

University of Louisville QEP Executive Summary

“The University of Louisville pursues excellence and inclusiveness in its work to educate and serve its community” proclaims our mission statement. This mission is realized, in part, through our commitment to teaching diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in order to develop “engaged citizens, leaders and scholars.” This commitment to student success and to nurturing students to become active citizens, leaders, and scholars is emphasized in our University’s 21st Century University Initiative, which is designed to help us realize the goals of our earlier 2020 Plan. Our 21st Century University Initiative provides a blueprint to help us continue to improve in all areas, including empowering undergraduate learning and enhancing our environment for student success. Our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and its distinctive emphasis on helping second-year students thrive and, therefore, persist is named in the 21st Century University Initiative as an important institutional goal.

Beginning in early 2015, our institution’s newly-formed QEP Development Committee examined and analyzed university data and identified a distinctive hurdle faced by many undergraduate students: navigating the challenges of the second year and successfully transitioning into the third year. The transition between the second and third year appeared to be a point of critical weakness in the university’s persistence plans. Although improved retention is one of the expected outcomes of the new QEP, the project will center upon enhancing student learning and the learning environment, and its subjects will be pre-unit and undecided students, who are collectively known as “exploratory students” on our campus, and whose particular struggles are evident in second-year performance data. The purpose of

this QEP is to enhance our students’ inquiry and decision-making skills in order to help them thrive academically and personally.

The University of Louisville’s QEP is titled Find Your Fit (FYF). This initiative is an opportunity to foster a campus-wide conversation about student learning and success in that crucial second year of undergraduate studies. At the heart of our QEP is the design, implementation, and assessment of a new, three-credit seminar aimed at enhancing the academic and personal success of exploratory second-year students. As we help our students “find their fit” academically and align their goals with a career path, our QEP project is poised to have long-term implications for how we support our undergraduate population inside and outside the classroom.

The FYF initiative offers our campus key opportunities to bring innovative pedagogical practices to the foreground as we provide our exploratory students with a high-touch, small seminar experience. These students will engage in critical, intellectual inquiry activities and actively participate in the major and career discernment process with focused support from a faculty mentor, an advisor, and an instruction librarian. Our new Student Success Center, set to open in fall 2018, aims to foster an integrated approach among career, academic success, and advising for our lower-division student population. FYF aligns closely with the mission of the new Center and will be a signature program offered through the Center. In line with SACSCOC expectations, a demonstration of effective impact should lead to the eventual adoption of the course, or its effective activities, assessments, and pedagogical practices, in our undergraduate curriculum and/or advising practices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



Students will demonstrate informed decision-making marked by identifiable measures of reflective learning, independent inquiry, and critical thinking.



Students will increase their sense of academic and social belonging or fit.



Students will increase their sense of decidedness.



Student will increase their sense of self-regulated learning behaviors.