



**Focused Learning, Focused Teaching:
A Plan for Quality Enhancement at Greensboro College**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
reaffirmation of accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

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Executive Summary

For its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Greensboro College proposes to revise its curriculum from a three-credit course model, in which a student typically takes five three-credit courses per semester (a “3x5” model), to a four-credit model, in which a student typically takes four four-credit courses per semester (a “4x4” model). Under the College's current 3x5 model, most faculty members typically teach four three-credit courses per semester; under the proposed 4x4 model, that typical teaching load would become three four-credit courses.

The topic grew from a general perception that the efforts of both students and faculty at the College are increasingly dispersed among such a range of class and work responsibilities that depth of inquiry and depth of reflection are difficult to sustain. Lending support to this perception, for example, are the College's results on the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (2004), which indicate that students here were less likely to report engaging in higher-level mental activities such as analysis, synthesis, and application, and less likely to report engaging in the kinds of active learning experiences that can encourage depth of learning. Lending support, as well, is an under-utilization of available faculty development funds, suggesting that teaching four courses per semester leaves faculty members little time for professional development in the form of scholarly research or course development.

Research on 4x4 models suggests that students taking four courses instead of five can focus more intently on each course, deepen their knowledge, and have greater opportunities to apply their skills. Likewise, faculty members teaching three, rather than four, courses per semester could be expected to focus more intently on each course and to have more time for professional development as both teachers and scholars. Therefore, a 4x4 curriculum has the potential to address three critical issues at Greensboro College: depth of learning, active learning, and faculty development.

The Quality Enhancement Plan topic was selected over the course of five months, in a process that began with a list of ten topics generated by the SACS Leadership Team and presented to faculty in August 2003. The selection process included forums with faculty, staff, students, trustees, and other college constituencies. The final topic, chosen from among a total of 17 that were eventually considered, was announced in December 2003. The Quality Enhancement Plan Team worked from January 2004 to the present to produce the current draft of the plan. The faculty reviewed a first draft of the plan in August 2004, a second draft in January 2005.

The academic departments have all submitted “good faith models” of their respective major requirements as they would be configured under a 4x4 system. A similar reconfiguration of the College's general education curriculum was developed by the QEP Team and submitted to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee (CIC) for review in January 2005. The CIC forwarded the general education proposal to the full faculty for review in February 2005. The academic departments will submit their final proposals to the CIC during the 2005-2006 academic year. The College aims to implement all 4x4-related curricular changes during the 2006-2007 academic year.

I. Introduction

The process that has resulted in this report began in July 2003 when the SACS Leadership Team first met to begin selecting a topic for the College's Quality Enhancement Plan. In December 2003, after several months of soliciting possible topics from and discussing them with various college constituencies, the Leadership Team chose to revise the College's academic curriculum from a three-credit course model, in which a student typically takes five three-credit courses per semester (a "3x5" model), to a four-credit model, in which a student typically takes four four-credit courses per semester (a "4x4" model). Similarly, under the College's current 3x5 model, most faculty members typically teach four three-credit courses per semester; under the proposed 4x4 model, that typical teaching load would become three four-credit courses. Thus, the proposed four-credit model allows students and faculty alike to focus on fewer courses with more depth and intensity. And thus the College's name for this QEP topic, "Focused Learning, Focused Teaching."

This report will show that the adoption of a 4x4 model could enable the College to achieve three significant goals: an increase in students' depth of knowledge, an increase in faculty members' use of active learning strategies, and an increase in faculty members' engagement in professional development activities. In the following sections of this report, the College presents the philosophical and pedagogical basis for the change to a 4x4 model, the plan for implementing the change and methods for assessing the change's effectiveness, and the resources needed to effect the change. Specifically:

- Section II: the history and institutional context of Greensboro College.
- Sections III and IV: the QEP leadership and the process through which the present topic was chosen.
- Section V: an operational definition of student learning derived from the College's statement of mission and educational objectives.
- Section VI: research arguing the relationship between a 4x4 curriculum and improved student learning.
- Section VII: the appropriateness of a 4x4 curriculum for Greensboro College in particular.
- Section VIII: the goals of the QEP and the specific instruments by which the College's achievement of these goals may be measured.
- Section IX: the plan for implementation.
- Section X: the resources needed to implement the QEP and the plan for funding it.

II. Analysis of Institutional Context

Greensboro College was chartered as Greensborough Female College in 1838 and from its inception has been affiliated with the United Methodist Church. The College first opened its doors for students in 1846; it assumed its present name, Greensboro College, in 1919. Men were first admitted in 1954. In 1968 the College began cross-registration with neighboring Bennett and Guilford Colleges. In 1985 the College added the Adult Education Program for independent adults over 23 years of age, which program now accounts for a third of total enrollment. In 2002, the College initiated a graduate program, offering masters degrees in Education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Today, Greensboro College is a comprehensive, independent, coeducational institution known for its small class sizes and the individual attention it gives to its students. Continuing its affiliation with the United Methodist Church, the College aims to be an academic and social community uniting the liberal arts and Judeo-Christian values in an atmosphere of diversity and mutual respect. True to the United Methodist Church's historic ideal of non-sectarian education, the College's central purpose remains the intellectual development of its students within the dual traditions of the liberal arts and the Judeo-Christian faith. These words, from the College's Statement of Mission, guide the Greensboro College community in the establishment of a collective institutional identity through the continuous negotiated construction of the College.

Since its most recent review for reaffirmation of accreditation, in 1993-94, the College has enjoyed a decade unprecedented in its history, marked by several strong positive trends. During that ten-year period, for example, through 2003-04, the College made significant fiscal advances:

- The operating budget grew from \$10.1 million to \$24.1 million with no deficits;
- Endowment and quasi-endowment funds grew from \$9.8 million to \$23.4 million (as of 30 June 2004);
- An on-going capital campaign raised over \$53 million (as of 30 June 2004); and
- Capital improvements were effected totaling \$23.8 million, including the acquisition or construction of an academic classroom building, a residence hall, a student activities/recreation center, several parking lots, and a sports complex.

Between 1993-94 and 2003-04, the academic program, too, experienced notable growth. The College offered its first graduate degrees, along with a new undergraduate degree program (Bachelor of Business Arts) and several new undergraduate programs, majors, and minors (including Athletic Training, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, and Women's Studies). FTE enrollment increased correspondingly during this period, by almost 28%, going from 780 FTE in Fall 1993 to 997 FTE in Fall 2003 (during which semester the College enrolled in addition 48 FTE graduate students). The number of full-time faculty grew significantly as well, from 45 to 61, although the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty declined from 83.4% to 74.3%, largely as a result of the addition of new programs and degrees.

A snapshot of the College taken in Fall 2003 reveals a total enrollment of 799 traditional students, 377 adult students, and 72 graduate students. These students are taught by, as

mentioned above, 61 full-time faculty members, supplemented by 65 part-time faculty members, which yields a student to faculty ratio of 14 to one and an average class size of 16. Greensboro College offers four undergraduate degrees (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Music Education, and Bachelor of Science) and two graduate degrees (Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and Master of Education). The College offers 29 undergraduate majors and an option for students, in consultation with faculty, to design interdisciplinary majors. Minors are available in most disciplines that offer a major. The College also offers minors in nine areas without majors: child and family studies, computer science, computer information systems, dance, ethics, international studies, legal administration, philosophy, and women's studies.

With the exceptions of science laboratories, fieldwork, and studio courses, most Greensboro College courses meet for 150 minutes per week for fifteen weeks and carry three academic credits. A usual course load for students is 15-18 credit hours. (To graduate in eight semesters, students must average 15 1/2 credit hours per semester.) Faculty members teach 24-27 credit hours per academic year unless otherwise stipulated in a faculty member's contract or agreed upon by the Dean of the Faculty. Most faculty members teach four three-credit courses per semester. Frequently, however, faculty members find themselves in overload situations from supervising internships, teaching directed studies and directed reading courses, supervising undergraduate and graduate theses, teaching weekend and evening courses, or engaging in other academic, advising, and administrative responsibilities.

A more detailed analysis of Greensboro College's strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the Quality Enhancement Plan is provided in section VII, "The Value and Appropriateness of a 4x4 Curriculum to Greensboro College."

III. Quality Enhancement Plan Leadership

In June 2003, the President of Greensboro College, along with the Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Services, the future Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Chair of the Department of Business, attended a workshop in Atlanta to better understand the new SACS requirements for reaffirmation under the Principles of Accreditation. This core group became the SACS Leadership Team. In July 2003, four additional members were added: the Vice President for Business and Finance, the Director of Institutional Research, the Chair of the Department of English, and the Dean of Academic Services.

In December 2003, the Leadership Team appointed Dr. Cynthia Hanson, Chair of the Department of Business and a member of the Team, to chair the Quality Enhancement Plan Committee. One faculty member from each of the eight academic divisions was subsequently invited to join the Committee. The faculty members were invited based upon their interest in the QEP topic, as expressed in oral and written discussions led by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (described in the following section), and/or in consultation with division members. Also accepting an invitation to join the Committee were the Dean of the Faculty, the Dean of Adult Education (also representing the Division of Modern Languages and Literatures), the Dean of Academic Services, a member of the Board of Trustees, and a student representative.

The members of the SACS Leadership Team and the QEP Committee are listed in Appendix A.

IV. Description of the Topic Selection Process

In July 2003, the Vice President for Academic Affairs asked the members of the SACS Leadership Team to generate an initial list of possible topics for the Quality Enhancement Plan. Ten topics were presented:

1. Teaching Citizenship
2. Focused Learning, Focused Teaching: Transitioning from a 3x5 to a 4x4 Curriculum
3. Annual Research and Performance Event
4. First Year Liberal Arts Experience
5. Learning Communities
6. Service-Learning Across the Curriculum
7. Closing the Academic Skills Gap
8. Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience
9. Senior Capstone Experience
10. Increase Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness

These ideas were shared with the faculty on August 20, 2003. The faculty then divided into small groups to discuss the suggested themes and to add themes of their own. This dialogue resulted in the addition of five more themes, as well as in revisions to several of the themes from the initial list. A summary of their suggestions and comments was sent to faculty members in late August with a request to select one or two topics that they thought had the most merit. Responses were compiled into a list of themes that reflected faculty preferences at that point in the process.

Over the next several weeks, the discourse continued through email interchanges, faculty meetings, and conversations with other constituency groups. Members of the SACS Leadership Team met in late September 2003 with about 25 members of the staff in a format similar to the faculty meeting. During September and October 2003, the SACS Leadership Team also met with students, the Alumni Board, the Council of Ministers, the Board of Visitors, and the Board of Trustees. From these exchanges, the number of ideas for the plan grew to 17. After all the responses were compiled, a summary document was sent to faculty, staff, and students about these 17 ideas. This document, which contained in addition general comments about the Quality Enhancement Plan, is attached as Appendix B.

In late October 2003, based on feedback from all of the constituency groups consulted, the SACS Leadership Team identified five topics that it wanted to explore further:

- Focused Learning, Focused Teaching: Transitioning from a 3x5 to a 4x4 Curriculum
- 4-1-4 Academic Calendar
- Teaching Citizenship and Service-Learning
- Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness
- Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience

Four faculty members and one staff member were each asked to research one of these five topics and produce a brief position paper. The five were requested to consider the following in their

investigations of the assigned topics: the topic's relationship to the mission of the College, the topic's potential to enhance student learning, the topic's relationship to the College's ongoing integrated institution-wide planning and evaluation process, and the resources necessary to develop and sustain the topic. The position paper developed for the topic Focused Learning, Focused Teaching is included as Appendix C.

At the November 2003 meeting of the faculty, the Vice President for Academic Affairs informed the faculty that the Leadership Team, after reviewing the five position papers, had settled on two finalists—Focused Learning, Focused Teaching and Teaching Citizenship and Service-Learning. The position papers on these two themes were distributed to the faculty, and the Leadership Team asked the faculty to respond with feedback within two weeks. The Vice President for Academic Affairs also chaired a forum with faculty and staff to discuss the two themes.

