probation would have technically failed to meet the terms of probation because grades of C or higher had not been earned in three full-credit courses. The rationale behind the elevated academic standards reflected by the “terms of probation” is unclear to faculty and administrators and thus also unclear to students.

Students who fail to meet these terms of probation are subject to suspension and by current practice automatically suspended. These students are given the opportunity to appeal in writing to the chair of the SAAS Committee through the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success (*Student Handbook*, p. 68). The SAAS Committee carefully considers the case of each student who appeals his or her suspension. Only about half the students suspended submit an appeal. Some of those who do not appeal have academic performance that is so deficient it is clear that an appeal would not be successful. However, at least some of the students who do not appeal have academic records as good, or better, than those who successfully appeal to SAAS. Factors such as the availability of and encouragement from an academic adviser or other faculty mentor can significantly influence whether or not a student appeals academic suspension. A student’s own characteristics or situation may also affect their decision to appeal. Students suffering from depression or anxiety may be less able to prepare a cogent appeal than others. Because factors other than academic performance can influence the process so significantly, the institution may retain students with less potential for academic success than those who accept their suspension and leave the College without appeal.

The current academic standards required to avoid probation (passing three full-credit courses and meeting GPA requirements) are sufficient to ensure that Berea does not retain students who will not graduate. In this regard, the “terms of probation” are unnecessary and sometimes can interfere with the College’s efforts to provide the opportunities and support for students to graduate. The faculty’s revision of grading standards to include pluses and minuses has made the GPA a more precise indicator of academic performance. The current terms of probation policy ignore the differences between grades of F, D-, D, D+, and C- by counting them all as failures to meet the terms of probation. It is worth noting that when the current policy was developed, a grade of C- was counted as a C in GPA calculation and thus would have also counted toward fulfillment of the terms of probation. Now a C- is no longer counted toward fulfillment of the terms of probation. Emphasis on students meeting GPA requirements gives students more ways to improve their academic record (in terms of their GPA, raising a C to a B or a B to an A counts just as much as raising a D to a C). Ultimately a student who received 16 D’s and 17 B’s in full courses could meet Berea’s requirements for graduation (33 courses and a GPA of 2.00 or higher), but if they had the misfortune to

have been placed on probation one semester they might well have been suspended for failure to meet the terms of probation.

Abandoning the additional “terms of probation” and simply requiring students’ satisfactory academic performance (as indicated by earning passing grades in three full courses and meeting GPA requirements) would simplify, clarify, and streamline the probation and suspension policy. Students who are not suspended would not have to appeal, and this would allow the SAAS Committee to devote their time and attention to other cases.

This recommendation also would delete a sentence concerning relief from probationary sanctions. Originally excusal from the normal administrative probationary sanctions was seen as a way to induce students to enroll in GST 101. Experience with this course has shown that such an incentive is not necessary. Also the current policy permits a student to enroll in the GST 101 course, avoid a particular sanction, and then drop the course. There now appears to be sufficient evidence to persuade students interested in achieving academic success at Berea College to enroll in GST 101 without additional administrative inducement.

Program Implications

The impact of the QEP will reach across campus and will require the College to consider a wide variety of issues. Most immediately, there are decisions to be made regarding the continuation of GST 101, the core piece of Phase I of the QEP. From the data collected thus far about the GST 101 class, it appears that assisting at-risk students increases their ability to learn and stay in school. As a result, the QEP Team will draft a proposal to the faculty to continue the GST 101 course for another year while additional data are collected. In addition, the Team will use the assessment results to determine the future parameters for the course including class size, common syllabus, granting of academic credit, and whether the course could or should be retaken if a student continues to be at risk. The Team will also recommend methods of faculty selection and compensation to the Dean, and the Team will discuss with academic administrators and appropriate committees the possibility of making the GST 101 course mandatory for those students on probation and an elective for those who are not.

The College will need to find a way to staff ten to twelve additional quarter-credit classes each semester. If additional faculty members are not hired, then some means of adjusting the current faculty load must be addressed. Possible initiatives include expanding the teaching load, raising limits on class size, and establishing an absolute

floor on class size. Any of these measures will require consideration of the consequences for the teaching faculty at the College. In addition to these issues related to GST 101, the QEP will require the development of faculty skills to teach and advise students.

Although not all faculty will teach in GST 101, all faculty will need to understand the full implications of the Correction, Intervention, and Prevention programs in order to assist their advisees.

The College will also need to be aware of the impact of the QEP on students. Every effort is now made to spread courses across the schedule from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. At the same time, most students have to schedule their labor time during those same hours. With the QEP, we will be increasing the time pressure upon our students who are at the greatest risk of academic failure. Because of our policy of strongly encouraging students to complete their course work in eight semesters, the students and the College face some difficult choices. For the students, the decisions they make can lead to greater maturity and deeper learning. The College will also have to decide how it will aid these students. Some options include reducing work loads for our most challenged students, reducing the number of courses taken during a semester and lengthening residence at the institution, and reassessing the work and service requirements.

To assess the impact of these changes, the College will have to use more detailed instruments to track student performance. Because the College is also introducing a new General Studies curriculum at the same time, great care will have to be taken in measuring the role played by the QEP in student performance. Just as the QEP requires that both faculty and students make adjustments, the new General Studies curriculum will place new demands on both groups. Gross measures like retention and the proportion of a class graduating must be complemented with specific data gathered in faculty and student surveys.

To insure that our most at-risk students reach their full potential as learners, Berea College may have to consider making some significant changes. More of the College's energy and resources may have to be directed to the early period of the student's education. More faculty time may be required for preparing interdisciplinary work and classes may be somewhat larger. While these adjustments are significant, the basic

commitment of the College to extend educational opportunities for underserved populations will remain. In addition, Berea College will remain a high-quality, comprehensive liberal arts college.

Recommendations

The QEP Team recommends that the College adopt this planning schedule and series of objectives for the next five years. The purpose of the QEP is to develop programs and services that are responsive to the needs of students at risk for probation and eventual attrition, to intervene with those students who need assistance, and to provide remediation for students on probation. To accomplish these important goals, the College agrees to find funding and time resources to carry out this program in a way that contributes to the academic vitality of the College. Further, the entire College community will review policies that affect faculty and student time pressures and will look for workable solutions that will enhance the academic excellence of the institution.

To accomplish these broad goals, the Team recommends that the following initiatives be pursued:

- strengthen and expand successful initiatives— GST 101 and the Early Intervention Program— related to probation and retention;
- improve/change/adopt relevant policies and structures related to academic probation and retention and rigorously assess them;
- design, implement, and evaluate an effective program for students on academic probation; and
- effect student learning through integrated programs for academic success and retention.

More specific objectives will be developed through inclusive meetings of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. All of the efforts will be guided by the Great Commitments of Berea College.

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Appendix I

Memo dated March 3, 2004 from Judith Weckman to Faculty, Staff and Students of Berea College Entitled *Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), A Requirement of Accreditation*

Appendix II

Document Entitled *Possible Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Topics, Developed by the Berea College Leadership Team*

Appendix III

Document Entitled *Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) April 2004 Faculty Meeting*

Appendix IV

Document Entitled *Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) April 8, 2004 Faculty Meeting*

Appendix V

Copy of April 22, 2004 Faculty Meeting Agenda and Minutes.

Appendix VI

Document Entitled *Agenda, May 7, 2004 Meeting of Board of Trustees Committee on Educational Policies.*

Appendix VII

Documents Entitled *Percentage of D's and F's by Academic Rubric and Course Level*;
Percentage of D's and F's by Academic Rubric and Course Level (Rank Ordered);
Percentage of D's and F's by Various Course Types

Appendix VIII

Document Entitled *Faculty Feedback: GST 101---Strategies for Academic Success, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005*

Appendix IX

Letter and Survey Sent out by the Office of Institutional Research to Students Enrolled in GST 101 during the 2004-2005 Academic Year

From: Judith Weckman
Sent: Wednesday, March 03, 2004 2:45 PM
To: #Students; #Staff; #Faculty
Subject: Accreditation Requirement, Your Help is Critical
Importance: High

To: Faculty, Staff, and Students of Berea College

From: Judith Weckman, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment

Date: March 3, 2004

Re: Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), **A Requirement of Accreditation**

Dear Bereans,

I am writing on behalf of the Leadership Team (Larry Shinn, Dave Porter, Stephanie Browner, Mike Berheide, and myself) appointed to guide Berea College through its reaffirmation of accreditation process. Our regional accrediting organization is the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). We are now in the process of preparing ourselves for reaffirmation and we need your immediate assistance. This entire process will be somewhat different than in past years when institutions conducted a comprehensive self-study and documented their compliance with a large number of standards. For example, the new process for reaffirmation no longer involves the efforts of an entire campus working to ensure compliance. Instead, the compliance part of accreditation will now be handled administratively.

However, the new process does include a very new kind of core requirement. The requirement is: *The institution has developed an acceptable **Quality Enhancement Plan** and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.* The topic of the QEP must be selected by the end of April.

The following describes what a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is and how we will work, as a campus, to identify and complete one.

The Quality Enhancement Plan is a document describing a carefully designed and focused course of action aimed at *enhancing student learning*. In the past, the accreditation process focused on the past (what has the institution done to improve its quality); the focus is now on what can the institution do in the future to improve the quality of education. The QEP should complement the institution's ongoing integrated planning and evaluation processes.

The subject of the QEP must be selected by engaging an institution's faculty, staff, students, Board members, administrators, and other stakeholders. So, this is what we need your help with immediately. We have less than 18 months to choose the topic of a QEP, select a group of faculty and others to research and write the plan, and submit it for review to SACS. SACS review will involve peers from other institutions who will assess the viability of the plan (e.g., the use of appropriate student learning measures, the ability to monitor and evaluate progress, and the plan's broad-based support on campus).

Very few institutions in our region have completely gone through the new reaffirmation process but following are some examples of Quality Enhancement Plan topics:

- How can we maximize the potential of our general education requirements to enhance students' skill development (critical thinking, writing, quantitative reasoning, etc.)?

- How can we enhance overall student learning through the Labor Program; how can we deepen or broaden learning through labor?
- How can we maximize the student learning potential of internationalizing the campus?
- What effect has *learning through service* had on learning in the classroom, retention, and skill development and how can we maximize its potential for student learning?
- How can we use Universal Access (laptops, technological services, faculty development, etc.) to enhance student learning?

These are just some examples to give you an idea of what might be the topic of a QEP. The document itself is intended to be less than a 100 pages but contain a solid review of institutional data, a literature review, and a main body that describes a plan for study and quality enhancement. Five years from now, the institution will be required to submit an *impact report* that addresses the effect the QEP had.

Please help us, the Leadership Team for Reaffirmation, begin the process of selecting the topic for a QEP. We need to have one identified by April of this year so that a team can be recruited and supported to begin this work.

We ask that you give us your ideas using a web-based instrument. We are using this to give everyone an initial voice, to efficiently gather ideas, and let the process be anonymous if you choose. When you arrive at the web site, you will simply be asked to answer one demographic question (student, faculty, etc.) and then write your ideas for an appropriate topic for the QEP. The Leadership Team will then look for patterns of interest and report the ideas back to campus. We intend to involve departments, program areas, and campus organizations in further selection. We will then share the top ideas with the General Faculty and move to select the final topic.

