

This report provides a summary of the feedback and input we received about the proposed QEP throughout the 2016-2017 feedback year. Starting in spring 2016, the QEP Development Committee and QEP staff team provided a variety of ways to inform audiences about the plans for the QEP and elicit feedback and input.

Campus-wide information sessions, scheduled and invited presentations with target groups, and the QEP website served as the primary ways that the QEP plans and information circulated. The bulk of the information sessions and invited presentations occurred in fall 2016, coinciding with the launch of the QEP website and online feedback submission form.

The result of these informational efforts led to responses and feedback in several forms including: face-to-face feedback at these information sessions, written feedback submitted to QEP staff team members after an information session (typically as an email) and written feedback submitted via the QEP website. A total of 43 information sessions and focus groups were held with 621 people participating. A total of 18 people (17 faculty and staff and 1 student) submitted written feedback via the QEP website, feedback questionnaire. See page 4 of this document for a chart that provides information about which groups we met with and when to discuss the QEP and solicit feedback.

Overall, we heard that people on campus felt that our proposed targeted population of students to be served by the QEP is an appropriate and relevant focus for the QEP. We also found that the idea of a seminar for second year students as the heart of our intervention is well received and offers us a number of important ways to enhance student learning and support the unique needs of these students. The vast majority of the feedback and comments we received were centered around questions of the “how” or “what” of the project, as well as copious suggestions for making the project successful.

We have grouped the feedback comments, suggestions, and points of clarification into several categories below. We have also included a summary of the feedback and suggestions from our Student Advisory Team that convened monthly from September 2016-March 2017.

Questions about the nuts and bolts of the QEP

The individuals who provided feedback generally qualified their comments by also “wanting more knowledge about what the QEP is.” This included:

Questions about the target population, such as: Have we identified why 2nd year students are failing? Advising might be the problem for these students, do you have a plan for how advising will change? We have Gen Ed 101 and maybe we should work on improving and changing that course? There are a number of other factors that lead up to students taking a course, it's unclear how a 3 unit, elective class will remedy the causes of attrition. Undeclared students are different from pre-unit students and they will face distinct challenges.

Questions about cost and course load, such as:

Who will teach this course and how will faculty get appointed? Who will pay the costs for this course (faculty pay, supplies, etc.)? The long-term plan seems to be resource intensive and prohibitive. What is the plan to cover costs over time? How can a faculty member take on this intensive type of course as overload [X-pay], you should offer faculty members a chance to teach it as part of their regular load/rethink faculty pay.

Questions about the course itself:

These students are in A & S, so why is the course being taught in CEHD? There is confusion about what the course will cover.¹ How is this course connected to i2a and critical thinking? Are you building off of it? How will you recruit students to take this course? Speed and Nursing students do not have electives in their program of study, how will you make this course appealing to these students?

Questions about the assessment

Many people expressed interest in the ways that impact would be identified. *Is there a plan to “follow” students after the intervention? What do we hope to see in students at the end of the seminar?*

We responded to these questions in a new of ways: we incorporated the questions into our planning and clarified some of these issues in the FAQ section of the QEP website, as well as included information in future presentations. We also fed these questions back into our planning conversations in order to think through some of the “nuts and bolts” of the process. Some of these questions and issues will be addressed in the curriculum and design process of 2017.

Feedback and Suggestions for the QEP

Other feedback we received was in the form of suggestions and ideas regarding the QEP and the new seminar at the heart of the project. These suggestions are grouped and summarized by these themes:

The seminar is a great opportunity to focus on *improving teaching*. Faculty who are participating can explore new pedagogy while addressing an institutional need among undergraduates at UofL: development of self-regulation and intellectual persistence

Promoting and making explicit the *academic rigor* of this course allows faculty members to justify teaching it (among their peers, their chair, and their department).

An important aspect in addressing this population and fostering the kind of psychological growth envisions is attention to the *emotional context* for these students. Failing, family pressure, alternately, family issues, “grades matter culture,” are all some of the possible factors that

contribute to emotional pressure felt by students in these circumstances (exploratory, undeclared majors).

Many of the points of feedback offered suggestions for content and focus areas for the seminar curriculum. These are *pedagogies* such as regular writing and practice on writing skills and focus on a final project that students present.

Suggestions and ideas for topics to be included in the seminar ranged from areas of research (such as resilience research) to areas of focus (such as time management and communication in writing practice).

Other suggestions are *interventions of value* such as expressly teaching students about growth mindset and measuring their own, development of a voice (e.g. how to ask for help, how to articulate what matters to them).