In addition to the feedback received from the faculty, staff, students, and various Boards, the Vice President for Academic Affairs engaged in an extended email conversation with Dr. David Carter, the SACS liaison, regarding the feasibility of the two emerging themes: Teaching Citizenship and Service-Learning, and Focused Learning, Focused Teaching. Dr. Carter suggested that having two themes might present problems and that civic education, although a laudable focus, was not reflected directly in the mission statement of the College. In late November 2003, after considering all collected information and additional feedback from the various constituencies, the SACS Leadership Team selected "Focused Learning, Focused Teaching: Transitioning from a 3x5 to a 4x4 Curriculum" as the topic of the Quality Enhancement Plan. At the December 2003 faculty meeting, the President announced the selection of this topic as the theme for the Quality Enhancement Plan.

V. Definition of Student Learning

Greensboro College's definition of student learning flows directly from its Statement of Mission. The central purpose of Greensboro College

is the intellectual development of its students within the dual traditions of the liberal arts and the Judeo-Christian faith. Through a disciplined pursuit of truth, its students acquire knowledge and develop a critical awareness that allows them to live humanely, responsibly, and productively in a free society. Such lives are characterized by clarity of thought and expression, the ability to reason, a sense of history and a global perspective, an understanding of literature and language, a knowledge of mathematic and science, an appreciation of the arts, an awareness of political and social realities, a familiarity with the biblical tradition, and an ethical awareness, a respect for physical soundness and an understanding of technology. (*Undergraduate Academic Catalog*, 2003-2004, p. 4)

To fulfill its mission with respect to student learning, Greensboro College has established a set of general education requirements based on the following 15 general education objectives. A graduate of Greensboro College should be able to:

1. Read critically a variety of texts.
2. Write effectively for different purposes and audiences.
3. Speak effectively for different purposes and audiences.
4. Reason to reach logical conclusions.
5. Understand and effectively use technology.
6. Think critically about ethics and values.
7. Analyze numerical data critically.
8. Analyze critically and/or perform/produce creative art.
9. Explore and understand human behavior.
10. Explore and understand the natural world in a scientific fashion.
11. Explore and understand the historical nature of civilization.
12. Develop a global perspective.
13. Understand personal wellness/fitness.
14. Explore and understand the biblical tradition.
15. Use and understand a language other than English.

(*Undergraduate Academic Catalog*, 2003-2004, p. 78)

In addition to the general education objectives, each academic department maintains its own measures of student learning in its Program Area Standing Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes (which Objectives and Outcomes are viewable online at <http://ir.gborocollege.edu/menu/>). The departmental objectives are tied to one or more of the Institutional Goals set forth in the College's Statement of Mission.

The general education objectives, along with departmental objectives, comprise the operational definition of student learning currently used by the College in assessing its educational program. The College will continue to define student learning as outlined above and to assess student learning through its existing assessment protocols. In fact, the first six of the 15 general education learning objectives noted above are also objectives of the QEP. However, because the means through which a 4x4 curriculum is expected to improve student learning include study in-depth and active learning, these measures become important components of the operational definition of student learning used in the QEP.

Study In-Depth

In-depth study is not so much an additional component of the curriculum as it is recognition of the degree of complexity and sophistication with which the various components are interrelated. It involves natural connections and multidimensions rather than a hodgepodge or scattered exposure. A course of study that offers depth will have a central core of method and theory that serves as an introduction to the explanatory power of the discipline, provides a basis for subsequent work, and unites all students who join in the study in a shared understanding of its character and aims. Such a course of study forces students to experience the range of topics that the discipline addresses and the variety of analytic tools that the discipline uses, and it leads them to some understanding of the discipline's characteristic questions and arguments, as well as the questions it cannot answer and the arguments it does not make (Association of American Colleges, 1985).

Depth requires sequential learning, building on blocks of knowledge that lead to a more sophisticated understanding and encouraging leaps of the imagination and efforts at synthesis. Depth is achieved through a variety of experiences that broaden the student's knowledge of a discipline, strengthening analytical powers while leading to a deeper, fresher, more complex perspective. Depth requires the kind of focused inquiry that takes time; it releases students to the testing of their own skills; it should not be hurried (Association of American Colleges, 1985).

The *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* provides an operational definition of depth of learning in its measure of the extent to which students report engaging in four levels of mental activities—memorizing, analyzing, synthesizing, and applying—the higher-levels representing greater depth of learning. Kuh, Laird, and Umbach (2004) report that engaging in integrative learning activities, for example, activities in which students integrate ideas from various sources or synthesize information into “more complex interpretations,” can be used as a “proxy for deep learning” (p. 8). Therefore, depth of learning can also be measured by the extent to which faculty members require students to analyze, synthesize, apply, and reflect.

Active Learning

Active learning is an instructional strategy in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class. Analysis of the research literature (Chickering and Gamson, 1987) suggests that students must do more than just listen: They must read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems. Most important, to be actively involved, students must engage in such higher-order thinking tasks as

analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Within this context, it is proposed that strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing. Active learning strategies may include, but are not limited to, service learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, case studies, games and simulations, practicums/fieldwork, laboratory work, and research.

One list of active learning strategies is provided by the *NSSE* (2002, p.4), which reports student engagement in eight categories of “enriching educational experiences,” including

- Practicum, internship field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment,
- Community service or volunteer work,
- Learning community or some other formal program in which groups of students take two or more classes together,
- Research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements,
- Foreign language coursework,
- Study abroad,
- Independent study or self-designated major,
- Culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.)

Another list of active learning strategies is provided by the *Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey*, which measures community learning, small group cooperative learning, group projects, multiple drafts of written work, student evaluations of their own work and each other’s work, and reflective writing or journaling.

VI. The Relationship of a 4x4 Curriculum to Improved Student Learning

Advocates of a 4x4 curriculum generally cite two paths to improved learning, one from the effects of a reduced course load on students, and the second from the effects of a reduced teaching load on faculty. When students take fewer courses in a semester, they are expected to focus more intently on each course, to deepen their knowledge, and to experience increased opportunities to apply their skills. Likewise, faculty members who teach fewer courses in a semester are expected to have more time to devote to professional development in the form of course development or scholarly pursuit.

The following three sections describe the relationships between the three goals Greensboro College hopes to achieve (active learning, depth of learning and faculty development), the QEP focus (a 4x4 curriculum), and student learning.

Active Learning and a 4x4 Curriculum

Active learning is an integral part of four-credit courses at many institutions. One of the earliest models for a four-credit course is the laboratory course, where an additional credit hour is assigned for applying learning in a laboratory setting. Today, the number and variety of active learning techniques has expanded considerably, as detailed in the previous section. However, all of the activities have the common characteristic of requiring additional time from both faculty and students for their implementation. In a 4x4 curriculum, faculty members have more time per class to develop active and collaborative activities, and students have more time per class to devote to applying knowledge and skills. In order to make sure that faculty members have the knowledge and resources for integrating active learning strategies, Greensboro College has designated funds for this purpose.

There is considerable research to support the relationship between active learning and improved learning outcomes. Mason and Boscolo (2000) found that writing-to-learn activities such as note-taking, commenting, reasoning and reflecting resulted in better conceptual understanding of plant biology as well as greater metaconceptual awareness of how and why their knowledge had changed. Webb, Farivar, and Mastergeorge (2002) described the conditions under which cooperative learning among students in small groups can lead to improved learning in mathematical concepts. Aulls (1998) reported that engaging classroom discourse improved recall of history content. At the post-secondary level, Kuh, Laird, and Umbach (2004) reported that active and collaborative learning is positively and significantly related to all the measures of what students gain from their collegiate experience as reported in the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*.

Depth of Learning and a 4x4 Curriculum

Depth of learning is not independent from active learning. Active learning is believed to lead to greater depth of learning. Kuh, Laird, and Umbach (2004) reported that when faculty members emphasize the practices included on the *NSSE*, students engage in more integrative learning activities, which, they argued, are surrogate measures for deep learning.

In addition to encouraging deep learning indirectly, by providing opportunities for active learning, a 4x4 curriculum promotes deep learning directly, by favoring depth over breadth. A 4x4 curriculum requires that students do more intensive work in fewer areas each semester. Research shows that “time on task” is a critical factor in learning; the greater the amount of time spent working on a subject, the greater the learning (Center for Teaching and Learning, 1989).

One model for a four-credit course that offers increased depth without necessarily integrating active learning strategies (as defined in this document) is provided by the University of Maine-Farmington (2005), which proposes that

a four-credit course might offer opportunities for in-depth knowledge and understanding of its subject by incorporating unusually long (or unusually complex and demanding) reading assignments, by covering a wide range of topics and concepts, by treating multiple examples, or by consistently making detailed and nuanced conceptual distinctions. In some programs, revised courses might incorporate material from other, dropped courses; in others, courses might expand their content to do justice to topics that were only superficially treated under the three-credit model.

Professional Development and a 4x4 Curriculum

Currently, the teaching load at Greensboro College is 24-27 credit hours, meaning that most faculty members teach four three-credit-hour courses per semester. The move to a 4x4 curriculum would reduce the teaching load to three four-credit-hour courses per semester, reducing both the total number of courses and the variety of courses a faculty member would be required to prepare and teach. The reduction in the total number of course preparations would enable each faculty member to spend more time preparing for course content and maintaining scholarly currency within the discipline. Less time spent in the classroom would also provide faculty with time to pursue other scholarly activity or focus more intentionally on the methods of instruction utilized in each course. Additional attention to scholarly activity would allow faculty to keep up to date on the latest developments in their disciplines, leading to better teaching, and thus to improved learning. Additional attention to course development could keep faculty abreast, as well, of the most effective teaching techniques, leading to more effective teaching, and thus to improved learning.

Obviously, simply moving to a 4x4 model will not automatically increase the teaching strategies and professional development that can lead to improved student learning. It will merely provide a greater opportunity. To encourage faculty to adopt new active and engaged learning strategies, the College will present them with models of best practices, such as presentations by faculty from institutions with a history of success in engaged learning, and faculty will be compensated for other curriculum development activities and initiatives related to the 4x4.

VII. The Value and Appropriateness of a 4x4 Curriculum to Greensboro College

Greensboro College prides itself on its student-centered, teaching-oriented academic environment. With an average class size of 16 students, the College is better suited to integrate active learning into the classroom than institutions with larger class sizes (Mattson, 2005). Indeed, many faculty members already engage in such activities. However, integrating active learning strategies into classroom activities requires additional time on the part of both faculty and students. The 4x4 will provide faculty more time to develop such activities and more student time per course to engage in such activities.

A traditional strength of Greensboro College is the faculty's commitment to the students. The faculty is consistently rated higher on availability and attitude measures than faculty at other private colleges (*Student Opinion Survey*, 1997-2002). The College places a good deal of emphasis on teaching effectiveness, as indicated by the weight given it in the evaluation of faculty (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 51). The attitude of the faculty towards students and the College's emphasis on teaching effectiveness indicate that the faculty is *motivated* to improve teaching. The role of the 4x4 is to provide faculty members with a greater *ability* to innovate in the classroom, by reducing not workload but course load.

In summary, in a less teaching-oriented environment, a 4x4 curriculum might not be as easily translated into improved teaching and learning, but at Greensboro College it has the potential to leverage our strengths to address areas we would like to improve, namely depth of learning, active learning, and professional development. The previous section of this report outlined the relationship of a 4x4 curriculum to these three goals; the following section explains in further detail why these goals are appropriate for Greensboro College. The section concludes with a note on the value of the 4x4 curriculum to three specific, significant student populations at Greensboro College.

Depth of Learning at Greensboro College

In contrast to the College's vision for depth of learning as expressed in its definition of student learning (see section IV), recent data from the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* and the *College Student Survey (CSS)* indicate that its students are engaging at a more superficial level of inquiry than the College would like.

