

# 2017 QEP Development

October 14, 2014

# Quality Enhancement Plan

- The **Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)** describes a course of action for enhancing educational quality.
- At UofL, it is an undergraduate QEP
- Core Requirement 2.12 requires that an institution develop an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan that **focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning.**



**HANDBOOK FOR INSTITUTIONS  
SEEKING REAFFIRMATION**

*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges*

1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097  
404-679-4501 • www.sacscoc.org

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SACS-COC Reaffirmation Handbook

# QEP Expectations from SACS-COC

- Forward-looking & improvement-oriented
- Connected to institutional mission and priorities
- About making a positive campus change through accreditation
- Focused on enhancing student learning and/or the educational environment
- Narrow and focused enough to demonstrate impact on student learning in 5 years
- Not just something you are planning to do anyway

# UofL's current QEP: Ideas to Action (i2a)

## QEP Timeline at UofL

- Implemented: **Fall 2007**
- Interim Impact Report: **March 2013**
- Integration with full report: **2017**

## Two *Integrated* Outcomes

1. Students will be able to think critically
2. Students will develop the ability to address community issues

University of Louisville  
QEP IMPACT REPORT  
March 2013

**SECTION 1: A succinct list of the initial goals and intended outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan**  
In 2007, SACS approved the University of Louisville quality enhancement plan (QEP) titled "Ideas to Action: Using Critical Thinking to Foster Student Learning and Community Engagement" as a ten-year plan. This report serves as the five-year interim report. Ideas to Action (i2a) is our initiative to enhance undergraduate students' critical thinking skills and effectively prepare them to contribute to society. The plan is designed to help students build core critical thinking skills in General Education courses and sharpen these skills in discipline-specific contexts in the major courses. This critical thinking foundation supports students' completion of a culminating experience, guiding them to integrate practical application of disciplinary knowledge with higher-order thinking skills.

**Initial QEP Goal 1:** Critical thinking will be explicitly taught in the general education courses and will be infused throughout the undergraduate curriculum. This approach prepares students to apply critical thinking skills across academic domains and to integrate them into their lives beyond campus. Schools or departments will develop culminating experiences for students in order to support students' abilities to make discoveries and connections as they apply critical thinking and disciplinary knowledge to authentic issues. **Initial Intended Outcome:** Students will be able to think critically.

**Initial QEP Goal 2:** The undergraduate educational experience will center on a student's assimilation of skills and knowledge from a variety of disciplines to solve complex problems. Students benefit from ongoing opportunities to engage in integrated learning, reflection, and content application to real world situations. **Initial Intended Outcome:** Students will develop the ability to address community issues.

**SECTION 2: A Discussion of Changes Made to the QEP and the Reasons for Making Those Changes**  
In 2007, we planned to move quickly from the blueprint stage to implementation of the QEP. However, it was necessary to enlarge the conversation and alter the original timeline in order to create a formal planning, piloting, and implementation cycle so we could respond to the realities of our environment rather than adhere to an ambitious but unrealistic plan. In the first 18 months, we worked closely with faculty, department chairs and Associate Deans to identify ongoing, strategic priorities and to tailor our approach and timing to their curricular concerns, cultural realities, and disciplinary discourse. What emerged was an evolutionary approach reflected in our timeline below.

**QEP Timeline and Strategic Priorities-Phase I**

2005-2007	Creating the Conceptual Framework for our QEP
2007-2008	Laying Groundwork, Defining Terms and Outcomes, Piloting Pedagogical Approaches
2008-2009	Building Infrastructure, Launching Programs
2009-2010	Creating Capacity for Growth and Scholarship
2010-2011	Piloting the Institution-wide Assessment Protocol
2011-2012	Engaging Units in Reporting Annual Activities and Outcomes
2012-2013	Reporting data, Summarizing Progress, Preparing for Phase II

The following paragraphs describe the central components of our QEP, the changes that were made to each during the first implementation phase, and the rationale for those changes.

