

Quality Enhancement Plan | University-wide First-Year Seminars: **The Cajun Connection**

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

On-Site Committee Review Dates | February 23-25, 2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I: Executive Summary	1
Chapter II: Topic Identification Process	2
Input Source #1: QEP Proposals	3
Input Source #2: NSSE Results	6
Input Source #3: Presidential Transition Teams	7
University Council and the UL System Board of Supervisors	7
Chapter III: Process Used to Develop the Identified Topic	8
QEP Steering Committee Overview	8
QEP Steering Committee Membership	9
QEP Steering Team Roles and Responsibilities	11
First-Year Seminar Subcommittee Membership	12
First-Year Experience Committee Memberships	13
Learning Communities FYE Committee	13
Library Learning Commons FYE Committee	14
Progress of the QEP Steering Committee	14
2009 Beta Testing and 2010 Pilot Study	16
Chapter IV: Desired Student Learning Outcomes	17
Mission, Strategic Plan, and General Education Learning Outcomes	17
QEP Steering Committee, Core Content Subcommittee, and Assessment Advisor	18
Final List of First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes	20
Chapter V: Best Practices and Literature Review	21
Conferences and Seminars Attended by QEP Steering Committee Members	21
Literature Review by the QEP Steering Committee and Subcommittees	21
Core Content Literature	23
Enhancement Component Literature	30
Peer Mentoring Literature	34
Chapter VI: Actions To Be Implemented	35
Marketing the First-Year Seminar	35
Selection and Training of Faculty	36
Selection and Training of Peer Mentors	38
Implications for Students, Instructors and Staff	39
Impact on the University's Standing Plans	43
Chapter VII: QEP Timeline	43
Chapter VIII: Organizational Structure	48
QEP Coordinator	49
QEP Implementation Committee	49
Assurance of Program Goal Accomplishment	51
Chapter IX: Resources	52
Current Introductory Course Offerings	52
Chapter X: Assessment	63
Characteristics of Effective First-Year Seminar Assessment Exercises	63
The Proposed Assessment Exercises and Instruments	66
Sampling Strategy	69
Closing the Loop	72

Appendix Materials

QEP References	I
Learning Communities	VI
Learning Communities Introduction	VI
Evidence Base	VI
Learning Communities (LC) Planning Committee	VII
Committee Recommendations	VII
Future Directions	VIII
References	IX
Edith Garland Dupré Library Learning Commons Introduction	X
Edith Garland Dupré Library	X
Learning Commons Group	X
Research	XI
Learning Commons Proposal	XI
Computer Labs	XI
Library Instruction Classroom	XII
IT Services	XII
Tutoring Services	XII
Writing Center	XII
Presentation Room	XII
Coffee Shop	XII
Conclusion	XIII
References	XIII
CMCN 425 Public Relations Campaign Class Executive Summary	XIV
Insights from the First-Year Seminar Beta-Test	XVI
Pilot First-Year Seminar Master Syllabus	XIX

Chapter I: Executive Summary

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's focus for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is the development and deployment of a university-wide First-Year Seminar for all incoming freshmen. It will replace existing Freshman Seminars currently offered by some academic colleges. The First-Year Seminar will be offered as a 2 credit-hour interactive experience led by faculty facilitators and supported by peer mentors. The seminar focuses on stimulating incoming students' intellectual curiosity and social responsibility, and providing them with knowledge and insights necessary for fulfillment and success in college and in their subsequent careers.

The First-Year Seminar is to be a central component of the student's First-Year Experience. Because incoming students often are both separating from their families and choosing to live off campus, the First-Year Seminar can provide understanding of the University, as well as promote bonding with and a sense of belonging to our university. It is their gateway to "The Cajun Connection" which is reinforced in 4 ways. Students will be able to experience a: (1) student-campus connection through identification and use of university resources; (2) student-student connection through a sense of community in the learning environment with a peer mentor and fellow classmates; (3) student-instructor connection reinforced by carefully selected, student-centered teachers; and (4) student-course connection through meaningful active learning experiences.

The selection of this specific QEP was derived from three input-gathering initiatives conducted between Fall 2007 and Summer 2008. First, the University's academic deans and department heads were provided with the ten QEP proposals solicited from faculty and ranked by students, faculty, community leaders, and staff. These administrators selected a proposal on transforming the classroom experience of students through active learning. Second, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results indicated that first-year students at UL Lafayette lagged those at peer institutions in engaging in active and collaborative learning. Finally, the "Academic/Faculty" and "Student Issues" Transition Teams appointed by the incoming University President recommended broad-based implementation of universal First-Year Seminars.

In Fall 2008, the 17-member QEP Steering Committee established active learning as a common foundation for all First-Year Seminars. After benchmarking best practices and analyzing several institutional characteristics, such as the University's existing freshman seminars, limitations on the maximum number of student credit hours required for graduation, and the financial condition of the University and the state, the Committee recommended that the seminars be offered as a 2 credit-hour course and limited to 25 students. The seminar would be required of all incoming students and include a mandatory community service component.

The QEP Steering Committee identified a set of requisite skills, knowledge, behaviors and values to be attained by seminar participants as the foundation for developing course curriculum, and then formed a "Core Content" subcommittee to research optimal course topics, timing and pedagogy. After review, reflection and refinement, 14 specific student learning outcomes (SLOs) were established. The SLOs are intended to foster student learning, increase awareness about the University and its resources, enable

student assimilation, create opportunities for networking, and build a foundation for student success in college and beyond. A comprehensive set of direct assessment instruments, customized to gather evidence of student accomplishment of the SLOs, was developed following the articulation of the learning goals.

In Fall 2009, select components of the proposed First-Year Seminar curriculum were tested. In Spring 2010, the entire seminar, as planned for full-scale implementation, will be piloted in a small number of sections. Following insight and feedback from the SACS-COC visiting team, the University will initiate implementation of the First-Year Seminars in Fall 2010, beginning with 21 sections in the Moody College of Business. Instructors teaching these seminars will receive 3 days of development and training the week prior to the first class session. Peer mentors will attend a 1 ½ day training prior to the semester.

Commencing in Fall 2010, the First-Year Seminar Coordinator, under the direction of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, will be appointed full-time and will focus on course-specific issues, such as currency of content, effectiveness of materials and delivery, and monitoring and utilization of assessment results. The First-Year Seminar Coordinator and the QEP Coordinator will co-chair a 12-member QEP Implementation Committee which will have ongoing responsibility for successful execution of the QEP initiative and the management of the 160 sections which will be offered across the University.

Chapter II: Topic Identification Process

Recognizing the significant opportunity that the QEP afforded the University to make substantive improvements in student learning, as well as the necessity of engaging all relevant stakeholders in the entire process, the SACS leadership team designed a procedure for topic selection that was systematic and meticulous. The identification of the development and deployment of a First-Year Seminar as the topic of choice for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's QEP was based on three factors: (1) faculty submission of 10 QEP topic proposals, their ranking by stakeholders, and final deliberation by academic deans and department heads; (2) analysis of 2007 NSSE results; and (3) recommendations by the Academic/Faculty and Student Issues Presidential Transition Teams.



Input Source #1: QEP Proposals

On May 6, 2007, Dr. Ray Authement announced his intention to retire after 33 years as President of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. In preparation for this monumental transition in the life of the University, the SACS Leadership Team sought to provide the incoming president with broad input into the selection of the QEP topic. The team authored three model QEP proposals and disseminated them to key faculty leaders for review. After incorporating their feedback on style and structure, a sample QEP proposal was developed and electronically shared with all faculty and select staff members and academic administrators soliciting proposal submission on topics of interest to the campus community.

The following description and instructions were included in this Fall 2007 solicitation.

As you may know, we are in the midst of preparing for our SACS reaffirmation. A recent requirement added by SACS is the development and implementation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This five-year plan must focus on student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. It must be feasible and achievable, and we must be able to demonstrate impact resulting from QEP implementation. The QEP will describe a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) directly related to enhancing student learning. Student learning is defined broadly in the context of the QEP and may address a wide range of topics or issues but, in all cases, the goals and evaluation strategies need to be clearly and directly linked to improving the quality of student learning. In order to ensure that the QEP is implemented, the institution must integrate it into its ongoing planning and evaluation process. The purpose of this correspondence is to invite you to submit a QEP proposal for consideration and vote by the faculty and other stakeholders. If you have been deliberating about a project that meets the above criteria, then please develop a one-page description of your idea and submit it to me at kcarson@louisiana.edu by October 15, 2007.

A total of 10 QEP proposals, entitled as listed below, were received through this invitation process:

- Center for Civics and Citizenship
- Coordination of Assessment and Assurance of Learning Processes
- Enhanced Inclusion, Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty
- International and Intercultural Student Awareness Initiative
- International, Interdisciplinary Degree Programs
- Learning Enrichment through Extra-Curricular Participation
- Online and Distance Learning Quality Assurance Initiative
- Positively Impacting our Students and our Region through Community Engagement Initiatives
- Teaching Resource Center
- Transforming the Classroom through Active Learning Research and Practices

As indicated in the solicitation for these QEP proposals, the SACS Leadership Team asked various institutional stakeholders to rank-order the 10 submissions. These stakeholders included all faculty members; academic administrators as recommended by Dr. Carolyn Bruder (SACS Liaison and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Academic Planning and Faculty Development); members of two affiliated Boards (the UL Lafayette Foundation and the UL Lafayette Alumni Association); and elected officers of the Student Government Association (SGA).

All stakeholders (except for the SGA members who were administered the survey interpersonally) were electronically polled using SurveyMonkey and were given the following instructions: "As you may know, we are in the midst of preparing for our SACS reaffirmation. A recent requirement added by SACS is the development and implementation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This five-year plan must focus on student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. It must be feasible and achievable, and we must be able to demonstrate impact resulting from QEP implementation. Using broad-based methods, several proposed QEPs have been developed across campus. We are asking for your input in evaluating these ten (10) proposals with the ultimate goal of selecting one single proposed QEP for development and implementation beginning in 2008-09. Please click on the below link, which will take you to our survey. We kindly ask that you read the brief description of each proposed QEP and answer the questions that follow each narrative to provide your valuable input and perspective. The survey will close on October 26th, 2007, so please respond before that date to make your preferences known. Thank you in advance for your contribution to UL Lafayette's SACS accreditation process and to our collective effort to continuously enhance student learning at our university."

To assure a high response rate of the student leaders, two members of the SACS Leadership Team met with the SGA and reviewed the 10 proposals for them. Students were then asked to rank-order the proposals and submit their results prior to departing the meeting. The results, which reflect an overall stakeholder response rate of 37%, are presented below.

QEP Proposals	Faculty Results N = 167		Staff and Administration Results N = 20		Community Results (Foundation and Alumni) N = 13		Student Results (SGA) N = 34		Participation Indicator (% indicating a willingness to serve)
	MEAN	RANK	MEAN	RANK	MEAN	RANK	MEAN	RANK	
<i>Center for Civics and Citizenship</i>	2.92	10	2.48	10	2.69	9	6.56	9	29
<i>Coordination of Assessment and Assurance of Learning Processes</i>	2.83	9	1.95	3.5	2.77	10	6.38	8	28
<i>Enhanced Inclusion, Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty</i>	2.57	6	2.19	5	1.69	4.5	5.65	4	20
<i>International and Intercultural Student Awareness Initiative</i>	2.28	5	2.24	6	2.62	8	6.32	7	34
<i>International, Interdisciplinary Degree Programs</i>	2.22	<u>2</u>	2.38	9	1.69	4.5	5.91	5	30
<i>Learning Enrichment through Extra-Curricular Participation</i>	2.67	8	2.33	7.5	1.84	6	3.71	<u>2</u>	23
<i>Online and Distance Learning Quality Assurance Initiative</i>	2.59	7	1.80	<u>1</u>	1.85	7	6.62	10	34
<i>Positively Impacting our Students and our Region through Community Engagement Initiatives</i>	2.26	4	1.90	<u>2</u>	1.38	<u>1</u>	4.74	3	34
<i>Teaching Resource Center</i>	2.18	<u>1</u>	2.33	7.5	1.54	3	6.24	6	32
<i>Transforming the Classroom through Active Learning Research and Practices</i>	2.25	3	1.95	3.5	1.46	<u>2</u>	3.18	<u>1</u>	40

On November 2, 2007 a retreat was hosted for academic deans and department heads for the purpose of reviewing these results and offering additional perspectives and preferences. The academic administrators in attendance broke into five teams to discuss the proposals and stakeholder feedback. Each team then reported conclusions back to the larger group, and members were then asked to individually rank the proposals. These rankings indicated that stimulating active student learning in the classroom was the most urgent and relevant topic proposal, a conclusion that was consistent with input from student government leaders.

