

QEP Topic Conversations: Focus Areas

August 28, 2009

- **CBU's Lasallian Identity** : Within this focus area there was a clear emphasis on *service learning* and the need to include a service learning component – or service learning opportunities – in the curriculum to provide opportunities for community outreach. The importance of *internships* could/should also come under this “umbrella,” as there is a clear need to provide and promote practical, real world learning experiences; perhaps some sort of capstone non-classroom project(s). Above all, there was a consensus that, as an institution in the Lasallian tradition, we need to be more intentional about incorporating *mission* into our courses in more explicit terms.
- **First Year Experience**: Participants agreed that we need to address clearly perceived deficiencies in students' *academic skills* and *dispositions* or *attitudes*. However, we should approach this in a more constructive manner – not emphasizing said deficiencies – by creating and nurturing a positive environment to foster student success. Within this focus area there was also clear agreement that we ought to emphasize *information literacy* and also include protocols and programs for identification of and intervention for “at risk” students. Moreover, there was a suggested connection to advising as well as the indispensable role of the library in student success. This would be separate/distinct from the Freshman Orientation Program, but could conceivably build on or dovetail with what is already in place in this Program.
- **Student Advising**: Such a focus area would obviously – or, at least, ideally – affect *retention*, but the inclusion of a mentoring component would also tie in to mission and prove demonstrative of our distinctiveness as a Lasallian university. Central to this theme or focus area would be the need for systematization and/or automation of the advising system, and also tying it to admissions and the overall admissions process. With respect to retention – as well as the other components mentioned thus far – we might want to think seriously about the intrinsic value of *academic referrals* (i.e., designating department “centers” for students to receive the assistance they need to succeed in their respective programs).
- **Participants**: E. Welch (Engineering), A. Yanushka (Mathematics), A.M. Wranovix (Literature & Languages), T. Burke (Psychology/Honors Program), T. Ford-Dysart (Admissions), K. Prien (Business), C. Matz (Library), R. Potts (Education), S. Geis (QEP Chair); two students were also invited – and agreed – to participate in the process but failed to attend or notify of reason(s).