

**A PROGRAM FOR TEACHER EDUCATION: SERVING
STUDENTS IN INNOVATIVE WAYS**

**Darrel Miller
Queens University of Charlotte**

Abstract

Queens University of Charlotte is a small, liberal arts centered institution located in North Carolina. The best practices initiative that I am submitting involves an effort that cuts across several offices at the university.

One of the largest graduate programs we have is in education. The initiative I am describing resulted from a need to increase enrollment in that program and the shortage of teachers in the local school systems. The office for adult and graduate programs approached the school system about a partnership to help credential teachers who had degrees in other fields. As a result of the partnership, several new academic programs were developed, but even more importantly offices across campus adapted procedures to make the enrollment, payment, registration, parking, and book purchasing as easy as possible for these busy professionals currently teaching or changing careers. Our increase in enrollment was significant – 40% for this fall term. In addition, student and school system satisfaction with the programs is high.

Introduction of the Organization

Queens University of Charlotte is a private, coed, Presbyterian-affiliated liberal arts university in the heart of historic Charlotte serving over 1,600 undergraduate and graduate students through its College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), The Pauline Lewis Hayworth College and McColl Graduate School of Business.

Founded in 1857 as a Presbyterian-related liberal arts college for women, Queens moved to its current location in 1914 and became fully coeducational in 1987. The University has been ranked in the top tier list of “southern regional universities” for seven consecutive years, and the Internship program was ranked tenth in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Total Enrollment:	1,754
College of Arts & Sciences:	737
Hayworth Undergraduate:	469
PMBA & EMBA Programs:	233
Other Graduate Programs:	315

College of Arts & Sciences

The College of Arts & Sciences at Queens is a traditional undergraduate program that emphasizes the liberal arts. Students can select from a variety of majors, and all students are required to complete an internship. In addition, 90 percent of CAS students travel or study abroad through the John Belk International Program, which is included as part of their overall academic program. The national average is just 9 percent.

McColl Graduate School of Business

The McColl Graduate School of Business at Queens offers professional master of business administration and executive master of business administration programs. Since its founding in 1980, the PMBA program has awarded over 700 degrees. The EMBA program, which was established in 1990, has awarded over 200 degrees.

Pauline Lewis Hayworth College

The Pauline Lewis Hayworth College at Queens offers evening and weekend classes for non-traditional undergraduate students, as well as master’s programs in nursing, teaching and organizational communication. Created in 1948 and named for Pauline Lewis Hayworth in 1995, Hayworth College is the oldest adult education program in Charlotte.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

The university’s Hayworth College experienced a gradual drop in enrollment over several years in its secondary education program. The program essentially served students who had a college degree and wanted to become teachers. A second population was comprised of students who were designated as lateral entry teachers. Lateral entry refers

to teachers who have a college degree, but who are not yet licensed by the state. The administration in Hayworth College recognized an opportunity to provide a needed service to the public schools while also increasing enrollment. Lateral entry teachers made up almost half of the 1400 new teachers needed last academic year. Almost 50% of those teachers left during or after the first year. By providing convenient and needed courses for licensure specifically targeted to lateral entry teachers, the school system and the university would both win.

The first cohort of lateral entry teachers began in the fall semester of 2000. From the beginning, the university looked for ways to make the enrollment and administrative aspects of the program as “user friendly” as possible. The university hoped to relieve students of the more mundane processes associated with enrolling in any university.

Design

The administration of Hayworth College, the education faculty, and the school system began to talk about how this program would be implemented in the early summer of 2000. As noted above, the goal was to make this program as painless as possible with the end goal of raising the retention rate for these first year teachers.

After establishing the school system’s criteria, staff began meeting internally about how to structure this program. The faculty focused on the curriculum and how they might staff a Saturday program. The admissions and academic affairs staff were more concerned with streamlining processes and asked the question: “How can we do all that we need to do for these students with a minimum amount of process”?

The staff quickly realized that they had to bring other offices into the process. These students needed to be coded separately in our internal data system. Staff met with personnel in the business office and the registrar to outline how these students were different from other graduate education students. A series of special codes were developed. This would facilitate registration and billing. In addition, the business office needed to help develop a payment schedule that would involve both the school system and the individual students. Initially, the school system would pay for half of each student’s tuition for the first two courses and provide their books. It was decided to bill the school system and students who were paying their own tuition (mostly from other school systems in the area) for half of their tuition at the end of October. This allowed the new teachers to receive at least two paychecks before they had to pay anything. The final payment was to be billed at the end of the first semester when everyone would have to pay their half.

Getting books to students and dealing with the dual payment system necessitated involving the bookstore, an outsourced service on campus. They agreed to bill the university and allow us to deliver the books to class on the first day. The university would bill the school system or individual student accounts.

Parking was the next hurdle. Since Saturday is not a premium parking day, the staff looked for a way to provide free parking. The Public Safety Office preferred to have some sort of identification on the cars, if not a university parking sticker. They ultimately suggested we use dashboard permits like those used for continuing education classes. This meant that the passes could only be used on a specific day, in this case on Saturdays.

This initiative did not require extra personnel until the second year when an admissions counselor was assigned full-time to education programs. We are currently searching for an additional faculty member in education. Initially, the main costs were related to time and effort by staff members in admissions, academic affairs, the business office, the registrar, the bookstore, and public safety. Other costs were incidental.

Implementation

The implementation process was under a tight timeline because of the difficulty in getting the word out to individual teachers. Understandably, they were unable to focus on more than their most immediate classroom needs. Some teachers were actually hired during the first week of classes. We decided to delay the start of their classes until the middle of September. This allowed the school system to mobilize principals and others to contact the teachers who were eligible for the program. The application process was limited to a short application form filled out on the first day of class. No fee was charged. Books were delivered to that first class and distributed to students. In addition to books, students were given parking passes.

The first class was given over primarily to administrative tasks and answering questions about licensure. This meant that the instructor had little time to accomplish her goals. In our attempt to make things easier for the student, we made things harder for the instructor. Subsequently, each course had an orientation session built into the schedule.

After classes began, the next hurdle was billing. This became time-consuming because each student needed to be coded according to how much they were responsible for paying. We eventually created codes for this group that separated them into payment categories. In addition, billing the school system became a hurdle since this was a new program and no one at the central office took responsibility for shepherding the payment through the necessary offices. As a result, payment was delayed. Currently, relationships are established, and university staff knows whom to contact at the school system's central office. Some teachers dropped out of the program during the first term, and the issue of who pays what had to be addressed. Several students did not pay and/or did not return the books. This issue continues to be a problem.

Benefits

There were several major benefits of this initiative. Enrollment increased by 72% in graduate education programs from fall, 1999, to fall, 2002. Student satisfaction is high as measured by feedback to faculty and administrators in the school system. After the first year, over 60% of the students in the initial class returned to begin courses in the second year. Anything over 50% was considered a measure of success.

Our increased involvement with the school system has led to other projects including an on site (middle school) program for lateral entry teachers this fall and a proposed masters of education next semester for teachers at “at risk” schools. The university also received two recognitions, one from the Chamber of Commerce and another by the school board, for service to the public schools.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the offices involved understand more fully how their various functions interrelate, and how important it is to involve everyone in planning a new academic program. It has also made staff members more flexible in tailoring processes to student needs, especially when the students are non-traditional. The success of this initiative has lowered barriers to initiating new programs university-wide.