A summary of the top-ranked proposal entitled *Transforming the Classroom through Active Learning Research and Practices* reads:

Our research shows that the predominant classroom pedagogy at UL Lafayette is the professorial lecture. However, in 5th century BC the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tse recognized that there may be better ways to engage students when he wrote, 'If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. But if you let me experience, I will learn.' Recent research in cognitive psychology and the science of learning teaches us much about how students learn and about techniques that can be used to ensure 'deeper' and 'more enduring' learning. The traditional

lecture is certainly one tool of value in the faculty chest, but research has identified many other class activities available to faculty to improve the learning experience. Ultimately, research indicates that students must become active learners, participating in their own learning decisions and actions. Faculty teaching performance and student learning will be enhanced by systematic exposure to this research. The proposed QEP would generate campus discourse and action based on the premise that we should teach for long-term knowledge retention and transfer, that is, students must remember what they have learned beyond the point at which they learned it, and they must be able to transfer and generalize what they have learned to other people and situations.

Input Source #2: NSSE Results

Following this proposal submission and evaluation process, the SACS Leadership Team further narrowed the domain of the QEP to a specific context for active learning based on results of the 2007 NSSE which was administered electronically to 1,909 first-year students and 1,873 seniors at UL Lafayette. The overall NSSE response rate for UL Lafayette was 27% (usable surveys were completed by 319 first-year students and 520 seniors), a level almost identical to that of our Carnegie Peers.



National Survey
of Student Engagement

NSSE 2007 Benchmark Comparisons
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

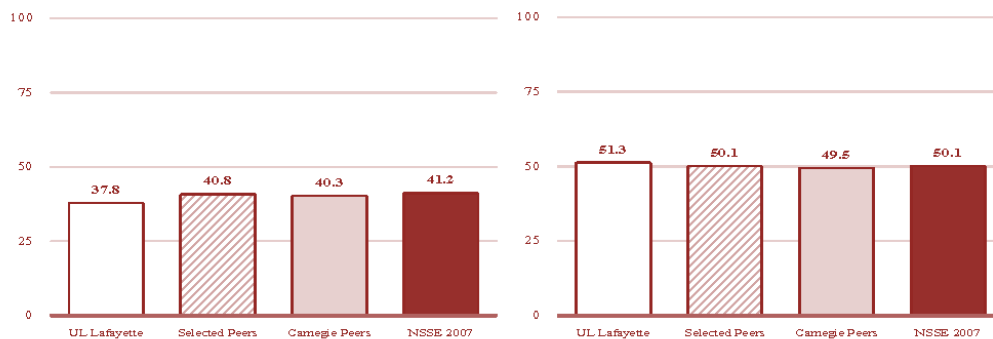
Benchmark Comparisons

UL Lafayette compared with:

Class	UL Lafayette	Selected Peers			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
First-Year	37.8	40.8	***	-.18	40.3	**	-.16	41.2	***	-.21
Senior	51.3	50.1		.07	49.5	**	.11	50.1		.07

First-Year

Senior



As shown above, UL Lafayette first-year students compared unfavorably as compared to the benchmarks with selected peer, Carnegie peer, and NSSE respondent institutions on the “Active and Collaborative Learning” dimension. In contrast, seniors reported more active and collaborative learning experiences than the benchmarks, and this was statistically significant when compared to Carnegie peer institutions. Thus, the data suggest that UL Lafayette should focus on engaging first-year students in active learning opportunities. This focus is consistent with addressing the problem of a student

persistence problem at UL Lafayette. In 2007, for example, 26% of students did not progress from their freshman to sophomore year.

Input Source #3: Presidential Transition Teams

On March 14, 2008, the SACS Leadership Team met with Dr. Joseph Savoie, prior to his assumption of the University presidency, to share the rankings of the QEP proposal process as well as the 2007 NSSE results. To deepen his insight into general campus needs, in the Spring of 2008, President-elect Savoie appointed six transitions teams to identify key issues, challenges, and opportunities facing UL Lafayette. These teams met between April and June 2008. On July 23, 2008, the Academic/Faculty Team recommended the implementation of universal freshman seminars. This recommendation was echoed by the Student Issues Transition Team who moved for instituting a freshman seminar for first-time and transfer students.

The Academic/Faculty Transition Team was comprised of Dr. Sandy Duhé (faculty in Communication), Dr. Julia Frederick (Director of the Honors Program), Dr. James Garber (faculty in Engineering), Dr. Judy Gentry (faculty in History), Dr. Jennifer Hightower Jackson (Assistant to the President for Campus Diversity and Community Outreach), Dr. John Meriwether (faculty in Physics and Executive Officer of the Faculty Senate), Dr. Toni Sims (faculty in Sociology), and Dr. David Yarbrough (faculty in Child and Family Studies). Dr. Steve Landry, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, served as Chair. Dr. Carolyn Bruder, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, served as a resource liaison.

The Student Issues Team consisted of Dr. DeWayne Bowie (Registrar and Vice President for Enrollment Services), Dr. Carolyn Bruder (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs); Kaye Choate (Junior student majoring in Nursing); Brittany Cormier (Senior student majoring in Psychology); Philip DeBaillon (Senior student majoring in Accounting); Dr. Patricia Cottonham (Dean of Students); Mr. Roger Schieferecke (Director of Enrollment Services); Mr. Jerry Luke LeBlanc (Chief Financial Officer); Ms. Liz Landry (Executive Assistant to the President); Dr. Geoffrey Stewart (faculty in Marketing); and Dr. Jerilyn Hill (faculty in Business Law).

The month before these reports were finalized, Dr. Steve Landry (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), Mr. Jerry Luke LeBlanc (Chief Financial Officer and Leader of Incoming President's Transition Teams), Dr. Carolyn Bruder (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and SACS Liaison) and Dr. Kerry Carson (Professor of Management and QEP Coordinator) attended the 2010 Track B Orientation in Atlanta. At this meeting, the SACS-COC staff strongly suggested a narrow focus for the QEP. The recommendations of the Transition Teams were consistent with the staff's suggestion. Therefore, it was decided that the University would develop and deploy a First-Year Seminar that had active learning as its basic pedagogical tenet.

University Council and the UL System Board of Supervisors

On August 4, 2008, Dr. Kerry Carson (QEP Coordinator) authored a letter to Dr. Steve Landry (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs) requesting formal approval by the University Council of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for a QEP focused on specific learning objectives to be realized via a First-Year Seminar.

This letter summarized the process as follows:

The topic selection process has taken place over the past year. Last fall, faculty and staff wrote 10 QEP proposals that were ranked by various stakeholders. Active learning in the classroom, which was ranked number one by students, was eventually chosen by the academic department heads and deans as the preferred initiative. This topic area was further narrowed by results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which indicated that the University was doing a good job with seniors but was lagging behind our peers in active and collaborative learning opportunities for first-year students. At the SACS orientation meeting this summer, it was suggested that the QEP be narrowly focused, and so the first-semester seminar was chosen. This topic was supported by the Academic/Faculty and Student Issues Transition Teams.

The request to move forward with the First-Year Seminar topic as the QEP focus was granted and approval gained on August 18, 2008, from the University Council which comprises of the University's Vice Presidents, the Executive Director of the Office for Campus Diversity, and the President. Dr. Savoie formally included the selected QEP topic as one of his goals for his performance evaluation with the Louisiana System Board of Supervisors. As stated in his 2008-09 Annual Performance Evaluation the goal was to "complete QEP planning related to implementing universal two-credit freshman seminar for all entering new freshman, for piloting in Fall 2009."

At the meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the UL System on December 4, 2009, representatives of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette presented a report on "Access and Success" initiatives on campus. The four representatives included the Provost, Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Associate VP for Academic Affairs, and the Director of the Academic Success Center. The group summarized various campus initiatives designed to increase access and enrollment and to improve student persistence once they enroll. Included in the presentation was a video, which included a segment on the newly designed Freshman Seminar, the focus of the University's QEP. As a follow-up, a letter of transmittal from President Savoie to the President of the Board of Supervisors and the President of the Board of Regents is planned to keep them informed of the initiative and place it in the context of their own Boards' interest in student retention and success.

Chapter III: Process Used to Develop the Identified Topic

QEP Steering Committee Overview

In preparation for the University's accreditation reaffirmation process, a SACS Leadership team was assembled in Fall 2006. Team members began work on ensuring processes were in place and documented to meet the expectations of the compliance certification component. In Fall 2007, the SACS Leadership team was reorganized and Dr. Kerry David Carson, Professor of Management, directed his efforts toward coordinating the QEP project. Initially, the QEP Coordinator focused on broad-based participation in the identification of the QEP topic. The processes, organizational

structures, and expectations that have evolved following topic identification are discussed in this chapter.

QEP Steering Committee Membership

The inaugural QEP Steering Committee meeting, chaired by the QEP Coordinator, was held on August 28, 2008, with 14 members. Based on the discussion at the first two meetings, two additional individuals were invited to join the Committee and began attending on September 25, 2008. The Committee decided to invite one additional member at the January 21, 2009 meeting. The 17 individuals serving as members of the QEP Steering Committee are identified in the table below:

QEP Steering Committee Membership	
Scott Brazda, Adjunct Instructor in Communications and Executive Director of the Stuller Family Foundation	
Dr. Carolyn Bruder, Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Director of Academic Planning and Faculty Development	
Dr. Kerry David Carson, Professor of Management	
Dr. Paula Phillips Carson, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment	
Melanie Comeaux, Grants Coordinator in the Business Office	
Paul Eaton, Student Orientation Director	
Dr. Julia C. Frederick, University Honors Program Director	
Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll, Assistant Professor of Communications	
Bette Harris, Academic Success Center/Junior Division Director	
Jill H. Lemaire, Assistant Dean of Student Services, Moody College of Business	
Dr. Paula S. Montgomery, Associate Dean, College of Education	
Dr. Melinda Oberleitner, Associate Dean of Nursing and Allied Health Professions	
Charles E. Richard, Associate Professor and Cinematic Arts Workshop Director	
Susan Richard, Associate Professor and Head of Reference, Edith Garland Dupré Library	
Dr. G. Thomas Rizzuto, Associate Professor of Mathematics	
Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, Associate Professor of Psychology	
Dr. David N. Yarbrough, Associate Professor of Child/Family Studies & Dean of Community Service	

The organizational structure of the QEP Steering Committee is graphically presented below.



** indicates the incumbent serves as a full participating QEP Steering Committee member.*

QEP Steering Team Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of QEP Steering members for the First-Year Seminar are described below.

- QEP Coordinator: Sets the agenda for QEP Steering Committee meetings, ensures that deadlines are met and coordinates with all relevant stakeholders.
- Assistant QEP Coordinator: Researches best practices and benchmarks, assists with budget formulation and acts as the Moody College of Business representative for beta testing and QEP pilot.
- Associate QEP Coordinator: Is backup for the QEP Coordinator and serves on the Peer Mentoring Subcommittee.
- Accreditation Liaison: Is both the SACS-COC contact and University administration representative.
- Public Relations Director: Brands and promotes the QEP through a class project (CMCN 425).
- Co-chair, Community Service Subcommittee (Dean of Community Service): Participates in the development and implementation of the service learning component and coordinates peer mentors in the UL AmeriCorps Program.
- Co-chair, Community Service Subcommittee (Executive Director of Stuller Family Foundation): Coordinates activities with community nonprofits and agencies seeking volunteer assistance.
- Assessment Advisor: Identifies and/or develops instruments and metrics to determine successful achievement of learning outcomes and conveys results when expected performance levels are not achieved.
- Data Analyst: Provides data analyses as needed.
- Budget Analyst: Assists in budget issues and preparing the QEP budget.
- Faculty Development: Assists with creating and delivering the educational module(s) designed to enhance teaching and learning.
- Digital Media Coordinator: Coordinates the creation and application of digital media resources for QEP promotion and faculty development.
- Student Orientation: Provides perspectives on enrollment management issues assuring continuity in addressing developmental needs of first year students.
- First-Year Seminar Coordinator: Coordinates four subcommittees (Core Content, Career Planning, Cultural, and Service Learning) and ensures potential readings and learning activities selected for implementation are research-based, reflective of best practices and relevant.
- Chair, Peer Mentoring Subcommittee: Creates the peer mentoring system, goals, recruitment and training.

The focus of the QEP is the First-Year Seminar. However, the Chair of the Learning Community Committee and the Chair of the Library Learning Commons Committee were invited as members of the QEP Steering Committee. Like the First-Year Seminars, the Learning Community and Library Learning Commons are two new initiatives, and these approaches to the First-Year Experience seem best coordinated with the QEP initiative.

The unique set of responsibilities and position duties of these Chairs follows:

- Chair, Learning Community Committee (First-Year Experience): Researches methods for structuring learning communities, provides recommendations, conducts a pilot study and implements a model.
- Chair, Library Learning Commons Committee (First-Year Experience): Researches and recommends components of this project and proceeds with implementation.