The *NSSE*, as mentioned earlier in this report, is a self-report instrument administered to first-year and fourth-year students that collects information on a variety of educational experiences, perceptions, and abilities (Kuh, 2003). One section of the *NSSE* collects information on respondents' perceptions of the extent to which they engage in four levels of mental activities: memorizing, analyzing, synthesizing, and applying. According to the 2002 survey, Greensboro College students reported a significantly higher level of "memorizing facts, ideas, or methods" and a lower level of analysis (significant for first-year students), synthesis (significant for first-year and senior students), and application (significant for first-year students), when compared to students at other baccalaureate liberal arts institutions. Similarly, the 2004 survey results reported significantly more emphasis on memorizing (significant for first-year students) and less emphasis on analysis, synthesis, making judgments, and application (significant for senior

students) when compared to students at other baccalaureate liberal arts institutions. These results, along with the *NSSE* data indicating that Greensboro College students were significantly less likely to write longer papers (greater than five pages in length) and were reading fewer texts than students at comparable liberal arts institutions, suggest that depth of inquiry is an area for improvement at the College.

The *College Student Survey (CSS)* is administered to graduating seniors and collects information from a “broad range of student outcomes” (Higher Education Research Institute website). In the spring of 2001, the College surveyed all graduating seniors. The total response rate for the spring administration was 38 percent. The results of the survey are also compared with those from other four-year protestant colleges in the United States. The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they believed their activities and skills in 18 areas were rated as “much stronger” compared to when they first started college. Only two of the 18 areas were rated positively by more than 50% of the students responding: knowledge of a particular field or discipline (74.5%) and general knowledge (54.9%). Areas that students indicated as being least improved as a result of four years of college included: foreign language ability (15.7%), knowledge of people from different races/cultures (19.6%), religious beliefs and convictions (11.8%), understanding of the problems facing their community (11.8 %) and nation (13.7%), and mathematical skills (15.7 %).

The typical student at Greensboro College currently takes five, and in some cases six, three-credit-hour courses per semester. This load requires the student to focus over a broad range of issues and topics. The multiple demands placed on the student’s focus prevent the individual from delving deeper within the course material and limit the time and effort the student can dedicate to the concepts in a given course. By reducing the total number of courses taken from five to four, the 4x4 plan would allow students to focus their learning and to deepen their engagement with the material in a given course.

Active Learning Strategies at Greensboro College

Recent data from the *NSSE* and the *CSS* also indicate that Greensboro College students were less likely to be exposed to a variety of active learning strategies throughout their curriculum. One potential benefit of reconfiguring the curriculum to a four-credit-hour model is the opportunity for faculty members to integrate active learning strategies into the classroom and outside of class. The reliance on instructor-centered learning strategies (primarily lecture) has been shown to be less effective in increasing the depth of student learning than other student-centered teaching and learning techniques.

According to the 2002 *NSSE*, when compared to students at other baccalaureate liberal arts institutions, Greensboro College freshmen were *less likely* to participate in community service or volunteer work, and seniors were *less likely* to participate in a culminating senior experience. Similarly, according to the 2004 *NSSE*, seniors at Greensboro College were *less likely* to report working on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements and *less likely* to have completed a culminating senior experience than students at other baccalaureate institutions. Perhaps more important than the results of any single item in this section is the fact that Greensboro College students were not significantly *more likely* to have

participated in or have plans to participate in any of the enriching educational experiences included in the survey.

Results of the 2001 CSS also indicate that 62.7 % of students never took a course that included a community service/service learning component during their four years at Greensboro College. This is in comparison to the 51.9% from other protestant four-year colleges.

Again, a reduction in the total number of courses taken by students each semester should free up additional time to be engaged in other learning activities. Faculty could require additional course assignments for research, writing, reading, laboratory work, and experiential learning with less concern that students are being drawn in multiple directions. Should the revised course schedule include additional contact hours per course, faculty members would have additional time in the classroom, as well.

Professional Development of Faculty at Greensboro College

According to the Greensboro College *Faculty Handbook*, faculty members are evaluated with the primary purpose of improving the quality of instruction. The *Faculty Handbook* also states that

teaching effectiveness and advising effectiveness are enhanced by continued professional growth. Thus, faculty members are expected to show evidence of such growth. The College recognizes that continued professional growth may take a variety of forms. (p. 51)

The College recognizes, in addition, that the professional development of its faculty may involve not only the scholarship of discovery (typically expressed through the publication of papers and presentations at professional meetings) but also the scholarship of teaching, application, and integration (Boyer, 1990). The conversion to a four-credit-hour model would enhance the professional development activities of the faculty by reducing the number of course preparations by faculty.

Currently, most full-time faculty members at Greensboro College teach four three-credit-hour courses per semester, leaving little time for professional development. Although the *Faculty Handbook* (p. 149) provides for guaranteed professional development monies of from \$400 (for attendance) to \$750 (for participation) per year, only 51% of faculty requested these funds in the most recent academic year (2003-2004). Conversion to a four-credit-hour system would shift the average faculty member's teaching load from four courses per semester to three, thereby reducing both the total number of courses and the variety of courses a faculty member would be required to prepare and teach. The reduction in the total number of course preparations would enable each faculty member to spend more time preparing for course content and following the scholarly developments within the discipline. Less time spent in the classroom would also provide faculty with time to pursue other scholarly activity or to focus more intentionally on the methods of instruction utilized in each course.

Special Student Populations at Greensboro College

As mentioned in the Introduction to this report, the College increased its FTE enrollment by 28% between Fall 1993 and Fall 2003. Of particular significance for the development and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan, however, is the extent to which that increase, and indeed the College's overall enrollment, reflects three substantial populations of special students—independent students over age 23, students self-identified as LD/ADHD, and students admitted with weaker high school academic records. In Fall 2003, for example, 36% of the College's total student population consisted of adult learners and 12% of traditional students were self-identified as having special learning needs (*Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities*, 2004). And of the entering first-year traditional students that semester, 21% were admitted into the Academic Success Program, a conditional admission program that “provides a structured environment for those students who need supplemental academic support” (*Undergraduate Academic Catalog 2003-04*, p. 14; typically these students presented a SAT combined score of between 800 and 850 or a high school GPA of 2.25 or lower).

The College believes that the reduced number of courses taken in a 4x4 curriculum would be especially beneficial to these three student populations. For example, adult students, who are often balancing work, family, and school, find it more difficult to keep up with a larger number of subjects, even if the work expectation per course is moderate. It is simply a matter of having one's attention divided in many different directions. With a 4x4 curriculum, adult students could maintain full-time status by taking only three four-credit courses, instead of four three-credit courses as currently. Research on adult learners in the workforce seems to support the idea that adults learners perform better when they are able to focus more intensely (e.g., by spending more hours) on fewer courses at one time (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; Jurmo & Fingeret, 1989).

Similarly, a key variable in producing successful outcomes for learning disabled students is the pacing of a course of study (Norlander, Shaw, McGuire, Bloomer, & Czajkowski, 1986). As reported in the ERIC digest on College Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities (1989), “a student who might experience frustration and failure with a full college course load might be successful when taking only two or three courses.” The reason for this is, while there are many different learning disabilities, many learning disabled students have difficulty in organization and in focusing attention. Therefore, it may be reasonably expected that students with learning disabilities will fare better focusing more intently on fewer courses at one time. In addition, learning disabled students could maintain full-time status by taking only three courses instead of, as currently, four.

VIII. Quality Enhancement Plan Goals and Assessment

Broadly speaking, the goal of the QEP at Greensboro College is to enhance student learning and to alter the academic climate on campus. More specifically, the goals of making a transition to a 4 x 4 curriculum are to (1) increase the depth of student learning, (2) increase faculty use of active learning strategies, and (3) increase faculty professional development.

The College proposes a variety of assessment activities and measurements to evaluate the effectiveness of the QEP in achieving these goals. A timeline for the administration of the assessment activities is provided in Appendix D. In addition, the College will designate an assessment coordinator to compile the data from the assessments, create an annual report on the progress of the QEP, and share those results with the faculty. The assessment coordinator will also work with the Dean of the Faculty to recommend, plan, and coordinate faculty development workshops.

The proposed assessment activities and measurements, which are detailed below, will evaluate the effect of the QEP on student learning, faculty teaching methods, and faculty development. Specifically, the College will assess the degree to which the QEP increases depth of learning, increases the use of active learning strategies, and increases professional development.

Assessment of Increased Depth of Learning

The College will employ the following five measures to assess the effectiveness of the QEP in increasing depth of learning:

- 1) Monitor the results of the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* pertaining to “Mental Activities.”

According to the 2004 *NSSE* (as referenced in section VII of this report), Greensboro College students were more likely to report engaging in memorization and less likely to report engaging in the higher levels of mental activity. The goal for the College is to meet or exceed the mean scores compared to other baccalaureate liberal arts institutions on the items pertaining to engaging in the mental activities of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application, within four years of implementing the QEP (by Spring 2010).

- 2) Monitor the results of the local items on the *Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey*.

The *HERI Faculty Survey* of teaching practices and research activities, professional activities, faculty attitudes and values, and job satisfaction will be administered in Fall 2004. Additional items have been written to assess the extent to which faculty assign written work and engage students in activities that require students to use higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application (see Appendix E). The Fall 2004 administration will provide baseline data on faculty teaching practices before implementation of a 4 x 4 curriculum. When the *HERI Faculty Survey* is administered again in Fall 2007, it is expected that faculty will report greater use of teaching practices

that promote higher levels of thinking skills. The goal is for the 2007 results to show higher scores than in 2004 on at least six of the 13 local items measuring teaching practices that promote depth of learning; for 2010, the goal is for results to show higher scores than 2004 on at least nine of the 13 local items.

- 3) Monitor the results of selected items on the *College Student Survey (CSS)* related to academic gains in their major discipline and in broad general education.

Students' responses in 2001 to items on the *CSS* related to academic gains in their major discipline and in broad general education were lower than desired. Only 54.9% of respondents felt that they were much stronger in general knowledge as seniors than they were when they started college. A higher percentage (74.5%) reported that they were much stronger in knowledge of a particular field or discipline compared to when they started college. Classroom changes that increase depth of learning should translate into greater academic gains both in the major and in general education courses. The goal is for at least 70% of students to report feeling much stronger in general knowledge and for at least 80% to report feeling much stronger in a discipline (compared to when they started college) within four years of implementation of the QEP (by Spring 2010).

- 4) Monitor the results of the General Education Assessment Reports.

The faculty assessments of students' performance on general education objectives (<http://ir.gborocollege.edu/gened/>) should reflect gains in the six core skills of general education. It is expected that faculty assessment reports will show higher levels of student performance within four years of the implementation of the QEP (by Spring 2010). The goal is for the number of faculty reports documenting students' improvement in meeting general education objectives over the course of a semester to increase between Spring 2006 and Spring 2010.

- 5) Monitor the results of the General Education Awareness and Perception Survey data.

The summary report of students' awareness of the first six general education objectives and their perception of their skills in those areas (<http://ir.gborocollege.edu/gened/>) provides one indicator of the effectiveness of general education courses in promoting student learning. Increased depth of learning as a result of making the transition to a 4x4 plan should be reflected in the attainment of general education objectives. Students' perception of gains in the six targeted general education objectives should also increase as they experience opportunities for greater depth of learning. The goal is for 80% of respondents to report gains on the six objectives within four years of implementing the QEP (by Spring 2010).

Assessment of Increase in Active Learning Strategies

The College will employ the following two measures to assess the effectiveness of the QEP in increasing the use of active learning strategies:

- 1) Measure the frequency of common active learning strategies.

Common active learning strategies that can be monitored using the HERI data include community learning as a part of coursework, small group cooperative learning, group projects, multiple drafts of written work, student evaluations of their own work and each other's work, and reflective writing or journaling. As a baseline for comparison, the College will administer the HERI survey to faculty in Fall 2004. It is expected that faculty will report using active learning strategies to a greater extent within four years of implementing the QEP (by Spring 2010).

- 2) Monitor the results of the *NSSE* pertaining to student participation in "Enriching Educational Experiences."

According to the 2004 *NSSE* (as referenced in Section VII of this report), Greensboro College students were not likely to have participated in or to have plans to participate in enriching educational experiences that could be characterized as active learning experiences. The goal for the College is to meet or exceed the mean scores compared to other baccalaureate liberal arts institutions on at least six of the eight items related to participation in enriching educational experiences surveyed in the *NSSE* within four years of implementing the QEP (by Spring 2010).

