

QEP  
Committee Meeting  
May 1, 2009

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Members present: James LaPlant (Chair), David Monetti, Kimberly Tanner, Deborah Davis, Karen Jacobsen, Maura Schlairet, Attila Cseh, Michael Schmidt, Kristina Cragg, John Trombetta, Jeramy Baum, Jane Kinney, Tom Manning, Ivan Nikolov, Mike Savoie, Jan Fackler, Sonya Sanderson

Members absent: Barbara Gray, Matthew Richard, Karla Hull, Luran Bihl, Regan Morgan

I. J. LaPlant introduced the committee's newest members:

- Maura Schlairet, College of Nursing (replacing J. Humphrey)
- Jeramy Baum, student representative from Arts & Sciences

II. VSU Undergraduate Research Inventory

- K. Cragg gave a presentation of compiled data from the departmental interviews completed by Strategic Research & Analysis. This data provides our committee with a baseline of where VSU is at with undergraduate research. (*see attachment #1*)
- The question was raised of whether any students were interviewed using the interview guide. K. Cragg said no, and that the committee needs to define what the QEP is going to offer before that happens.

III. Updates

- Student membership – Ofelia Nikolova has recruited five students for the QEP committee. The SGA has a new president coming in; that person will be tagged once they're in office.
- Publicity – a little blip was put on the second page of the Spectator about the QEP. It's a start. We still have time to get the word out and the Marketing subcommittee will be meeting soon. Also, Kate Heine of the Communications Unit is willing to help get the word out through the VSU Connections website.

Note: During student orientation this summer, all incoming freshmen will receive a document with a description of various campus organizations and activities. A description of the QEP has been included in this document.

- Student Learning Outcomes – the minutes from the SLO and Assessment subcommittee meeting were handed out. Four possible SLO's were chosen, J. LaPlant would like the committee's feedback on them.

IV. Charges for the subcommittees

- Literature Review/Best Practices –
  - Analyze the literature on undergraduate research, best practices, models for an OUR

- Desired SLOs, Actions to be implemented, Timeline –
  - Form measurable student learning outcomes
  - Outline curriculum and extracurricular actions to be implemented
  - Provide 5-year timeline for the QEP
- Assessment –
  - Research assessment and implementation methods
  - Set performance criteria
  - Set up a schedule of assessment
- Organizational Structure & Resources –
  - Outline the organizational structure for an OUR
  - Articulate a “low end” and “high end” budget
  - Identify resources on campus for the office as well as potential extramural funding
- Marketing/Outreach –
  - Publicize the QEP across the student body
  - Publicize the QEP with all faculty across the campus
  - Identify community partners for the QEP
  - Publicize the QEP in the community

J. LaPlant told the subcommittees that they should meet over the summer to prepare for the SACS VP visit. Each subcommittee needs to draft a one page report on how they will accomplish their charge and disseminate it to the rest of the QEP committee for review before the visit. J. LaPlant is available to meet with subcommittees except between May 15 and June 6.

V. SACS VP visit this summer

- K. Cragg will try to work out a date in late July for the visit.
- The committee will use the feedback provided by the VP to guide the writing in the fall.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

# VSU QEP

# Undergraduate Research Inventory

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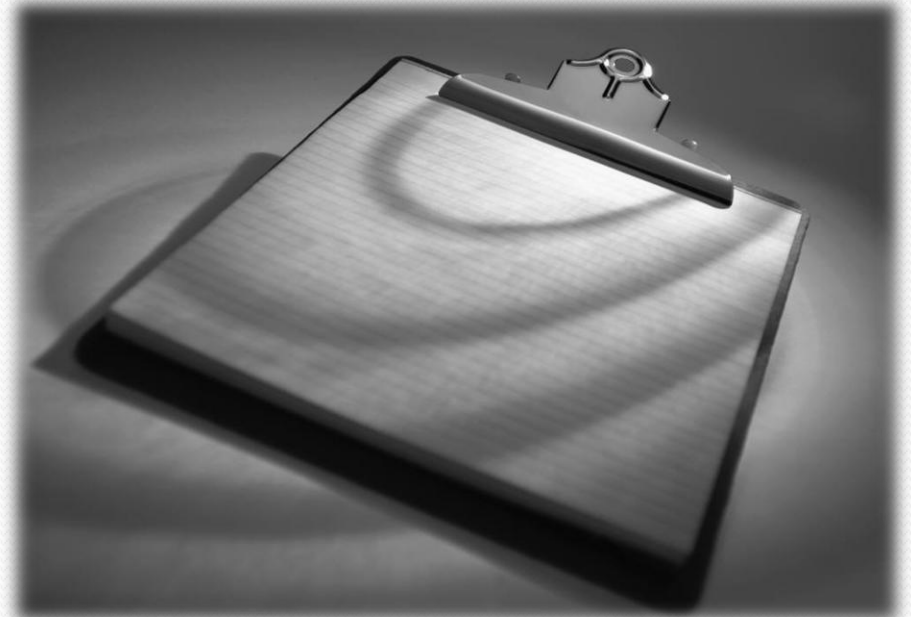
Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

May 2009

*Questions about the information contained in this report should be directed to Strategic Research and Analysis. Information in this report can be used; appropriate citation to Strategic Research and Analysis for our work is requested.*

# About the Undergraduate Research Inventory

- Interviews were conducted with academic department heads of undergraduate programs from March 18<sup>th</sup> through April 21<sup>st</sup>.
- 24 interviews were completed:
  - 19 via face to face meetings
  - 5 via emailed responses
- 3 departments did not respond.