Membership on the five First-Year Seminar subcommittees (Core Content, Career Planning, Cultural Activities, Service Learning, and Peer Mentoring) was expansive and broad-based. Individuals could volunteer through self-nomination. Others were invited because of unique capacities, experience or expertise. Individuals serving on the five subcommittees are identified below. *(Note: ♦ indicates the individual serves as a member of the QEP Steering Committee)*

First-Year Seminar Subcommittee Membership

Core Content Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, Associate Professor of Psychology ♦

Dr. Constance Broussard, Administrative Coordinator Upward Bound
Lance Chance, Bibliographic Instruction and Distance Learning Librarian
Carolyn Dural, Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts
Dr. Leon Labbe, Professor of Renewable Resources
Jill LaRoussini, Nursing Instructor
Dr. Andrea Loewy, Graduate Coordinator of Music
Mary Luquette, Business Instructor
Sue Ann Ozbirn, Assistant Dean of General Studies
Lee Price, Assistant Dean of Sciences
Dr. Bill Rieck, Professor of Education
Dr. Anita Wimberly, Director Student Support Services

Career Planning Subcommittee

Co-chair: Kim Billeaudeau, Career Services Director
Co-chair: Lucy Gammon, Career Counseling Center Coordinator

Kay Riedel, Assistant Dean of Education
Dr. Leon Labbe, Professor of Renewable Resources
Dr. Patricia Lanier, Associate Professor of Management
Dr. Jack Ferstel, Instructor of English

Cultural Activities Subcommittee

Chair: Mark Tullos, Director of the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum

Rose Honegger, Director of the Office of International Affairs
Dr. Jerry McGuire, Professor of English
Dr. Mary Ann Wilson, Professor of English

Community Service Subcommittee

Co-chair: Dr. David Yarbrough, Dean of Community Services ♦

Co-chair: Scott Brazda, Adjunct Instructor in Communication and Executive Director of the Stuller Family Foundation ♦

Dr. Eddie Palmer, Dean of the Graduate School
Heather Blanchard, Executive Director of the Healing House
Carlee Alm-Labar, Marketing Director of the Community Foundation of Acadiana
Judd Jeansonne, Program Director of Campus AmeriCorps

Peer Mentoring Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Julia Frederick, University Honors Program Director ♦

Assistant Chair: Bette Harris, Director of the Academic Success Center/Junior Division ♦

Dr. Jennifer Hightower Jackson, Assistant to the President for Campus Diversity and Community Outreach
Heather Plaisance, General Reference Librarian, Dupré Library
Martha Bryant, Acting Director of After School Programs, Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning

First-Year Experience Committee Memberships

Like First-Year Seminar subcommittees, the membership on the Learning Community and Library Learning Commons Committees was broad-based. The individuals serving on these two First-Year Experience Committees are listed below.

Learning Communities FYE Committee

Chair: Dr. Melinda Oberleitner, Associate Dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions ♦

Dr. Pegge Alciatore, Assistant Professor of Biology
Camille Bulliard, Assistant Professor of Performing Arts
Dr. Robert Carriker, Associate Professor of History and Geography
Dr. Terry Chambers, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Sherry Curry, Assistant Professor, Dupré Library
Donna Fatheree, Instructor of Mathematics
Brent Faul, Office of Information Systems
John Ferstel, Instructor of English
Dr. August Gallo, Professor of Chemistry
Dr. Diane Olivier, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations & Leadership
Lana Rodriguez, Academic Counselor, Junior Division
Robbie Stefanski, Instructor of Nursing
Dr. Geoffrey Stewart, Assistant Professor of Marketing
Dr. Karl Volkmar, Associate Professor of Visual Arts

Library Learning Commons FYE Committee

Chair: Susan Richard, Edith Garland Dupré Library ♦

Mary Bourque, Academic Counselor, Junior Division
Lance Chance, Assistant Professor, Dupré Library
Sheryl Curry, Assistant Professor, Dupré Library
Linda Desormeaux, Dupré Library
Duane Huval, Dupré Library
Patrick Landry, Computing Support Services
Betsy Miguez, Associate Professor, Dupré Library
Heather Plaisance, Dupré Library
Clancy Ratliff, Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program
Justin Thurman, Writing Center Coordinator
Lori Trim, Computing Support Services
Elise Peltier, Student Government Association Representative

Progress of the QEP Steering Committee

To demonstrate the evolution of the QEP Steering Committee's planning, philosophy and execution of the First-Year Seminar, the timeline below chronologically identifies meeting dates and major agenda items from August 23, 2008 to December 3, 2009. The agenda items are also listed for the First-Year Seminar Implementation Committee for October 6, 2009 and December 1, 2009. In the 2010 Spring semester, the First-Year Seminar Implementation Committee will continue forward. The QEP Steering Committee will no longer meet except to assemble for the SACS-COC on-site visit in February 2010.

- August 28, 2008 | Discussion was centered on the proposed QEP organizational structure and the First-Year Seminars currently offered on campus. The SACS-COC white-paper on steps involved in developing the QEP was distributed to Committee members and reviewed.
- September 11, 2008 | Documentation for student learning outcomes at other universities was reviewed and discussed. The Committee decided to add the Library Library Commons and the Digital Media positions. On September 15, 2008, Charles E. Richard, Associate Professor and Director of the Cinematic Arts Workshop and Susan Richard, Associate Professor and Head of Reference at the Edith Garland Dupré Library, were sent an invitation to join the QEP Steering Committee. They both accepted and attended their first meeting on September 25, 2008.
- September 25, 2008 | Several Committee members developed proposed student learning outcomes based on best practices, and these as well as core assumptions were discussed.
- October 9, 2008 | A summary of student learning outcomes was reviewed and discussed. An initial listing of outcomes was conveyed to the Core Content

Subcommittee for investigation and refinement. Research on the respective benefits of a 1, 2 and 3-credit hour seminar was presented.

- November 6, 2008 | Updates from the subcommittees were presented and discussed. The appropriateness of a 2-credit hour course was supported. The eventual organizational structure for implementation of the First-Year Seminar was deliberated.
- November 20, 2008 | Updates from the subcommittees were presented. Identification of an on-site QEP evaluator was discussed. Contradictory feedback from student focus groups was presented and debated.
- January 21, 2009 | Updates from the subcommittees were presented and discussed. Budget issues were reviewed. Importantly, the QEP Steering Committee decided to rely heavily on student input for the marketing of the QEP. Following this meeting, the QEP Coordinator talked with Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll, Assistant Professor of Communication, who was scheduled to teach the senior-level PR campaign management seminar (CMCN 425) in Fall 2009. Upon securing her agreement to use her class to help market the QEP through course project, she was invited to join the QEP Steering Committee. She accepted the invitation and began attending meetings on March 4, 2009.
- February 11, 2009 | The QEP Steering Committee members attended Dr. Mary Allen's Assessment Workshop on First-Year Seminars. Subcommittee members also were invited to attend.
- March 4, 2009 | Updates from the subcommittees were presented. There was a focused discussion on peer mentoring. Development of the QEP budget for AY2009-2010 was addressed. A format for brief QEP Steering Committee job descriptions was presented.
- March 25, 2009 | Updates from the subcommittees were presented and discussed. The main agenda item was the implementation timeline for the universal First-Year Seminar and the First-Year Experience.
- April 29, 2009 | Written reports from subcommittees were due. The QEP Steering Committee tentatively approved the AY2009-2010 budget. Individual summer goals were discussed.
- May 21, 2009 | Steering Committee members were invited to a webinar entitled, "Designing and Delivering a First-Year Seminar." Nine members attended.
- September 1, 2009 | A draft of the QEP document was distributed before the meeting and feedback was provided. The organizational structure for the implementation phase was discussed.
- September 15, 2009 | A QEP presentation at the Deans and Department Heads retreat on October 13 was discussed as well as other marketing issues. An overview of the assessment of student learning outcomes was provided.
- October 6, 2009 | The First-Year Seminar Implementation Committee's initial meeting focused on the survey results on motivating faculty, the criteria to be used in selecting seminar instructors, and the process for selecting a common reading.
- November 17, 2009 | The QEP Steering Committee continued focusing on the generation of questions for the On-Site Review Committee. The final working meeting for the Steering Committee was celebrated. Members were asked to be available during the on-site visitation from February 23-25, 2010.

- December 1, 2009 | The First-Year Seminar Implementation Committee held its second meeting to review beta testing outcomes and plan for the pilot study.
- December 3, 2009 | Students from the CMCN 425 capstone course presented their findings and recommendations to the QEP Steering Committee regarding management of a Public Relations Campaign for the First-Year Seminar.

2009 Beta Testing and 2010 Pilot Study

As the work of the committees progressed, it became evident that there did not always exist an optimal model for seminar design and delivery. As a result, two distinct phase-in stages were proposed, deliberated and agreed upon by the QEP Steering Committee. These stages are the Fall 2009 Beta Testing and the Spring 2010 Pilot Study.

Fall 2009 Beta Testing. Beta testing of select components of the First-Year Seminar was conducted in Fall 2009. Dr. Wozencraft, the First-Year Seminar Coordinator used her First-Year Seminar class and invited two instructors in the Moody College of Business to participate in beta testing select components proposed for inclusion in the seminar. These instructors indicated a willingness to add or alter existing content in their current 2-student credit hour course entitled “Introduction to Business.” The components that were beta-tests included: (a) a module on career assessment and planning, (b) the service learning project, (c) information literacy training, (d) time management, and (e) money management concepts using the CashCourse resource offered by the National Endowment for Financial Education.

The Career Assessment and Planning Module and the Service Learning Project components were supported and partially implemented by existing offices on campus. Information literacy training was undertaken in conjunction with librarians in the Dupré Library who developed a comprehensive assignment to be deployed in class. The time management concept was introduced as a two-step training in which students were asked to record how they spend time and to plan and adhere to an altered, more efficient schedule by employing research-informed strategies. The CashCourse resource was evaluated for its usefulness in budget planning. The process and outcomes of this Beta testing is presented in the Appendix under “Insights from the First-Year Seminar Beta Test.”

Spring 2010 Pilot Study. A pilot study is planned for Spring 2010 in a small number of sections in the Moody College of Business. This is intended as a full “dress-rehearsal” of the First-Year Seminar. While there will only be a few instructors involved in the pilot phase, approximately 10 instructors will receive the comprehensive faculty development and training intended eventually to be delivered to all seminar instructors. This inclusion of 10 instructors will allow for optimum interaction during the training process and also will prepare some for future seminars.

The instructors included in the pilot study will be expected to develop their syllabi in accordance with the proposed content expectations and student learning outcomes. A partial set of student learning outcomes will be assessed, primarily for establishing instrument reliability and validity. The suggestions and recommendations of the SACS-COC visiting team will also be incorporated during and following the pilot phase.

Chapter IV: Desired Student Learning Outcomes

There were two primary stages in the development of the desired student learning outcomes for the First-Year Seminar. First, the (a) UL Lafayette “Statement of Purpose” (mission statement), (b) *2009-2014 Strategic Plan*, and (c) General Education Learning Outcomes were reviewed to assure coordination of learning objectives across the curriculum. In the second stage, the Seminar’s student learning outcomes were developed. This step occurred in three phases: (a) the QEP Steering Committee, upon review of past practices at UL Lafayette and best practices at peer institutions, submitted a comprehensive listing of viable learning outcomes to be investigated and distilled by the Core Content Subcommittee; (b) the Core Content Subcommittee conducted an extensive review of the literature on common skill deficiencies and attributes related to collegiate success and compared these to the needs of UL Lafayette students; and (c) the Assessment Advisor reviewed the goals to ensure they were stated in a manner that was conducive to measurement. This process resulted in a final list of 14 student learning outcomes.

Mission, Strategic Plan, and General Education Learning Outcomes

The development of student learning outcomes for the First-Year Seminar was guided and supported by the UL Lafayette “Statement of Purpose,” which articulates: “The University is dedicated to achieving excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, in research, and in public service. For undergraduate education, this commitment implies a fundamental subscription to general education, rooted in the primacy of the traditional liberal arts and sciences as the core around which all curricula are developed.”

The University’s *2009-2014 Strategic Plan* advances eight strategic imperatives, two of which are clearly supported by the QEP: “Enhancing Student Engagement and Success” and “Facilitating Quality Teaching and Learning.” The first imperative includes an action item which commits the University to creating a meaningful First-Year Experience through development of “a substantive and formative First-Year Seminar for incoming students.” Three related mandates indicated in the *Strategic Plan* which can be at least partially fulfilled through a First-Year Seminar include that the University is to: (a) “foster commitment to making a difference through community engagement,” (b) “enrich the vitality of campus life through extra- and co-curricular activities and organizations,” and (c) “involve career services early in our students’ academic progression” as well as “provide resources to assist students with choosing or affirming their choice of major.” Also relating more broadly to the First-Year Experience is the *Strategic Plan* expectation that the University will “bond students with others through learning communities.”