Thank you for your thoughts and ideas. Please be clear about what the study should focus on; provide as much detail as you can on the topic and outcomes of interest. The site will be open until **Sunday, March 14**. We will close it at that time to summarize the responses and prepare for further discussion on campus.

<http://apps-server/QualityEnhancementPlan>(website was taken offline March 14,2004)

Possible Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Topics

1) *Learning through service* is an educational experience based upon a collaborative partnership between college and community. *Learning through service* enables students to apply academic knowledge and critical thinking skills to meet genuine community needs. Through reflection and assessment, the intention is for students to gain a deeper understanding of course content and to enhance their sense of civic responsibility.

What effect has *learning through service* had on learning in the classroom, skill development, retention, and civic responsibility, and how can we maximize its potential for student learning?

2) Berea's *Universal Access* initiative has included a number of program pieces. These include:

- providing laptops to all students (the EDGE program)
- placing multi-media equipment in classrooms
- providing network access in residence halls and many classrooms
- expanding electronic resources in the library
- expanding the availability of software and training for both students and faculty

For example, WebCT is an example of a course management technology that has changed the way many faculty teach and organize their courses.

Has Universal Access made a difference in student learning? How can we use the technology associated with Universal Access to enhance student learning?

3) Recently Berea College attained its highest 5-year graduation rate in decades (60%). But what about the 40% who still do not graduate? Many students (approximately 140 each spring and half as many each fall) are placed on academic probation for substandard academic performance. Many of their rights and privileges are restricted (participation in activities such as athletics and student organizations as well as study abroad) but little is done on a systematic basis to understand their individual or collective needs. Many students on probation subsequently are suspended and withdraw from the College. The educational literature suggests that approaches other than punishment and restriction might achieve better results. This proposal calls for the development and testing of a course specifically designed to provide these students with the insight, support, and assistance necessary for them to become academically successful at Berea College. Such a course might count for partial course academic credit but not toward graduation (in a manner similar to convocations).

4) In 19xx, Berea instituted a Wellness Program and modified the curriculum to reflect an emphasis on developing habits of "lifetime wellness" in students. The construction of the new Seabury Center and its programming was designed with this aim in mind. But we have not examined the "wellness" of our students, the extent to which they have incorporated principles of wellness into their lives, or the impact of any such adoption on physical fitness, educational achievement, emotional well-being, or quality of life. The QEP should address these issues by (1) investigating the relationship between physical fitness and educational achievement, the actual fitness of our students, and the effect of the Wellness Program on these variables; and (2) recommending any needed changes.

Alternatively:

The physical fitness of students affects a wide range of other variables, from educational achievement to emotional well-being, from retention to health-care delivery. Which current college practices serve to encourage physical fitness in our students, and which discourage it?

Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
 April 2004 Faculty Meeting

COLLEGE AND GENERAL FACULTY: PLEASE COMPLETE

QEP Topics*	Given our mission of educating and inspiring service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond, the challenge or opportunity this proposal addresses is particularly important.					If enacted, this plan has the potential to significantly enhance student learning by providing more engaging and meaningful learning experiences for our students.				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Universal Access</i>	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Learning through Service</i>	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Academic Probation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Wellness</i>	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

If you would be willing to serve on a QEP committee, please put your name, phone extension, CPO and then indicate which topic(s).

Name _____ Phone ext./CPO _____

- Universal Access
- Learning through Service
- Academic Probation
- Wellness

If you cannot attend the Faculty Meeting, please complete this form and return it to the Provost's Office, CPO 2204 by Monday, April 2004.

*Complete descriptions on separate attachment.

Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Updated April 13, 2004

April 8, 2004 Faculty Meeting

N =56

Given our mission of educating and inspiring service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond, the challenge or opportunity this proposal addresses is particularly important.

If enacted, this plan has the potential to significantly enhance student learning by providing more engaging and meaningful learning experiences for our students.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Universal Access	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.7%)	13 (24.1%)	21 (38.9%)	17 (31.5%)	3.94	2 (3.9%)	2 (3.9%)	12 (23.5%)	21 (41.2%)	14 (27.5%)	3.84
Learning through Service	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	11 (20.0%)	17 (30.9%)	25 (45.5%)	4.16	0 (0%)	2 (3.8%)	15 (28.8%)	21 (40.4%)	14 (26.9%)	3.90
Academic Probation	2 (3.6%)	2 (3.6%)	14 (25.5%)	14 (25.5%)	23 (41.8%)	3.98	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	12 (23.1%)	23 (44.2%)	15 (28.8%)	3.96
Wellness	3 (5.4%)	3 (5.4%)	13 (23.2%)	27 (48.2%)	10 (17.9%)	3.68	3 (5.5%)	3 (5.5%)	14 (25.5%)	26 (47.3%)	9 (16.4%)	3.58

Willing to Serve:

Universal Access

Scott Steele
Paul Smithson
Mary Lamb

Learning through Service

Scott Steele
Michelle Tooley
Deborah Martin
Betty Hibbler
Ashley Cochrane
Brad Christensen
Meta Mendel-Reyes

Academic Probation

Scott Steele
Deborah Martin
Dawn Anderson
Jeff Richey
Don Hudson
Shan Ayers
Gail Wolford
Tom Boyd
Oliver Keels
Margaret Dotson

Wellness

Dawn Anderson
Gail Wolford
Oliver Keels
Jeff Pool
Martha Beagle
Joy Hager (only if needed)
Sandy Pennington

No Specific Plan

Bob Hoag
Gordon McKinney

Comments:

Mission question: When did this come to be?

If enacted question: Weard-words! -- This query is poorly formulated, given the actual topics. Also, why assume "engaging" & "meaningful" are what most matters to "enhanced" learning?!?

If enacted (wellness): Answered a 3 -- not sure of plan.

If enacted question: Answered a 3 on all -- can't judge a plan till we have one.

Choosing a Topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

April 8, 2004 Faculty Meeting

Updated April 13, 2004

If enacted question: odd

GENERAL AND COLLEGE FACULTY MEETING

Thursday, April 22, 2004

Trustees Room, Seabury Center

4:15 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Approval of Minutes of the April 8, 2004 meeting (Attachment #61)
- II. Response to Motion of April 8, 2004 – Larry Shinn
- III. Approval of Degree Candidates – Delphia Canterbury
(Attachment #62) - *For vote by College Faculty Members*
- IV. **Quality Enhancement Plan Motion**
(Attachment #63) - *For vote by General Faculty Members*
- V. Executive Council Business – Gary Mahoney
 - A. Election of Committee Members
(Attachment #64) - *For vote by General Faculty Members*
(Attachment #65) - *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - B. Nominations for Honorary Degree Candidates (**Attachment #66 to be distributed via email**)
For vote by College Faculty Members
- VI. Academic Program Council Business – Lee Roecker
 - A. Proposal from the Sociology Department
(See Attachment #53 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - B. New Course Proposal from Political Science, Women’s Studies and Black Studies
(See Attachment #54 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - C. Proposals from the Philosophy and Religion Department
 1. Philosophy Curriculum Revision Proposal
(See Attachment #55 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 2. Religion Curriculum Revision Proposal
(See Attachment #56 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - D. Proposal from the Art Department
(See Attachment #57 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - E. Proposal regarding Special Topics Courses
(See Attachment #58 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
 - F. Proposal regarding Academic Probation Policy/New Course (Attachment #67)
For vote by College Faculty Members
- VII. Faculty Affairs Council Business – Mike Berheide
Proposal regarding Instructor Evaluation Questionnaires
(See Attachment #59 from the April 8, 2004 agenda) *For discussion only*
- VIII. General Education Review Committee – Steve Pulsford
 - A. Interim Report from the General Education Review Committee, reflecting discussions among faculty through April 15, 2004 (Attachment #68) *For information only*
 - B. Continued Review of the Proposed Amendments to “Proposal for Revision of Berea College’s General Education Program” (See Attachment #46 from the March 11, 2004 meeting—Amendments 23 and 24) *For vote by College Faculty Members*
- IX. New Business
- X. Announcements

The Quality Enhancement Plan: Probation and Retention at Berea College

Campus Process Used to Select a Plan

Berea College, in partial fulfillment of the reaffirmation requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools will devise a Quality Enhancement Plan whose impact will be assessed five years from now. Using e-mail and a web-based survey, the Leadership Team sent a letter to all faculty, staff, and students describing the Quality Enhancement Plan and solicited ideas for topics. Departmental leaders were also contacted separately and asked to discuss ideas within departments and respond to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team reviewed all faculty, staff, and student responses to this inquiry and developed four major topics. These were articulated in brief proposal formats and brought to a meeting of the general and college faculties (which includes student government members). Faculty/staff members (and student representatives) were asked to rate each of the four plans in terms of how important it was to the mission and its potential to improve student learning. Individuals were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to serve on a QEP committee. The Leadership Team then evaluated the faculty responses and the level of personal support and chose the topic of Academic Probation.

Rationale for Choice

This topic is particularly relevant to student outcomes at Berea. Last year we achieved a 60% five-year graduation rate, the highest in 40 years. However, 10% of Berea students are placed on academic probation each year, and of these, about half subsequently dropped out or were suspended for academic reasons.

Our current academic probation policies may be construed as punitive in nature and do not include any defined institutional support for rectifying student problems. This past year, the Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success has been developing a course to be offered to probationers, which is intended to help them identify and resolve the problems which led to their probation. This course may become one part of an overall Quality Enhancement Plan but this project is more extensive than this course alone. For example, our current attempts to redesign the General Education program seem likely to result in some common course or first-year experience intended to help new students develop personal habits, skills and attitudes needed for success in college. A well-researched QEP that includes a variety of experimental components could provide an excellent opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the institutional support we provide to all our students.

Initiation of the Project

The goal of this QEP is to reduce the number of students going on academic probation and also provide more effective support for those students whose performance places them on probation. Therefore, the QEP will be dedicated to designing, implementing and evaluating an effective Academic Probation Program. It may take various forms depending on the initial thinking of the group appointed to undertake this effort. For example, a review of the literature may lead the team to devise several strategies and then compare the outcomes. These strategies *may* include a formal probation course that students would be required to take, a series of workshops, and/or individualized programs to enhance student engagement or improve a particular student's general skill level, well-being, and adjustment to college.

It will be the responsibility of the appointed team of volunteer faculty, academic administrators, academic support professionals and students to review the relevant literature; become familiar with relevant College data, programs, and policy; construct a plan for enhancement, and choose the strategies required to carry out the plan. The plan must include defined outcomes or educational goals that can be measured to evaluate the success of the Plan. The full faculty and academic support staff will be kept informed throughout the process and included as required in the development and implementation of the QEP project.

Motion:

The General Faculty supports the adoption of the project described above and entitled, "Probation and Retention at Berea College," as its Quality Enhancement Plan.

