GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Statesboro, Georgia

2015 to 2016 COURSE REVIEW INITIATIVE

GA Southern University launched a QM internal course review pilot in Spring 2015 consisting of 10 teams from 9 disciplines. After course reviews were completed, the teams were asked to write a reflection piece of their experience of the review process. They then shared their reflections with the campus during a poster session for a *QM Course Review Showcase*. This presentation analyzes those reflections and presents the themes that emerged. This provided insight for our faculty development unit for promoting course reviews, and it helped us determine our next steps for promoting deeper buy-in for online course quality assurance.

PRESENTERS: 2016 QM CONFERENCE

- Sheri Carey
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SPRING 2015 PILOT

In Spring of 2015, Georgia Southern University launched an internal course review pilot consisting of ten QM review teams from nine disciplines Once the review process was completed, team members drafted an online course quality assurance implementation plan for their departments. The teams were given the following general guidelines.

Governance

- Who within your program will lead your QM Review process and ensure its sustainability in the future?
- Who in your department will need to be involved in designing, overseeing, and implementing QM? What are their roles in the process?
- By what criteria will courses be selected and prioritized for review?

Schedule of Courses to Be Reviewed

- Indicate the courses for which you plan to do internal QM reviews over upcoming semesters. An internal review implies you are following QM course review protocol, which includes documenting the review in the Course Review Management System (CRMS).

Use of the Template

Indicate your view of using a course template that is based on QM standards.

- We will adopt the existing Folio Foundations Template.
- We will work with the Center for Online Learning to develop a Custom Template.
- We will not require any course templates.
- We currently use a variation of the COL template

Benefits of Process / Reflection

- How might QM be used in your program area? What are some of the potential benefits? Consider the potential positive impacts of implementing QM for your online course offerings and write a brief narrative / reflection.

OUTPUTS

The following is a list of the departments that participated in the Spring 2015 Pilot course review teams. The bullet points indicate their actions over a three-semester period as a result of the pilot project.

A total of 16 courses were reviewed over three semesters. Fifty-percent of departments sustained their process.

1. **College of Public Health**
   - Created a full-time position for Distance Education Coordinator
   - Developed a manual for Distance Education Policy
2. **Nursing Undergraduate Program**
   - Committed to review their entire program
   - Agreed to do a SoTL Project
3. **Nursing Graduate Program**
   - Committed to review their entire program
4. **Foreign Languages**
   - Opted to review a sequence of courses in the Spanish department
   - Considering expanding to other languages
5. **Writing and Linguistics**
   - Opted to review a sequence of courses
6. **Health and Kinesiology**
   - Low level of commitment; reviews on ad hoc basis
7. **International Studies**
   - Low level of commitment; reviews on ad hoc basis
8. **Sociology and Anthropology**
   - The department was restructured shortly after the pilot began; courses moved to another program that is not participating
9. **First Year Experience**
   - FYE did not review any additional courses after the pilot.
10. **Information Systems**
    - Information Systems did not review any additional courses after the pilot. There was not sufficient support from the leadership.

REFLECTIONS

Reflections from the ten implementation plans were analyzed to identify key themes. This table lists themes that were identified in rank order.

The totals column is the number of times a theme is mentioned as being significant in the reflection statements. The highest possible frequency is 10.

#	Themes from Reflections	Totals
1	Valued the Adoption of Template	9
2	Promoted Alignment	8
3	Increased Collaboration among Faculty	7
4	Resolved Gaps in Course	7
5	Promotes Credibility of Online Courses/Programs	5
6	Established Course Review Schedule	4
7	Helps Meet Accreditation Standards	4
8	Improves Face-to-Face and Hybrid Courses	4
9	Reviewers Improve thier Own Courses	4
10	Increased Awareness of Accessibility	3
11	Fostered Research	3
12	Improved Academic and Student Support Services	3
13	Promotes Equivalency between Online and Face-to-Face Courses	2
14	Promotes Explicit Instruction for Students	2
15	See Course from Student Perspective	2
16	Validate Current Practice	1
17	Adopted Master Course	1
18	Valued QM Training	1
19	Promotes Quality Assurance Policies	1

RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the implementation plans and pilot outputs led the Center for Online Learning to make the following recommendations for Centers that lead efforts in QA on their campuses.

1. Need for strong leadership support in the departments that participate in QM reviews
2. Work with fully online programs and/or programs with a clear sequence of online course offerings
3. Faculty development centers should be very intentional: objectives, rewards (stipends), recognition to the departments and faculty
4. Survey review teams for perceived benefits / challenges was very useful and should be reported back to leadership in the departments
5. Encourage use of a template based on Quality Matters and other best practices
6. Promote more professional development of meeting accessibility standards
7. Retool professional development offerings to promote deeper understanding of program/course/module alignment
8. Front load course design professional development with meeting QM standards
9. As we mature in online course quality assurance planning, future studies should focus on the impact of QM on student learning

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NEXT STEPS

The central theme is that departmental leadership buy-in is the most important factor in sustaining Quality Matters. Efforts should be made early on to have significant conversations with high-level administration in each department.

In an effort to strengthen online course QA on our campus, we plan to promote the development of distance education quality assurance policy within each college in the university. To this end, we will host a **Distance Education Policy Development Forum in Spring 2016**. The forum will be held over several days.

Participants / Teams

- Each department will send a team of three to four people to the forum. There is a limit of five teams
- Teams will be made up of Deans or Associate Deans, Chairs, Program Directors, and Faculty

Topics of Discussion:

- Teams will review distance education regional accreditation policies and other regulation standards (SACS, C-RAC, accessibility, etc.)
- Teams will review quality assurance policies from other schools across the country
- Teams will identify their department's:
  - Course Design Expectations
  - Course Delivery Expectations
  - Faculty Development Expectations
  - Course Review Expectations
- Each team to discuss and write distance education policy statements for their department / program area
- Discuss ideas for QM and/or SoTL research on Campus

QUALITY MATTERS TELEVISION

Listen to what the participants of the QM Course Review Showcase had to say about the QM review process.

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