As the First-Year Seminar provides the common point of departure for a college education, it is important that the seminar learning objectives support the University’s core curriculum. Because of the well-established benefits of a liberal education on students’ value development and their ability to engage in effective critical thinking and communication, it was a goal of the QEP Steering Committee to create synergies between the seminar content and the General Education curriculum and aid students in understanding the value of the General Education curriculum.

The University's General Education Assessment Matrix is presented below. Review of this document reveals that there are three major goals for which the Seminar may be a viable mechanism for student learning. These are: (a) demonstrating effective use of technology, (b) developing awareness of themselves as members of human society and citizens of their communities, and (c) thinking critically and communicating effectively."

UL Lafayette General Education Student Learning Objectives and Goals	
1. Communication. Students should communicate effectively in oral and written English.	A. Think critically and read with comprehension. B. Write essays that make arguments appropriately supported by evidence, while synthesizing and documenting sources. C. Speak cogently in presenting information.
2. Science. Students should be able to understand the nature of scientific knowledge and have a sufficient knowledge base to be familiar with the power and limitations of science as related to contemporary topics	D. Apply key processes and scientific reasoning to draw reasonable conclusions within the natural sciences. E. Use critical and logical thinking, knowledge of accepted scientific methods, and appropriate sources to evaluate the credibility of information with scientific content
3. Humans and Their Contexts. Students should develop awareness of themselves as members of human society and citizens of their own communities.	F. Collect, consume, and critique basic and complex concepts in history and social sciences. G. Understand the diverse and complex nature of humanity H. Create engaged citizens.
4. Arts and Letters. Students should understand the nature and value of literature and the fine and performing arts.	I. Interpret and write critically about literary or cultural texts. J. Create, perform, or interpret works of art (visual, musical, design, theatrical, or dance) to describe, analyze and evaluate the context, history, influence, or structure of a particular genre, movement, or work of art.
5. Quantitative Reasoning. Students should be able to analyze quantitative information in order to solve problems and understand the world.	K. Use mathematical methods and models to solve quantitative problems and to communicate solutions effectively. L. Analyze and critically evaluate numerical and graphical data to draw reasonable and valid conclusions about "real-world" situations.
6. Information Technology. Students should be able to demonstrate effective use of information technologies.	M. Search electronic sources for information. N. Collect, evaluate and utilize retrieved data to advance arguments. O. Communicate through electronic media.

QEP Steering Committee, Core Content Subcommittee, and Assessment Advisor

Several documents were reviewed prior to conceptualizing student learning outcomes for the proposed First-Year Seminar. For example, the QEP Steering Committee reviewed 12 goals established by a 2003 University Retention Committee that were expected to be incorporated into any newly created First-Year Seminars at the University. Also, the QEP Coordinator disseminated to the Committee a description of IUPUI's First-Year Seminars and Hollins University's QEP on First-Year Seminars. Members of the QEP Steering Committee then individually reviewed student learning outcomes at a variety of institutions and developed lists of relevant and desired student learning outcomes. These were discussed at the QEP Steering Committee meetings.

The QEP Coordinator then developed an encapsulated list that integrated those outcomes proposed by individual Committee members. The categories and number of goals associated with each topic in this initial compendium were as follows: University Resource Identification (3 goals), Career Development (5 goals); Wellness Issues (4 goals), Study Strategies (2 goals), Electronic Communication (3 goals), Academic Integrity (2 goals), Library and Writing Skills (2 goals), Collaboration with Others (3

goals); Multicultural Awareness (3 goals), and Complementary Learning Opportunities (2 goals). Four members of the QEP Steering Committee conducted student focus groups with diverse constituencies to assess their reactions to the First-Year Seminars and their proposed student learning outcomes. While responses from the focus groups were mixed, most students indicated that the peer mentoring component would be particularly valuable, especially if the mentor was a junior or senior and in the same major as the seminar participant. Also, several students expressed the desire to learn more about financial, physical, and mental wellness. However, some objected to the service learning or community service component, suggesting they would have insufficient time to volunteer due to their work schedules. While the QEP Steering Committee members continued to believe that this was an important activity, they realized that students would need to be oriented to the value of such an exercise.

The preliminary and comprehensive set of goals was then transmitted to the Core Content Subcommittee for in-depth review and refinement. Specifically, the Core Content Subcommittee was charged with reviewing the extant literature on seminar outcomes and further analyzing best practices within the context of the University's General Education learning outcomes. Following their efforts in pursuit of this charge during AY2008-2009, the subcommittee submitted a refined set of learning objectives on May 18, 2009. The categories and number of goals associated with each topic in this modified listing were as follows:

- Student Engagement (2 outcomes)
- Goal Setting and Motivation Enhancement (3 outcomes)
- Time Management (2 outcomes)
- Study Skills and Learning Styles (4 outcomes)
- Critical Thinking (2 outcomes)
- Information Literacy (3 outcomes)
- Personal Wellness (4 outcomes)
- Money Management (4 outcomes)
- Relationship Building (3 outcomes)
- Service Learning (2 outcomes)
- Fine Arts (1 outcome)
- Development of Multicultural/Diversity Competence (4 outcomes)
- Career Planning (4 outcomes).

The QEP Coordinator and First-Year Seminar Coordinator met with the Assessment Advisor to review this recommended list of 38 learning outcomes in 13 major categories. Dr. Mary Allen, an assessment consultant invited to campus and who met with the QEP Steering Committee on February 5, 2009, recommended that we assess between 12 and 16 goals for this course. Following that advice, the trio agreed that the best approach would be to attempt to summarize and condense each category into one meaningful learning outcome. The Assessment Advisor was charged with collapsing the 38 goals into 12 to 16 student learning outcomes. This was to be done in the context of adhering to the national agenda for student learning in higher education. The Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative by the Association on American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) recently identified "The Principles of Excellence" and a set of "Essential Learning Outcomes" for institutions of higher learning. These were considered throughout deliberation of the student learning objectives and assessments for the First-Year Seminar. The Assessment Advisor was able to capture the goals in 14 measurable student learning outcomes.

Final List of First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes

The First-Year Seminar is an interactive experience led by faculty facilitators and peer mentors focused on stimulating incoming students' intellectual curiosity and social responsibility, and providing them with knowledge and insights necessary for fulfillment and success in college and in their subsequent careers. To these ends, the Student Learning Goals of the course are as follows.

To increase awareness about the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and to benefit from its programs, services and resources, students will:

- 1 | Comprehend the philosophy, function and value of the General Education curriculum.
- 2 | Identify available student services and locations of support units offering academic assistance, health care, financial aid, arts and multicultural programming, career planning, and technology resources.

To maximize success in matriculation through the higher education curriculum, students will:

- 3 | Know and apply time management techniques and effective learning strategies.
- 4 | Select, locate and evaluate information resources held in Dupré Library and in digital formats.
- 5 | Define academic integrity and delineate the forms, harm and consequences of academically dishonest behavior.

To create opportunities to build social, support and professional networks, students will:

- 6 | Realize the advantages of student engagement and become involved in campus life.
- 7 | Describe responsible social networking and effective communication etiquette.
- 8 | Recognize emotionally-intelligent approaches to conflict resolution.

To start building the foundation for fulfillment and success in and beyond college, students will:

- 9 | Determine occupational interests, and research and evaluate information about career paths.
- 10 | Apply a logical and rational problem-solving model to address a relevant challenge.
- 11 | Understand wellness, health maintenance and injury and illness prevention practices.
- 12 | Demonstrate techniques for establishing and maintaining a balanced budget.
- 13 | Translate their service learning experience into a plan of meaningful civic participation.
- 14 | Analyze their own worldview in relation to those of other cultures, demographics, and aspects of human diversity.

Chapter V: Best Practices and Literature Review

The QEP Steering Committee members attended a number of accreditation and First-Year Seminar conferences to learn about best practices to be emulated.

Conferences and Seminars Attended by QEP Steering Committee Members

- SACS COC Summer Institute, July 2007, in Louisville, KY / Carolyn Bruder, Accreditation Liaison/Administration Representative and Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator
- SACS COC Annual Meeting, December 2007, in New Orleans, LA / Carolyn Bruder, Accreditation Liaison/Administration Representative and Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator
- SACS COC Orientation Meeting, June 2008, in Atlanta, GA / Carolyn Bruder, Accreditation Liaison/Administration Representative and Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator
- SACS COC Summer Institute, July 2008, in Orlando, FL / Paula Carson, Assessment Advisor
- National Conference on First-Year Assessment, October 2008, in San Antonio, TX / Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator
- SACS COC Annual Meeting, December 2008, in San Antonio, TX / Carolyn Bruder, Accreditation Liaison/Administration Representative; Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator; and Susan Richard, Library Learning Commons Coordinator
- Institute for First-Year Seminar Leadership, April 2009, in Asheville, NC / Theresa Wozencraft, First-Year Seminar Coordinator
- Webinar on Designing and Delivering a First-Year Seminar, May 2009, on campus / Coordinated by Paula Montgomery, Faculty Development. Attendees included Scott Brazda, Community Service Subcommittee Co-chair; Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator; Paul Eaton, Orientation Director; Julia Frederick, Peer Mentoring Committee Chair; Bette Harris, Associate Coordinator; Jill Lemaire, Assistant Coordinator; Susan Richard, Library Commons Chair; Theresa Wozencraft, First-Year Seminar Coordinator
- SACS COC Annual Meeting, December 2009, in Atlanta, GA / Carolyn Bruder, Accreditation Liaison/Administration Representative; Kerry Carson, QEP Coordinator; Paula Carson, Assessment Advisor; and Theresa Wozencraft, First-Year Seminar Coordinator
- 29th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience, to be attended in February 2010, in Denver, CO / Theresa Wozencraft, First-Year Seminar Coordinator

Literature Review by the QEP Steering Committee and Subcommittees

Consistent with the University's *Strategic Plan*, First-Year Seminars are linked to increased student persistence (Pascarella & Terenzinin, 2005; Ishler & Upcraft, 2005), as well as improved academic performance and positive social network development

(Keup & Barefoot, 2005). Because of these positive benefits, 88% of U.S. colleges and universities offer a graded First-Year Seminar to incoming students (Cuseo, 2006). UL Lafayette currently does offer variants of the proposed seminar, which are typically structured as extended orientation courses with professional- and discipline-linked content embedded. The challenge on this campus, however, is that not every student is offered a seminar. And, when seminars are offered, they are diverse in terms of length, content, depth, and quality. To standardize offerings that will maximize student learning, the First-Year Seminar design and deployment needs to be approached on a systematic, comprehensive and incremental basis. That is, seminars need to be sustained by an overall institutionalized campus structure and support mechanisms. Related to this QEP initiative were discussions about the initial development of learning communities and a library learning commons. These two approaches to student engagement are incorporated into the appendix of the document, as seminars are typically offered in concert with other enriching First-Year Experiences (Hunter & Linder, 2005).

Emulating highly-regarded best practices, the University has laid a strong foundation for the success of the plan. The QEP Steering Committee has actively and intensely involved faculty, as well as student affairs staff, academic administrators and students in planning a seminar that reflects the needs of this campus and its students. Seminar instructors will be provided the necessary latitude to capitalize on their unique pedagogical strengths, but initial and ongoing training will be required and teaching resources will be made available. The First-Year Seminar will involve upper-class students as peer mentors, will be a required course for incoming freshmen, will largely be rooted in the academic literature, and will be manageably small in size. Further, the seminar curriculum is designed around specific and meaningful student learning outcomes that will be assessed and will drive improvement and enhancements (Hunter & Linder, 2005).

Within higher education, many first-year seminars share similar goals. They strive to enhance academic skills; foster critical thinking; orient students to resources on campus; enhance interactions with peers, faculty, and staff; encourage career development; and develop a sense of campus community (Hunter & Linder, 2005; Tobolowsky, 2008). There exist several rational justifications for offering First-Year Seminars with intended outcomes such as these. During the first semester of college, many students separate from their families of origin, transition from their homes to the university, and attempt to become integrated in an unfamiliar setting (Bigger, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Because the majority of UL Lafayette students live off campus, the First-Year Seminar can serve as their main connection to the university (Bigger, 2005; Schroeder, 2003). Such a connection is needed, as research indicates a sense of belonging translates into student ability to thrive and succeed (Autin, 1985; Cuseo, 1997; Bigger, 2005). According to Petschauer and Cuseo (2009), there are four ways to provide this connection. There is the (1) student – campus connection (the identification and employment of available resources in and around the campus community), (2) student – student connection (a creation of a sense of community in the learning environment with a peer mentor in each classroom), (3) student – instructor connection (a personal relationship between the student and the instructor with a maximum number of 25 students in each section), and (4) the student – course connection (an increased student interest and involvement in the course through active learning).