**Berea College General and College Faculty Meeting
Thursday, April 22, 2004
Trustees, Room, Seabury Center**

Provost Porter called the meeting to order at 4:15 and called on J. Pool who led the faculties in prayer.

S. Pennington announced that a reception would be held for B. Hosley (May 10, 3:00-5:00 in Baird Lounge) to celebrate the successful defense of her dissertation Wednesday. H. Barton invited all to attend 'Jazzy Nights, Midnight in Paris.'

- I. Provost Porter called for consideration of the minutes of the April 8, 2004 meeting (Attach. 61). Following a motion to approve and a second, and hearing no call for corrections, **the minutes were approved**.
- II. President Shinn briefly discussed his email message, "Response to the Motion of April 8, 2004," noting that the Administrative Committee also feels outsourcing is the last resort. Two of the four options involve Collegis; another option would be to hire an interim director. The President welcomed comments, noting that as a community we must feel good about reaching decisions. The Provost has spent time with CIRC about this matter; CIRC will continue to be involved in the process, acting as a sounding board for the faculty at large.

G. Mahoney read the following statement:

"As stated in the April 8 Faculty Meeting, Dave and Larry shared with Executive Council the information contained in the president's special report. They also brought to the Executive Council, in confidence, some candid information concerning the evaluations of IS&S and our computing infrastructure. First, I would agree that this information is sensitive and has to remain in confidence. Secondly, in light of this information, so far I find the process appropriate and the actions of the Administrative Council [sic] to be responsible."

In response to a question, G. Mahoney noted that he had distributed the text to all Executive Council members for their consent. Since he had not received responses from all, he used 'I' instead of 'we', speaking for himself and not the entire E.C.

- III. D. Canterbury presented corrections to the distributed list (Attach. #62): pg.3: add Robert S. McGraw (Independent: Graphic Communication); pg. 4: delete George W. Webb (Education Studies) and Andrea Michelle Williams (Biology). Hearing no further corrections, the Provost called for the vote. **The motion was adopted.**

- IV. On behalf of the SACS Leadership Team M. Berheide presented the motion at the bottom of the Quality Enhancement Plan proposal (Attach. #63). Many parts of the SACS review process involve only certain areas, but this part of the review requires participation by all on campus. He then reviewed the process to this point.

S. Powell observed that the proposal rationale speaks of current policies as being punitive. He would like to see students more clearly accepting responsibility for their actions. According to M. Berheide this proposal suggests that the SACS Team step back further than that, and review theories of education, probation, etc. The motion is whether to even have this discussion. S. Powell also noted that the proposal contains no discussion about identifying students who have matriculated but do not belong at Berea. M. Berheide agreed that we might well address that point, but repeated that the proposal is about whether to discuss the entire issue or not. Of the twelve candidates, this suggestion received the most support from respondents to last month's campus-wide email.

In response to O. Keels, M. Berheide replied that the proposal would not make mo ot the necessity of approving the course for students on probation. However, the new course proposal would be regarded with some interest if this QEP were adopted.

B. Hoag expressed concern about the rationale and asked for clarification of what the faculty was being asked to approve. M. Berheide referred to the motion at the bottom of the proposal. When asked what part of the above program was being approved, M. Berheide explained the process in general: the team would be selected from the entire faculty, undertake a literature review, present their report, and begin a campus-wide discussion on developing a campus probation program. At this point there is no clear idea what the program would look like. The SACS Leadership Team feels that there is evidence that something isn't working with the current Academic Probation program. Identifying the problem(s) and responding to it/them would be the focus of the study. Concerned that the proposed topic affects only a small number of students, A. Lahamer expressed his preference for a QEP that would affect more people.

President Shinn reminded the faculty that similar conversations occurred during a 1996 yearlong study that found that Berea College was about average in the area of retention. Six months later, when the College had its worst retention rate ever, the committee identified 19 variables for the College to examine and improve. Some of those have been addressed and retention figures have improved. Considering the results of time spent on just a few of those items, it could prove beneficial to also strengthen the entire first-year program. This QEP could produce results and impact the entire curriculum.

B. Suder suggested striking the word 'adoption' and substituting 'initiate discussion.' Provost Porter stressed the need to move forward because of the timeline. At this point the Team needs to know whether this is the topic the faculty want to pursue for the QEP or not. If not, the Team will identify another project.

B. Hoag voiced his concern about the rationale's second paragraph and his desire for a more open-ended process rather than the assumption of a problem, diagnosis and solution. If approved, he fears the charge would be guided in part by the rationale. The rationale should simply state that this is an important issue. M. Berheide responded that if the rationale were being seen as restrictive, it should not be considered as part of the proposal. The proposal is simply to agree upon the issue to address.

D. Hudson noted that this topic includes the issue of suspension, affects a significant number of students, and has been a point of discussion over the past year. In response to A. Lahamer's suggestion that the EDGE program be the QEP issue, M. Berheide noted that EDGE had been a candidate but did not receive as much support as the probation and retention issue. J. Weckman explained the process further, noting that most people had not voted. Because it is important to have broad based participation she mentioned the option of slowing down the process.

O. Keels observed the confusion about exactly what would be approved and asked for clarification. He asked if approval of this proposal means approval to create a team to construct proposals to reduce students on probation. M. Berheide concurred that the faculty was being asked for their agreement that the College address the issue of probation and retention, and construct appropriate proposals that would be implemented after two years, and reported on after five years. L. Roecker suggested deleting the words "described above" from the motion. M. Berheide reinforced that the rationale is simply to provide reasons why this is a good project to select.

G. McKinney observed that since the process assumes there would be findings that would be acted upon, it is not truly open-ended. In light of that, SACS would not find it convincing if we report that we examined the issue and found everything was okay with no need for further action. While noting he doesn't think that would be our finding, M. Berheide mentioned that these could be experimental programs, open to future adjustment. Because this will involve all of us, in the long run we need more support for whatever issue we select. It needs to be something that everyone really feels deserves the time and attention necessary. In response to G. McKinney, he said SACS requires that, as a part of the proposal, we implement a plan. The plan itself would still be brought to the faculty for a vote.

B. Hoag suggested the following changes: strike the second paragraph of the rationale section, omit the last two sentences of first paragraph under "Initiation of the Project" (beginning with "For example, ...") and rewrite the first sentence of the same paragraph to read: "The goal of this QEP is to address questions about probation and retention and to consider ways of improving relevant policies and structures related to academic probation and retention at the College." The suggestion was considered a friendly amendment and included as part of the original motion. **Upon voice vote, the motion was adopted.**

V. G. Mahoney presented two items from the Executive Council for discussion and vote.

A. On the General Faculty ballot for Election of Committee Members (Attach. #64). Following nomination by K. Thomas, Ann Mary Quarandillo was added as an additional candidate for SPC. On the College Faculty ballot (Attach. #65) G. Mahoney indicated that the faculty should strike Jim Dontje's name from the slate. J. Blythe said that the nominating subcommittee would be willing to make an appointment to avoid forcing the solitary candidate into office. G. Mahoney instructed the faculty not to vote for the SGA Faculty Representative position listed on the ballot.

B. Nominations for Honorary Degree Candidates (Attach. #66 - distributed via email)

Having instructed the faculty to remove candidate #2 from the list (would be reconsidered at a later date), G. Mahoney placed in nomination the remaining names one at a time.

H. L. Gates - There was no discussion; **the motion was adopted.**

In reply to J. Baltisburger, G. Mahoney confirmed that, for various reasons, these nominations are open-ended; if not accepted this year they would be good for another future year. President Shinn noted that the College bestows one honorary degree at the December ceremony and two at the spring graduation. D. Nelson also noted that Gates had won the Weatherford-Hammond prize.

Eula Hall

O. Keels recalled that in a faculty discussion a few years ago on categorizing honorary degree candidates and service award winners, the focus for honorary degree candidates would be on their academic work, creative endeavor, etc. G. Mahoney replied that the criteria is one stage; the committee then goes through the supporting documentation looking at the criteria and forwards their recommendations to the Executive Committee, then to the faculty. **The motion was adopted.**

Liane Russell - There was no discussion; **the motion was adopted.**

Bishop Desmond Tutu - Following clarification about a previous nomination of Bishop Tutu that he declined to accept, **the motion was adopted.**

Billy Edd Wheeler - There was no discussion; **the motion was adopted.**

VI. L. Roecker presented items from the Academic Program Council for discussion and vote. He first requested unanimous consent to move items A-D as one; the faculty would discuss individual proposals but vote only once. Hearing no dissent, he moved the adoption of items A-D as listed in the agenda:

A. Proposal from the Sociology Dept. (Attach. #53, April 8, 2004 agenda) - no discussion

B. New Course Proposal from Political Science, Women's Studies and Black Studies (Attach. #54, April 8, 2004 agenda) - no discussion

C. Philosophy Curriculum Revision Proposal (Attach. #55, April 8, 2004 agenda) - no discussion

Religion Curriculum Revision Proposal (Attach. #56, April 8, 2004 agenda) - no discussion

D. Proposal from the Art Dept. (Attach. #57, April 8, 2004 agenda) - Two changes were noted by B. Boyce: The title of ART 2XX should read "Colonial and Modern Latin American Art" (p.1) and the course title in the first sentence of the final paragraph on p. 2 should read "ART 275, Pre-Columbian Latin American Art."

Following the two corrections, **the motion was adopted.**

E. L. Roecker presented the Proposal regarding Special Topics Courses for discussion and vote (Attach. #58, April 8, 2004 agenda).

B. Hoag expressed concern about the consequences of this proposal, that the logic of special topics courses would put APC out of business and that it would work against student planning. The proposal would allow departments to offer courses without informing the rest of the faculty, which would affect advising. He also found the rationale troubling, building on the

inappropriate misuse of the original 386/486 courses that were created to allow visiting professors to offer courses. The initial proposal has been used in other ways, sanctioned as a way to add courses.

D. Anderson clarified that Berea's course numbering system does not designate 100 level courses as first year, 200s as second year, etc. The 200 level course designation simply indicates that a GST requirement is present.

J. Blythe spoke of her concern about designating the courses as either ½ or 1 course credit. Previous discussions have discouraged departments from adopting ½ credit courses. L. Roecker responded that the credit assignment and numbering system in the proposal were consistent with current practice. He also agreed that, despite the original intention of 386/486, APC has been encouraging people to use these as a way to test the waters for potential courses. Regarding 186/286, APC doesn't feel there would be an enormous number of courses offered. Currently there aren't many 386/486 courses offered in any given semester. APC sees this as a way for departments to test the waters for lower level courses. Addressing the concern about people circumventing APC, he reminded the faculty that one can only teach a course so many times before it has to come to APC; longer rotation courses are not in the catalog anyway. J. Blythe acknowledged the current practice, but still expressed concern about vacillating between ½ and 1 credit. L. Roecker noted such designation allows for freedom and flexibility.

K. Christensen remarked that although the History Department has used this as a way for new faculty to offer courses, it does present difficulty in advising. Often even the titles don't make it into the schedule book. If we allow this, we would need to address the problem of getting the courses advertised in a timely fashion to give them a fair chance in enrollment. L. Roecker agreed about the importance of timing. A department seeking to offer a special topics course would need to act early. (See second ¶ under rationale.) The Provost called for the vote; **the motion was adopted.**

F. L. Roecker presented the Proposal regarding Academic Probation Policy/New Course (Attach. #67) for discussion and vote.