Assessment of Increased Professional Development

The College will employ the following three measures to assess the effectiveness of the QEP in increasing professional development by faculty members:

- 1) Monitor the results of the *HERI Faculty Survey* items pertaining to publications and professional development.

The 2004-2005 *HERI Faculty Survey* will provide baseline data for comparing Greensboro College faculty to national norms for publications. The *HERI Faculty Survey* also includes local items to assess attendance and participation conferences in one's discipline as well as at conferences and workshops focused on active learning pedagogies (see Appendix E). It is expected that implementation of the 4x4 curriculum and encouragement of active learning strategies will lead to increases in the number of faculty who report participation in these types of professional development. The more selective focus of teaching three courses per semester rather than four may also promote greater scholarship within one's field of study and thus be linked to more faculty publications. The College's goal is to report professional development levels (of conference attendance and participation and of publications) comparable to those of peer institutions.

2) Monitor the level of use of college funds for professional development.

One indicator of professional development is the amount of money available to support faculty development activities including college funds for conference attendance and participation, funds for summer research and development activities, and funds for summer faculty development for faculty on continuing contracts. The funds allocated, requested, and disbursed may be evaluated for change over time. Additionally, the percentage of faculty who make use of the guaranteed funds for conference attendance can be computed to assess level of participation in professional development activities. During the period from 2000 – 2004, requests for faculty development funds in the above-named categories totaled 93% - 250% of allocated monies. The amount of money available for those activities did not increase during that time period, with the exception of summer funds for faculty on continuing contracts. During the same time period, the percentage of eligible faculty requesting funds from the "guaranteed" college funds for conference attendance and participation ranged from 44% (2002-2003) to 80% (2001-2002) with 51% of faculty requesting these funds in the most recent academic year (2003-2004).

It is expected that within four years of the implementation of the QEP, the percentage of faculty requesting and accessing funds will increase as faculty seek ways to enhance their scholarship and pedagogy. The goal is for at least 60% of eligible faculty to request college funds for conference attendance and participation each year beginning Fall 2006 and for at least 85% of eligible faculty to request college funds within a single year by Spring 2010.

3) Monitor faculty development workshops offered at Greensboro College.

Support for making the transition to a 4x4 curriculum must include development workshops that will help faculty learn new ways of actively engaging students in the classroom. Faculty development workshops are periodically offered by Information Technology staff, library staff, the Writing- Across the Curriculum program, and the office of the Dean of the Faculty. In the past three years, a small number of these workshops have focused on active learning strategies. It is expected that the number of workshops offered will increase in the four-year period surrounding the initiation and implementation of the QEP (Spring 2006 – Spring 2010). The goal for participation is to involve all full-time and part-time faculty in at least one workshop each year and for at least 50% of the full-time faculty to participate in each of the faculty development workshops aimed at developing active learning strategies in the classroom.

IX. Implementation Plan

In order to begin to prepare for implementation, the QEP Committee sent a memo in March 2004 to all academic departments requesting that they prepare “good faith models” of their major requirements under a four-credit course system, submit recommendations for general education requirements for their disciplinary areas, and provide an estimate of resources necessary to implement the model. To support this first step, the College allocated \$300 per major for departmental curriculum development activities. The QEP Committee requested that departments submit their information by July 30, 2004, in preparation for faculty workshops and discussions on the QEP in August 2004. The first draft of the QEP document was sent to the faculty prior to the August meetings.

The purpose of the August 2004 faculty discussion on the QEP was to obtain faculty feedback on the first draft of the QEP document, to obtain faculty guidance regarding the procedure for general education revision, and to obtain faculty input on issues and considerations in course scheduling and contact hours under a 4x4. These issues were addressed in a series of three small group discussions followed by reports from the small groups and discussion by the faculty as a whole. Small group discussions were recorded by a member of each small group, and faculty discussion was recorded by the secretary to the Dean of the Faculty.

The faculty discussions provided important feedback to the QEP Committee. The faculty felt that the report needed to identify additional means of assessment, to be more specific regarding the cost of implementation and the means of funding, and to better specify the process through which current students would make the transition to a new curriculum. Six of the eight small groups recommended that the existing QEP Committee formulate the general education proposal for the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. Many faculty members suggested reducing the number of general education hours. There was little consensus regarding course scheduling and contact hours. Three of the eight small groups favored 180 contact minutes per week, two of the small groups favored either 150 or 180, but not 200, contact minutes per week, and the remaining groups were undecided or split in their recommendations. The faculty expressed an interest in seeing course schedule models from other schools before resolving the issue of contact hours.

Following the August 2004 faculty discussions of the QEP, the QEP Committee identified three major goals for the Fall 2004 semester: to revise and expand the QEP document, to develop a general education proposal, and to research alternative course/class schedules. The QEP Committee accomplished all three goals for Fall 2004. Designated subcommittees of the QEP Committee researched, developed, and edited each major section of the QEP document. In order to maintain divisional representation, the full committee, in meetings held throughout Fall 2004, developed a general education model. The general education proposal was sent to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee in November 2004, for discussion at the January 2005 meeting. The Dean of Adult Education compiled information on class schedules and meeting times for over 30 institutions from which the QEP Committee will develop three or four possible models for presentation to the faculty for discussion in Spring 2005.

The revised and expanded QEP document was sent to all faculty and staff in January 2005. The QEP Chair moderated an open discussion and question-and-answer session on the QEP at the January faculty meeting. The VPAA led a similar meeting for staff members at the College Assembly in February. Faculty members were asked to communicate feedback on the plan to the Chair of the QEP Committee. Staff members were asked to communicate feedback to the Dean of Academic Services, the staff representative to the QEP Committee.

In addition to the feedback obtained from faculty and staff through the January and February discussions and solicitations, the QEP document was also sent to the SACS Leadership Team for formal comment. The SACS Leadership Team was asked to review the document with respect to the QEP guidelines set forth by SACS and to provide guidance in the development of the plan. Specifically, the President of the College and the Vice President for Business and Finance were asked to provide additional assistance in the development of the funding section, and the Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Services was asked to provide additional assistance in addressing the transition for current and potential students.

Following the meeting of the SACS Leadership Team, the QEP Committee will make final revisions to the QEP document for submission to SACS no later than February 21, 2004. At that point, the primary charge of the QEP Committee, to develop a plan for quality enhancement, will be fulfilled. The QEP Committee will assist the SACS on-site team with its review of the plan and will assist in addressing questions and concerns about the plan in the SACS on-site committee's report. The QEP Committee will also develop three or four course schedule proposals to present to the faculty for discussion, after which it will formulate a course schedule proposal for review by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. At the end of the Spring 2005 semester, responsibility for implementing and assessing the plan will be turned over to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will monitor the implementation and assessment schedules (Appendices G and D) and will appoint the assessment coordinator and other individuals or committees as necessary to fulfill the plan. The Dean of the Faculty will be responsible for planning speakers and workshops to aid faculty in the transition.

After the general education and course schedule revisions are approved by the faculty, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will ask the academic departments to submit their curriculum revisions to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, together with the Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Services and the Dean of Adult Education, will prepare an information sheet on the pending transition for distribution to existing and potential students. Information on the pending transition will also be posted on the College web site and included in the *Academic Catalog* for the year preceding the implementation.

In the Spring semester prior to the Fall implementation of the curriculum changes, revised graduation checksheets will be prepared for all students who are enrolled at the College during the transition and information sessions will be held for students and faculty advisors. Essentially, each student will be evaluated as a transfer student into the new program. Course credit and equivalency will be based upon the principle currently used in evaluating students who transfer in courses that carry a different course weight than the Greensboro College equivalent;

that is, students will receive credit for the course taken (regardless of credit hours) and will receive credit hours as assigned for the course as taken. For example, a student who has taken ENCS 101 (3 credit hours) will be exempt from ENCS 101 (4 credit hours), but will only receive three credit hours. In cases where courses have been deleted and/or replaced with new courses, the Office of Academic Services will consult with the appropriate academic department regarding equivalency, as is currently done when there are revisions to the curriculum that affect students currently enrolled. In order to facilitate this process, after curriculum changes are approved by the faculty, charts showing course equivalencies will be prepared for the general education requirements and for each major. An example of a course equivalency chart for general education requirements is included as Appendix F.

A chart showing implementation tasks scheduled by semester, for Fall 2004-Fall 2006, is included as Appendix G.

X. Resource Requirements and Funding Plan

Resources for Plan Development*

Curriculum development activities for departments \$4,000
In March 2004, the College allocated \$300 per major, or approximately \$7,500 in total, for departmental curriculum development activities to create the “good faith models” of academic programs under a 4x4 model. Approximately \$4,000 of the allocated funds was expended.

Summer stipend for QEP Chair \$2,100
The QEP Chair was paid a stipend of \$2,100 in the summer of 2004 to write the initial draft of the QEP plan.

Course release for QEP Chair \$2,100
The QEP Chair was granted a course release in Fall 2004, which required paying an adjunct instructor.

Retreat for QEP Committee \$500
The QEP Committee held a half-day retreat off campus to finalize the general education proposal and to review the revisions to the QEP plan prepared by each of the QEP subcommittees.

Resources for Plan Implementation

Professional Development \$15,000
While a 4x4 model facilitates active learning strategies and in-depth study, it does not guarantee improved learning. To encourage faculty to adopt new active and engaged learning strategies, the College will present them with models of best practices, such as presentations by faculty from institutions with a history of success in engaged learning, and faculty will be compensated for other curriculum development activities and initiatives related to the 4x4.

Registrar/Academic Advising \$7,500
An estimated 500 person-hours will be required to prepare revised graduation checksheets for students currently enrolled at Greensboro College during the transition from three-credit courses to four-credit courses.

Admissions \$5,000
The Admissions Office will prepare information on the new curriculum for prospective students.

* These expenses have already been paid.

Education Coordinators \$8,000
Due to the complexity of meshing the new 4x4 curriculum with the evolving demands of state and federal standards for education programs, the coordinators of the five education major programs have requested compensation.

Technology and Equipment \$550,000
Technology and equipment play an important role in a 4x4 model, as one conceptual model for four-credit courses involves laboratory work, while another involves the increased use of technology as a means to apply knowledge and improve depth of learning. Therefore, existing needs for laboratory upgrades and technology replacement and acquisition take on increased urgency. The Technology and Equipment Subcommittee of the Institutional Planning Committee has recommended \$550,000 in capital budget expenditures for technology and equipment.

Faculty \$600,000
If faculty members continue to teach 12 credit hours a semester, and students continue to need 124 credit hours to graduate, a transition from a 3x5 curriculum to a 4x4 curriculum does not, in and of itself, necessitate a net increase in faculty (see Appendix H). However, Greensboro College is in the 25th percentile of fourth-tier liberal arts colleges in terms of percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty, and deficits in full-time faculty have been long running problems for several departments. Therefore, the QEP Committee recommends a goal of 10 new faculty positions by 2011, with priority to be determined through the College's institutional planning process, specifically, the Program and Personnel Subcommittee of the Institutional Planning Committee.

Library TBD
The impact of the transition on library resources will depend upon how faculty members restructure their courses. Initial research suggests that many colleges see less emphasis on major papers and more on collaborative projects, new media projects, and presentations. One college experienced an increased need for film and video. The Director of Library Services continues to research the impact of the transition on libraries and will monitor the impact on library resources as the plan is implemented.

Resources for Plan Assessment

Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey \$600
As discussed in Section VIII, "Quality Enhancement Plan Goals and Assessment," the HERI survey will be used to assess professional development and, through additional local items prepared by Greensboro College, increased depth of learning. The HERI will be administered every three years, beginning in Fall 2004.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) \$2,700
As discussed in Section VIII, "Quality Enhancement Plan Goals and Assessment," the NSSE will be used to assess depth of learning and active learning strategies. The NSSE will be administered every other year, beginning in Spring 2006.

College Student Survey (CSS) \$1,000
As discussed in Section VIII, “Quality Enhancement Plan Goals and Assessment,” the CSS will be used to assess depth of learning. The CSS will be administered every year, beginning in Spring 2006.