While the documented benefits of a First-Year Seminar increase with an expanded student credit hour requirement, UL Lafayette has chosen to adopt a two-credit hour

format, which has been shown to increase student interactions with faculty, peers and the campus; enhance student learning strategies; and improve students' physical and mental wellness. The 1-hour seminar format most often has a restricted orientation outcome of increasing knowledge of campus resources, policies and practices. While the most positive outcomes are associated with seminars of three-credit hour length due to the opportunity to develop student's academic skills as well as foster critical thinking, the University opted for the two-hour format for a variety of reasons (Swing, 2002). First, the economic costs of a more expanded option would be prohibitive in the current environment. Second, the political realities are that the state would prefer fewer hours rather than more hours in the curriculum. Third, the two-credit hour course attends to our major concern of connecting the student to the University and providing them with strategies to succeed in college. Finally, while the First-Year Seminar will introduce students to rational problem-solving, the general education curriculum is designed to focus on higher order cognitions.

Core Content Literature

The context in which each of the student learning outcomes will be pursued is discussed in the following section, organized thematically for purposes of grouping similar constructs and content areas. For each area, mandatory learning outcomes are linked to proposed content, as are sub-objectives and optional objectives when they exist. Specific strategies for facilitating student accomplishment of the objectives are then identified.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT. Students must successfully engage in the university experience to maximize their college success (Cuseo, 1997; Kuh, 2005). Successful engagement requires a working knowledge of campus resources, according to participants in the 2006 National Survey of First-Year Seminars. Survey participants selected campus resources, academic planning and advisement, and college policies and procedures in the top ten of those topics cited as most important to include in a First-Year Seminar (Tobolowsky, 2008).

The first-year textbooks sampled for review by the Core Content subcommittee contained limited attention to campus resources, which was predictable given that these vary in name and function across universities. Thus, faculty, staff and student perceptions of UL Lafayette freshman needs were particularly critical in selecting content to support engagement. As shown in the following student learning outcomes, successful student engagement is a multilayered objective involving the academic, procedural, and personal/social domains (Cuseo, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 2001a, 2001b).

Mandatory Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 1) Comprehend the philosophy, function and value of the General Education curriculum.

(Outcome 2) Identify available student services and locations of support units offering academic assistance, health care, financial aid, arts and multicultural programming, career planning, and technology resources.

(Outcome 6) Realize the advantages of student engagement and become involved in campus life.

Strategy for Outcome Attainment

Students will be given information in multimedia and experiential formats to augment their familiarity with policy and procedures, academic planning and extracurricular involvement. A range of assignments may be used to help students apply the knowledge in contexts relevant to the First-Year Experience. Students may be given an exercise to engage in an extracurricular activity of the instructor's or their own choosing. This engagement may overlap with the fine arts and/or cultural initiative if the student is so inclined.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING STRATEGIES. College students are challenged to manage their time with far more independence and less accountability and structure than when they were in high school. Additionally, new facets of time management competence must be developed early in college to assure successful matriculation. The 2006 National Survey of First-Year Seminars indicates that 28.6% of universities consider time management to be one of the three most important topics to include in the First-Year Seminar (Tobolowsky, 2008). The importance of time management is further reflected in its frequent inclusion in seminar textbooks. All of the texts sampled by the Core Content subcommittee included a time management chapter. These factors led to the inclusion of time management in the final learning outcome set.

Goal setting skills are foundational to successful time management and to maximizing one's success (Kearns & Gardner, 2007). While the First-Year Seminar survey did not corroborate goal-setting as being on the list of most important seminar topics to address (Tobolowsky, 2008), the majority of the texts reviewed did include this topic. The literature in industrial-organizational psychology and in management clearly establishes that goal type impacts subsequent task performance (Locke & Latham, 2006). Kuh (2005) identifies motivation as one of the critical elements supporting student engagement. Given the goals of increased student engagement, enhanced performance, and successful matriculation, the subcommittee thought it essential to provide students not only knowledge about goal setting and motivation enhancement strategies, but also practice in implementing these strategies in the context of university life. The outcomes and strategies also take into account millennial students' preference for structure and participative decision-making (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Study skills and learning strategies are critical for college success (Conley, 2008). Tobolowsky (2008) reports that 50% of public universities rank study skills in their top three topics for inclusion in First-Year Seminars. In fact, study skills garnered the highest percentage of top three endorsements in comparison to all other potential topical areas. All of the texts reviewed by the Core Content subcommittee not only addressed study skills, but broke down the topic into separate chapters to allow for more in-depth treatment.

Mandatory Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 3) Know and apply time management techniques and effective learning strategies.

Optional Learning Outcomes (7)

Students will apply time management strategies and techniques to their unique time management challenges as first year students. Students will describe three strategies for goal development. Students will set a goal for engagement in campus life. Students will identify three strategies for enhancing their own motivation to work toward a goal. Students will identify and explain at least three study and/or test-taking skills. Students will discover their learning strategy strengths and weaknesses. Students will generate three options for maximizing their use of learning strategies.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

To improve their time management practices, students will be taught time management skills such as stating intentions (Owens, Bowman, & Dill, 2008), task partitioning, and scheduling low and high priority items appropriately (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). Students will be asked to complete a time log which allows them to sample how they spend time on varying days. They will also be asked to assess whether their time usage is in accordance with their values and their personal goals for the semester (Kearns & Gardiner, 2007). Peer leaders will assist students with analyzing their time logs and share information on their own time management problems as first-year students. The instructor will request that students apply goal-setting and/or problem-solving skills to their analysis of how they might change their time scheduling practices. Problem-solving may be used to help students find different ways to meet the needs currently addressed by their time management practices, allowing an opportunity for problem-based learning to occur.

Students will be given an opportunity to complete a values assessment, learn the SMART formula (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, & Target-dates; Kinicki & Williams, 2009) for evaluation of goal achievability and select among motivational strategies to apply to a goal such as campus engagement. Insight into personal values can be achieved through an online resource such as www.career-test.biz/values_assessment.html. Once identified, printouts cataloguing student values will be placed in a portfolio along with the work values assessment completed as part of the career assessment exercise. Both sets of values will be used in career and life-planning activities. Motivational strategies will be presented to students to help them to work toward goal attainment. Students will learn about the Premack principle (Premack, 1965), self-reward, self-monitoring, and contracting techniques (Miltenberger, 2004).

The LASSI – 2nd ed. (Weinstein & Palmer, 2002) will be used to help students diagnose individual strengths and weaknesses in learning styles. Students will be encouraged to develop a plan for maximizing their strengths and mitigating their weaknesses, based upon their individualized feedback on the 10 LASSI scales. The LASSI will provide a starting point for students to understand their learning styles. Students also need techniques and strategies that help them to overcome study skills deficits. Thus, students will be taught test-taking skills and study strategies to enhance their academic performance potential. The peer mentor will be encouraged to discuss common test-taking and study skills challenges faced by first-year students as a way of optimizing contextual relevance to the first-year student. Optimally, the students will use goal setting and evaluation strategies to develop an effective plan for academic skills improvement.

PERSONAL WELLNESS. First-year college students usually benefit from access to information about caring for themselves. Health and wellness activities enable student success (American College Health Association, 2005). All First-Year Seminar texts surveyed by the Core Content subcommittee addressed wellness issues. A significant number of campus resources to which the student will be introduced provide support for physical and mental health (Mullendore & Banahan, 2005). Physical and mental wellness learning outcomes were vetted by Nursing and Psychology faculty, who along with other subcommittee members, considered relevant needs expressed by UL Lafayette students in focus groups.

Mandatory Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 11) Understand wellness, health maintenance and injury and illness prevention practices

Optional Learning Outcomes (3)

Students will demonstrate an understanding of health and injury issues pertinent to the college population. Students will discuss two simple techniques to reduce stress. Students will be able to cite two infection prevention practices.

Strategy for Outcome Attainment

Campus resources for health and wellness will be identified and explained through a multimedia and/or experiential approach. Students may be taught via media and experiential learning certain techniques for stress and infection management, as well as injury prevention. Relaxation methods will be introduced that allow a decrease in physiological tension (Girdano, Everly, & Dusek, 1997).

INFORMATION LITERACY. Information literacy can enrich student engagement and academic success and is also an essential skill for college graduates entering the workplace. Learning outcomes for this area were derived with the input of the University Bibliographic Instruction Librarian and articulated with a subset of the goals of the University Libraries. This set of outcomes is based upon standards espoused by the Association of College & Research Libraries (2000, 2003).

Information literacy is defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (2000) as the ability to recognize when information is required, combined with the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Also requisite to information literacy is the understanding of economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the access and use of information.

Emerging as a critical component of information literacy is awareness of the ethical implications of information development and application. In the academic setting, demonstration of integrity in all scholarly work is fundamental to our system of higher education. Resultantly, course content will address the forms and consequences of academically dishonest behavior.

Mandatory Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 4) Select, locate and evaluate information resources held in Dupré Library and in digital formats.

(Outcome 5) Define academic integrity and delineate the forms, harm and consequences of academically dishonest behavior.

Optional Learning Outcomes (4)

Students will define basic library terminology and give examples relevant to their use at Dupré Library. Students will use the online catalog to identify and locate periodicals and monographs. Students will use database/index resources to identify, locate, and access journal articles. Students will evaluate the reliability of information resources.

Strategy for Outcome Attainment

Students will be taught to define library terminology and to use and evaluate the information resources available inside Dupré Library, as well as outside in the virtual world of digital information resources. Video clips may be developed that demonstrate certain skills to students. Library tours and specialized bibliographic instruction experiences may supplement in-class learning. Faculty instructors will be trained by the Head Bibliographic Instruction Librarian to assure that their knowledge is contemporary and accurate. Students will be asked to complete an assignment that allows them to apply their knowledge and demonstrate acquisition of the information resource skills.

CRITICAL THINKING. Critical thinking is considered an important topic for inclusion in first-year seminars by 40.6% of all responding institutions in the First-Year Seminar survey conducted by Tobolowsky (2008). Critical thinking was addressed in its own chapter in all First-Year Seminar textbooks reviewed by the subcommittee, further underscoring its importance. Critical thinking is a set of skills revered by faculty (Nathan, 2005). Given that entire courses are devoted to the development of critical thinking skills, it became important to select one skill from the critical thinking domain upon which to focus during First-Year Seminar. As college students are faced with independently solving novel and unfamiliar problems, and that their future employers hold in particular regard the skill of problem-solving (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2008), it was decided that this would be the area of focus.

Mandatory Learning Outcome

(Outcome 10) Apply a logical and rational problem-solving model to address a relevant challenge.

Strategy for Outcome Attainment

Students will be taught traditional and/or contemporary problem-solving model(s). Instructors will be encouraged to use problem-solving models and sample problems from their own disciplines. These discipline-specific problems with the model application will be given to students to promote understanding. Students will be then asked to apply a model to their learning strategy and/or time management projects.

MONEY MANAGEMENT. While money management is not among the topics benchmarked as most important to include in a seminar (Tobolowsky, 2008), faculty and staff on the Core Content subcommittee, as well as students in the focus groups, felt strongly that fiscal prudence and budget maintenance was an important skill deserving of coverage. Financial literacy and budget management were addressed in some of the texts reviewed by the Committee. The Committee adopted learning outcomes that were based upon the financial management module in the existing first-year student course currently offered by the Moody College of Business.

Mandatory Learning Outcome

(Outcome 12) Demonstrate techniques for establishing and maintaining a balanced budget.

Optional Learning Outcomes (3)

Students will demonstrate knowledge of responsible money management practices. Students will identify resources available to fund education goals and other living experiences. Students will list actions steps required to maintain current financial resources.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

Students will be exposed to information on money management and planning practices. They will be requested to develop a balanced budget. In addition, instructors may choose for students to undertake a learning experience to address one of the optional learning outcomes. CashCourse resources (sponsored by the National Endowment for Financial Education) or similar credible sources will be made available to students to assist them with this area of skill development.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING. College students are faced with myriad challenges that create new or intensified demands on their relational skills. They must adapt to interpersonal issues without as much direct parental support as was experienced in high school. Millennials are reported to have fewer conflict-resolution skills than previous generations, opting instead to often avoid or ignore situations that escalate into larger dilemmas (Howe & Strauss, 2000). However, employers have communicated that they value graduating students who have relational skills. Communication and teamwork competence are cited by employers as being among the most highly demanded and desired employee characteristics. Interpersonal skills were eighth in the top ten of that list (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2008). Additionally, the digital age has increased the level of complexity in achieving competence in all of these areas. Communication in the age of electronic media has created contemporary etiquette expectations and ambiguities (Jones, 2006) and continues to pose a challenge to the separation of one's social and professional life domains.