A. Jones spoke in favor of the proposal. Students currently view probation as a mechanical, unstoppable process. They would see the proposed probation policy as offering support from the community for students who are struggling academically. Following clarification that the course would be graded, discussion followed about student motivation if the requirement was simply to complete the course.

D. Hudson stated that this is an initial effort to help students try to avoid suspension. Success of such a course will depend on good advising and good observation. Enrollment in this course during the spring term could help students who are placed on academic probation at the end of fall term to travel during the summer. Students would not be allowed to drop GST 101.

In response to a question from B. Boyce, L. Roecker indicated that the course would be taught by faculty volunteers, with several already lined up to teach the first sections. The format has yet to be determined. After the first year, evaluation of the course would occur to identify what worked and what did not. After that staffing would be an issue. APC is trying very carefully to make this **not** look like a punishment. Those on probation would be put into sections first; then others who might like to take the course could enroll.

B. Boyce raised the issue of credit for such a course since credit is not earned for similar type courses such as Math 010 or 011. He also asked if it would count toward a student's GPA. L. Roecker spoke in support of the credit designation since the student would be gaining college level skills, etc. D. Hudson observed that the faculty would need to discuss the issue of granting credit for basic math at a later time. E. Broadhead questioned the idea of requiring a student to take this course and still allowing the student to participate in things that probably influenced their grades, such as sports and other extracurricular activities.

S. Powell moved that the final sentence in item (2) of the proposal be dropped (Seconded).

C. Hance spoke against the amendment, concerned that students who enroll in the course would continue to be punished by current sanctions. R. Overbey spoke in support of the amendment, stating his belief that a student on academic probation has not demonstrated the responsibility to handle Berea's environment. He would like to see every student take such a course, but doesn't see it as punitive, rather as assistance from others with more wisdom and experience.

The Provost spoke against the amendment, stating that currently a student on probation can't sign up to go abroad. If a student signs up to go abroad then goes on probation, the student is no longer eligible to participate in study abroad. Participation in intercollegiate athletics is determined by NAIA rules. He believes the small incentives to students to improve their performance are better than offering none. D. Hudson also spoke against the amendment, noting that the structure has gone through several versions, from requiring the class for all to its present form. Currently the message is, "Don't do this again and you can't do any of the 'prohibited' things." He also noted that this does not impact the car policy. He replied to E. Broadhead, saying that the way the course would be structured (directed by an individual instructor) would not involve additional work, but would focus on the student's current course schedule. While there might be small amounts of additional work, it would involve the faculty member and student working with what is already on their schedule.

L. Kriner agreed with the idea of using the course as a reward to enable study abroad. However, she suggested changing the ambiguous "Those who enroll ..." to "Those who successfully have completed ..." to encourage students to take and complete the course successfully, not just enroll in it. L. Roecker observed that the proposal as it stands would allow a student who goes on probation in the fall to sign up for a summer travel program in lieu of Short Term if enrolled in GST 101. He also pointed out that the first sentence of (2) does say complete. If we require all students on probation to enroll it would be too much. The ability to enroll in travel, etc., would be a small reward. The Provost pointed out that if a student goes off academic probation, there is nothing keeping them from studying abroad anyway. While enrolled in GST 101, they could sign

up to do other things in the summer. If a student continued on probation, they could not go; if they went off probation, they could go. This wouldn't change. The only advantage would be the ability to sign up for a study abroad course while on probation. L. Roecker added that if one did not successfully complete GST101, one could not go because probation requirements had not been met. G. McKinney inquired what would happen if a student in the spring goes off probation but doesn't pass GST101. L. Roecker pointed out that passing the course is a requirement to go off probation. O. Keels commented that according to the wording of the proposal, i.e., "encouraged to enroll..." if students only meet #1, they have met the terms of the probation. Provost Porter asked the originator of the motion if a change in wording of the final sentence would be seen as a friendly amendment to change wording. S. Powell declined to accept it as a friendly amendment. Upon voice vote, **the motion was defeated 39-49.**

Discussion followed about whether a student could take the class twice, the Provost indicated that it was uncertain. J. Bagnoli noted that the provision that a student can only earn credit for the same course once would have to be put aside. However, L. Roecker observed that students do take ensemble courses repeatedly for credit.

O. Keels voiced several concerns: (1) the questionable wisdom of creating a new policy with an experimental course that the faculty is uncertain will work and (2) the nature of the students who will enroll and be helped by the course. He envisions new students or ones that have been successful, but have just had one bad semester as likely to be the first ones to choose this option. Those who really need some help to understand what it means to be successful, etc., probably would not be attracted to this course. He suggested that the course is not aimed at the very students it is meant to help. L. Roecker replied that this experiment would show whether those who really need the course take it or not. If the course does work, the faculty might consider the need to require it for all students on probation. In response to an inquiry from J. Hager, L. Roecker stated that the probable length of the experiment would be one year. If the one-year experiment works, the faculty might want to continue it. If an extension were needed that would be a budget question, but the proposal does not include it. APC wondered if they even needed to bring this to the faculty, but decided they wanted to hear faculty views on it.

J. Baltisburger observed that the introductory sentence to the two points states that "... a student MUST..." but #2 is only an action to be encouraged. He suggested that the final sentence of (2) could simply be added at another spot in the amendment. J. Bagnoli suggested striking all of #2, making the statement "Student must earn a C," and creating a separate sentence for #2.

O. Keels moved to strike #2 totally. (Seconded) The faculty could trust APC and SAAS to weigh the criteria and implement the experimental course without implementing policy. If the course comes back in two years, the faculty could make it a part of the policy. He sees no reason to create a policy for the catalog to govern an experiment. D. Hudson spoke to the experimental nature of everything we do and encouraged the faculty to move on to the vote on the amendment. G. Chao noted the appropriateness of this proposal as part of Berea's SACS study, suggesting that APC and SAAS do this as an experiment and not have the faculty vote in policy. Upon voice vote, **the motion was defeated.**

Discussion returned to the main motion. Upon voice vote, **the original motion was adopted.**

M. Graetzer moved to rearrange the agenda to consider Item #8 next (GERC business). The motion was seconded. L. Roecker spoke against the motion, observing that IEQs are important, also. The Faculty Affairs Council has worked hard to bring to faculty. M. Berheide stated that we are running out of meetings; the proposal regarding the IEQs requires discussion at one meeting before it can be voted on at a subsequent meeting. He also noted that a change of agenda requires a 2/3 majority for adoption. **The motion was defeated.**

VII. On behalf of the Faculty Affairs Council M. Berheide presented the Proposal Regarding Instructor Evaluation Questionnaires (Attach. #59, April 8, 2004 agenda) for discussion only. He reviewed the process to this point (see rationale).

E. McCormack thanked the task force for their work and observed that, while it is not a comprehensive review of how to measure teaching effectiveness, it does provide a guide on how to use IEQs. He spoke in support of the proposal, affirming the procedures outlined as a reasonable basis for the use of IEQs as an evaluation tool. M. Berheide responded that the FAC expected to continue in its work to look at evaluating acceptable teaching. M. Meta-Reyes asked for clarification about the requested discussion of the whole evaluation of teaching, if the FAC's view is that all that remains for discussion is the use of IEQs in post-tenure review. The FAC was asked to continue the task that the faculty approved last year. M. Berheide stated that his remembrance was that the FAC was charged to return its original motion from the fall with additional material about the acceptable use of IEQs.

Concern was raised about the wording of bullet #2 under General Principles (p.2 of proposal). One suggestion was to add the introductory phrase, "If the collection process is correct, IEQs can provide..." J. Bouma suggested that the second phrase begin "both can be valid..." instead of "both are valid..." B. Hoag observed that bullet #2 emphasizes that IEQs are valid and reliable as student perceptions, etc., and that they are relevant. Throughout the document, one must examine a variety of information about teaching. Student conversations, talk among colleagues, and IEQs all need to be contextualized. High IEQs alone do not mean one is a great teacher.

When asked if the example in bullet #6 was a definition, M. Berheide replied that it was not; it was just one example. All would agree that a variation of this range would be difficult to hang any judgment upon. At J. Baltisburger's request to have the point more clearly defined, M. Berheide indicated the FAC would be open to other language.

O. Keels questioned why appropriate sample size had not been addressed in the General Principles section. For a class of seven to nine students, those numbers will stand out without looking at validity, etc. G. McKinney spoke about looking at the total use of the document, using all of the various pieces of information on the IEQ and not just the final number. M. Berheide observed that at times small samples are important. J. Weckman further noted that a small class is not a sample size; it is the

population. The literature suggests that no class with fewer than ten students be used, but that would eliminate many courses at Berea. O. Keels expressed concern about the document and courses with low enrollments when applied to probationary faculty. The tendency to call it a valid measure of anything but ten students' perceptions would be going too far.

S. Pennington noted that the current discussion about the use of the IEQs on the floor was not unlike the conversations in the IEQ Volunteer group. She stressed the importance of focusing the discussion on the policy changes governing who has access to the IEQ and under what circumstances, and not the current form and its use.

In reply to a suggestion from J. Bouma, M. Berheide observed that sources mentioned in the document (see bullet #3 of General Principles - "one of several diverse sources") are listed in other places in the *Faculty Manual*. Perhaps there should be other appendices for other measures of good teaching, but currently the only one that stands out is the IEQ. The hope is that with additional access, the IEQs would be demystified, that those who read them would realize what can and cannot be done with them, etc. Some assessment of teaching is required of chairs, but this is not explained in any detail.

B. Hoag read from the *Faculty Manual* regarding pre-tenured faculty (p. 76, etc.), suggesting there would be no reason why the FAC or its successor would not use the same procedure for post-tenure reviews.

M. Mendel-Reyes said she was still troubled by some confusion. The evidence of her probationary review letter was positive, but only time would tell. One way to judge such a letter would be to look at how much was written about each of the teaching measurements. Hers focused quite a lot on the IEQs, primarily on small percentage points, but also included a sentence about student comments, as well as a few sentences about the chair's remarks. When one receives the probationary review letter and knows that one's job future depends upon that, it is hard not to conclude that the measurement receiving the most attention is considered the most important. Since the FAC has not responded to the faculty motion to address the evaluation of teaching as a whole, it is difficult to know how much weight was placed on each component of their assessment.

M. Berheide noted that it was obvious that in some cases the types of evidence presented would conflict a bit, but a decision must still be made. The committee might choose to spend more time on one thing than another. With the new program the faculty passed, the Faculty Status Council (formerly Faculty Affairs Council), will write probationary review letters in the future. He reminded the faculty that the Board of Trustees has passed a resolution encouraging the faculty to develop a post-tenure review system with all deliberate speed. While the current proposal would not accomplish that, it is clear that any such system would involve the use of IEQ data, so it is important to lay out some ground rules about their use now. Department chairs currently have access to IEQs, which are simply one measure to help them with their charge of seeing that effective teaching occurs. As chairman of the Art Department, B. Boyce spoke in support of the motion, seeing this as a great benefit not only for chairs but also for everyone else.