Assessment Coordinator \$2,100
The College will need to designate an individual to compile the data from the assessments, create an annual report on the progress of the QEP, share those results with the faculty, and recommend, plan, and coordinate faculty development workshops to ensure that the goals of the QEP are met.

Sources of Funding

Capital Campaign
Greensboro College is currently in a comprehensive capital campaign called “The Campaign for Greensboro College: *A Promise to Keep*.” The goal of this campaign is \$100 million. As of January 21, 2005, \$54,602,417 had been raised in gifts and pledges. At present the College is in Phase II of that campaign with an immediate goal of \$30 million. As of January 21, 2005, \$14,117,996 has been raised. In Phase II \$9 million has been targeted for facilities, \$2 million for faculty and staff support, and \$1 million for technology support. Extensive efforts will continue to secure funds through this campaign, including the encouragement of grant-writing opportunities for faculty in discipline-specific areas.

Executive Bachelor Program
The Executive Bachelor Program is an accelerated degree program for working adults that was launched in the spring semester of 2004. The College has committed twenty-percent of the revenue of the Executive Bachelor Program to the funding of academic programs and initiatives at Greensboro College. The revenue projection from the Executive Bachelor Program to the academic program for 2004-2005 is \$65,000. With current enrollment levels, the College expects the program to generate approximately \$400,000 per year in the next five years, \$80,000 of which will annually fund the academic program, including the QEP.

Student Retention
A successful QEP will result in better student retention, thus generating more revenue. For example, much of the cost for the new faculty required by the QEP could be recovered with the retention of 40 additional students, assuming consistent financial aid awards.

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Appendix A

Quality Enhancement Plan Leadership

Members of the SACS Leadership Team

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Summer Day, *Student Representative* (Spring 2004)

Paul Leslie, *Professor of Sociology; Dean of the Faculty*, B.A., Clark University; M.A., Ph.D., Boston University

Shirley Smith, *Professor of Elementary Education; Associate Director of Teacher Education*, B.A. Seton Hill College; M.Ed., Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Ed.D., University of Pittsburgh

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Ann Walter-Fromson, *Professor of Psychology*, A.B., Oberlin College; M.Ed., Ph.D., Duke University

Martha Yarborough, *Trustee Representative*

Appendix B

Suggestions for Focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan (With Faculty and Staff Comments)

1. Teaching Citizenship

A recent report (March, 2003) by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching concluded that American higher education has not met the challenge of nurturing the civic and moral development of students. Caryn McTighe Musil, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, And Global Initiatives At The Association Of American Colleges and Universities Colleges, points out that most students across the nation take part in some kind of community service during their college years through a coordinating center for community service, service-learning courses, or research centers devoted to distinctly civic issues. However, most colleges' efforts at community involvement are not considered central to the academic mission. "All too often," she says, "civic engagement is not rooted in the very heart of the academy: its courses, its research, its faculty work." She argues that we need to develop interactions with our communities that are more complex and reciprocal. More importantly, colleges should try to create "environments in which educating for democratic citizenship is understood not simply as an extracurricular option, but as a fundamental goal of 21st-century liberal education."

"Teaching citizenship" or "civic education" would be a natural topic for Greensboro College's Quality Enhancement Plan. Our mission states that our "students acquire knowledge and develop a critical awareness that allows them to live humanely, responsibly and productively in a free society." We also have a history of internships, an Ethics Across the Curriculum program, the Village 401 initiative and a great relationship with the Greensboro community. Building on these successful ventures, we could further integrate our commitment to the community into the curriculum in a substantive and meaningful way. For example, we might move from a focus on "community service" to add a "service learning" dimension. In our general education curriculum, we might integrate "learning communities" with an experiential learning component to address a particular issue or problem in the community. The urban area of the Triad provides an excellent environment for this, one that is not always available to students at other colleges. By building stronger bridges between our academic programs and the opportunities in the community, we enhance the educational value of what we offer at the college and make an important contribution to the community at the same time.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Enhanced student commitment to citizenship and democratic participation
- Better understanding of the link between academic courses and problems in society
- Students will have higher civic and moral development

Faculty Comments:

- Student learning is the focus. What do we want our students to learn? What kind of student do we want to produce? "Students lack citizenship understanding." QEP is the vehicle to enhance student learning. One member stated that there is a sense of ethics missing. He wants our students to become active citizens.

2. "Focused Teaching, Focused Learning: Transitioning from a 3x5 to a 4x4 Curriculum."

Revise the academic schedule to a 4-4 plan. That is, the standard course would become a 4-credit hour course, and students would take four courses a semester. Faculty teaching load would be three 4-credit courses. Classes could meet Mon., Tues., Thurs., and Fri. with Wednesdays as reading-research-conference days.

- Benefits: This one change would, I think, significantly boost retention and reduce faculty workload—and it would cost practically nothing.
- Drawbacks: It would require a major overhaul of the entire curriculum, including general education requirements. In order for it to work, the Pres. and VPAA—esp. the Pres.—would have to solidly and publicly support the overhaul.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Students also will benefit from a more focused academic agenda, on average taking four courses per semester instead of five.
- This will lead to greater depth and focus for our students as well as greater breadth in the courses offered.
- Students will experience new and creative opportunities for learning that are not necessarily tied to the structure of the classroom environment.
- Retention rates will be increased.
- Scores on major field exams will increase.

Faculty Comments:

- It would benefit both students and faculty to have our attention divided between fewer courses in a 4x4 format
- Would real change occur, or would we just “rearrange the furniture” again as we did with Gen Ed 5 years ago?
- We have lots of faculty who weren’t here five years ago and the critical mass might have shifted.
- Perhaps we should combine a passion for Global Awareness with fewer courses.
- An informal vote showed that most group members would support a 4x4 program.
- Due to time constraints it would be more feasible to work with something we already have in place and improve it, rather than starting from scratch with a big initiative.
- We have local models of successful 4x4 programs including Elon, Salem, and Guilford.
- What would happen to the 124 credits required for graduation?
- Upper level courses would benefit by an increase in enrollment if we went to the 4x4 model.
- This model might be difficult for some program areas, including Kinesiology, but faculty members were willing to explore options.
- Under a 4x4 program, what would the actual class schedule look like? Four 50-minute periods a day?
- How would science labs fit in a 4x4 model?
- We should engage other institutions that have made this transition. Elon has grown tremendously in many ways since they overhauled their programs.
- A greater number of contact hours per course would be helpful in addressing so many competencies.
- A 4x4 schedule with one day class-free for seminars and other student/faculty interaction would be a way to encourage students to be life-long learners.
- Moving to longer class times for 4-hour courses should be supported by faculty development opportunities for learning creative, engaged pedagogies. Also, we noted in our discussion (1) that more in depth (4 hr) courses would facilitate more integration of technology into teaching; and (2) we need to strive for a more focused general education curriculum—e.g. five core values that would be embedded in all or many courses; (3) we should be more intentional about integrating current opportunities for service learning into our curriculum.
- 4 hour classes would help the first year experience
- Example 2 - 4 hour classes, could include service learning
- the politics of converting from 3 hr to 4 hr courses would be a challenge
- Research shows 4 hr course are more intense, students learn more
- 4 hour courses would be better for adults, they would need to focus their attention on only 3-4 topics, instead of 4-5.
- We’d like to know more about this, understand the pros/cons.
- Need to know more about it
- Gives greater depth. Increasing class time, reduces # of courses.
- #3 in student outcomes—where is creativity there

- + thing is student's have hard time taking 5-6 courses per semester
- Wed. off for student? Will students actually do work that day or sleep all day?
- + side –weaker students; could use less classes to focus on what they are taking?
- Conversion to a 4 x 4 curriculum- got support but several caveats

Cons:

1. A lot of work to redo curriculum & schedules (and Gen Ed!!?)
2. Increase workload (in expansion) of old three-hour courses
3. Could produce overlong lectures
4. Increase discrepancies between credit hours and contact hours
5. May fracture too many courses and requirements

Pros:

1. Could make workloads more equitable
2. Students take fewer courses but with better coverage, better preparation
3. Could allow for easy integration of service and/or ethics components in courses
4. Increase creative teaching

Staff Comments

4-hour Credit System (different opinions in this area):

- Does this give students too much free time if 3 classes are enough to be considered full time?
- High school seniors are looking for colleges that offer the 4 credit hour systems.
- Does this allow students more time to focus less classes?
- Restructured curriculum going to the 4 by 4 plan could be beneficial for students (more contact hours) and faculty (having to teach only three courses for full-time load).
- Many of our traditional students spend evening hours in classes that are only available at these times. Is this detrimental? Are they missing out on part of the “college experience” because of this?
- Are weekend classes good for the academic experience? What does the student retain? Are we offering these classes because they are market driven?
- Combining traditional and adult students into classes is beneficial to all, the two populations interact and learn from each other – but at what price to the traditionals?
- 4x4 Curriculum – additional expense to get up and running

Student Comments

- Would like to see this change. Many northern schools have this type of setup.

3. Annual Research and Performance Event

Highlight academic achievement through an annual celebration/display of achievement. If each major required some sort of senior project, these student projects could be presented to the campus (and larger) community. Projects could be presentations of papers, readings of creative works, musical or theatrical performances, etc. We already do this for honors theses. English majors already sit for an oral exam with the English faculty. Perhaps some sort of capstone experience/performance/product could be developed across the campus and highlighted on a special day. Perhaps some sort of publication of student work could be piggybacked onto the day. For a possible model, look at Augustana College's Annual Research and Performance Conference.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increased student confidence in their ability to present in public
- An increased emphasis on academic excellence in the student culture

Staff Comments

- Individual departments can do research and have Performance Events but not as a focus for QEP

4. **First Year Liberal Arts Experience**

Develop some sort of core first-year liberal arts experience. Possible models are, for example, Beloit College, College of Wooster, Southwestern University, Ursinus College, or Washington & Jefferson College. This would be a two-semester sequence. It would need to be offered by faculty across the curriculum. It would need to satisfy the general education objectives now being satisfied by ENCS 101 and 102. That is, even though seminar topics could vary according to the instructor's expertise, each seminar would need to teach writing, oral communication, computer technology, and research techniques. The second semester seminar could emphasize research techniques and be structured around a research project. The student needn't have the same instructor or study the same topic both semesters, although some colleges make the instructor the student's first-year advisor and tie the seminars to advising. At any rate, the focus would be on intellectual inquiry and critical thinking. Here's the College of Wooster's description of its seminars:

The Seminars focus upon the process of critical inquiry in a writing-intensive, small seminar class. They are designed to enhance the intellectual skills essential for liberal learning and for successful participation in the College's academic program. The students engage with a set of issues, questions, or ideas that can be illuminated by the disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives of the liberal arts. Each Seminar is designed and taught by a faculty member who also serves as the academic adviser to the students in that Seminar.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increased student understanding of the liberal arts early in their education.
- Increased appreciation for the interdisciplinary contributions to the liberal arts
- Increased critical thinking and analysis skills
- Better performance in upper level courses that build on the foundation of the liberal arts.

Faculty Comments:

- Perhaps a first year seminar linked to a senior capstone course could replace freshman English.
- Too many students think our general education course are boring
- We should spice up the gen ed curriculum - at least make the titles more appealing and provocative
- Group 5 focused primarily on #4, First Year Liberal Arts Experience
- Noted that 62 of approximately 300 incoming students need to be in Academic Success for Freshmen Program.
- First year experience should be broadened, especially since we are liberal arts small college.
- Global Awareness/Multicultural experiences key to the experience.
- Problem: If first year experience expanded to include second semester or revisited via senior seminar, this could impact credit hour requirements for various majors. Could possibly be addressed through a capstone course.
- With concern about "tinkering" with General Ed. requirements, could the expansion of the first year experience be addressed through international internships, seminars, capstone courses, portfolios, etc? Again, the institution must commit \$ for this to happen. The group noted that many of the topics discussed in addressing the first year experience also touched on #1 Teaching Citizenship, #5 Learning Communities, #6 Service-Learning Across the Curriculum, #9 A Senior Capstone Experience, and especially #10, Increase Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness. Topic #4 could be linked to these other topics and then brought to conclusion in the student's final year. The vehicle of conclusion (portfolio, senior seminar, capstone course, etc) must be designed with Gen. Ed. and the Major program area requirements in mind.
- Needs to be more than 1 year, it needs to be throughout all four years.

