

TO: CBU Faculty and Staff
FROM: Scott D. Geis, QEP Chair
SUBJECT: QEP Topic Selection
DATE: February 25, 2009

Good afternoon!

It was early summer of 2007 The sun was shining brightly, and there was a nice, warm summer breeze on the afternoon Dr. Tony Aretz – our former Academic Vice President – called me and asked if he could speak with me in his office; he said he had an “opportunity” he would like for me to consider. I was in a good mood that day, due in no small part to the fact that I – along with Tony and Cathy Carter – would be departing Memphis for Rome in a couple of days (assuming my passport arrived, which it ultimately did, at 8:00 on the morning we left).

When I arrived at Tony’s office, he handed me a document entitled *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation*, published by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (or SACS, as Tony would come to refer to it). He opened the handbook to page 21, where my eyes were drawn to large, bold, blue print that read: **The Quality Enhancement Plan**. I obviously had no idea what this was, and the more we talked, the more apparent it became that this was relatively new to Tony as well. He did know that this was a new “piece” in the whole reaffirmation of accreditation process, that he needed someone to serve as chair, and would I be willing to serve in this capacity? Tony assured me of two things: First, it would not involve a significant commitment in terms of time and energy; and second, that he would be there to help mentor me through the whole process – from start to finish. Hindsight being what it is, I probably should have taken the sage advice of one of my senior colleagues and said, simply, “No thanks. I’m abstaining from SACS.” But, as I said, I was in a good mood, it was a beautiful day, I like Tony, and so I thanked him for the opportunity and for his trust.

Truth be told, I do see this as a privilege and a wonderful opportunity: not to advance my career at CBU, but to play what I hope will be an integral part in our re-thinking together – at another level entirely – how we can better serve our students. That’s what this Quality Enhancement Plan – or QEP – is expressly designed to do. And in the coming weeks and months, I’ll be attempting to give each and all of you a clearer sense of what the QEP is all about, and the extent to which our success is directly tied to broad-based, university-wide support, buy-in, and involvement.

In the next week or so, you’ll be receiving a letter from yours truly that will address the nature and purpose of the QEP, as well as our first step in the overall process, which is to select a topic that’s directly related to improving student learning. More to the point: the whole purpose – indeed, the sole purpose – of the QEP is to change and transform the learning culture here at CBU, and to do so in a way that will persist long past our SACS visit in 2011. In short, we’re doing this for our students, not for SACS. Thank you very much, and I’ll be in touch!

Peace,
Scott

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