In reply to a question from E. McCormack, M. Berheide stated that the Dean and Provost have the responsibility to oversee the training process.

B. Hoag reported that the FAC deliberately included the section about statistics, but that did not mean one need become an expert in statistics to interpret IEQs. Lots of people would be looking at IEQs on their own. By now he has looked at a lot of IEQs and become more proficient in processing the information they contain. He thinks it is appropriate to sit down with a colleague to look at anomalies in major trends. One gains expertise by looking at a greater number of IEQs, but to do this, one must have access. He focuses not on crunching numbers but finds looking at comments far more helpful. The Provost noted that the faculty would vote on this proposal at the next meeting.

VIII. Steve Pulsford presented the Interim Report from the General Education Review Committee, reflecting discussions among faculty through April 15, 2004 (Attach. #68). He reminded the faculty that this report is informational only, representing the work of the past week. Two major changes: adapted GSTR2 and added extra international perspective. GERC remains concerned about the overall size of the program.

M. Graetzer asserted that the changes in the proposal from what was passed at last week's College Faculty Meeting were of concern to the entire Foreign Language faculty. The faculty object to the unilateral and significant changing of what was voted upon by the entire faculty, especially without consultation with the Foreign Language faculty. She first addressed the exception of international students from the international perspective. Stating that it doesn't make any more sense than having a minority woman waive that perspective, she asked why the international perspective had been singled out. Bilingual ability does not translate into knowing about other aspects of other cultures. International students say that courses taken in Foreign Language have encouraged them to add a foreign language minor. Additionally, the faculty does not want to deprive American students of the opportunity to take Foreign Language courses with students who have already learned a second language. In many French and German classes, the majority of students are international students. Secondly, she spoke about the issue of course waivers for this perspective, asking why there were no waivers for any other courses in the perspective area. She states that this is not only about content, but also about the experience itself. While the original proposal suggested that one course could be waived for credit, this one does not address that matter.

S. Pulsford said that GERC had received emails in support of the waiving, and that there would naturally be differences of opinion. He then responded to the points M. Graetzer made and covered some of the rationale GERC used when writing the Interim Report. Berea College's General Education Program is one of the two largest of all our benchmark institutions. A large program can become redundant; GERC sought to cut down on redundancy in the program. A student that comes in with language skills at a high level should not be required to take further levels. International students generally come with an awareness of the wider world, etc., one of the key things that we want students to gain from an international perspectives course.

M. Hoffman spoke in agreement with S. Pulsford, citing the section “Perspective Teams” (Interim Report, p.7) that begins “GERC recommends....” The Perspective Design Team would take these issues into account as they work on course criteria, objectives and outcomes and bring their proposal to the faculty, via COGE. When M. Graetzer observed that the first part of the document is not a recommendation, S. Pulsford reminded the faculty that this document has changed each week. President Shinn also reminded the faculty that the motion to pass was a straw poll and did not carry the weight of no change to the motion. Joice Biazoto spoke in support of M. Graetzer and the benefit of taking foreign language courses. She stated that she would not have become a Classics major without having had to take a foreign language course. Skills she has learned in foreign languages courses have been applicable in many other areas, and will be valuable in her work as the new *Pinnacle* editor. According to S. Pulsford, in drafting their proposal GERC tried to increase students’ choices and opportunities to take other courses that they wanted.

B. Boyce pointed out the omission of several words from the Arts Perspective statement in the proposal (p.2). The Objective statement should read: “To develop an understanding and appreciation of artistic form and creation through the study of and/or **actual** practice of the visual arts, creative writing, literature, music, dance, and/or theatre. Under Examples of Outcomes, the first example should read: “ – Understanding the history and **experiencing** the practice of at least one form of artistic expression;”

B. Continued Review of the Proposed Amendments to “Proposal for Revision of Berea College’s General Education Program” (See Attachment #46, March 11, 2004 meeting – Amendments 23 and 24)

Amendment #23

A. Perkins withdrew Amendment #23 in light of last week’s meeting. Those who seconded it have agreed to the withdrawal.

Amendment #24

A. Perkins then reviewed the substance of Amendment #24 and its rationale, updating some of the wording to accommodate changes in the new GERC proposal. Point (2) of the statement labeled PROPOSAL (p. 4) should now read: “the proposed two-semester course replace GSTR3 and Western Historical Perspectives.” The second paragraph under Considerations and additional places where GSTR 3 is mentioned are no longer relevant. He then highlighted the amendment’s similarities to the current Western Traditions courses (taught by faculty from a variety of departments, focus on Western Traditions, substantial writing component, etc.) He also reviewed points where Amendment #24 differs from the GERC proposal. The amendment would:

1. Continue the time coverage of Western Traditions II to end of 20th century;
2. Require an introduction to Islam and consideration of relations between the Islamic world and the West;
3. Give some attention to an art form that would flesh out and supplement what is currently done (within both semesters of the course). It would be left to the instructor to choose which art form would be considered.

He then spoke in support of the amendment, noting that GERC has already recognized the importance of western heritage in several changes to this point. (1) The amendment is better in preparing students for good citizenship, an acknowledged part of a college education. (2) Recent literature has emphasized students were more successful in dealing with general education when it was not crammed into the first year or two but extended over four years. This allows the development of sequences so that courses taught in upper levels can rely on those taught in the first year, etc. The amendment would extend that sequential consideration through the sophomore year. (3) The course sequence would guarantee that students have an opportunity to practice writing in a way that the GERC proposal does not. (4) An earlier proposal to add a course in Islam, although not adopted, had good support. While that amendment may have failed because of its contingency on the War on Terrorism, Amendment #24 supports the continual teaching of Islam. He then spoke about the difficulty in effectively staffing GSTR3 as currently proposed. Assuming a sophomore class of 325 students at 25 students/section, a minimum of 13 sections would be required. In talking with many of the six or eight current faculty members who would be well qualified to teach GSTR3, he found that many would not be enthusiastic to teach the course. This amendment would both expand the ‘qualified’ numbers of teachers and improve the course. He finished by saying there were some things students should learn about because they would enjoy knowing them, and would then be encouraged to learn more.

S. Pulsford reported on the twenty-six benchmark schools in light of their Core Curriculum and Western Heritage. Of those with a general curriculum that all students take, only three schools have a core curriculum: Monmouth - core of 8 classes; Earlham – three-seminar sequence for first year students; Wabash - 3 courses, 1 first year, 2 sophomore. Looking specifically at Western Traditions /Civics, etc., only two schools have anything comparable: Monmouth - 2 courses and Wabash - Cultures and Traditions 1 and 2. The Wabash course sequence appears to be similar to Berea’s old RHP offering (very much a great books course with a week on each classic text). He noted that the other 24 schools have very broadly defined distribution requirements and listed a few examples of the requirements. While he appreciates what A. Perkins has to say, sequencing is not what other benchmarks are doing. A proposal of five core courses would still put Berea number two on the list. S. Pulsford then acknowledged that comparison with other schools was not a total argument; Berea could still do what it likes.

O. Keels suggested it was inappropriate to look at what benchmark schools do without also taking into consideration the experiences and opportunities of students at Berea compared with students at other schools. While S. Pulsford agreed with O. Keels, he observed that Berea students are not completely different; looking at benchmark schools does reveal that such a course is not an expected part of a liberal arts education. A. Perkins supported O. Keels’ comments, that we make a mistake to set benchmarks as our model. They represent some of the worst things that have happened in higher education over past 30 years, largely because faculty have not chosen to take time to look at and consider what higher education means, what it should be. J. Blythe spoke against the College restricting itself to looking at benchmarks too generally; this would be comparing apples and oranges and perhaps ending up with funny fruit. Berea College is different, and aims to graduate students that are different from those from other colleges. She expressed support for the acceptance of GERC’s looking at, thinking about, and listening to what other institutions include, but stressed that Berea does not need to follow the example of

others, to become someone else. Studying ‘classics’ can also be a means of deconstructing. Speaking in support of the amendment, she reminded the faculty of the larger important issue – the purpose of general education and the liberal arts.

S. Gowler reminded the faculty why GERC did not propose a two-year sequence course. Their work grew out of a close study of the Great Commitments, the *Being and Becoming* learning goals, and the best current and recent thinking on Liberal Education, and the aims of General Education that under-gird the current program. GERC did not find any compelling reason to move forward with a two-semester course in Western Traditions, and indeed found little support for it. They did not find a common thread of content, but instead a focus on habits of the mind, critical thinking, moral reflection, and good citizenship. GERC has reservations about such a course for several reasons: such a course emphasizes content - students think, ‘I’ve already had it’. If the content approach were not effective at eighteen, why would it be so at twenty? This is not the best way for students to develop a deep and thorough understanding of Christianity, an understanding that has generally been seen as inadequate in Berea College students. A. Perkins would like to add arts, Islam, an expanded timeframe, Judaism, etc. As good as these topics are, to even consider adding them to a course already seen as overloaded would not be advisable. The suggestion that the amendment would do away with the need for a course in Christianity is not plausible.

A. Perkins acknowledged the absence of much detail in his amendment, but also noted it followed the example of other GERC courses that left such details to the design team. He was willing to do the same. He also agreed that Western Traditions is overloaded, but understood that if this course sequence is adopted, the responsibility for teaching the research paper is moved to another place in the curriculum, freeing up time in this course. There might also be technology that would allow teaching art forms in another way. He read selected books from GERC’s bibliography (Attachment 17, Appendix VI; see Kimball 1995 and Nussbaum 1997) and disagrees with GERC’s conclusions. He pointed out that much of the writing in Higher Education is aimed at universities, about moving them back to where Berea College is today.

B. Suder spoke in support of A. Perkins’ comments and the amendment. With all the flaws in RHP and Western Traditions and arguments about content, still, at the senior level it has been possible to count on students having encountered texts and ideas to build upon in the Senior GSTR course. Student writing is much improved by the connection in the earlier phase. He applauded A. Perkins for trying to re-envision what has been a liberal arts staple for over 150 years. Although it is beset with problems for the design team, the team could overcome them. He could not imagine a course entitled Christianity in the World; such a course would be nightmarish. Christianity itself would be too broad a course without further focus. B. Suder fears GSTR3 would become what he would think of as a dilettante course without much substance. A. Perkins’ course would attempt to look at major religions over the course of an entire year. Islam is with us and we need to deal with it. It is imperative that we do this.

In response to the concern that GSTR 3 would be overloaded, M. Hoffman compared the GERC description of Christianity in the World and Amendment 24, p. 5. She found the topics of GSTR 3 to be included within the two-semester course as major elements, along with all the other aspects of the Western history, including Art, Islam, etc. She remained confused by the apparent discrepancy of calling GSTR 3 overloaded and not viewing the proposed two-semester course with many additional topics as being overloaded as well.

M. Mendel-Reyes spoke against amendment, reminding the faculty that GERC placed an emphasis on how students learn. She greatly respected GERC’s research on the need for the General Education Program to reflect how students learn and finds two points relevant to Berea College students.