**Critical Thinking Framework**

The QEP proposal envisioned i2a leadership providing an operational definition of critical thinking that infuses the language of critical thinking into the campus culture. Instead, we adopted a common critical thinking framework in lieu of discipline-specific definitions. After vetting a number of critical thinking learning models, we adopted the critical thinking framework by Richard Paul and Linda Elder because it is comprehensive in its inclusion of standards and elements of thinking; it is discipline-neutral and can be overlaid on the content in all undergraduate programs and our university partners; it includes instructional support materials; and it is aligned with our current critical thinking rubric used in General Education assessment.

**Culminating Experience Component**

# QEP is not the same as Compliance

## QEP 101:

- ❑ Unique to each institution
- ❑ Evolutionary change project
- ❑ Report on what students learned & what we learned about our institution
- ❑ Institutions set their own benchmarks & interpret results within institutional context
- ❑ Continuous closing the loop & adjustments throughout change process

“The aim then is to hold each institution accountable for providing evidence that **directed efforts have been made** to achieve the stated student learning objectives, including a **discussion of adjustments** that were made to environmental demands and exigent circumstances.”

*--R. Jackson, former SACSVice President,  
“What Makes a Successful QEP in  
Relation to Student Learning Outcomes.”*



# What to expect: Current QEP (i2a) and New QEP

2017 and beyond QEP: Current QEP  
(i2a) **and** New QEP

2007

2017

2007 QEP: Ideas to Action



# Development of 2017 QEP

- ❑ Engage campus spectrum
- ❑ Faculty committee to lead campus exploration of topic
- ❑ Topic heavily informed by data/evidence about student learning at UofL
- ❑ Our new QEP may be connected to our first QEP with appropriate evidence and rationale
- ❑ Next QEP proposed to SACS in spring 2017 with specific 5-year plan in place



# Two QEP Topics on the Table

- **General Education (Gen Ed)**

Our next QEP could be an enhancement of student learning that is coordinated with the upcoming revision of Gen Ed at UofL.

- **Engagement**

Our next QEP could focus on our university's commitment to student engagement in authentic learning contexts.

*NOTE: Either topic needs to clearly serve as an opportunity for a continuation of the core concepts / skills of our current QEP, i2a.*

# General Education and SACS-COC

## Core Requirement 2.7.3

In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that:

- (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree,
- (2) ensures breadth of knowledge,
- (3) is based on a coherent rationale.

## Gen Ed (cont'd)

- ❑ SACS requires minimum of 30 semester hours of Gen Ed credit for baccalaureate degree.
  
- ❑ Gen Ed is 34 hours at UofL
  
- ❑ Gen Ed program is required to include one course from:
  - ❑ Humanities/fine arts
  - ❑ Social/behavioral sciences
  - ❑ Natural sciences/mathematics

# General Education Requirements (GER) at UofL

The General Education program at the University of Louisville fosters active learning by asking students **to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to understand and appreciate cultural diversity**. Specifically, students will establish foundations in the following content areas: **Arts and Humanities, Mathematics, Oral Communication, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Written Communication**. Students will also acquire a competency in Cultural Diversity through work in the content areas.

# QEP Topic on Engagement

Our opportunity to focus the new QEP on enhancing one or more of our institutional priorities around engagement, possibly linking to one or more of these activities:

- ❑ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative's committee on Technology, Demographics, International, Engagement
- ❑ Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement
- ❑ National Survey of Student Engagement
- ❑ High Impact Practices (HIPs)

# QEP Development Next Steps

- ❑ Assemble members of QEP Development Committee in fall 2014
- ❑ Begin to research and flesh out two topics for next QEP in late fall 2014/spring 2015
- ❑ Begin stakeholder feedback in spring 2015
- ❑ Confirm topic in 2015
- ❑ Develop full QEP SACS proposal--due spring 2017

## Wrap Up

Do you have any questions or feedback about the QEP development process or the two QEP topics we are exploring?

# Wrap UP

We are putting together a list of potential faculty members for the QEP Development Committee. Do you have faculty names from your unit to suggest for inclusion in this group?

Let us know by **Friday, October 17**, please.

## QEP Development Committee co-chairs:

Patty Payette

patty.payette@louisville.edu

Riaan Van Zyl

mavanz01@louisville.edu