Mandatory Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 7) Describe responsible social networking and effective communication etiquette

(Outcome 8) Recognize emotionally-intelligent approaches to conflict resolution.

Strategy for Outcome Attainment

Instructors will use various activities and media to facilitate student learning about the concept of emotional intelligence, as well as at least one model of conflict resolution. Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence (1995, 2006) construct will be taught. Any of a variety of research-supported conflict resolution models may be presented with deference to disciplinary and instructor preferences. Interpersonal problem solving and constructive criticism are two of the model types that may be presented. Students will be taught the potentially damaging consequences of digital socialization and poor professional communication etiquette. Experiential activities, virtual guest speakers, and readings will be used to accomplish these outcomes.

CAREER PLANNING. Career planning is of high importance to millennial-generation college students and was identified as one of the three most important topics to include in a First-Year Seminar by 17% of respondents (Tobolowsky, 2008). Also, non-traditional students often arrive on campus with a more clearly defined career choice, but need help with creating an effective career plan that takes into account their multiple life roles (Herr, 1997; National Career Development Association, 2008). Career planning at UL Lafayette is informed by the theories of Super and Holland (Zunker, 2001) beginning with the career assessment options offered by Career Counseling and extending through the range of opportunities offered by Career Services.

The learning outcomes selected are consistent with the National Career Development Association's 2007 Guidelines, and UL Lafayette's First-Year Seminar espouses the developmental view supported by this association. Seminar coverage will focus on aiding students in attaining and preliminarily applying career development knowledge. Most of the seminar's emphasis will be derived from the National Career Development Association's personal/social development domain, which focuses upon self-awareness and discovery. Beyond the personal/social domain is the career management domain which focuses on career planning and the successful implementation of a life career plan. The last step in the career development process is reflection. These latter domains will be addressed by UL Lafayette's overarching plan to develop services for sophomores and students in transition.

Mandatory Learning Outcome

(Outcome 9) Determine occupational interests, and research and evaluate information about career paths.

Sub-objectives (3)

Students will identify their career interests, abilities and work values. Students will gather information about career options and evaluate the pros and cons of different occupations as they may relate to interests, abilities, and work values. Students will identify how Career Services can support their career planning efforts.

Optional Learning Outcome (1)

Students will explicate early career planning strategies.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

Students will participate in career assessment using the software entitled FOCUS-2. This software will allow students to assess interests, abilities, and work values (and save this personal information). Additionally, FOCUS-2 will help students evaluate the fit between careers of interest and their personal work values and abilities. FOCUS-2 can also be used to gather information about careers, compare careers and articulate majors to careers. Students interested in further career planning services or those who generate ambiguous or inconsistent profiles will be encouraged to meet with staff from Career Counseling or Career Services.

Enhancement Component Literature

In addition to the core content areas, the QEP Steering Committee recommended certain enhancement components for inclusion in the seminar. Service learning, intercultural awareness, and exploring the arts are the three suggested areas of enhancement. These choices were driven by both national higher education agendas and UL Lafayette's own priorities and unique strengths. The national and local impetuses for each of these enhancement components will be addressed in turn in the following component descriptions.

SERVICE LEARNING. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2007) recognizes the importance of engendering civic engagement as part of the core college experience and appreciates service learning as a vehicle for accomplishing this. UL Lafayette has recently reinvigorated its commitment to developing civic engagement in its students. Specifically, UL Lafayette is seeking to establish additional formal and embedded service learning opportunities. Simultaneously, the University is attempting to develop a culture in which service learning is actively molded.

The QEP Steering Committee extends its support to this campus initiative by requiring service learning as a component of the First-Year Seminar. The Steering Committee appointed the task of service learning development to the Community Service Subcommittee. The co-chairs of this group then set about developing a viable service learning experience for this particular context. The co-chairs represent both the University and nonprofit community: Dr. David Yarbrough (UL Lafayette's Dean of Community Service) and Mr. Scott Brazda (Executive Director of Stuller Family Foundation, a local philanthropic organization).

The subcommittee recommends that the seminar embrace the National Service Learning Clearinghouse's (2009) definition of service learning, as a "teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." With this guiding definition in place, the co-chairs examined the service learning options that would fit within the context of the First-Year Seminar. Particular attention was given to McCarthy's (1996) advice that a successful first exposure to service learning creates a desire in the student to continue to participate in this developmental process. Upon exploring various introductory strategies, a one-time experience was recommended as a way to inaugurate students to service learning and civic engagement (McCarthy, 1996).

Following this decision, the Community Service Subcommittee co-chairs each assumed responsibility for a unique aspect of the operationalization of this initiative. Scott Brazda identified multiple community service agencies with leadership and missions conducive to interfacing with a service learning experience. Mr. Brazda's experience and position as a foundation director gave him particular insight into the local agencies' strategies, operations, and administrations. The other co-chair, Dr. David Yarbrough, identified and coalesced the opportunity for the seminar experience to interface with AmeriCorps. This interface has provided a unique opportunity to extend the peer mentor concept. AmeriCorps has agreed to provide service learning peer mentors to maximize the impact of this one-time experience. The service learning peer mentors will support both their fellow students and the First-Year Seminar faculty.

Dr. Yarbrough will help to shape the instruction and reflection components of this one-time experience to assure a focus on service learning. Zlotkowski (2005) warns that service learning can devolve into a meaningless volunteer experience without the pre- and post-activities that transform it into service learning aimed at the enculturation of civic engagement.

Mandatory Learning Outcome

(Outcome 13) Translate their service learning experience into a plan of meaningful civic participation.

Sub-objectives (3)

Students will identify altruistic and egoistic reasons for engaging in a service learning project. Students will articulate a rationale for engaging in further service learning. Students will describe the concept of civic engagement and their own attitudes toward it after a guided service-learning experience.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

Students will participate in a service learning project that will take the form of a one-time experience. The project will be introduced early in the semester, and students will receive preparation for the project by learning about the agency, the purpose of the project, and general issues and concepts involved in civic engagement. The students will work as a group with an AmeriCorps peer mentor who will guide them through the project. An on-site post-activity reflection will be conducted with an opportunity for further reflection in class if the seminar instructor so desires.

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS. While the millennial generation has collectively experienced more cross-ethnic and racial group interaction than any previous age cohort (Howe & Strauss, 2000), it is evident that they will need considerable domestic and international intercultural prowess to deal effectively with the global economy and changing domestic demographics (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; Friedman, 2005).

Given that many UL Lafayette students were reared in regional, non-urban areas, it is reasonable to assume that the university campus will provide their first real opportunity to interact with a range of internationals. Additionally, Nathan's (2005) anthropological research on college students suggests that domestic cultural minorities and majorities do

not readily interact and affiliate. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007) recognizes these realities in Principle 6 of the LEAP report (i.e., foster civic, intercultural, and ethical learning) and encourages universities to address intercultural learning. With these compelling stimuli, the QEP Steering Committee desired to include some aspect of intercultural education as part of the First-year Seminar.

A subcommittee on Arts and Multicultural Issues was formed to examine learning opportunities and to develop outcomes. Mr. Mark Tullos, University Art Museum Director, chaired this group. It was anticipated that this subcommittee, comprising English faculty, the Director of International Affairs, and the Museum Director, would be able to generate unique options for using the arts and letters to aid in the intercultural learning agenda. The subcommittee succeeded in recommending multiple learning goals and strategies in these domains.

Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, First-Year Seminar Coordinator, further delineated the intercultural goals and explored opportunities for relevant interaction on campus. She collaborated with Dr. Jennifer Jackson, Assistant to the President for Campus Diversity and Community Outreach, and Mrs. Rose Honegger, Director of the Office of International Affairs, to develop the Committee's goals and strategies for intercultural knowledge attainment. These expanded recommendations and opportunities were then viewed in light of the developmental nature of the seminar.

It was determined that the First-Year Seminar was best suited for providing students with a framework for learning about intercultural issues throughout their college career. The challenge then became one of examining and selecting the best approach to inculcating this framework. In the 1980s and 1990s, stereotypes and prejudice were used to teach about cultures. However, millennials are philosophically opposed to owning these concepts and thus are more interested in frameworks that allow them to embrace their perception of themselves as egalitarians (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Ippolito, 2007). The concept of worldview was chosen to provide this framework, as it allows one to examine other cultures by considering the values that constitute the worldview of that group (Sue, 2004) without focusing solely on the negative relational aspects of intercultural encounters.

Mandatory Learning Outcome

(Outcome 14) Analyze their own worldview in relation to those of other cultures, demographics, and aspects of human diversity.

Sub-objectives (2)

Students will apply the concept of worldview to an aspect of diversity in which they compare an in-group (one to which that individual belongs) to an out-group (one to which that individual does not belong). Students will accurately and sensitively identify similarities and differences in worldview across the two compared groups.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

The strategy recommended by the subcommittee to attain the learning outcomes will be a shared reading concerning one or more non-domestic cultures. Reflection and group discussion will concern worldview construction and the factors that contribute to

worldview variations. It is hoped that reading and reflection experiences will cultivate sensitivity, empathy, and open-mindedness toward different world cultures by bringing to the forefront the contribution of worldview to the reader's, author's, and character's perceptions, assumptions and actions. Students will be challenged to see how worldviews vary across domestic cultures as well. These activities should help students to move toward an ethno-relative stance. Students will be invited to attend one of the Fall offerings of the Office for Campus Diversity or the Office of International Affairs; alternatively, they may choose to attend an off-campus intercultural event. The latter activity also supports Student Learning Outcomes 2 and 6.

CULTIVATING AN APPRECIATION FOR THE ARTS. In line with the 2007 NSSE results, the QEP Steering Committee determined that students would benefit from having an opportunity to deepen their engagement by participating in planned experiences involving the arts. The visual and performing arts are by their very nature interdisciplinary. Art synthesizes cultural, social, historical, and philosophical ideas, human experience and imagination. "The arts can forge sustained connections between peoples and ideas and cultures that otherwise either simply remain invisible, unexpressed, or worse yet, clash in destructive ways" (Cantor, 2003, p.3). The arts allow individuals to transcend their own culture and experience that of others. Additionally, involvement in the arts promotes critical thinking skills such as problem solving (Halpern, 2003). The QEP Steering Committee believes that UL Lafayette has strong resources in the arts, thus amplifying the potential for students to gain the aforementioned benefits.

It is anticipated that guided exposure to the arts can support both core and enhancement learning outcomes. Participating in the arts on campus allows students to address their broader educational goals as well. This seminar outcome articulates with the General Education goals designated under "Arts and Letters," as well as those under "Humans and their Contexts." For example, many first year students will have the opportunity to interpret works of art in their socio-historic context, which will in turn contribute to their understanding of the diverse and complex nature of humanity. When coupled with one or more survey courses typically taken by the first-year student, a richer contextual undergirding is created. Notably, four learning outcomes have the potential to be further supported by this experience.

Mandatory Student Learning Outcomes

(Outcome 1) Comprehend the philosophy, function, and value of the General Education curriculum.

(Outcome 2) Identify available student services and locations of support units offering academic assistance, health care, financial aid, arts and multicultural programming, career planning, and technology resources.

(Outcome 6) Realize the advantages of student engagement and become involved in campus life.

(Outcome 14) Analyze their own worldview in relation to those of other cultures, demographics, and aspects of human diversity.

Sub-objectives (2)

The students will demonstrate an awareness of arts opportunities on campus. The students will interface with an arts experience and demonstrate a contextualized understanding of the arts.

Strategies for Outcome Attainment

Students will be asked to complete an arts experience as part of their “Cajun Passport” for student engagement. At a minimum, the First-Year Seminar should provide students with an opportunity to become aware of the arts opportunities that exist on campus and to engage in an arts experience that is appealing to them. However, with the potent tools in place on campus already, the seminar has the potential to challenge students to have the more complex interactions with arts experiences described above. One such exceptional resource is the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum which offers guided tours, special lectures, brown bag seminars, and a host of other learning opportunities. The Director of the University Art Museum is supportive of the seminar’s learning outcomes, having been instrumental in their creation. Also, the Bayou Bijou offers an international film series that provides an opportunity not only for intercultural development, but also for exposure to yet another type of visual art. Finally, UL Lafayette’s College of the Arts provides a continual array of student and faculty exhibitions and performances.

Peer Mentoring Literature

Definitions of peer mentoring abound in the literature. They include ideas and terms such as friendship, social interaction, reciprocal helping, tutoring and student instruction. For the purposes of this report, the definition of peer mentoring will be “the mentoring (helping, assistance and guiding) of students by other students who are senior to them in the university.”

The model used in the First-Year Seminars is based on student peer mentoring programs which help students develop academic competencies, as well as life-skills and social competencies. These learned skills will help first-year students make the transition to university life, with the freshmen becoming active participants in the learning process.

