

QEP Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 24, 2015
COE 302



Members Present

Dianna Rust, Terri Tharp, Jamie Morgan, Paula Calahan, Gina Poff, Michelle Boyer-Pennington, Scott Handy, Lara Daniel, Mary Farone, Brandon Lewis, Rick Sluder

Call to Order

Terri Tharp, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm in the College of Education Conference Room 302.

Dr. Tharp suggested that everyone present introduce themselves. She then welcomed Brandon Lewis who is now our student member on the committee. We look forward to hearing his comments and ideas regarding the QEP and MT Engage.

Update from Diana Rust

Dr. Rust provided a handout included a draft of the MT Engage Initiatives and also two condensed versions of this information. The overall committee is trying to get the information into manageable sections that are more understandable and less wordy. Our SACS liaison said we are way ahead of other universities involved in a QEP program that will be evaluated in March 2016. It has been a challenge to figure out the main initiatives because we have so many ideas. We do have it down to two curriculum initiatives and three support initiatives (see Exhibit A). She would like to keep the number of initiatives at a maximum of five so they are easier to remember. She is now asking all the committee members to take an advocacy role and talk about our QEP and the program. Right now we are lacking awareness campus wide and need to make faculty and students more aware of this new opportunity for our students. If a committee member is unable to answer any questions we get, she would be happy to try to answer them or schedule a meeting with any departments or programs who are interested. Dr. Rust is going to send the proposal to Dr. Tharp who will provide to anyone who asks. We are going to hold a contest to encourage people to read this information. Dr. Rust is hoping to get a reserved parking space to give away as the prize, but hasn't received confirmation yet. Important QEP facts will be emailed out along with a short quiz. Anyone who responds to the quiz will be entered into a drawing for the prize. We will also have a student contest – What is MT Engage? It will probably be presented through some type of social media.

Update from Michelle Boyer-Pennington

Dr. Boyer-Pennington advised that we ended the 2014-2015 Academic Year with three Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and four program goals. When her committee met with the SACS liaison this summer he commented on several occasions that our goals were very ambitious and expressed some concerns that we would be able to accomplish all of them. So they scaled back to one SLO which captures the elements of the three they previously had and to two program goals. (See handout on Exhibit B) They did retain the eportfolio piece because that is a way for

the student to showcase their skills acquired at MTSU and it will also be an assessment tool. They did not receive any negative feedback from SACS on using the eportfolio since we are using it to help the student and for assessment purposes, not as the purpose of the QEP.

MT Engage Components

Dr. Tharp reviewed the handout outlining the present MT Engage Components (Exhibit C). The item stating that students will complete one MT Engage Course per semester for their freshman and sophomore years was questioned. What if some students miss advising or do not take a UNIV 1010 course their first semester? Then they are unable to become a part of the program. Dr. Handy also pointed out that if you merely say they need to have four courses completed by the end of their sophomore year, they could (theoretically) take all four courses in their Spring semester which would defeat the purpose of continuous growth over time. After some discussion it was agreed to word it as requiring two courses in their freshman year and two courses in their sophomore year for a total of four by the end of the sophomore year. There was some discussion regarding how this program will benefit students in some of the physical sciences or, perhaps, an accounting major. This is a topic that will need to be revisited as we draw closer to implementing the program. Ms. Calahan reminded the committee that the key is using common language such as is written in the Desired Student Learning Outcome handout.

MT Engage Incentives

Questions have been raised about the usefulness of electronic badges. Dr. Tharp emailed several links to the committee members to review. Dr. Rust advised that the main committee doesn't have negative or positive feelings regarding electronic badges. We just need to see if they are of value to the students and/or potential employers. There was no other specific feedback regarding the suggested incentives. Mr. Lewis said that, personally, merchandise such as T-shirts or buttons are nice, but not what incentivize him to become involved. He is interested in something that will positively affect his future relationships and obtaining employment. He will discuss MT Engage and possible incentives with his peers and report back to the committee at the next meeting. Because we have not had much specific student feedback, the committee is eager to hear what he and other students have to say.

Next Steps

Dr. Tharp asked Dr. Rust about our next deadline. Dr. Rust said they want to be able to distribute the first draft in early November so we will need to have our information to her no later than November 1st. Although some wording may change after that date, we need to have the concept/gist of the program completed by then so the rest of the campus can review and respond.