Staff Comments

- First Year Program focus worrisome if not joined with other areas because it does not impact the adult education and transfer populations.

5. Learning Communities

Offer linked general education courses, especially for first-year students. Learning Communities are packages of thematically linked courses, enrolling a common cohort of students. The educational benefits are well documented. Students generally learn better in groups. They reinforce learning in and out of class by creating social grouping within their common courses. Wofford College calls such courses

Learning Communities and describes them this way:

Learning communities are an inter-disciplinary approach to learning that link courses in two or more departments with one another through a common theme or topic. Professors in each discipline work together, through a variety of methods, to provide this innovative learning experience for their students.

We do something like this already with our freshman honors courses; it could be expanded to the whole student body.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increase in knowledge acquisition
- Increase in problem solving capability
- Increase in enthusiasm for subject matter
- Increase in retention and graduation rates

Faculty Comments:

- Another member was interested in discussing Learning communities, perhaps in conjunction with the First Year Experience. We discussed the possibility of on campus research presentations where majors from one discipline would meet with two or three other disciplines to present research. Concerns were raised that this might be more than a small department could handle, workload wise, and that it detracts from the honors program, which already presents research at the end of every year. Though there were objections to this program, it was the consensus of the group that students would benefit from multidisciplinary team teaching and learning with students of different majors.
- Learning Communities generally were found to be more effective in larger university settings. GC's intimate atmosphere is not that appropriate for linked courses.
- Don't know whether extending of "partnership" program other than honors would work.
- Team Teaching (?) Discussion how it works. The problem is equal compensation, credit hours, doesn't always "work" in practice. ECU does this in education, but administration would have to support it financially.
- Honors program works- 2 instructors get together, college supports it. Other than that, it won't work with out current budget. Some thought there was discontinuity with team teaching, felt like it was like having appointments throughout the semester instead of having class.

6. Service-Learning Across the Curriculum

Offer something like service learning across the curriculum. Develop a service-learning component to the First Year Seminar. (The course might have to go to 3 semester hours to accommodate the component.) Also develop a service-learning component to each major (or most majors)—that is, one or more courses required for the major with a service-learning component.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increase in several academic performance areas (GPA, writing skills, critical thinking skills)
- Increased commitment to activism and to promoting social justice
- Increase in self-efficacy
- Increase in leadership activities and interpersonal skills
- Increased likelihood in choosing a service oriented career

- Increased participation in service after college

Faculty Comments:

- We already over-emphasize service learning and volunteerism and de-emphasize literacy and reasoning
- We once had a coordinator of service learning, then we moved away from that kind of thing, then it came back with Village 401
- Work - off campus - is a big distraction
- Don't like linking to 1st year seminar. Honors program used to have it.
- Citizenship in this is potential.

Staff Comments

- Village 401 is not tied to the academic curriculum but could be. Building on this for the service learning connection would allow us to use what's already in place.
- How would an adult student or a traditional student who works 30 hours outside of school work this in?
 - Fact active, experiential learning is critical to student success, whether that be in the form of community service, significant leadership experience, study abroad, or internship experience. A program structured around that concept, requiring students to graduate with at least one of the experiential learning options, would enhance the level of student learning outcomes, and prepare students to be better citizens.
 - Students need to gain self confidence by doing internships, studying abroad, doing community service etc. , to prove their own self-worth
 - Work closer with the Faculty to find out what civic and community projects they are working on – for example, Dr. Bond and Dr. Cates both have projects....these need to be publicized more on campus to allow for more campus involvement.
 - Build into all curriculums service community experience

Student Comments

- If it was required for all students to take instead of optional you might have students not want to do it and not contribute to the class.

7. Closing The Academic Skills Gap

Many students arrive at Greensboro College lacking the academic skills necessary to navigate our first year curriculum. Some traditional students either have poor study habits or none at all, do not know how to manage their time, have never had to take notes in class, and can not handle the heavy reading load their courses may require, all because they were able to get by in high school without these skills. Some adult education students may have the same deficiencies due to the lapse in time since they have attended college. If we could identify students upon enrollment who may fall into this category (i.e. use data from past years about students who are on probation, are suspended, or who otherwise are not successful early in their career here) and develop programs to close this gap for students, we may see positive outcomes in terms of retention rates, better student engagement in classes, and more faculty/student interaction time being spent on content rather than improving academic skills.

Develop a plan to target students who may lack academic skills necessary to navigate our curriculum

- Use data from past years about students who are on probation, are suspended, or who otherwise are not successful early in their career here to establish a target group.
- Identify students upon enrollment who may fall into these categories.
- Develop programs to close this gap for students. Possible ideas may be a summer program for these students or a required study skills course.

Drawbacks:

- This project would focus on our weaker students. Does it address enough of our total enrollment?

- This plan may require substantial funds (i.e. a summer program for students? More staff? More faculty so that classes are smaller? etc.).

Possible student outcomes:

- Better academic performance by students
- Better retention rates
- More faculty/student interaction time being spent on content rather than improving academic skills
- Better student engagement in class

Faculty Comments:

- If admissions continues to enroll, admit, then we need a way to serve them.
- If admissions has the PEAK, etc. do we attract students that are high maintenance and not focus on admitting strong students? We like the student services, however are we focusing too much on that? Are middle students getting ignored?
- Should this be addressed in QEP?? Maybe don't want to focus on this now, because our student services are strong, and we have a good system in place. However, the Ford Foundation has paid salaries to this point. Running out of money for PEAK? Now, some salaries are going to have to be in regular budget.

Staff Comments

- Closing the Academic Skills Gap – not our focus – separate program but not QEP – these students need to be mainstreamed as fast as possible so that they are not singled out as being different or having problems

8. An Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience

Creating an integrated four-year educational experience guarantees a Greensboro College graduate applies classroom learning with hands-on practical learning that comes from the process of “experience and doing.” In other words, ...the development of a structured four-year experience that provides for all students the practical application of their academic learning. Presently, this is left up to chance – some students take advantage of the opportunities, while many others do not. This could have a significant impact on student learning and outcomes. We have a solid foundation already at the College for service, leadership development, study abroad, internships, etc. Therefore, this would involve building upon an institutional strength, while simultaneously addressing a limitation – the fact that we have are leaving this up to chance. Two other points that make this notion appealing to us beyond the positive educational value: 1) we know that our students generally like to be involved and when they do so, they do stay with us at higher rates. 2) This can have appeal to parents and students in the marketplace.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of diversity
- Exposure to persons of varying socioeconomic levels
- Enhanced student commitment to citizenship
- Better understanding of the link between academic courses and societal issues
- Student will experience new and creative opportunities for learning that are not tied to the structure of the classroom environment
- Enhanced self-efficacy
- Increased awareness of vocational interests and values
- Enhanced awareness of personal leadership skills
- Improved persistence rates

Faculty Comments:

- Life Long Learning was a big focus of NCATE and would dovetail nicely with the QEP suggestion of an integrated 4-year program. Critical thinking and information Literacy should be included.
- Too much to cram into first year

Staff Comments

- Combining an integrated four-year educational experience with conversion to a 4x4 curriculum would allow for a more focused learning environment in which students are challenged to interact (via practical hands-on learning) on a more regular basis with not only the campus community, but the larger community in general.
- One example of a possible “integrated experience” would be to require that each of year students select a topic to examine. Topics could include the following: Global Awareness, Multiculturalism, Ethics, Citizenship, Service Learning, etc. Students would work on the topic by researching, attending lectures, interacting with the community, etc. An on-going portfolio of materials, notes, etc. could be maintained.
- Students could focus on different topics each year, but would be expected to pick an overall topic for which they would create a “Senior Capstone Presentation” that could be publicly presented to the College and community. Of course, themes and projects could be related to and vary somewhat by major. The end result should be some sort of tangible and measurable product.
- Use #8 as a stepping stone. Integrating over four years ideas such as Senior Capstone Experience, Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness, Literacy, Speaking Classes, etc., with each year representing a different challenge and experience. These would be opportunities not tied to classroom environment. The overall experiences and achievements would culminate in the senior year and would be a requirement to graduate.

Flexibility and creativity would both be important components of such an integrated approach.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Better public speaking
- Better research skills
- Better interpersonal communication
- Better critical thinking
- Measurable Intellectual Output (the “Senior Capstone Presentation”)
- Creation of a personal portfolio
- The creation of more “marketable students”

Concerns discussed:

- Should we be Comprehensive and General or Focused and Specific?
- The need for an institutional identity that remains constant and receives the support it needs to not only survive, but thrive. [An integrated approach like the one above would have the advantage of helping to create an institutional identity by showcasing the intellectual output of the College’s students through their Senior Capstone Presentations and by demonstrating the College’s commitment to experiential learning and to helping students unlock their full potential.]
- Our divergent student population (Traditional, Adult Ed., etc.) and how to work everyone into such a scenario.
- Initially, admissions would have to do a real job of selling such a concept. Ultimately, such a concept should boost retention rates by drawing to the College those students who are most interested in experiential learning, in making the biggest contributions back to society, and in enhancing their post-undergraduate marketability.
- There would need to be some sort of oversight of students to ensure that they were making use of their research day and were pursuing their yearly topics adequately.
- After reviewing the list of suggestions for a focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan at Greensboro College the one that stood out was #8, An Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience. Fact active, experiential learning is critical to student success, whether that be in the form of community service, significant leadership experience, study abroad, or internship experience. A program structured around that concept, requiring students to graduate with at least one of the experiential learning options, would enhance the level of student learning outcomes, and prepare students to be better citizens.

9. **A Senior Capstone Experience**

Developing a senior capstone experience guarantees our students the process of synthesizing their academic learning and other experiences from the first semester to pending graduation. This may happen in some disciplines already, but is it important to ensure that all GC graduates have this opportunity for synthesis. One way of doing this – senior year seminar course that is structured as a “padeia” experience. Not only would it address the culmination of academic learning, but would integrate the other experiences as well.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of the relationship between the liberal arts and the discipline/profession they plan to pursue.
- Enhance the senior year experience, especially for those who may be prone to see the last year as one to simply get through.
- Increased number of students choosing to go to graduate school or advanced professional schools
- Increased number of students getting jobs related to their disciplines and getting those jobs sooner after graduation

Faculty Comments:

- Should be designed by department standards
- Needs more full-time faculty
- Good source of assessment
- Could encourage cross-disciplinary courses
- Could require a service component
- Currently occurs in some disciplines, kinesiology and education

Staff Comments

- Topic of Senior Capstone too narrow in focus it could however be combined with other topics.
- The concept of a Senior Capstone Presentation does have a historical precedent here at the College. During Rev. Dr. Turner M. Jones’s administration (1854-1890), the equivalent of public oral comps were held for graduating girls.

10. **Increase Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness**

Frank Wong, former chair, American Commitments National Panel, American Association of American Colleges and Universities argues that while other institutions in society are also fostering diversity, higher education is uniquely positioned, by its mission, values and dedication to learning, to foster and nourish the habits of heart and mind that Americans need to make diversity work in daily life, as a value and a public good. Carol Musil adds that “democracy cannot fulfill its aspirations without acknowledging diversity and that diversity finds a moral compass in democratic values and principles.” Higher education, many have argued, is the one institution that can nurture Americans’ commitment and capacity to create a society in which democratic aspirations become democratic justice and diversity proves a means of forging a deeper unity.

One possible focus for the QEP might be a program to increase multicultural understanding and global awareness among the members of our college community, especially our students. This might involve the identification of courses that have a multicultural and/or globalization component, possible changes in general education requirements, experiential and service learning initiatives that increase exposure to other cultures, and intentional international experiences.