The literature on peer mentoring and instruction indicate that early methods of mentoring were segmented into programs either designed to be embedded within a course (such as the emerging scholars programs and peer-led team learning) or to be adjunct to the course (supplemental instruction, accelerated learning groups and structured learning assistance). Additionally, the original programs focused on supplementing curricular learning (academic competencies) or tutoring. They did not include direct assistance with the transition to campus life.

A body of work published in the 1990s by Vincent Tinto helped to focus a larger portion of mentoring on preventing increased student attrition. A decade of Tinto’s articles shifted the paradigm in mentoring programs away from supplemental instruction (peer tutoring) toward true mentoring. Pedagogies developed in the past decade now divide peer mentoring into three different approaches (Milne, Keating, & Gabb, 2007). The first model (Student Peer Mentoring Programs) is based on an academic program whose goal is to both support learning for first-year students and ease their transition into the university. Model number two is a transitional approach which offers social support for commencing students. The third model is mentoring programs, commonly using Student Instructors and consisting of student rovers in the learning commons of a college or

university. The Committee chose to approach peer mentoring at UL Lafayette from the first model (Student Peer Mentoring Programs), as it best supports academic capabilities, life-skills development and social competencies.

The benefits of using peer mentoring in higher education are positive but difficult to quantify. However, research indicates that peer mentoring is an integral part of success in student effort and persistence (Tinto, 1995); both academic achievement and satisfaction (McInnis & James, 1995); and heightened self-esteem and refined communication skills (Fowler & Muckert, 2004). These benefits indicate that positive effects on student retention and success rates are “intuitively likely” (Pendleton, 2005). Current student learning assistance at UL Lafayette involves a combination of services including peer tutoring, on-line tutoring, study groups, supplemental instruction, disabled student services, counseling and testing, and career services. Peer mentoring will enhance these extant services while adding a new dimension.

Chapter VI: Actions To Be Implemented

Successful deployment of the First-Year Seminars will be contingent upon numerous preparatory activities. These activities are the focus of this chapter.

Marketing the First-Year Seminar

In Spring 2009, an article was published in the University’s award winning magazine, *La Louisiane*, that featured Dr. David Yarbrough, Dean of Community Service, and his role in introducing students in the First-Year Seminar to community service. This prompted the *Baton Rouge Advocate’s* Acadiana Bureau to publish a follow-up newspaper article on June 23, 2009, entitled “ULL freshmen must volunteer in new seminar.” This article indicated that UL Lafayette will soon obligate its freshman to serve the community as part of the proposed First-Year Seminar. In an article dealing with the millennial generation, *La Louisiane* focused on the QEP and First-Year Seminar in its Fall 2009 edition.

UL Lafayette’s student newspaper, *The Vermilion*, published a lead article on the First-Year Seminar in October 2009 and plans subsequent articles during this academic year. Also in October, members of the QEP Steering Committee provided an in-depth presentation on the First-Year Experience at a half-day retreat for Deans and Department Heads. In November, a two-hour version was presented to the University Council, as well as administrators and staff from the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs areas. As a follow-up, the President is going to provide a series of blogs to university stakeholders about the QEP during the Spring 2010 semester.

Ten students in a senior-level capstone course (CMCN 425: Public Relations Campaign Management) under the direction of Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll, Assistant Professor of Communication, developed brand and marketing strategy for the QEP. The students presented their campaign to the QEP Committee on December 3, 2009. The executive summary of their report is provided in the appendix. An intern will be hired to assist in implementing their short-term strategies during the Spring 2010 semester.

Working with the Public Relations Campaign Management class, Mr. Charles E. Richard, Associate Professor and Director of the Cinematic Arts Workshop will be producing four 1-minute marketing videos that will inform current and incoming students and other stakeholders about the First-Year Seminar. These will be shown on plasma display screens on campus, as well as through social networking media. In addition, they will be available on the QEP website.

Selection and Training of Faculty

Instructors. All qualified and “participating” faculty and staff members are invited to teach the proposed First-Year Seminars. Participating members are those who are actively involved in the life of the University on an ongoing basis. In all cases, instructors must have at least a master’s degree and be (a) academically-qualified, typically with 18 graduate credit hours in their specialty and/or (b) professionally-qualified, with substantial depth and breadth of relevant practitioner experience. Teaching skill and dedication to student development are qualities that will be actively sought in First-Year Seminar faculty. Faculty applying or tapped to teach First-Year Seminar will have demonstrated proficiency in teaching by meeting the criteria of being at or above the University average on the Student Evaluation of Instruction for the past two years and /or have been recipients of the Dr. Ray Authement Excellence in Teaching Award. Faculty who have demonstrated commitment to student development by excelling in advising, particularly those who have been recipients of the University’s Advising Excellence Awards, will be given favorable consideration.

UL Lafayette is committed to the instructional advancement of its faculty through ongoing professional development. This commitment has been heightened by the development of First-Year Seminars designed to provide a rich and meaningful college learning experience for all students. First-Year Seminar instructor development will consist of a three-day program.

There will be a customized training component delivered to seminar instructors for each of the content areas covered in the course. Early in the implementation phase of the QEP, the trainer for select content areas will be digitally recorded for those who find themselves in need of that resource. For example, assessment may reveal that certain instructors have not helped their students attain a particular objective. The digital resource would be part of the retraining effort for that instructor. Mr. Charles E. Richard, Associate Professor and Director of the Cinematic Arts Workshop, will be directing, scripting, filming, and post-producing the videos. The content areas and trainers currently include:

- Assessment | Dr. Paula Phillips Carson, Professor of Management and Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment
- Campus Resources | Bette Harris, Director of the Academic Success Center/Junior Division and/or Pat Cottonham, Dean of Students
- Careers | Kim Billeaudeau, Career Services Director and/or Lucy Gammon, Career Counseling Center Coordinator
- Fine Arts/Cultural Enrichment | Mark Tullos, Director of the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum and/or Dr. Andrea Loewy, Graduate Coordinator of Music
- Information Literacy | Lance Chance, Bibliographic Instruction and Distance Learning Librarian and/or Susan Richard, Head Reference Librarian

- Money Management | Mary Luquette, Finance Instructor
- Multicultural/International Issues | Dr. Jennifer Hightower Jackson, Assistant to the President for Campus Diversity and Community Outreach and/or Rose Honegger, Director of the Office of International Affairs
- Peer Mentoring | Dr. Julia Frederick, Director of the University Honors Program
- Personal Wellness | Jill LaRoussini, Community Health Nursing or Dr. Chris Hayes, Student Health Services
- Relationship Building/Emotional Intelligence | Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, Associate Professor of Psychology
- Service Learning | Dr. David N. Yarbrough, Associate Professor of Child and Family Studies and Dean of Community Service
- Student Engagement | Paul Eaton, Director of Student Orientation
- Time Management/Learning Strategies | Dr. Constance Broussard, Upward Bound or Dr. Anita Wimberly, Student Support Services

In addition to content-related development, seminar instructor training will include information on effective teaching strategies, approaches and pedagogies for facilitating learning in first-year students. Major components of this segment of the faculty development program are identified in the sections below.

- What is a First-Year Seminar? An in-depth look at the concepts and history of First-Year/Freshman Seminars will be facilitated using various adult learning strategies. Participants will explore the academic and social constructs of these seminars, as well as the benefits to students and instructors alike.
- What Does a First-year Student Look Like? Participants will examine the cognitive and intellectual capacity of students who are considered members of the Millennial Generation (Gen Y). Discussions will be facilitated regarding issues such as work ethic, social bias, historical perspectives and pop culture.
- Goals of First-Year Instruction | Participants will create a master list of non-negotiables relative to the imperatives noted in the University's *Strategic Plan*. This list will serve as a mechanism to promote equity and fairness during the teaching and learning process. Participants will examine their beliefs regarding the learning process and the impact that teaching has on long-term learning.

Connecting the students to the University (The Cajun Connection) is a major theme in delivering the First-Year Seminars. This is accomplished in 4 ways (Petschauer & Cuseo, 2009).

- The Student – Instructor Connection: The “student-centered instructional approach” has become a featured model in the First-Year Seminar. The emphasis rests on the establishment of a personal relationship between the student and the instructor. A major premise of this idea is that knowing the names of students increases their sense of safety and belonging in the Maslow framework. It is important to embrace this notion as it provides a foundation to create a welcoming environment. Participants will engage in a variety of strategies developed to assist in the “getting to know you” process.

- The Student – Course (Subject) Connection: Once students have begun to feel more comfortable in their new academic surroundings, the next step is to increase student interest and involvement in the course. During this phase, instructors will practice a variety of delivery models and strategies designed to: (a) connect to the interests of the learner, and (b) personalize the learning experience. Participants will engage in a variety of strategies intended to sustain the “art and science of good teaching.” Reality-based instructional techniques will be demonstrated by the facilitator, followed by instructional strategies led by the participants.
- The Student – Student Connection: Increased student engagement and learning is often accompanied by the creation of a sense of community in the learning environment. Instructors who internalize this concept can use collaborative and cooperative teaching structures to facilitate peer interaction and class community. The peer mentors will help participants engage in a variety of activities designed to encourage and guide student – student connections.
- The Student – Campus Connection: Student success is often contingent upon the identification and utilization of human and technological resources available in and around the campus community. Hence, instructors will become knowledgeable about resources both on- and off-campus, and will understand the referral processes to aid students seeking assistance.

Ongoing Training and Professional Development. Every spring, an outside consultant will be hosted on campus for training/professional development of all continuing (and previously oriented) instructors of First-Year Seminars, as well as those who are being considered as possible instructors. In addition, the First-Year Seminar Coordinator and one other member of the Implementation Committee will have access to travel money to attend at least one topical conference each year.

Selection and Training of Peer Mentors

To be selected as a peer mentor, students will be required to have and to maintain a minimum 2.5 grade point average. Additional requirements include: (a) being enrolled as a full-time student at UL Lafayette for at least one year, (b) committing one semester or one year to the program, (c) committing to attendance at the training session and the First-Year Seminar classes, (d) having an active university e-mail account with willingness to correspond with students through their e-mail, (e) being willing to use Facebook to increase interaction with students in the course, (f) having a sincere desire to help first-year students transition to college life, and (g) submitting a signed recommendation from a faculty member.

UL Lafayette will adopt the *Student Peer Mentoring Program* format, as it creates a more refined set of position requirements which deliberately sets this job description apart from the many tutoring jobs available on the campus. Training will stress the difference between mentoring and tutoring, and will define proper conduct with mentees. Tutoring outside the classroom should be limited and will not be part of the job description for peer mentors.

Mentor training is necessary, as these students will be placed in a “teaching/mentoring” position. To assist freshman in reaching the proposed learning outcomes, peer mentors must be formally trained before the semester starts. Research on peer mentor training indicates that one to two-day sessions are standard at universities and colleges similar to the UL Lafayette (University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh; Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis; California State University, Chico; Georgia Southern University; The University of Arizona; and the University of Tennessee). Mentor training will provide student mentors with the conceptual, informational and relational standards that will equip them with the appropriate communication and leadership skills necessary to successfully collaborate with mentee students. Peer mentors not in attendance at the training session will not be allowed to serve.

The Peer Mentor Training Program will consist of 1½ days of structured activities designed to develop team building, problem solving and communication skills. Specific and assessable objectives for the skill enhancement of peer mentors include developing strategies to help first-year students succeed in college, knowing the University and campus resources and when to refer to them, understanding the requirements of mentoring to include ethical and legal considerations, developing interpersonal and digital communication skills, refining small group leadership skill, and promoting teamwork and collaboration in diverse environments.

The pilot training session will be conducted just prior to the commencement of the Spring 2010 semester. Initial topics will be taught on campus, and then the group will be transported to Fausse Pointe Retreat for an overnight stay and teambuilding session. Students who complete this process will be given the opportunity to purchase an annual, on-campus parking sticker. Feedback from the students suggests that this is the most valuable form of compensation for peer mentors. In addition, these student volunteers will receive priority scheduling.

In addition to the peer mentor for each section, students belonging to AmeriCorps on campus will assist with the community service learning project (cf. Chapter V).

Implications for Students, Instructors and Staff

Implications for Students. To subsidize the purchase of instructional materials, common readings and licenses (e.g., LASSI – The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) used in the First-Year Seminar, a course fee of approximately \$100 per seminar student will be proposed. The institution is very restrictive in its granting of fee requests so as to ensure the collegiate experience at UL Lafayette remains as affordable as possible. Hence, this fee has not yet been officially approved.

There may be some other implications for students. There is a potential opportunity cost for students manifesting from a loss of work compensation while they participate in the seminar instead of reporting to their jobs. This is particularly true for the service learning component which will occur on a weekend day. However, the students will receive notice of the service learning date long in advance, and optional dates may be offered. Transfer students may find that orientation courses taken at other institutions are not transferable or considered credits that will count toward their degree. All transfer students enrolling at UL Lafayette with fewer than 12 hours of credit will be required to enroll in the First-Year Seminar.