Dr. Tharp advised the committee to research the value of electronic badges and review the components and incentives before our next meeting. It was agreed the committee will meet again on Thursday, October 15th at 2:00, location to be determined.

In order to meet the Student Learning Outcome that students will use integrative thinking and reflection to demonstrate the ability to make connections across multiple contexts and educational experiences and the program goal of strengthening a culture of engagement at MTSU, MT Engage will focus on five initiatives--two curriculum initiatives and three support initiatives.

Two curriculum initiatives:

1. MT Engage Foundation Pathway: Support will be provided to faculty who teach lower-division courses to enhance existing courses through the use of high impact, engaging pedagogy, a co-curricular experience, and integrative/reflective thinking and/or writing assignments placed in an ePortfolio. Phase I involves a revision of the UNIV 1010 University Seminar and selected general education courses, such as English 1010 and English 1020.

2. MT Engage Major Pathway: Departments will be provided support to engage in curriculum development and redesign to incorporate MT Engage components into the major. Departments will have support to revise classes to incorporate high impact, engaging pedagogies and integrative/reflective thinking assignments, as well as assistance tailoring the ePortfolio to the major in order to showcase students' (a) engagement in their learning, (b) reflections about their experiences, and (c) personal and professional development.

Three initiatives will support these curricular pathways:

3. MT Engage Faculty Development: General workshops and learning communities will be held each semester through the Learning Teaching & Innovative Technology Center which focus on high impact, engaging pedagogy and integrative/reflective thinking pedagogy. In addition, the Faculty Instructional Technology Center will provide faculty training in ePortfolio technology on a regular and one-on-one basis.

4. MT Engage Experiences: A searchable database consisting of high impact beyond-the-classroom experiences will be developed and maintained to provide students greater awareness of available beyond-the-classroom activities. This database will include a general list of academic and student affairs experiences (e.g., student organizations, student leadership, volunteering), as well as suggested activities for students by major (e.g., internships, research experiences, tutoring opportunities). Also, an MT Engage Week will be held each fall semester to provide focused attention on the many opportunities available to students.

5. MT Engage Recognition Program: A program will be developed to recognize students who complete various levels of these learning experiences both within the general education curriculum (i.e., the first two years) and beyond.

MT Engage: Engage Academically, Learn Exponentially, Showcase Yourself

The MT Engage QEP is focused on enhancing student academic engagement. This will be accomplished by:

1. Incorporating high impact pedagogies within the course and through beyond-the-classroom engagement activities / strategies:
 - High Impact Pedagogies: learning communities, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, project-based learning, etc.
 - Beyond-the-Classroom examples: service-learning, research, co-curricular activities, attending related campus events, attending off-campus events, etc.
2. Challenging students to use integrative thinking and reflection across multiple contexts and educational experiences. Students will develop an ePortfolio which will showcase the integration of the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained during their time at MTSU.

The student learning outcome for MT engage is:

Students will use integrative thinking and reflection to demonstrate the ability to make connections across multiple contexts and educational experiences.

The following five student indicators, adapted from the AACU Value Rubric for Integrative Thinking, will be used to assess students' integrative/reflective thinking.

- 1) The ability to connect relevant experiences and academic knowledge (connections to experience),
- 2) The ability to make connections across disciplines and perspectives (connections to discipline),
- 3) The ability to adapt and apply information to new situations (transfer),
- 4) The ability to use effective, appropriate, and various forms of communication to enhance the quality of their assignments (effective and integrated communication), and
- 5) The ability to demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts, especially as it relates to their personal and professional development (self-assessment and reflection).

For more information go to www.mtsu.edu/mtengage

IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes:

The focus of the MT Engage QEP is on enhancing student academic engagement. This will be accomplished by creating a culture of academic engagement for students at the university. Through a process of course redesign and faculty professional development, faculty will enhance their existing courses using high impact, engaging pedagogy. MTSU is committed to student success. This effort is consistent with the University's mission and purpose statement which reads, "MTSU fosters a student-centered environment conducive to lifelong learning, personal development, and success" and "challenges students through diverse teaching methods."