Possible Student Outcomes:

- Increased abilities to live and work in a diverse global society
- Enhanced attention to diversity and globalization issues of their work
- Increased self-confidence in working with people from different cultures

Faculty Comments:

- If we move forward with more concentration on global studies/multicultural experiences, this includes travel/service in other areas of nation/world (as well as increasing exchange student program). The institution must commit resources (\$) to make this endeavor successful.
- For a meaningful global/multicultural emphasis to occur, the institution must commit \$ and other resources (one member of the group noted that Elon builds international travel expense into their tuition, which accounts for their large number of students studying abroad). The student outcome would be a stronger awareness of one's role in the community, including local to global, and a clearer understanding of multicultural experiences.
- This program or these programs are in the books, but budget for this is too low to support any real program.
- It's not too expensive for groups to travel overseas.
- Think this should be a focus on a more global perspective.
- I think we should focus on a more global perspective"

Staff Comments

- Multicultural & Global Awareness
Students experiencing different political, cultural, economical differences.
Traveling or getting our students out into the community more possibly awarding credits (Village 401)
- Global Perspective Courses:
Is it really needed?
Are our students getting anything out of such courses?

11. Information Literacy Across the Curriculum

Group members found the idea interesting, but were concerned about the lack of assessment feasibility. One possibility would be a pre-test and post-test, but since this subject deals with mostly qualitative values, it is difficult to have data.

12. Speaking Intensive Classes

The idea of speaking intensive classes was brought for discussion. Greensboro College already has several courses with an emphasis on public speaking,

13. Need for Institutional Identity

Faculty Comments

- Greensboro College needs an institutional identity instead of just a disjoint General Education program that amounts to "checking boxes".
- Whatever we adopt, we need understanding of our institutional identity.
- 1st NCATE review, what is our conceptual framework? We did that for education, now we need to do it campus wide.
- We have grad programs, new business program, Village 401, etc. but we need a guiding vision.
- Not opposed to change but we need an understanding of what a liberal arts church-related, Christian values. What does that mean? How do professional programs fit into a liberal arts setting?
- I feel "fragmented" from GC because I don't understand our identity at this point
- We're doing all of this? How does it all connect? What are the student benefits? How does this affect student outcomes?
- Institutional Identity should be our main focus, and perhaps #1,3,4, 6,8 and 10 should be combined?

Staff Comments

- The Need for Institutional Identity (being a college of the church and what that means).
- Identity of the College. Are we trying to be all things to all people? Greensboro College is trying to serve a very diverse audience are we doing it well? Many of our new programs are market driven but does that harm us? We need to determine who we are and be able to articulate that rather than developing a description and then trying to mold ourselves into that.

14. **Develop a Plan to Build On Our Current General Education Program**

- Build the QEP around our current goals - literacy, analytic thinking, writing, technology, ethics - let's not re-invent the wheel
- Let's build on what we have; we've never had the resources to implement the current curriculum goals.

15. **A Portfolio System**

Examine the possibility of portfolio use (similar to Teacher Ed.) to include service-learning component. The portfolio would move with student through their college experience. Problem: How would they be assessed? Portfolio design would follow student major. Undeclared Majors (mostly freshmen) would be assigned topics. Suggestions were made about providing culminating experience (senior capstone course in major, orals, seminar, etc). This experience would be tied to the individual student's portfolio and would occur in the senior year.

Staff Comments

- Our Educational program does this already.
- Does this benefit the rest of our students in the long run? Does this help set our students apart from others?
- Can this be used as a recruiting plan?

16. **Undergraduate Research**

Undergraduate research provides students with an opportunity to obtain skills and experience that will benefit them not only in graduate school but also in their jobs once they complete their undergraduate education. Faculty who work with students in undergraduate research also have an opportunity to combine their disciplinary scholarship with the teaching enterprise, often resulting in conference presentations or publications for both faculty and students.

17. **A 4-1-4 Annual Calendar**

Several staff recommended a 4-1-4 annual calendar. This would break up the calendar year by allowing the month of January to serve as the time in which students would apply their classroom learning with hands-on practical learning that comes from the process of "experience and doing". Students would be given the choice of spending this month in a group student abroad experience; service-learning experience; or, internship or other career mentoring opportunity.

Advantages:

- This method provides the formal means for guaranteeing every Greensboro College student benefits from a wholistic approach to student learning that is beyond the walls of the classroom.
- Students who would not otherwise be financially able to travel overseas for an entire semester would now have a greater opportunity to do so given the shorter timeframe.

- This method would allow students to build deeper relationships with faculty, staff and students for whom they may not usually have the opportunity to relate to.
- There are other institutions that have this type of curriculum and are very successful.

Technical considerations:

- The academic year may need to be extended.
- The initial transition into this curriculum may be difficult for students who are in their final year of college.

History and Mission

- Serving the community has been a tradition of Greensboro College.
- This curriculum would give each student the opportunity to go out and serve in the community.

Addressing the Current Needs with the 4x1x4 Curriculum.

- Provides a framework that the mission of Greensboro College will be evident for each and every student.
- Community service would allow the student to use what they have learned.
- Students who are experiencing academic difficulty will be allowed that one month to improve upon their grades and other areas of their academic studies.
- Retention tool.
- Students majoring in Education would need to be considered due to student teaching.
- Faculty could do a one hour course during that month.
- 4x1x4 curriculum could build into other ideas.
- Applies the liberal arts.
- Formally guarantees that a student will apply what they are learning.
- Social development.

Would allow a student to feel “whole” at the end of their four years through integration.
Builds relationships of student, faculty and students among students.
Great marketing tool!

Faculty General Comments about the Quality Enhancement Plan in General

- We also discussed the fact that 1/3 of Greensboro College’s students were commuters, and took most of their classes at night. Whatever program we implement must involve that constituency as well.
- A big difference between liberal arts colleges and universities is that students at liberal arts colleges seem to have fewer, deeper, educational experiences than students at universities.
- QEP suggestions #2, #4 and #9 could be combined.
- We should be careful not to get too limited by any one theme such as “western civilization”. Many of the values attributed to western cultures are also part of the culture in other parts of the world.
- Whatever we do, it should all point to a unified focus.
- It will be exciting to see some real teamwork across campus in interdisciplinary efforts.
- Topics 1, 6, 10 really can be combined into a single focused Topic concerning Service and Citizenship. Should citizenship/service be Embedded or be subject in specific courses?
- Revamping pre-existing strengths is preferable to adding many new components.
- We need to better integrate the GC curriculum into student lives, in and out of the classroom.

- We need to have a more elegant (smaller) set of Gen-Ed objectives.
- A few student around here do everything - most aren't involved in anything other than class and sports
- Over the past ten years, sports have consumed more of our institutions resources and more of our students time
- The reality of having to measure growth and improvement suggests a rather narrow focus for the QEP - too many of these themes are too broad and difficult to assess
- Does this all *have* to be integrated?" Should it be?
- PALS undercut liberal arts curriculum?
- Area of concern: are student outcomes related to QEP? Does the QEP have a campus wide influence to it?

Copies of a "Unified Curriculum Proposal" written by Fred Oerther were distributed. The six points included in the proposal of October 24, 2002 are included here as part of this report:

1. A series of faculty discussions, lead by the Dean of the Faculty, considering "the Core Values of Western Civilization", the success of the overall academic program in achieving the Mission Statement, development of yearly themes, the selection of books for the "Campus Read", and the production of "White Papers" and policy initiatives relative to the Unified Curriculum.
2. Campus Seminars: A monthly series of presentations by faculty to the campus community on topics and themes of interest within the Liberal Arts and Judeo-Christian traditions.
3. Team Taught Courses: A series of hybrid interdisciplinary courses structured around some important aspects of Western Values, designed and taught by two-person faculty teams. Such courses would be offered every semester, each student would be mandated to take one at some point during each academic year, and each of these courses would earn 6 CR and count towards general education requirements.
4. Campus Read: Each semester the entire campus community is encouraged to read one book, selected by the faculty. If possible, this book might be included as relevant academic content in regularly offered courses. This book could be presented and discussed in the round during the last Campus Seminar of the each semester, all the students would be encouraged to attend and participate. (Perhaps the college would subsidize the purchase of this book.)
5. Community Service Requirement: Greensboro College students would be required to fulfill some minimum community service obligation (not for credit, just an extra-curricular graduation requirement) at some point in their academic career at the College in order to get their degree. The faculty and staff would, of course, inspire this by their own examples.
6. Senior Comprehensive Exam: Graduation requirements would include the production of a paper on the year's theme in Western Civilization, and an oral examination before a Faculty Board. In addition to providing an incentive fore students to create their own understanding of a Unified Curriculum in the Values of Western Civilization, such events would no doubt prove highly entertaining.

Staff General Comments

Topics suggested to be combined as one

- Learning Communities & First Year Liberal Arts Experience
- First Year Liberal Arts Experience, Learning Communities, An Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience and A Senior Experience

- Teaching Citizenship, Annual Research and Performance Event, First Year Liberal Arts Experience, Service-Learning Across the Curriculum, An Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience and Increase Multicultural Understanding and Global Awareness.

Combine the following:

- Focused Learning, Focused Teaching: Transitioning from 3x5 to 4x4 Curriculum
- An Integrated Four-Year Educational Experience
- Senior Capstone / Annual Research and Performance Event

- If class sizes could be held at 15, several of the suggestion on the “Suggestion for Focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan at Greensboro College” would be possible. Annual Research and Performance Events (3) and Closing the Academic Skills Gap (7) and a Senior Capstone Experience (9) would work within a structure of this type. Do we though, have documentation to support the theory that large classes are detrimental to the learning experience here at Greensboro College?

Appendix C

Position Paper on Focused Learning, Focused Teaching (Prepared by Ann Walter-Fromson for the SACS Leadership Team)

The 4x4 Curriculum: A Proposal for Quality Enhancement at Greensboro College

Why would we want to select this option?

Changing to a 4 X 4 plan is the most significant change we can make to the curriculum and hence, to student learning and academic life. Colleagues at other institutions who have undergone this shift report that it is the "single best thing" for curriculum reform; faculty at Greensboro College who have taught under this system at other institutions likewise see it as an advantage for both students and faculty. The 4-hour courses allow for more sophisticated course content at the same time that they afford more academic support to the students. With fewer course preparations and fewer numbers of students per semester, faculty will have more time to focus on each course, both in preparing to teach and in being available to work closely with students. Students taking just four courses per semester can concentrate their efforts more effectively; devoting more time to each course would make study and seeking tutorial assistance more manageable. These changes would benefit all students, but particularly adult students (whose lives are already divided between work, home, and school) and students with learning difficulties (who often experience problems with organization and concentration).

Adding a fourth credit hour to each 3-hour course increases the expectations for each course. The fourth hour could be devoted to developing students' core academic skills such as oral communication, writing, or the use of technology. Some disciplines may elect to add experiential learning requirements or a laboratory component to their courses. Others may choose to integrate a focus on ethics, citizenship, or global awareness. The additional time may be used to support student scholarship, with more students becoming involved in research projects. It is expected that with fewer courses that are taught in greater depth, students will retain more of their learning. Faculty teaching three rather than four courses per semester may also have more time for professional development activities that can enrich their teaching.

There are some practical reasons for supporting a change to a 4 X 4 curriculum. It is the least expensive way to reduce faculty teaching loads. For a small faculty with many responsibilities outside the classroom (academic advising, committee work, club advising), reallocating workload to focus instructional energies on fewer courses could improve faculty effectiveness in the classroom while relieving some of the burden of multiple demands. The four credit hour system is currently used by many institutions (with many of those being more selective than Greensboro College) and is popular with both students and instructors. Hence, it could be a drawing point for potential students as well as for recruiting new faculty. The change could be cost effective for students (buying course materials for fewer courses each semester) and for the college (possibly less need for adjunct instructors).

Shifting to a 4 X 4 curriculum would also open the door to some other exciting opportunities for change by incorporating one or more of the other options presented as a focus for the Quality

Enhancement Plan such as developing citizenship, global awareness, or a coherent first year experience for all students.

What would be needed to effect this change?