1. If she were convinced the amendment would produce the intended results, she would have no problem supporting it. Students now learn differently than they did previously, as do the faculty.
2. Convinced that many students come out of Western Traditions with a deeper hatred than before the course, she asked if the amendment were based on what the faculty want to teach or what students need to learn. One way General Education reflects the respect we have for our students is by allowing more student choices. She would be willing to trust that students would make good choices. Such choices would do more for students than survey course they don’t want to take.

Noting that Americans do not understand the Arab world, that the Arab world doesn’t understand the Western world, and the great misunderstandings between the two, A. Lahamer spoke of the opportunity to focus on content with this amendment. He supported the Amendment in the hope that it would help to increase understanding between the two worlds.

R. Meadows spoke in support of the amendment in part, because it would provide historical and geographical content to build upon in later courses. Faculty should also recognize the strengths of students when they come to Berea; most students already know about Christianity in a deep way, but need to learn about it in the context of other religions.

President Shinn noted that the amendment does indeed require an additional course. Citing that Dewey and Hutchins fought about this issue taking the either/or approach, the President asserted that we would not need to choose one or the other. He has taught similar courses in the past, not just on religions, but also covering western engagement. This course is five times as large as the Christianity in the World course and would make the curriculum too large. He suggested the possibility of replacing GSTR 3 with a reduced version of the proposed courses (one semester course), being very selective in the choice of content. He further noted that a well-developed and well-taught course called Christianity and the World must do what this amendment proposes. In his opinion a 15-course General Education Program is not feasible for Berea. President Shinn observed that Berea students are similar to Beloit students so we must be very careful when making comparisons. Because Berea students come often with diminished backgrounds, less content taught well would be preferred, rather than difficult texts taught over the course of two semesters. The GERC proposal has immense potential but he questioned our capacity to teach either one of the courses. He cited an admissions study of 1996 that reported a decrease in the number of students attending liberal arts schools. One thing that sets liberal arts schools apart is the capacity of their students to choose their

course of study. Each time we add a course we signal to those students that they have less choice. The President advocated thinking of creative approaches to a course such as the one imagined to help our students have this contextual approach.

A. Perkins responded that the amendment would not eliminate choice; it would add, at most, one course. Having looked at the entering scores and socio-economic backgrounds of Berea students, and noting less difference than there used to be between Berea students and others, he reflected that Berea College is becoming more and more middle class. He expressed his concern that we not just increase student understanding of Christianity, but that we also help them better understand how they came to be who they are, as well as their indebtedness to Western experience.

E. Broadhead spoke of two foundational issues and returning to the fundamentals. If we are going to teach Christianity, we need to have a course that does that consistently and thoroughly. We must give students an understanding of Western Heritage on which to hang critical thinking. He also spoke to the overall agenda.

P. Rivage-Seul mentioned GERC's charge to reduce the size of the General Education Program. She would rather return to the old program as more exciting than what has been proposed. Citing Wednesday evening's women and Islam program as a superb learning experience, and observing that people don't read books as much anymore, she said the faculty had not thought creatively enough about how to teach such important material. She supported the proposed two-semester course, but was not certain that the approach presented was right. She spoke in support of a course where all faculty would teach the same text for common experiences.

S. Pulsford observed that the faculty could, in the end, reaffirm its support for the current curriculum. If Amendment 24 were the will of the faculty, we would be very close to the current program: Two freshman and two sophomore courses, natural science, world issues, etc. In that case, it might not be worth the effort to redesign all the courses.

G. McKinney acknowledged that S. Pulsford might be right, but noted that the perspectives issue is a significant difference. If the old curriculum were maintained, he would like to see the possibility of one course counting for two perspectives, effectively reducing the number of courses students must take, but doesn't see how that could happen. S. Pulsford also noted other small differences; the arts classes and the science classes would go from two to one.

K. Christensen responded to M. Hoffman's earlier comments. She includes most of what A. Perkins is proposing in the current two courses and finds it a struggle to teach them well. She expressed concern about the level of learning possible in a one-semester course, noting that having calendar time to breathe, to be able to contextualize, to provide background, makes a tremendous difference. She agreed with B. Suder about the frightening nature of a one-semester course.

Provost called for straw poll vote. A written ballot was called for: a yes vote supports Amendment 24; a no vote supports the GERC proposal. **The motion was defeated: 35 - yes; 40 no.** The closeness of the vote would imply that it was the sense of the faculty that there was much within the amendment that they would like to see incorporated.

IX. New Business

B. Boyce presented the following tribute and thank you to John Crowden:

"Jean and I have known John Crowden for about forty years, first as students at Berea College in the 1960s and then we renewed that contact and with it, our appreciation for his abilities as a faculty colleague.

We appreciate John for his commitment to the College's academic program;

We especially value his commitment to the College's and Berea's cultural needs;

We are grateful for his leadership and coordination of Convocations, and want to thank him for bringing such riches to our campus ... speakers, musicians, dancers, ... all of us can conjure up a list of events for which he was responsible.

We are aware of his strength and dignity, as he has battled health problems these last few years;

We will miss him on campus, but we wish him the very best in retirement."

Sandy Bolster expressed concern about B. Suder and K. Christensen's comments regarding the ability to teach Christianity in the World course.

X. Announcements

W. Hyleck asked for clarification about the final item on page three of the proposal that lists "An approved labor project or experience" as fulfilling the Active Learning Experience requirement. The faculty need to know what is meant by an approved labor experience. S. Pulsford indicated that G. McKinney had communicated with GERC and approved a wording change. Such wording would be included in the final proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Note: Two suspensions of the meeting's agenda occurred to allow those present to eat a light supper of pizza and salad. As these were not listed on the agenda and did not change the agenda, they are not listed in the minutes.

Susan Henthorn, Secretary

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Friday, May 7, 2004
8:45 - 10:00 a.m.
Draper Third Floor Conference Room

AGENDA

I. Recurring and Consent Items (Trustee Action Required)

- Approval of Degree Candidates for May 2004 and September 2004 (EP-2)
- Recommendations for Honorary Degrees (material to be supplied at meeting)
- Faculty Promotions (EP-7)

Kathy Bullock to Professor
Gary Mahoney to Professor
Ed McCormack to Professor
Roy Scudder-Davis to Professor

II. Policy and Strategy Items and Major Projects (Trustee Action Ultimately Required)

- None

III. Informational Reports and Discussion (Trustee Action not Required)

- Presentation of Quality Enhancement Plan for SACS Review (material to be supplied at meeting)
- Report on sabbatical leaves requested and approved for 2004-05 (A summary list will be supplied at the meeting)
- Core Program Preview: Focus on Berea College Students - Engagement, Inclusion, Achievement; Our Measures and their Meaning (BCP-2)

**Faculty Feedback:
GST 101----Strategies for Academic Success, Fall '04 and Spring 2005**

Colleagues,

This is a survey for all instructors who participated in the GST 101 Course this academic year. Please attach your GST 101 syllabus and answer the following questions. (For the multiple response items, simply **Bold** your selection.)

Fall 04

How many students were enrolled in your section initially?

Did any fail to complete the course? If so how many and or what reason did they not complete?

Of the students who will complete the course, how many will receive deficient grades (C- or below)? ___ How many will receive Fs? ___

How many times did you meet during the semester?

Which of the following best describes the average length of time for class meetings?

30 minutes 1 hour 90 minutes 2 hours

How many of the 9 chapters in the On Course text did you assign to students to read?

Please list any additional articles you assigned to students as reading:

To what extent were you satisfied with student preparation for class?

very dissatisfied somewhat dissatisfied somewhat satisfied very satisfied

To what extent were you satisfied with students engagement during class?

very dissatisfied somewhat dissatisfied somewhat satisfied very satisfied

How frequently did you use exercises or activities contained in the On Course Instructor Guide with your section?

never occasionally about half the time usually always

Please describe the amount of writing you required students to submit?

Did you allow students to resubmit deficient work?

Survey was distributed and summarized by Dr. Don Hudson, former Associate Provost for Advising and Academic Success, Office of Academic Services

**Faculty Feedback:
GST 101----Strategies for Academic Success, Fall '04 and Spring 2005**

How often did you meet with students individually outside of class?

never seldom occasionally frequently constantly

How would you rate the quality of your experience as a GST 101 Instructor?

very disappointing somewhat disappointing neutral somewhat
satisfying very satisfying

Spring 05

How many students were enrolled in your section initially?

Did any fail to complete the course? If so how many and or what reason did they not complete?

Of the students who will complete the course, how many will receive deficient grades (C- or below)? ____ How many will receive Fs? ____

How many times did you meet during the semester?

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Percentage of D's and F's by Academic Rubric and Course Level

	All Courses	100	200	300	400
Agriculture (N = 68)	2.0%	5.3%	n/a	0.3%	0.0%
Art (N = 135)	5.7%	8.2%	7.5%	5.2%	1.6%
Asian Studies (N = 10)	1.6%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Biology (N = 96)	11.3%	22.5%	n/a	8.0%	1.3%
Black Studies (N = 20)	10.2%	19.4%	6.2%	n/a	n/a
Business (N = 104)	6.6%	11.9%	8.6%	3.6%	4.5%
Child & Family Studies (N = 88)	5.5%	6.7%	5.5%	3.7%	7.8%
Chemistry (N = 72)	11.8%	19.9%	n/a	8.4%	12.6%
Communication (N = 16)	8.5%	6.0%	11.4%	18.1%	5.6%
Computer Science (N = 36)	11.3%	26.6%	6.2%	3.7%	0.0%
Economics (N = 58)	11.5%	23.6%	6.8%	2.3%	0.0%
Education (N = 117)	1.9%	7.7%	2.1%	3.0%	0.0%
English (N = 120)	5.6%	6.7%	4.2%	7.1%	3.0%
French (N = 31)	8.9%	9.3%	n/a	9.1%	0.0%
German (N = 36)	13.0%	18.0%	n/a	3.6%	0.0%
Health (N = 16)	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	n/a
History (N = 78)	9.7%	12.1%	10.0%	11.2%	1.8%
Mathematics (N = 105)	17.8%	25.4%	19.9%	8.2%	8.0%
Music (N = 426)	2.4%	2.4%	4.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Nursing (N = 56)	6.4%	n/a	n/a	6.9%	0.0%
Philosophy (N = 44)	5.6%	14.6%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Physical Education (N = 276)	2.2%	6.5%	1.0%	1.3%	0.0%
Physics (N = 53)	11.0%	16.7%	12.6%	10.3%	4.0%
Political Science (N = 47)	12.4%	16.4%	20.4%	8.8%	8.4%
Psychology (N = 73)	6.8%	14.9%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%
Religion (N = 41)	10.4%	13.9%	9.9%	1.4%	16.7%
Sociology (N = 49)	5.6%	7.4%	9.5%	5.3%	0.9%
Spanish (N = 69)	9.3%	12.0%	n/a	4.2%	2.9%
SENS (N = 27)	8.0%	8.6%	0.0%	14.9%	0.0%
Technology (N = 81)	2.5%	3.3%	2.7%	1.6%	1.0%
Theatre (N = 53)	4.0%	6.4%	4.3%	0.2%	13.3%
Women's Studies (N = 44)	4.1%	7.3%	3.7%	2.0%	1.8%

NOTE: Data are based on the most recent three academic years.