# Definition of “Research”

- Two definitions were provided to guide discussion:
  - “An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline” (CUR 2008).
  - “A diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover facts or principles, and increase the sum of knowledge, enhance design, or enrich artistic ability” (University of Houston, QEP, 2007).
- Interviews indicated that departments were split evenly over the two definitions.



# Additional Definitions of “Research”

- An inquiry conducted by undergraduate students under supervision of faculty.
- An investigative collaboration between or among faculty and students for the purpose of enhancing knowledge, investigative skills, and professional development for employment or continued research endeavors.
- An emphasis on application of knowledge rather than the development of new knowledge. Our gap is between what we know and what we practice as managers rather than in basic knowledge.
- An investigation that leads to student discovery.
- What counts as research for faculty should count as research for students.

# Participation in Undergraduate Research

- Student participation ranged by department from 0% (no opportunities for undergraduate research) to 100% (research required as part of curriculum).
  - 0-25%: 3 departments
  - 26-50%: 1 department
  - 51-75%: 0 departments
  - 76-100%: 15 departments
- Faculty participation ranged by department from 0% (no faculty involvement) to 100% (all faculty involved).
  - 0-25%: 7 departments
  - 26-50%: 3 departments
  - 51-75%: 2 departments
  - 76-100%: 4 departments



*Note: Not all departments provided estimates of participation.*

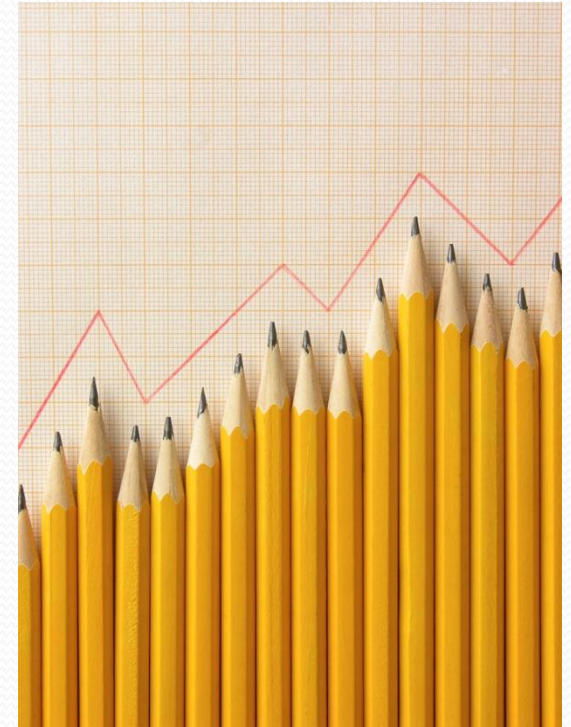
# Resources for Undergraduate Research

- The range for available funding varied by department. Some departments were able to offer students supplies for conducting research, while some departments offered funding for travel/submission fees from foundation accounts.
- Very few departments (3) mentioned obtaining grants to aid in funding undergraduate research.
- 8 departments mentioned using discretionary accounts to fund UG research
- The most common barriers cited to undergraduate research are:
  - Time (faculty and student)
  - Funding
  - Space/equipment



# Assessment/Feedback of Undergraduate Research

- 10 of the 24 responding departments reported formally assessing undergraduate research practices.
- Department heads perceive from students that students find research daunting and are somewhat unprepared for research projects.
- Department heads perceive from students that many students see the value of research once they have completed a project and are very proud of their accomplishments.



# Department Heads' Suggestions for Improvement

- Create an interdisciplinary Center for Research with centralized resources (space, resources, labs, statisticians)
- Create a designated UG research coordinator (part-time)
- Offer a university-wide research course to cover fundamentals of creating scholarly works common to all disciplines
- Offer research workshops for students
- Provide student travel funds
- Provide incentives for faculty participation in research with UG
- Provide start-up funds for new faculty



# Department Heads' Suggestions for Improvement

- Reduce teaching loads of faculty to provide more time for research with students
- Obtain Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) grant funding from NSF to fund undergraduate research
- Create a competitive faculty grants program to sponsor UG research
- Create partnerships with community businesses to provide opportunities for research and possible funding
- Increase funding for research resources



# Department Heads' Suggestions for Improvement

- Make UG research a meaningful/contractual experience
- Create partnerships with businesses
- Expand UG Research Symposium
- Publicize UG research
- Work with Center for Applied Research
- Tap into existing possible resources
- Combine multiple papers into articles
- Utilize graduate school



# Themes/Observations

- The academic and research calendars are in many cases incompatible.
- It is perceived that faculty view personal research as independent from undergraduate research and there is the potential for these two entities to be combined.
- Barriers (i.e. class size, time, lab space) to undergraduate research exist; however, these barriers are not insurmountable.
- Preparation for students and faculty to conduct undergraduate research may be beneficial to increasing interest and success of this effort.



