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The University of Mississippi Medical Center

Call for QEP Proposals

As the University of Mississippi Medical Center prepares for re-affirmation of accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS-COC), proposals are requested that detail specific approaches to preparation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for this campus. The QEP Steering Committee will review, select and recommend four of the submitted QEP proposals to the UMMC SACS Leadership Team for consideration as this institution's QEP topic.

SACS Accreditation and the QEP

Background

This institution has a primary accreditation by SACS-COC, which is charged with accreditation of all institutions of higher learning in an eleven state southern region. All other accreditations for academic programs on this campus require continuation of SACS accreditation. Furthermore, continuation of federal funding, including research awards and federal student loans, are dependent upon maintenance of this accreditation.

A QEP is one of several components that will be reviewed by a site visit team from SACS in 2011 and must be approved for re-affirmation of our accreditation. Specifically, the medical center must have:

“developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the university, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.” (The Principles of Accreditation, SACS-COC, 2008)

Opportunity

Because a QEP is developed by an institution's members in response to an internal assessment of student learning needs, it provides an opportunity to reflect, plan, and devote new resources to improvement of the campus learning environment. This opportunity offers us the ability to effect focused, positive, significant and long-reaching improvements to our educational mission.

QEP History at UMMC

The QEP Steering Committee began to solicit campus needs related to student learning for the QEP on January 5, 2009, with an article in the campus newsletter, CenterView; distribution of several thousand “QEP - It's a good idea” lapel buttons; detailed analyses of student learning data from academic affairs officers in each of the five UMMC schools; posters and suggestion boxes that were distributed across campus; a mailing to alumni; and an e-mail solicitation from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to all faculty, staff, students and employees. The “QEP - It's a good idea” campaign continued through April, 2009 with 33 focus groups that were conducted with campus constituents by members of the QEP Steering Committee. From these efforts, almost 550 individual topic suggestions were recorded, of which close to 375 met criteria for further consideration. Subsequently, qualitative research methods were employed to group topic suggestions into six areas of campus need related to student learning. Following review by the QEP Steering Committee, this final list of six areas of need was selected for distribution to and consideration by campus constituencies.



Areas of Campus Need:

- **Curriculum expansion beyond classical biomedical topics**
- **Campus collegiality**
- **Instructional enhancement**
- **Accommodation to learning styles**
- **Instructional services/facilities**
- **Enhancement of instructional technologies**

These six areas of need will be vetted to campus constituencies in two “town hall” meetings to be held between mid-May and June 30, 2009; by publication in CenterView; and through an e-mail to all UMMC faculty, students and employees. An additional e-mail will be delivered to UMMC alumni. This document will be updated appropriately and made available to the campus to guide individuals in the preparation of QEP proposal documents. The deadline for receipt of formal proposals will be Wednesday, September 30.

QEP proposals will be reviewed by a QEP Proposal Review Group in consultation with the SACS Leadership Committee. Four proposals will be selected to receive QEP Proposal Awards of \$5,000 each and to submit an expanded proposal in competition for the subsequent round of review in which a single submission will be selected for development as the UMMC QEP Proposal. The QEP Proposal Awards will be awarded to the finalists or finalist teams as UMMC accounts. While those funds cannot be used for salary supplementation, they may be used for travel, contractual services, commodities, and equipment within state guidelines.

Guidelines for Preparing Proposals

Areas of Need

The areas of need that should be addressed by individuals or teams in crafting their QEP proposals have been identified following a comprehensive, campus-wide needs assessment and may be summarized as follows:

- curriculum expansion beyond classical biomedical topics,
- campus collegiality,
- instructional enhancement,
- accommodation to learning styles,
- instructional services/facilities, and
- enhancement of instructional technologies.

Each QEP proposal submission should identify specifically how that proposal addresses one or more of these areas of need.

Proposal Review Criteria

A QEP Proposal must address the salient features identified by SACS-COC as essential to an acceptable QEP. These are identified as:



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- demonstrating a capability to exert a transformative effect on student learning or the learning environment at the medical center,
- emerging from/directly addressing identified campus needs,
- describing the group or groups targeted by the QEP and the impact projected for the campus as a whole,
- defining the specific outcome measures by which success of the QEP will be verified and the methodology to be used for that assessment,
- delineating the timeline for the project, and
- describing the budgetary and personnel needs for initiation, implementation and completion of the QEP.

The degree to which a proposal meets these criteria will be assessed by a review group in consultation with the SACS Leadership Committee. The relationship of a proposal to the institutional mission and resources of the medical center will be additional and meaningful factors in consideration of each submission.

A Proposal should be prepared in the form of a manuscript with the following sections.

1. Descriptive Title of the QEP (not to exceed 100 characters)
2. Identification of Campus Need
 - Present a cogent argument that clearly defines that element of our current campus learning environment that would be addressed by the proposed QEP topic?
 - Documentation of needs from medical center assessments should be supplemented by a scholarly review of the supporting literature.
3. Statement of Purpose
 - Using the following standard format, define the focus of the proposed QEP.
“The [proposed QEP topic] will exert a positive impact on [student learning or the environment for student learning] at the University of Mississippi Medical Center by . . .”
4. Plan of Action
 - Narrative description of types and sequence of activities being proposed: Detail the timeline for initiation and completion of the elements of the QEP. If proven necessary, include a capability for ongoing review and mid-course correction. A graphical representation of the timeline is a desirable supplement to the narrative.
 - Institutional resource needs: Identify needs for faculty/staff personnel, facilities, space, equipment, supplies, and administrative support. Include a budget of estimated costs. A core team of existing faculty/staff may be identified but is not essential.
 - Student learning outcomes: Detail the specific criteria to be used to assess the impact of the QEP and what means will be used to gather the required data and provide statistical validation that the outcomes have been achieved. For example, effects on nationally validated learning instruments, changes in class/course structure or number, graduation rates, numbers of faculty/student involved in new learning activities, measures of student/faculty satisfaction, etc. Use of direct and indirect assessments should be defined.
5. Summary Statement
 - Clearly relate the proposed impact of the QEP on the ability of the medical center to improve achievement of its educational mission.

You can make a difference.



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Incentives

The Principal Author of each the four most viable QEP proposals will receive a \$5,000 award. In the case of team submissions, team members should be identified as Co-Principal Authors. The QEP proposal awards will be awarded to the finalists or finalist teams as UMMC accounts. While those funds cannot be used for salary supplementation, they may be used for travel, contractual services, commodities, and equipment within state guidelines.

Proposal Workshops

Individuals who are interested in preparation of a QEP Proposal should contact Dr. Rob Rockhold, assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, 984-2810, rockhold@pharmacology.umsmed.edu. Workshops will be arranged to provide additional guidance.

Manuscript Submission

Format

The proposal should be prepared as a Microsoft Word document with one-inch margins and 12-point typeface. Excluding bibliography, the narrative component may not exceed eight (8) single-spaced pages in length. Space devoted to graphical representations of a timeline or other figure must adhere to that limit. The name(s), e-mail address(es), and primary telephone number(s) of the author(s), along with the title of the proposal, should be indicated on a separate cover page.

Submission Procedure

Proposals must be received by the QEP Proposal Review Group no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 30, 2009. Print copies of the proposal should be delivered Dr. Rob Rockhold, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Room U173, University of Mississippi Medical Center, 2500 North State Street, Jackson, MS, 39216-4505. Electronic documents should be emailed as an attachment to rockhold@pharmacology.umsmed.edu.