N = the number of courses

*Reflects the average percentage of D's and F's given across course sections.

**Percentage* of D's and F's by Academic Rubric and Course Level
Rank Ordered**

Sorted in Descending Order for All Courses:

	All Courses	100	200	300	400
Mathematics (N = 105)	17.8%	25.4%	19.9%	8.2%	8.0%
German (N = 36)	13.0%	18.0%	n/a	3.6%	0.0%
Political Science (N = 47)	12.4%	16.4%	20.4%	8.8%	8.4%
Chemistry (N = 72)	11.8%	19.9%	n/a	8.4%	12.6%
Economics (N = 58)	11.5%	23.6%	6.8%	2.3%	0.0%
Biology (N = 96)	11.3%	22.5%	n/a	8.0%	1.3%
Computer Science (N = 36)	11.3%	26.6%	6.2%	3.7%	0.0%
Physics (N = 53)	11.0%	16.7%	12.6%	10.3%	4.0%
Religion (N = 41)	10.4%	13.9%	9.9%	1.4%	16.7%
Black Studies (N = 20)	10.2%	19.4%	6.2%	n/a	n/a
History (N = 78)	9.7%	12.1%	10.0%	11.2%	1.8%
Spanish (N = 69)	9.3%	12.0%	n/a	4.2%	2.9%
French (N = 31)	8.9%	9.3%	n/a	9.1%	0.0%
Communication (N = 16)	8.5%	6.0%	11.4%	18.1%	5.6%
SENS (N = 27)	8.0%	8.6%	0.0%	14.9%	0.0%
Psychology (N = 73)	6.8%	14.9%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%
Business (N = 104)	6.6%	11.9%	8.6%	3.6%	4.5%
Nursing (N = 56)	6.4%	n/a	n/a	6.9%	0.0%
Art (N = 135)	5.7%	8.2%	7.5%	5.2%	1.6%
English (N = 120)	5.6%	6.7%	4.2%	7.1%	3.0%
Philosophy (N = 44)	5.6%	14.6%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Sociology (N = 49)	5.6%	7.4%	9.5%	5.3%	0.9%
Child & Family Studies (N = 88)	5.5%	6.7%	5.5%	3.7%	7.8%
Women's Studies (N = 44)	4.1%	7.3%	3.7%	2.0%	1.8%
Theatre (N = 53)	4.0%	6.4%	4.3%	0.2%	13.3%
Technology (N = 81)	2.5%	3.3%	2.7%	1.6%	1.0%
Music (N = 426)	2.4%	2.4%	4.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Physical Education (N = 276)	2.2%	6.5%	1.0%	1.3%	0.0%
Agriculture (N = 68)	2.0%	5.3%	n/a	0.3%	0.0%
Education (N = 117)	1.9%	7.7%	2.1%	3.0%	0.0%
Asian Studies (N = 10)	1.6%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Health (N = 16)	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	n/a

NOTE: Data are based on the most recent three academic years.

N = the number of courses

*Reflects the average percentage of D's and F's given across course sections.

Percentage* of D's and F's by Various Course Types

Required General Education Courses, including Wellness:

GSTR 220 Western Trad 1 (N = 48)	11.5%
GSTR 221 Western Trad II (N = 47)	10.9%
GSTR 109 Intro to the Arts (N = 49)	9.3%
GSTR 232 Natural Science (N = 46)	9.1%
GSTR 203 US Trad (N = 71)	8.6%
GSTR 355 World Issues (N = 51)	7.7%
GSTR 100 Stories (N = 78)	7.0%
PEH 100 Wellness (N = 49)	6.8%
GSTR 475 Christianity (N = 50)	6.3%
GSTR 209 Arts in Context (N = 23)	5.7%

Courses that meet the Social Science Requirement:

ECO 101 - Principles of Macroeconomics (N = 10)	26.2%
PSC 110 - American Government (N = 5)	21.6%
ECO 102 - Principles of Microeconomics (N = 10)	18.9%
PSY 100 - General Psychology (N = 21)	14.9%
PSC 100 - Intro to Study of Politics (N = 6)	14.1%
SOC 110 - Problems of American Institutions (N = 4)	11.9%
SOC 220 - Cultural Anthropology (N = 3)	9.4%
SOC 100 - Sociology of Everyday Life (N = 8)	6.1%
HIS 200 - Intro to Historical Study (N = 3)	3.9%
ANR 170 - Agricultural Economics (N = 2)	2.2%

Courses that meet the Quantitative Reasoning Requirement:

MAT 110 - Precalculus with Trig (N = 26)	30.1%
CSC 101 - Modeling (N = 12)	26.6%
MAT 112 - Precalculus with Modeling (N = 3)	24.4%
MAT 104 - Introduction to Statistics (N = 7)	23.1%
MAT 220 - Calculus (N = 14)	21.4%
MAT 225 - Calculus II (N = 6)	18.7%
MAT 108 - Environ Issue: Math Model (N = 3)	5.9%

Selected Common Courses with High Average Percentage of D's and F's:

BIO 101- Anatomy I (N = 11)	37.2%
GER 101 - Elementary German (N = 9)	27.8%
BIO 110 - Modern Biology (N = 10)	25.2%
CHM 121 - Structure (N = 7)	24.7%
BIO 302 - Anatomy II (N = 6)	23.7%
HIS 226 - Western Civilization I (counts as GSTR220) (N = 3)	22.5%
PHY 217 - General Physics I (N = 10)	20.3%
BUS 120 - Accounting I (N = 10)	18.8%
GER 102 - Elementary German II (N = 9)	15.6%
BUS 130 - Accounting II (N = 7)	12.7%
PSC 320 - Comparative Government (N = 3)	10.3%

NOTE: Data are based on the most recent three academic years.
N = the number of courses

*Reflects the average percentage of D's and F's given across course sections.

Survey Instrument (Instrument was created and administered online.)

GST 101 Strategies for Academic Success [edit](#)

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As you may know, Berea College has undertaken a program to support students on academic probation. GST 101, Strategies for Academic Success, is one of the first initiatives we have been exploring. As a current or past participant in this course, your thoughts and ideas are extremely important. This survey should take less than 15 minutes. Your responses are completely anonymous and the results will be used in summary form only.

[edit](#)

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I guarantee that there will be many of us paying close attention to what you have to say.

Cheers,

Dave Porter, Provost



1. Please indicate when you were enrolled in the GST 101, Strategies for Academic Success course. *

[edit](#)



Fall 2004 Spring 2005

[move](#)

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2. Your GST 101 instructor:

- Anderson, Dawn
- Bagnoli, Joe
- Baskin, Andrew
- Blythe, Janice
- Bullock, Kathy
- Crachiolo, Beth
- Gerassimides, Gus
- Hudson, Don
- Johnson, Jonathan
- Martin, Deborah
- Pennington, Sandra
- Porter, Dave
- Roecker, Lee
- Schuster, Claire

[edit](#)
[move](#)
[pipe](#)



3. What is your classification?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

[edit](#)
[move](#)
[pipe](#)



4. My attendance in GST 101 has been about:

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

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5. To what extent did the following contribute to your academic performance that led to probation?

[edit](#)



	To a great extent	6	5	4	3	2	Not at all
Something about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something about others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something about my situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[move](#)
[pipe](#)



6. To what extent did the following contribute to your academic performance that led to probation?


	To a great extent	6	5	4	3	2	Not at all
My own self-confidence, self-esteem, or psychological state.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Un-engaging or inadequate teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My own lack of problem-solving skills (talking to teachers, seeking support, meeting academic obligations).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My own motivation/effort and the time I committed to studying.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor or unclear advising.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life events that got in the way (family issues, illness, relationship problems).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal illness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[edit](#)
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campus.

Other, please describe or explain below.




 10. Other reason that contributed to your academic performance that led to probation.


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 11. Please briefly describe what you now know about achieving academic success. Give specific examples.

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 12. What are you now doing to achieve academic success?



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 17. Specifically, what did you find the most useful about this course?



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 18. What else would have been helpful to you in this course?



[edit](#)
[move](#)
[pipe](#)

 19. How else can the College help you to achieve academic success?



[edit](#)
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[pipe](#)

 20. What odds do you give yourself for graduating from Berea College?

- 100% Absolutely
- 90%
- 80%
- 70%
- 60%

[edit](#)
[move](#)
[pipe](#)

- 50% Uncertain
- 40%
- 30%
- 20%
- 10%
- 0% Impossible

Launch

Done

Message Subject: Your GST 101 Course **Date Sent:** 05/03/2005
Email List: GST 101 Enrollees, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 **Survey:** GST 101 Strategies for Academic Success
Message Text: Greetings,

I realize that we are approaching the end of term and each of us is very busy, but we need your assistance. One of the goals in the Office of Academic Services is offering appropriate support to assist students to be successful academically. Last fall, the course GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success, was established as one of the ways to support students who were placed on academic probation. It was our intent that successful completion of the course would also result in many students being removed from academic probation. This new course was introduced last fall for the first time and was continued in the course offerings for this spring. We believe that this new course has been supportive, but we need direct feedback from all students who took GST 101 to assist us in making a more complete assessment of the course.

Please click on the link below to complete the survey. It will take about 15 minutes and it is completely anonymous. The survey should be completed by Friday, May 7.

The link to the survey is:
#SurveyLink#

The information provided from each of you will greatly assist us as we determine future ways to support other students. Best wishes as you prepare for finals. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

If you have any technical problems, please do not respond to this email. You may contact Clara Chapman in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at clara_chapman@berea.edu.

CC Emails:

BCC Emails:

From Email: janice_blythe@berea.edu

HTML: No

Response Count: 39

Sent Count: 119

Emails Sent

Statistics: 1 of 119

Message Subject:	Your GST 101 Course	Date Sent:	05/09/2005
Email List:	GST 101 Enrollees, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005	Survey:	GST 101 Strategies for Academic Success
Message Text:	Greetings,		

I realize that we are approaching the end of term and each of us is very busy, but we need your assistance. One of the goals in the Office of Academic Services is offering appropriate support to assist students to be successful academically. Last fall, the course GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success, was established as one of the ways to support students who were placed on academic probation. It was our intent that successful completion of the course would also result in many students being removed from academic probation. This new course was introduced last fall for the first time and was continued in the course offerings for this spring. We believe that this new course has been supportive, but we need direct feedback from all students who took GST 101 to assist us in making a more complete assessment of the course.

Please click on the link below to complete the survey. It will take about 15 minutes and it is completely anonymous. The survey should be completed by Wednesday, May 11.

The link to the survey is:
#SurveyLink#

The information provided from each of you will greatly assist us as we determine future ways to support other students. Best wishes as you prepare for finals. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

If you have any technical problems, please do not respond to this email. You may contact Clara Chapman in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at clara_chapman@berea.edu.

