Kathy indicated that the Task Force also needed to consider how advisement impacts their charge as advisement is considered part of teaching. Team members suggested that an advisor be included on the team. Kathy will request a volunteer from the Academic Advisement Council to join the group for the December 8th meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

1. What are faculty teaching needs as identified through survey data? (Mark Yanochik, see handout) Mark described the methodology he used to summarize the data from four relevant surveys and reported his findings.

2. How do we define teaching excellence/teaching ethos? (Hemchand Gossai/Stacey Kluge, see handouts) Stacey and Hemchand reported on their respective reports. Hemchand posed the question of whether the committee should focus on what constitutes effective (and/or highly effective) teaching strategies to describe good teaching in a more concrete fashion (rather than try to define teaching excellence).

Another question posed asked whether we are looking at the correct grouping of institutions. Don’t we need to look at institutions whose student population is more like ours (e.g., similar SAT scores and 4-year graduation rates)? Research has shown that variable inputs (wide variety in ability of students enrolled at Georgia Southern) results in lower quality. The consensus of the team appeared to be that these institutions were polled only for potential definitions of teaching excellence and were not used to inform the listing of activities we wish to support (that information was taken from sources internal to Georgia Southern). It was also argued that developing a teaching ethos is a foundational concept that should be able to cross different types of institutions. Faculty need to understand what the tools are to be able to understand effective pedagogy.

3. What are the technology standards for excellent teaching? for minimal teaching effectiveness? (Daniel Rivera/Raleigh Way) Raleigh summarized these reports, indicating that he is not advocating a prescriptive approach (applying ISTE standards), but suggests that we use the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education and think through how technology can support and enhance these attributes. It was further noted that these Principles parallel Hemchand’s teaching ethos.

4. What questions should the student ratings of instruction ask to measure good teaching? (Laura Frost) Laura deferred her report until the December 8th meeting.

5. What does excellent teaching entail? (Christine Draper/SONya Shepherd) Christine noted several problems concerning gathering and synthesizing these data. Each college appears to offer their own types of teaching awards and require different criteria. There is no consistency across the university. Sonya summarized the criteria for the university awards.
All members agreed that there is a greater need for consistency in evaluation of effective teaching across the University. This discussion led to a dialog on how teaching is evaluated for promotion and tenure decisions. Currently, dossiers rely quite heavily on Student Ratings of Instruction. Lack of a consensus on evaluating teaching is clearly another gap.

It was suggested that what may be needed is a rubric on effective teaching or teaching artifacts—examples of good teaching. Members agreed as long as creation of a mechanism for capturing evidence of good teaching became part of the culture and not just another process. It was further noted that teaching needs to be connected to an outcome—learning.

It was recommended that the Task Force encourage greater faculty participation in faculty development activities to ensure more effective teaching; however, there is a certain amount of self-selective bias in those faculty who elect to participate in these types of activities. We would need to mandate a teaching portfolio to achieve true consistency in practice. It was agreed that technology plays a role in documenting good teaching as well, suggesting that a required teaching portfolio could be maintained electronically and submitted for all teaching evaluations, consideration for awards, etc. rather than ask faculty to recreate these artifacts. This discussion led to the question of whether the University could mandate certain tools to facilitate commonalities in assessment of teaching. Finally, it was noted that the forthcoming General Education outcomes will help to bring some consistency to all programs.

Gaps
From the subcommittee reports and subsequent discussion, the following gaps were identified:

1. Need for a new faculty learning community.
2. Need for feedback on teaching following classroom evaluations.
3. Need for a new faculty seminar series on effective university teaching practices.
4. Need for consistency and university-wide criteria in evaluating good teaching for promotion and tenure decisions as well as for teaching awards.
5. Need for Administrative Awareness/Witnessing of effective teaching on a consistent basis to illustrate the value of teaching (e.g., annual class observations) beyond checking off as T & P requirement, which assumes good teaching but supplies little to no evidence of such.

Kathy asked for suggestions for the December 8th meeting agenda:
- discuss reorganizational structure—perhaps filling out the flow chart shared via email

In the interim, Candace will draft a matrix that helps identify additional gaps and post for all to contribute to between now and the December 8th meeting. Kathy noted that she and Candace will write the mid-term report for the Provost.

Adjourned: 12:05 p.m.

Next meeting
Thursday, December 8, 2011, 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., AD 2002
Agenda:
1. Discuss reorganizational structure of 3 C’s
2. Continue work on the gap analysis