# Themes/Observations

- Many departments are interested in knowing what is already occurring across campus with undergraduate research.
- Research can take on the form of service learning, active learning, etc.
- Questions were raised to include non-academic unit involvement in undergraduate research (i.e. Housing and Financial Aid).
- Discussion gravitated toward talking about graduate research
- Evaluation/incentives



# Themes/Observations

- Research methods – some integrate in curriculum, other offer a separate course
- Incentives offered
  - Best paper award
  - Presentations
  - Travel funding for students



# Concerns Expressed by Department Heads

- Challenge to be specific enough, but flexible enough
- Make it worth students' and faculty's time
- Must fit VSU's mission
- It is perceived that faculty are not rewarded for working with undergraduates on research in promotion/tenure (in some cases)
- Efforts should be of added-value -  
- don't add something just to add something
- Use caution with "mandatory" components



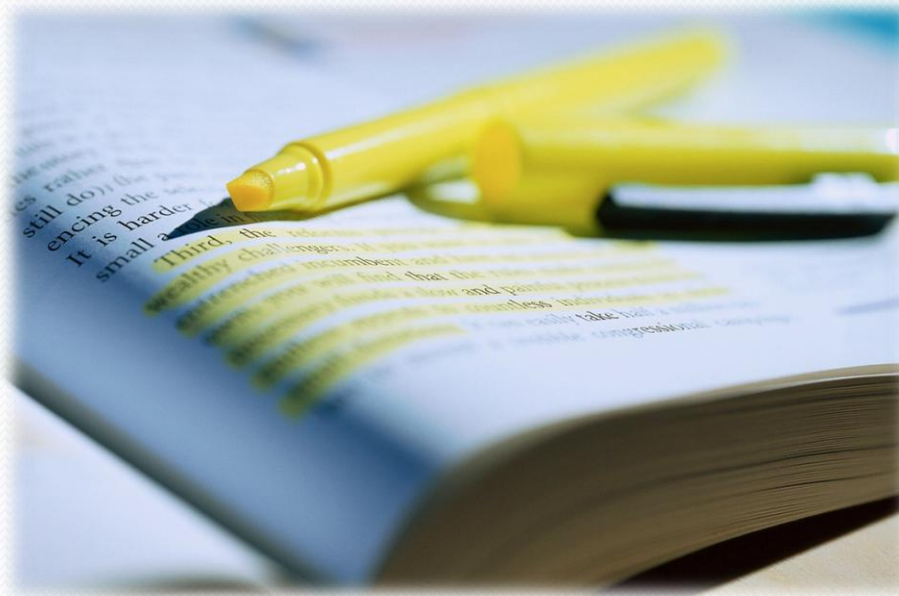
# Unique Findings

- Part of the faculty hiring process
- Faculty exchange of research



# Next Steps

- Address issues identified in themes.
- Define research for the purpose of this project.



# Interviews

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Interview</b>
History	Dr. Paul Riggs	March 18, 2009
Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences	Dr. Edward Chatelain	March 19, 2009
Communication Arts	Dr. Carl Cates	March 30, 2009
Early Childhood & Spec. Ed.	Dr. Lynn Minor	March 31, 2009
Art	Dr. Blake Pearce	April 1, 2009
Math & Computer Sciences	Dr. Mylan Redfern	April 1, 2009
Chemistry	Dr. James Baxter	April 2, 2009
English	Dr. Mark Smith	April 2, 2009
Women's & Gender Studies	Dr. Tracy Woodard-Meyers	April 6, 2009
Biology	Dr. Robert Gannon	April 8, 2009
Philosophy & Religious Studies	Dr. Fred Downing	April 8, 2009
Political Science	Dr. Jim Peterson	April 8, 2009
Honors Program	Dr. Ofelia Nikolova	April 8, 2009
Psychology & Counseling	Dr. Robert Bauer	April 8, 2009
Nursing	Dr. Anita Hufft	April 10, 2009
Sociology, Anthropology & CJ	Dr. Michael Capece	April 13, 2009
Music	Dr. James Shrader	April 14, 2009
Adult & Career Education	Dr. Reynaldo Martinez	April 15, 2009
Modern & Classical Languages	Dr. Viki Soady	April 21, 2009
International Programs	Dr. Ivan Nikolov	Responded via email
Accounting & Finance	Dr. Leonard Weld	Responded via email
Management	Dr. Phyllis Holland	Responded via email
Marketing And Economics	Dr. Cindy Tori	Responded via email
Kinesiology & Phys. Education	Dr. Mike Griffin	Responded via email

# Comments – Discussion – Questions

