Introducing the QEP

HCC INSPIRE: Innovative Science Program Initiatives to Reform Education:

Changing the way we teach based upon how our students learn, beginning with the sciences

HCC INSPIRE will improve student learning in the sciences by providing real-world, active and collaborative learning opportunities. We define real-world, active and collaborative learning as students engaging with each other and with faculty in a mutual search for in-depth understanding, meaning or solutions in the context of real-world situations relevant to everyday life and career.

The sciences were chosen as the starting point for the QEP because of the growing national need for improvements in science education. Over time, HCC INSPIRE-driven strategies and infrastructure will allow extensive scaling up of real-world, active and collaborative learning across all disciplines. Students engaged in this type of learning will gain skills identified as important for 21st century learning: critical thinking, information literacy, communication, personal and social responsibility, teamwork and quantitative reasoning.

QEP Q & A: What is a QEP and why is it important?

What is a QEP?

QEP stands for Quality Enhancement Plan. As part of its reaffirmation process, HCC is required by our accrediting agency (SACSCOC) to develop a comprehensive, 5-year QEP that will improve student learning, engagement and success.

What is SACSCOC?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional accrediting body for institutions of higher learning in most of the southern United States and Latin America. HCC is accredited by SACSCOC to award 2-year Associates’ and Applied Associates’ degrees. Reaffirmation of accreditation occurs every ten years.

Why is accreditation important?

Accreditation by one of the regional accrediting bodies like SACSCOC ensures that HCC maintains its high educational standards and international reputation. In addition, accreditation means that HCC and its students will have access to federal grant funding, including student financial aid, and students’ credits from HCC may be transferred to other accredited institutions.

What is unique about the QEP?

The QEP is unique in that it is a faculty-driven effort with district-wide, broad-based involvement from all stakeholders: students, staff, faculty, administration, the HCC Board of Trustees, and the community.

How was the QEP developed?

HCC’s QEP is the result of:

- District and college-level forums
- Over 400 online topic suggestions by staff, administrators, faculty and students
- Eight white papers
- District-wide roundtable discussion
- District-wide faculty and student surveys
Read the QEP online

The QEP has its own web pages on the SACS web pages online at hccs.edu/qep. On this site you can learn more about the process HCC used to create the QEP and read the entire QEP document. You may also read the online at hccs.edu/qepdocument.

The QEP Director is Dr. Tineke Berends. After a post-doctoral fellowship at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, she joined Houston Community College as a biology instructor at the Northwest College in 1995. Read more of Dr. Berends’ biography on the QEP web pages referenced above.

Key elements of HCC INSPIRE

- Improving Student Learning: Enhancing existing biology, chemistry and physics courses with substantial problem-based learning modules and concurrent development of online, module-supporting learning object collections.
- Improving Student Engagement: Increasing STEM student access to extra-curricular learning opportunities through district-wide expansion and sponsoring of science clubs.
- Improving Student Success: Developing more student learning communities involving science courses and a science-based Freshman Success Course.

SACS is coming

A SACSCOC reaffirmation team will be visiting the HCC campuses on November 7 – 10, 2011. You may be asked to answer questions and provide feedback about the QEP. This issue of the QEP newsletter is designed to give you the kind of information about HCC’s QEP that you might be expected to know.

For more information, questions or feedback, please contact:
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