Changing to a 4 X 4 curriculum would require a considerable investment of faculty time and good will. In the short run, the workload of faculty would be significantly increased, as shifting to a four-credit system [presuming 4 courses per semester for eight semesters = 32 courses needed to graduate] would involve making changes at every level of the curriculum: individual courses, requirements for majors and minors, general education requirements, and B.A./ B.S. requirements. One of the conditions that promotes change is providing real incentives to faculty to gain their support and motivation for time-consuming innovations (ASHE-ERIC, 2002). Providing stipends for course development, supporting conference and workshop attendance for learning new approaches to instruction (e.g. problem-based learning, service learning), and building a supportive library of instructional materials would all communicate to faculty the value of their efforts at curriculum change. Committed leadership is also needed to promote curriculum change--a determination to work through problems that may arise and a clear sense of the goal. The issue of equity for science instructors currently teaching courses with labs (4 hours credit) must also be addressed. Designating all course experiences as equal in credit would not preclude adjusting the teaching load credit of science faculty to put it on a par with other faculty. To do so would likely require hiring lab instructors.

Hiring a consultant is another consideration. There is currently a lack of consensus among those supportive of a change to a 4 X 4 curriculum as to what the schedule of course meeting times should look like and how long each class period should last. A consultant might be able to present us with 5 or 6 models used by other institutions and the advantages and drawbacks of each. Other areas in which we might benefit from a consultant's services would be revising the majors and developing transition plans for moving to the new curriculum. A consultant may also be able to address concerns of faculty regarding reduction in the number of courses required for the major or for general education.

To close, I will paraphrase one of the many colleagues who contributed to this document. I see this curriculum change as the most important thing that could happen to meet the (perhaps unspoken) goal of this college: to help students who need much academic support --students who would probably not be successful in many other institutions--have a chance to achieve their academic goals.

Reference

ASHE-ERIC (2002). Building conditions that promote change. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, 29 (3), p. 77 (8 p).

Appendix D

QEP Planned Schedule of Assessments

BASELINE DATA

| <u>Semester</u> | <u>Assessments</u> |
|------------------|---|
| Fall 2004 | HERI Faculty Survey with local items General Education Awareness and Perception Survey (GEAPS) General Education Assessment Report (GEAR) |
| Spring 2005 | College Student Survey (CSS) |
| Fall 2005 | GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2006 | National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) CSS |

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION BEGINNING FALL 2006

| <u>Semester</u> | <u>Assessments</u> |
|------------------|---|
| Fall 2006 | GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2007 | CSS |
| Fall 2007 | HERI Faculty Survey with local items GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2008 | NSSE CSS |
| Fall 2008 | GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2009 | CSS |
| Fall 2009 | GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2010 | NSSE CSS |
| Fall 2010 | HERI Faculty Survey with local items GEAPS GEAR |
| Spring 2011 | CSS |

Appendix E

Questions Developed for the HERI Survey

Additional Questions for Greensboro College Faculty

Please mark your answers to items 36.- 56. on your HERI Faculty Survey at the bottom of page 4 in the section marked “ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS”. Note carefully the answer choices for each group of items.

In the past two years have you engaged in any of the following activities?

(Mark one answer on your HERI survey for each item)

Answer choices: A = YES, B = NO

36. Attended a conference in my field.
37. Presented at a conference in my field.
38. Participated in a workshop on active/engaged learning.
39. Attended a conference on pedagogy/teaching methods.
40. Presented at a conference on pedagogy/teaching methods.

In how many of the courses that you teach do you use each of the following?

(Mark one answer on your HERI survey for each item)

Answer choices: A = All, B = Most, C = Some, D = None

41. Written assignments that require students to analyze basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory (such as examining a particular case, situation, research study, or work of art in depth and considering its components).
42. Written assignments that require students to synthesize and organize ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.
43. Written assignments that require students to make judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions.
44. Written assignments that require students to apply theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.
45. Written assignments that require students to reflect upon their experiences in an internship, fieldwork, or service learning setting.
46. As part of coursework, require students to attend and reflect on cultural or educational events (such as campus lectures, art exhibits, concerts, recitals).

47. Written assignments that require students to approach a topic and articulate ideas from multiple perspectives.
48. Written assignments that require students to summarize and reflect on required readings for a course.

(Mark one answer on your HERI survey for each item)

Answer choices: A = All, B = Most, C = Some, D = None

49. Activities that require students to think metacognitively (such as fostering awareness or evaluation of students' own learning processes including planning, problem-solving, and strategy use).
50. Oral presentations or in-class activities that require students to analyze basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory (such as examining a particular case, situation, research study, or work of art in depth and considering its components).
51. Oral presentations or in-class activities that require students to synthesize and organize ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.
52. Oral presentations or in-class activities that require students to make judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions.
53. Oral presentations or in-class activities that require students to apply theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following:

(Mark one answer on your HERI survey for each item)

Answer choices:

A = agree strongly, B = agree somewhat, C = disagree somewhat,

D = disagree strongly, E = don't know

54. Service learning is an effective way to address the civic dimensions of disciplines/professions.
55. The teaching of course content is enhanced through the use of service learning.
56. There are adequate services and resources to support integrating active/engaged learning strategies into courses at Greensboro College.

Appendix F

General Education Transition Chart

[This is a sample draft, based on the proposal currently under consideration by the faculty.]

| Discipline | Requirement in new gen ed | If a student already has.... | He/she needs this to complete gen ed requirements |
|--|--|--|--|
| English | 8 hrs. (101/104, 102) | None | 101/104, 102 (8 hrs.) |
| | | 100 (6 hrs.) | 101/104, 102 (8 hrs.) |
| | | 101/104 (3 hrs.) | 102 (4 hrs.) |
| | | 101/104, 102 (6 hrs.) | None |
| Fine Arts | 4 hrs. | None | Fine arts course (4 hrs.) |
| | | Approved fine arts courses (1-6 hrs.) | None |
| Foreign Language/Global Perspective | 8 hrs. (4 hrs. of foreign language; 4 hrs. of either an additional foreign language course [same language] or a GP course) | None | 4 hr. of foreign language; 4 hrs. of either an additional foreign language course (same language) or a GP course |
| | | Foreign language 101 (3 hrs.) | 102 (4 hrs.) or a GP course |
| | | Foreign language 101, 102 (6 hrs.) | None |
| | | GP course (3 hrs.) | Foreign language 101 |
| | | Foreign language course 101, GP course (6 hrs.) | None |
| History | 4 hrs. | None | History course (4 hrs.) |
| | | 101, 102, 141, 142 (3-6 hrs.) | None |
| Social Science | 4 hrs. | None | Social science course (4 hrs.) |
| | | Approved social science course(s) (3-6 hrs.) | None |
| Kinesiology | 4 hrs. (100) | None | KIN 100 (4 hrs.) |
| | | KIN 100 (2-3 hrs.) | None |
| Religion | 8 hrs. (REL 101 or 102; and either REL 101, 102, 201, 202; ETH 200; PHL 201, 202) | None | REL 101 or 102; and either REL 101, 102, 201, 202; ETH 200; PHL 201, 202 (8 hrs.) |
| | | Any one course of the choices listed (3 hrs.) | Any one of the choices listed (student must have either 101 or 102) (4 hrs.) |
| | | REL 101 or 102 (3 hrs.), any one of the other choices listed | None |
| Science | 4 hrs. | None | Lab science course (4 hrs.) |
| Discipline | Requirement in new gen ed | If a student already has.... | He/she needs this to complete gen ed requirements |
| | | Approved lab science course (4 hrs.) | None |
| | | Science course with no lab (3 hrs.) | Lab science course (4 hrs.) |
| Mathematics | 4 hrs. | None | Math course (4 hrs.) |
| | | Approved math course | None |
| | 48 hours total | | |

B.A./B.S. Distinction

| Degree | Requirement in new gen ed | If a student already has.... | He/she needs this to complete gen ed requirements |
|---------------|---|---|--|
| B.A. | 8 hrs. of 200+ foreign language, literature, or fine arts | None | 8 hrs. of 200+ foreign language, literature, or fine arts |
| | | Foreign language 201 (3 hrs.) | Foreign language 202, or 200+ literature or fine arts (4 hrs.) |
| | | Foreign language 201, 202 (6 hrs.) | None |
| | | 200-level literature course other than the one counting for gen ed (3 hrs.) | Foreign language 201, or 200-level or above literature or fine arts (4 hrs.) |
| B.S. | 4 hrs. of 200+ MATH; 4 hrs. of another 200+ MATH or 200+ science | None | 4 hrs. of 200+ MATH; 4 hrs. of another 200+ MATH or 200+ science (8 hrs.) |
| | | 200+ MATH (3 hrs.) | 200+ MATH or 200+ science (4 hrs.) |
| | | 200+ science (4 hrs.) | 200+ MATH (4 hrs.) |
| | | 200+ MATH; 200+ other MATH or 200+ science (6-7 hrs.) | None |
| | 8 hours total | | |

Appendix G

QEP Implementation by Semester

| Fall, 2004 | Spring, 2005 | Fall, 2005 | Spring, 2006 | Fall, 2006 |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| QEP Committee submits first draft of plan. | CIC reviews gen ed proposal | QEP speaker/workshop | Departments prepare 06-07 course schedules (4x4 curriculum) | New curriculum is implemented |
| Faculty workshops and discussions on QEP draft, gen ed course scheduling | Faculty reviews gen ed proposal | CIC reviews departmental proposals | Office of Academic Services prepares new checksheets for all students | QEP speaker/workshop |
| QEP committee develops gen ed proposal | QEP committee prepares final draft for SACS (due 2/21/05) | Faculty reviews departmental proposals | Information sessions for students on transition | |
| QEP committee revises draft | QEP committee prepares course schedule proposal | QEP assessment coordinator is appointed | Students register for 06-07 (4x4 curriculum) | |
| QEP committee researches course schedules/contact hours | CIC reviews course schedule proposal | | | |
| | Faculty reviews course schedule proposal | | | |
| | Departments prepare CIC proposals | | | |
| | VPAA and VP Student Life and Enrollment prepare information on transition for campus distribution (students, admissions, etc) | | | |

Appendix H

The Impact of a 4x4 Curriculum on Faculty Resources (Prepared by Cynthia Hanson for the Greensboro College faculty)

The purpose of this analysis is not to minimize the serious need for more faculty at Greensboro College. Our faculty needs are well documented and well substantiated in Priority Planning Requests for faculty positions, some of which have been on record since 1999. Our recent Compliance Report to SACS notes that GC is in the 25th percentile of tier four schools in terms of percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty. Deficits in full-time faculty have been long running problems for several departments at GC.

The question that this paper addresses is the impact of changing from a three-credit course system to a four-credit course system on faculty resources. The premise of the paper is that a four-credit course system does not *necessarily* result in an increase in faculty needed, and that increases or decreases in faculty requirements will depend on other changes to the curriculum that come about as a result of the change in credit hours.

An appropriate analysis can be presented by calculating credit hours. If faculty members are still teaching 12 credit hours and students still need 124 credit hours to graduate, the net effect on faculty resources will be zero. Faculty members are teaching 25% fewer courses and students are taking 25% fewer courses.

The argument may be clarified by presenting a flawed analysis. The one below was posted on a national listserv (CICDEAN) by a college dean.

One thing to keep in mind is that if you make this switch [to a 4x4] you will probably need to add faculty (or increase class sizes). For example, let's say that you now have 10 faculty each offering 4 courses that have 20 seats in them. That gives you 800 seats, and can accommodate 160 students each taking five classes. If those same 10 faculty each offered 3 4-credit courses, you now have 600 seats, and can only accommodate 150 students each taking 4 classes.

The problem with this analysis is that the first group of students is taking 15 credit hours and the second group of students is taking 16 credit hours. If you re-do the case of the three credit system where there are 800 seats to include students taking 16 credit hours or 5.33 three-credit courses, you see that those 800 seats will only accommodate 150 students ($150 \times 5.33 = 800$).

If a major or program area increases credit hours required, then it will increase faculty requirements for that area. If the new general education curriculum moves demand from 100-level courses to under-subscribed upper-level (non-major) electives, then it could alleviate some of the pressures on faculty resources. The first effect can be predicted (when the departmental plans are approved by the faculty), the second cannot. It is in fact very difficult to predict the net effect of the transition on full-time and part-time faculty needs.