

March 25, 2009

To the Tarleton Community,

By now you are probably aware that as part of the upcoming SACS reaffirmation visit Tarleton must develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that:

- includes a broad-based process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment,
- focuses on student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution,
- demonstrates Tarleton's capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP,
- includes broad-based involvement in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and
- identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.

The QEP Committee has been implementing a broad-based process to identify our QEP which includes surveys of faculty, staff, and student, reviewing NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) data, researching approved QEPs, and hosting forums for discussion of student-learning related issues. The university community has been very engaged in this process and has provided invaluable input and we **thank you** for all of your efforts.

The QEP Committee has digested all of the information and selected a topic. Endorsements were gathered from Academic Council, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, Division of Student Life, Division of Finance and Administration, Student Government (House and Senate), and Tarleton Central Texas. On March 16 formal approval of the topic was obtained from President Dottavio and the Cabinet.

The QEP, based on your student learning related input, issues, and needs is <insert drum-roll here>:

“Keeping it REAL” (Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning)

What does this mean? Tarleton prepares its students to be active participants in their professions and communities. We do this by challenging them to consume, process, and produce information that is not only of high academic quality, but can be used to address the needs of our ever changing world. However, the students don't necessarily understand or appreciate the broader impact of their educational experience, and are therefore not truly engaged in that experience. With **“Keeping it REAL”** as a QEP, we will be creating curricular connections and providing concrete experiences in all venues during their university experience. By connecting their university experience to real world situations and their upcoming careers, our students will learn to think beyond assignments and create their own educational goals, thus becoming engaged in their own education.

This QEP has impact far beyond the classroom. The whole university, including student services, counseling, housing, environmental services, etc. can all be actively involved. It will transform the way many of us give and receive knowledge, skills, and values. Thus the QEP will not only enhance student learning, but will help Tarleton Excel, Expand, Encourage, and Extend.