Many comments provided ideas for how to develop *other complementary programs* to support the target population of students. Ranging from creating mentoring structures to itemizing other offices and support areas are available for students in need, these feedback were particularly good ideas for the development of the support mechanisms that can complement and connect to relevant existing initiatives

Other suggestions grouped around how to foster *mentoring* among the students in the seminar. One idea expressed was about how to create and develop a network for students.²

These suggestions were incorporated into the ongoing planning conversations. Some of the ideas were taken up and woven into the project; some were noted for consideration as the project is implemented; some were prioritized as we conceptualized how the QEP pieces would fit together.

Concerns about the Proposed QEP

Some people expressed concerns about the QEP plan. The top areas of concern:

- Target audience may not be best served by this intervention
- Faculty buy-in for the project and teaching the project
- Lack of academic rigor and/or content of the proposed QEP course
- Not sure how the QEP aligns with or connects to relevant initiatives or programs

We responded to these concerns in two ways. First, we kept these concerns as “lenses” or filters in our discussions and decision-making processes to be sure we are fully addressing the concerns and mitigating negative implications of these issues. Secondly, we modified our language for talking about the QEP and adjusted our work so that we were able to demonstrate how we were aware of, and responding to, these concerns as part of our planning going forward.

Presentations and forms of feedback solicitation January 2016 – December 2016.

Group	Date
Council of Academic Offices	January 1, 2016
Monthly meeting of the Associate Deans	February 1, 2016
College of Arts and Sciences Faculty	March 25, 2016
Undergraduate Council	April 1, 2016
Exploratory Advising Team	April 1, 2016
Career Development Center Staff	April 1, 2016
	June 1, 2016
Student Affairs Summer Academy	July 1, 2016
Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning staff	August 12, 2016
Monthly meeting of the Associate Deans	August 18, 2016
Leaders from the University Libraries	September 7, 2016
Student Retention Team	September 8, 2016
Cultural Center staff team	September 3, 2016
Student Government Association	September 20, 2016
	November 15, 2016
General Information Sessions (Belknap Campus)	September 22, 2016
	October 21, 2016
	November 15, 2016
Unit Advising Directors	September 28, 2016
Division of Student Affairs Directors	October 5, 2016
Faculty Senate	October 5, 2016
First Year Initiatives staff team	October 3, 2016
Council of Academic Offices	October 4, 2016
REACH staff	October 13, 2016
General Information Session (Health Sciences Campus)	October 17, 2016
TRIO staff	November 16, 2016
Staff Senate	December 12, 2016
Total	35 sessions

Feedback from the Student Advisory Team

The Student Advisory Team (SAT) met monthly from September 2016 to March 2017. A total of seven students participated during the year; six of them were upperclass students and one was a sophomore.

These students were quite passionate about the proposed Find Your Fit project, in part, because they felt the project could normalize the undecided status that can feel like a stigma for students. They noted the undue amount of pressure that students face in trying to graduate in four years and stay on a pre-determined path that may or may not fit in the long run. The SAT members shared their own experiences with their difficult journeys on the path toward finding and choosing a major and career path; one of them said: “Where was this course when I was a sophomore?”

The students in this group felt the QEP seminar proposed is a significant and meaningful opportunity for second-year students for both practical and personal reasons. As one student noted: “being undecided costs money.” Taking a course in which students are honing academic skills while articulating academic goals and making personally relevant choices is a sound investment of time and money and in gaining academic confidence. Students noted that the lack of specific programs and support for students in the second year can result in some students feeling lost, or that “everyone has it all together except me.” Students indicated that classes get harder in the second year and some learners may feel reluctant to ask for help and take up an advisor’s time with their ill-defined problems or personal struggles.

Students had many valuable suggestions for what the QEP seminar could include. They indicated that students like to learn from others’ experience because it helps them understand there are multiple paths and solutions as a college student, or in a career choice. They felt strongly that the students in the seminar should have an opportunity to have regular contact with upperclass students who struggled with choices, majors or their own paths. They suggested that upperclass students, individually or in a panel, share with the QEP students the ways they overcame obstacles, resources they used, and people they talked to. They also advocated for job shadowing, networking and information interviewing as important skills sets and experiences students need to help inform themselves as they investigate career choices.

The group suggested that students in the seminar complete a “Where I Stand” assignment in which they reflect on their beliefs, values, ambitions and passions as the start of the course to help them get in touch with themselves and to inform their choices and decisions. Students also felt strongly that the inquiry assignments be centered upon students own interests and that the final assignment be something digital and creative they can share with peers in the class.

In terms of the advising aspects of the course, students said they'd like to see advisors be proactive and encouraging with helping students identify potential career paths or majors in their areas of interest.