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The student learning outcome for MT Engage, to be derived through this process of academic engagement, is integrative thinking and reflection. Students will use integrative thinking and reflection to demonstrate the ability to make connections across multiple contexts and educational experiences. Reflection and integrative thinking are metacognitive processes that enable students to "learn how to learn from experience" by analyzing their thoughts or insights about the impact of an event or experience on their lives and future goals. Successful reflection facilitates self-awareness, as well as personal and professional growth.

Integrative thinking and reflection are not only forms of academic engagement, but also academic skills that can be developed through any number of high impact pedagogies, including first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning. MT Engage students will develop in the appropriate use of integrative thinking, reflection, and self-assessment about their academic experiences and personal and professional development within this culture of engagement, as well as in their ability to make connections across multiple academic contexts and educational and personal and professional experiences. The following student indicators will be used to assess students' integrative thinking and reflection:

- indicators*
- The ability to connect relevant experiences and academic knowledge (connections to experience),
 - The ability to make connections across disciplines and perspectives (connections to discipline),
 - The ability to adapt and apply information to new situations (transfer),
 - The ability to use effective, appropriate, and various forms of communication to enhance the quality of their assignments (effective and integrated communication), and
 - The ability to demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts, especially as it relates to their personal and professional development (self-assessment and reflection).

The MTSU MT Engage QEP has two program goals:

- To foster a culture of engaged learning
- To improve student retention, progression, & graduation.

MT ENGAGE Incentives

Student incentives for participating in the MT Engage Program

Early Registration Privileges

Scholarship Opportunities

Designated Advisor (moved to resources with an MT Engage Director; in addition to assisting the director with advising students of the requirements for participating and meeting program criteria, this person would also assist with recruiting activities and assist students with e-Portfolio training)

Electronic Badges

Recognition at Certain Benchmarks

- Freshmen: Upon enrollment/commitment to the program, students might receive a t-shirt, signed pledge card, MT Engage button, lanyard, etc.; spring luncheon invitation with door prize incentives; scholarship(s) to be awarded at luncheon
- Sophomore: Eligible to become mentors for freshmen, assist with recruiting, obtain class credit (MTE Seminar/Practicum); spring luncheon invitation with door prize incentives; scholarship(s) to be awarded at luncheon
- Junior: Continue in mentoring role with additional leadership responsibilities, obtain class credit (MTE Seminar/Practicum); spring luncheon invitation with door prize incentives; scholarship(s) to be awarded at luncheon
- Senior: May continue in mentoring role, certificate, spring luncheon invitation honoring MTE graduates

MT ENGAGE Components

The MT Engage program has a three-fold theme: Engage Academically, Learn Exponentially, Showcase Yourself.

The components of the MT Engage program will reflect this theme through academic experiences in the classroom, involvement beyond the classroom, building an e-Portfolio, and an End of the Program Interview.

In-the-Classroom Experiences

- Students will complete one MT Engage course each semester for the freshmen and sophomore year for a total of four MT Engage courses to be completed by the end of the sophomore year. **Change to by the end of the sophomore year only, not require each semester.**
- Students will complete two MT Engage courses in their major.
- There is no hour limit on the designation of a MT Engage course (could be one hour, two hours, three hours, etc.).
- Each MT Engage course will require at least one beyond the classroom activity which will be documented in the e-Portfolio.

Beyond-the-Classroom Experiences

- Students will complete at least one beyond the classroom activity in each designated MT Engage course. Therefore, they will complete at least four beyond the classroom activities by the end of the sophomore year and at least six beyond the classroom activities by the end of the senior year.
- Each beyond the classroom experience will be determined by the instructor of each MT Engage course and will include a reflection component.
- Each beyond the classroom experience will be documented in the e-Portfolio.

e-Portfolio

- The e-Portfolio will be a combination of both the classroom and beyond-the-classroom experiences. Students will keep records/documentation/photographs, etc. of classroom and beyond experiences/activities and reflect on both types of experiences.
- The e-Portfolio will be driven by the student learning outcomes.
- The e-Portfolio will be assessed at the end of the sophomore year, and scholarships for exemplary ones will be awarded.
- The completed e-Portfolio will be assessed after the first semester of the senior year.

End of the Program Interview

- The interview will be an option for students who have completed the final e-Portfolio and two additional courses in their major.
- Community members and alumni will facilitate a mock-interview panel with the students.
- The top interviewee(s) will be awarded a cash prize.