CC Emails:

BCC Emails:

From Email: janice_blythe@berea.edu

HTML: No

Response Count: 10

Sent Count: 87

Emails Sent

Displaying 1-50 of 87

Message Subject: Please complete this
Date Sent: 05/10/2005
Email List: GST 101 Enrollees, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005
Survey: GST 101 Strategies for Academic Success
Message Text: Dear #FirstName#,

We haven't heard from you yet and are hoping that you will take a few minutes and respond to the survey linked in this message. It will help us evaluate the usefulness of GST 101 and understand how to help students who find themselves on academic probation. Your instructor, #CustomData3#, is very interested in the results of the survey. All responses are confidential and will be used in summary form only (our Institutional Research office is handling all the processing).

The response rate to the survey is just a little over 50% at this time and we want to increase it substantially by Thursday morning. Please respond.

The link to the survey is:
#SurveyLink#

Thanks!

Janice Blythe
Associate Provost

If you have any technical problems, please do not respond to this email. You may contact Clara Chapman in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at

GST 101 -- Declined to take [edit](#)

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As you may know, Berea College has undertaken a program to support students on academic probation. GST 101, Strategies for Academic Success, is one of the first initiatives we have been exploring. As a student who chose not to take this course, your thoughts and ideas are extremely important. This survey should take less than 5 minutes. Your responses are completely anonymous and the results will be used in summary form only.

[edit](#)

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I guarantee that there will be many of us paying close attention to what you have to say.

Cheers,

Dave Porter, Provost



1. What is your classification?

[edit](#)



Freshman

[move](#)

Sophomore

[pipe](#)

or consequences.

I did not understand what my instructor wanted or expected.

I needed more support from the instructor.

I did not go to my instructor to ask for help.

Lack of clear guidance from my advisor.

I did not follow my advisor's advice.



5. To what extent did the following contribute to your academic performance that led to probation? (continued)

[edit](#)
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	To a great extent	6	5	4	3	2	Not at all
Lack of effort on my part.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of particular skills (e.g. time management, task prioritization, writing, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of general academic ability on my part.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distractions - my involvement with other activities was too extensive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty in transitioning to College life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate class							

attendance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not turning in homework assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of personal college study skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought my abilities and skills were sufficient, but they were not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I didn't realize how difficult college work would be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>




6. To what extent did the following contribute to your academic performance that led to probation?
(continued)

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	To a great extent	6	5	4	3	2	Not at all
I didn't spend the time necessary to do good work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The textbooks were not available at the beginning of the term.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not know where to go to get help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not feel comfortable asking for help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not realize how much work it would take to succeed in college.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not have as much time to study because I went home							

- every or most weekends.
- I did not have as much time to study because I had another job off-campus.
- Other, please describe or explain below.
-

 7. Other reason that contributed to your academic performance that led to probation.

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 8. What odds do you give yourself for graduating from Berea College?

- 100% Absolutely
- 90%
- 80%
- 70%
- 60%
- 50% Uncertain
- 40%

[edit](#)
[move](#)
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- 30%
- 20%
- 10%
- 0% Impossible



9. Why did you not choose to enroll in GST 101? Please be specific.

- edit
- move
- pipe

Launch

Done

Initial E-Mail Invitation: May 6, 2005

Message Subject: About Your Academic Probation

Date Sent: 05/06/2005

Email List: Chose Not to Take GST 101

Survey: GST 101 -- Declined to take

Message Text: Greetings,

I realize that we are approaching the end of term and each of us is very busy, but we need your assistance. One of the goals in the Office of Academic Services is offering appropriate support to assist students to be successful academically. Last fall, the course GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success, was established as one of the ways to support students who were placed on academic probation. I understand that you chose not to enroll in GST 101 but I would still appreciate getting feedback from you regarding your academic probation.

Please click on the link below to complete the survey. It will take about 5 minutes and it is completely anonymous. The survey should be completed by Wednesday, May 11.

The link to the survey is:
#SurveyLink#

The information provided from each of you will greatly assist us as we determine future ways to support other students. Best wishes as you prepare for finals. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

If you have any technical problems, please do not respond to this email. You may contact Clara Chapman in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at clara_chapman@berea.edu.

Message Subject: About Your Academic Probation **Date Sent:** 05/09/2005
Email List: Chose Not to Take GST 101 **Survey:** GST 101 -- Declined to take
Message Text: Greetings,

I realize that we are approaching the end of term and each of us is very busy, but we need your assistance. One of the goals in the Office of Academic Services is offering appropriate support to assist students to be successful academically. Last fall, the course GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success, was established as one of the ways to support students who were placed on academic probation. I understand that you chose not to enroll in GST 101 but I would still appreciate getting feedback from you regarding your academic probation.

Please click on the link below to complete the survey. It will take about 5 minutes and it is completely anonymous. The survey should be completed by Wednesday, May 11.

The link to the survey is:
#SurveyLink#

The information provided from each of you will greatly assist us as we determine future ways to support other students. Best wishes as you prepare for finals. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

If you have any technical problems, please do not respond to this email. You may contact Clara Chapman in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at clara_chapman@berea.edu.

Clara Chapman

From: Judith Weckman
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2005 3:50 PM
To: Janice Blythe; Dave Porter; Donald Hudson; Deborah G. Martin; Dawn Anderson; Jamie Ealy; Gordon McKinney; Gail Wolford; Melissa Gardner; Margaret Dotson; Joe Bagnoli; Andrew Baskin; Kathy Bullock; Beth Crachiolo; Gus Gerassimides; Jonathan Johnson; Sandy Pennington; Lee Roecker; Claire Schuster
Cc: Clara Chapman
Subject: GST 101 surveys



GST 101 Report.pdf
(230 KB)

All (QEP members and instructors of GST 101)

Attached are the full results of the recently administered GST 101 course surveys. Please note that the survey was sent to all enrollees of the GST 101 course for both the Fall and Spring terms. A similar version was also sent to those students who were invited to enroll but chose not to. We have put the results in PDF form so that you can view the various major sections of the survey and look specifically at those items directed 1) only to enrollees versus 2) only non-enrollees. You may also see direct comparisons of the two groups' results for the many items that were included on both surveys. **When using the PDF bookmarks, remember to click on the plus signs to see full details under each major section.**

Personally, I have been very pleased with the response rates (61% for enrollees and 72% for non-enrollees) and the results. On almost every item that asks the respondent to rate to what extent each contributed to going on probation, you will see that those who actually took the course are much more likely to make "internal" attributions. Those who did **not** enroll are more likely to make "other" or "external" attributions for the reasons they go on probation. The comments illustrate this same result as well.

Because we did not administer this survey at the *beginning* of the GST 101 course, it is impossible to know if the enrollees were more "internally oriented" to begin with or if they learned to take personal responsibility by taking the course. I really believe that it is the latter and that the course has made a very deep impact on these students.

I will be greatly interested in how the results are discussed and what follows. Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

--Judith and Clara

Executive Summary

The goal of Berea College's Quality Enhancement Plan is to address questions about probation and retention and to consider ways of improving relevant policies and structures related to academic probation and retention at the College. (Passed by the College and General Faculties, April 22, 2004)

This document contains an account of the work accomplished thus far as a part of the Berea College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The inherently iterative process of developing this Plan has involved many individuals and constituencies and has required the consideration of a wide range of issues related to probation and retention. Berea College's unique mission and the special challenge of helping its students overcome the disadvantages associated with their socio-economic backgrounds served as the foundation for this endeavor. Student learning provided the paradigmatic framework for examining the ways in which the College's policies, programs, and practices could be modified to better achieve its educational priorities.

This report is divided into three main sections: contexts, the Plan's development process, and the Plan itself. The first section reviews the historical, scholarly, and organizational contexts in which the QEP was developed. A review of the College's history shows that, although academic probation is a relatively recent feature of Berea's academic program, issues of retention and graduation have always been a challenge. Currently, freshman-to-sophomore retention rates have risen above 80% and graduation rates above 60%—these rates are already among the highest in the College's history. These rates are also near national averages. Considering the unique challenges that many Berea students face, these rates might be considered a substantial achievement. However, the QEP Team's review of the scholarly literature (and our own practices and policies) led to the conclusion that increasing the College's understanding of its students, what they need to know and be able to do to succeed in college, and how they learn will allow Berea College to further increase these rates. To accomplish these goals, however, will continue to require careful coordination and integration of effort across administrative and faculty governance committees and structures.

The second section of this report provides an account of the QEP's development. Over the past decade, the College has been engaged in many activities that are similar to

the QEP development process described in the SACS *Reaffirmation of Accreditation Handbook*. The process described in this section reflects the complexity and difficulty of developing a QEP that had broad support and also could significantly enhance student learning. The Berea College Reaffirmation Leadership Team helped the faculty select the QEP topic and then appointed a team of volunteers drawn from the College and General Faculties to conceptualize and develop the details of a QEP focused on retention and probation. In addition to these two groups, the Board of Trustees and the Student Government Association (through the SGA's active participation in the General Faculty) have been involved in the development of this Plan. The QEP itself will become a part of a broader initiative that has emerged from the College's strategic planning process. Next year, a "task force," called for by separate faculty action in the spring of 2005, will consider broader educational issues and implications as well as the particular actions described in the QEP. Also, programs and processes involved in the current QEP will need to be assigned to various administrative and faculty committees for continuing oversight and assessment.

The third and final section contains the QEP itself. The first several pages of this section describe the relationship between the QEP and student learning. While probation and retention could be approached in a variety of ways, the QEP Team found that using a student learning framework was both appropriate and helpful. The QEP model contains three phases: Correction, Intervention, and Prevention. The first of these phases, Correction, will require the College to find ways to engage and support students who have already encountered academic difficulty and are on academic probation. The primary means for both supporting these students and learning from their experiences is a newly developed quarter-credit course, GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success. What is learned from this phase will inform activities in the Plan's second phase, Intervention. The focus of the Intervention Phase will be on understanding the needs of students as they begin to encounter academic difficulty. This phase of the QEP will consider programs such as the current Early Intervention Program which supports individual students, and a Supplemental Instruction Program that will focus on academic courses with high failure rates. What is learned from both the first and second phases of the QEP, will allow the College to consider ways to reduce academic failures through

enhanced selection of candidates (i.e., the Prevention Phase). Berea's goal is to select from economically and academically qualified applicants those students who will benefit the most from Berea College's challenging program.

This QEP has already generated a great deal of conversation and activity on the Berea College campus. Approximately 20 sections of the GST 101 course were offered last year. Student performance data, as well as surveys of students and faculty members, have provided useful information concerning this program as well as more general institutional policies and practices. Based on information collected thus far, both policy and program implications have emerged, and the QEP Team will be recommending preliminary changes to appropriate administrators and faculty decision-making groups this fall. These preliminary analyses and recommendations are discussed in the final portions of the last section of this report.

Much has been accomplished through this process already, and useful perspectives and valuable insights have emerged. These "little victories" promise to provide momentum for the work ahead. The QEP Team is optimistic that, as this process continues, the institution will develop a fuller understanding of the ways in which ongoing attention to student learning can help to align institutional processes and programs with Berea College's goal of educating and inspiring leaders for Appalachia and beyond.