Implications for Instructors. Because a Spring 2009 UL Lafayette Budget Team survey reported that over 60% of faculty indicate they don't teach summer school because of non-competitive pay, faculty may be reluctant to teach a First-Year Seminar without extra compensation. Those staff members who desire to teach for extra compensation will need to complete their expected weekly work hours. Faculty and staff members who have not taught the new First-Year Seminar will be expected to report earlier than the normal commencement of the semester for faculty development sessions relating to effective instruction. Because this training will occur before the semester officially begins, those attending the pre-semester training sessions will receive \$250 in remuneration.

First-year Seminar Teaching Preference Survey

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about teaching the universal First-year Seminar planned for campus-wide implementation.							
	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Response Count
I would be interested in teaching a section of the new First-year Seminar during Fall semesters.	12.6% (27)	7.9% (17)	26.2% (56)	30.4% (65)	18.7% (40)	4.2% (9)	214
I would be interested in teaching a First-year Seminar as part of my regular teaching load.	16.2% (34)	15.7% (33)	24.8% (52)	21.9% (46)	12.9% (27)	8.6% (18)	210
I would be willing to teach a First-year Seminar as an "overload" for \$2,000 for each 2-credit hour course.	18.3% (39)	11.3% (24)	15.5% (33)	22.1% (47)	24.9% (53)	8.0% (17)	213
If I did teach a section of the seminar, I would prefer to have my compensation placed in a personal development fund (e.g., travel) rather than receive it as salary.	31.7% (66)	27.9% (58)	18.8% (39)	5.3% (11)	4.8% (10)	11.5% (24)	208
If I did teach the seminar, I would rather receive course release time in the Spring semester than monetary compensation.	22.5% (47)	22.0% (46)	23.4% (49)	12.9% (27)	7.2% (15)	12.0% (25)	209
If I was selected to teach the seminar, I would be willing to attend three (3) days of training before teaching my first class.	9.9% (21)	3.8% (8)	9.4% (20)	37.1% (79)	32.9% (70)	7.0% (15)	213
Comments							53
answered question							214
skipped question							1

The compensation schedule for instruction of First-Year Seminars is as follows:

- Regular faculty who elect to teach a seminar on an “overload” basis will be compensated \$2,000 for instructing one section of the two credit hour seminar.
- Regular faculty may elect to have their \$2,000 stipend placed into a dedicated expense account to be used for professional development and travel, or for equipment and software purchases.
- Regular faculty who teach two seminar sections (for a total of four contact hours) can elect to use this assignment to replace one three credit hour disciplinary course (with the consent of administration). In this case, no additional compensation will be offered, and the instruction will be considered part of the regular teaching load.
- Regular faculty can elect to teach two fall semester seminar sections (for a total of four contact hours) on an “overload” basis and be granted one three credit hour course load reduction in the Spring of that same academic year (with the consent of administration).
- Adjunct faculty teaching a seminar will be compensated \$2,000 for instructing one section of the two credit hour seminar. A maximum of six sections can be taught on a semester basis. This maximum declines if the adjunct instructor is assigned to other disciplinary courses.
- Staff members teaching a seminar may negotiate with administration to include the instruction as a regular component of their job duties.
- Staff members may instruct at times they are not expected to be performing their regular job duties. For example, they could work through the lunch hours on Monday through Thursday and teach two seminars. Staff will be compensated \$2,000 for instructing one section of the two credit hour seminar.

To assess faculty members’ motivation to teach the First-Year Seminar, an electronic survey was sent to all regular faculty members, with 214 faculty members responding. The results indicated that 49.1% of the respondents expressed willingness to teach this seminar. The percentage of faculty members preferring to teach the class as an overload was 47% as compared to 34.8% for who were willing to teach the class as part of their regular load. Only 10.1% wanted compensation placed in a personal development fund while 20.1% indicated a desire for release time the following semester. Even though the \$250 compensation wasn’t mentioned in the survey, 70.0% of the respondents indicated a willingness to attend 3 days of training before teaching their first seminar.

A selected group of staff members who hold an advanced degree were also surveyed. Of the group of 10 respondents, 9 were interested in teaching. Seven indicated a desire to teach the course as an overload, and 6 said they would teach the course as part of their regular duties. Only 1 staff member wanted compensation placed in a personal development fund.

First-year Seminar Teaching Preference Survey - STAFF

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about teaching the universal First-year Seminar planned for campus-wide implementation.							
	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Response Count
I would be interested in teaching a section of the new First-year Seminar during Fall semesters.	10.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	30.0% (3)	60.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	10
I would be interested in teaching a First-year Seminar as part of my regular workload.	20.0% (2)	10.0% (1)	10.0% (1)	40.0% (4)	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	10
I would be willing to teach a First-year Seminar as an "overload" (that is, in addition to your normal working hours) for \$2,000 for each 2-credit hour course.	10.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (2)	20.0% (2)	50.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	10
If I did teach a section of the seminar on an "overload" basis, I would prefer to have my compensation placed in a personal development fund (e.g., travel) rather than receive it as salary.	30.0% (3)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	30.0% (3)	10
Comments							2
answered question							10
skipped question							1

Implications for Staff. Professionals in the Career Counseling and Services units will assume significant additional responsibilities as a result of the FOCUS-2 career exploration exercise to be completed by all seminar participants. These areas will eventually require additional space and staff to accommodate their participation in the seminar. There is an anticipated rise in their services as students become more engaged throughout their matriculation.

The Director of the Honors Program, who currently has an 80% release time agreement for her administrative duties, will be adding the coordination of the peer mentor program to her portfolio of job responsibilities. There will also be extra duties placed on the Dean of Community Service, who has a 20% release time arrangement. As the number of sections increases with full phase-in, it is expected that this Dean will be eventually granted 60% release time. Also student assistants will need to be hired to help with this process.

Student learning outcomes assessment will be coordinated and monitored by the Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment. This will become a full-time administrative position in July 2010. Additionally, the faculty member who is serving as the First-Year Seminar Coordinator on the QEP Steering Committee

and QEP Implementation Committee will be assigned these duties full-time in Fall 2010. The incumbent will receive ½ summer pay in order to assist with facilitating faculty training before the start of the Fall semesters.

Impact on the University's Standing Plans

While First-Year Seminars contribute to the fulfillment of several initiatives on the University's strategic agenda, optimizing their success will require modification of certain institutional policies, procedures and other standing plans. For example, the curricula in the Colleges of Education and Engineering are highly structured and lengthy, requiring extensive hours for graduation. In the College of Education, the Early Childhood Education curriculum consists of 128 credit-hours, and adding the First-Year Seminar would bring the total to 130 hours required for graduation. Similarly, adding the First-Year Seminar to the Chemical Engineering curriculum will bring the total credit-hours required to matriculate to 131, as the seminar would be taught along with the discipline-specific Chemical Engineering (CHEE 101) course.

Because the First-Year Seminar necessarily has to be offered primarily during the first semester of incoming students' arrival on campus, most sections will predictably be offered in the fall. This may burden some colleges with regard to availability of space and instructors. To alleviate this challenge, alternative scheduling options are being considered. For example, intensive-course options are plausible. In the long term, the University is planning to start a "bridge" program to bring in marginal students in the summer to prepare them for the fall. The seminar could be integrated in the summer content, which would also include developmental courses and a study skills course.

Chapter VII: QEP Timeline

Fall Semester 2009 | Beta-test five components in the curriculum in 3 sections

Spring Semester 2010 | Pilot-test the entire proposed curriculum in 7 sections

Fall Semester 2010 | Provide First-Year Seminars in the BUSINESS College (total of 21 sections)

Fall Semester 2011 | Extend First-Year Seminars to NURSING and LIBERAL ARTS Colleges (total 59 sections)

Fall Semester 2012 | Extend First-Year Seminars to ARTS and SCIENCES Colleges (total 95 sections)

Fall Semester 2013 | Extend First-Year Seminars to EDUCATION and ENGINEERING Colleges (total 160 sections)

A detailed QEP timeline is provided below:

SUMMER SEMESTER 2009

Administer the BCSSE (Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement) in orientation.

FALL SEMESTER 2009

Market the QEP to the University community.

- (a) Develop a brand (identity and label) and public campaign management strategy for the QEP in the Public Relations Management Campaign capstone course.
- (b) Encourage the publication of First-Year Experience stories in student and university outlets.
- (c) Produce videos and supporting material for digital distribution.
- (d) Develop QEP website.

Present the QEP at Fall Semester Retreat for Deans, Directors and Department Heads.

Present the QEP to the President, University Council, and select administrative staff.

Conduct beta-tests in 5 content areas with 3 different instructors in the Moody College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts.

Analyze BCSSE results.

End meetings for the QEP Steering Committee.

Begin meetings for the QEP Implementation Committee.

Submit the QEP report to SACS-COC in December 2009.

SPRING SEMESTER 2010

Provide full training to instructors and peer mentors in the pilot study before they begin the spring-semester classes.

Pilot-test the entire proposed curriculum in six sections in the Moody College of Business and in one section in Liberal Arts.

Develop and establish face and content validity for direct measures for assessing student learning outcomes.

Create a website for first-year student resources.

Customize and brand the CashCourse resources and the Grade Point Calculator and make them available to seminar students.

Use a student intern to assist in implementing of the QEP short-term public relations strategies.

Post the one-minute promotional videos to electronic social networking media and plasma screens on campus.

Present information about First-Year Seminar to the student volunteers working Preview Day and early orientation (ongoing).

Assist in coordinating the visit of SACS-COC Team.

Respond to suggestions and recommendations from the SACS-COC Team.

Assess two or three of the student learning outcomes measured with customized direct instruments.

Assess all learning outcomes which will employ class exercises as the instrument of evaluation (e.g., career, time management and service learning objectives).

Train and calibrate assessment instrument evaluators for the purpose of establishing reliability in rubric utilization.

Purchase digital instructional materials in content areas where appropriate and available.

Administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Close the loop with BCSSE results related to the QEP.

Select the instructors and peer mentors for 21 sections to be offered in the Moody College of Business during the Fall 2010.

Administer and analyze student feedback gathered through the First-Year Seminar Student Survey (will occur every semester).

SUMMER SEMESTER 2010

Analyze NSSE results.

Train seminar instructors and peer mentors for the Moody College of Business sections prior to the beginning of Fall 2010 classes.

Present information about the seminar at parent orientation (ongoing).

FALL SEMESTER 2010

First-Year Seminar Coordinator position to become full-time.

Allocate office space for First-Year Seminar Coordinator.

Offer 21 sections of the First-Year Seminar in the Moody College of Business.

Assess all student learning outcomes measured by direct instruments (will occur every semester).

Analyze student feedback of instruction in the seminar courses (will occur every semester).

Close the loop with NSSE results related to the QEP.

SPRING SEMESTER 2011

Provide needed sections of the Seminar for incoming first-year students (ongoing every Spring).

Repeat assessment of student learning outcomes to replicate results.

Select (and de-select) instructors and peer mentors for the Fall 2011 semester (will occur every spring).

Host an outside consultant on campus for on-going FYE training for faculty and staff (will occur every spring).

SUMMER SEMESTER 2011

Determine the need for FYS content adjustment and make changes necessary to improve outcome attainment. Train all seminar instructors and peer mentors prior to the beginning of Fall classes (will occur every semester as needed).

Close the loop with student learning outcome assessment results (will occur on an on-going basis).

FALL SEMESTER 2011

Begin offering First-Year Seminars in the Colleges of Nursing and Allied Health Professions and Liberal Arts (for a cumulative total of 59 sections).

SUMMER SEMESTER 2012

Administer the BCSSE in orientation.

Make content adjustments to maximize outcome attainment. Evaluate instructor feedback on training utility and make adjustments to training.

FALL SEMESTER 2012

Begin offering First-Year Seminars in the College of the Arts and the Ray P. Authement College of Sciences (for a cumulative total of 95 sections).

Analyze results and close the loop on BCSSE as related to the QEP.

SPRING SEMESTER 2013

Administer the NSSE.

SUMMER SEMESTER 2013

Analyze NSSE results.

Update marketing materials to reflect evolution and changes in the seminar.

FALL SEMESTER 2013

Close the loop on NSSE results related to the QEP.

Begin offering First-Year Seminars in the College of Education and the College of Engineering (cumulative total of 160 sections).

SUMMER SEMESTER 2014

Begin offering section(s) of the First-Year Seminar in the second session of summer school.

2014-2105

Continue offering First-Year Seminars in all Colleges.

Five-year Impact Report due to SACS-COC.

2015 AND BEYOND

Administer the BCSSE and NSSE as indicated, but at least every three years as recommended and needed for the UL Lafayette College Portrait.

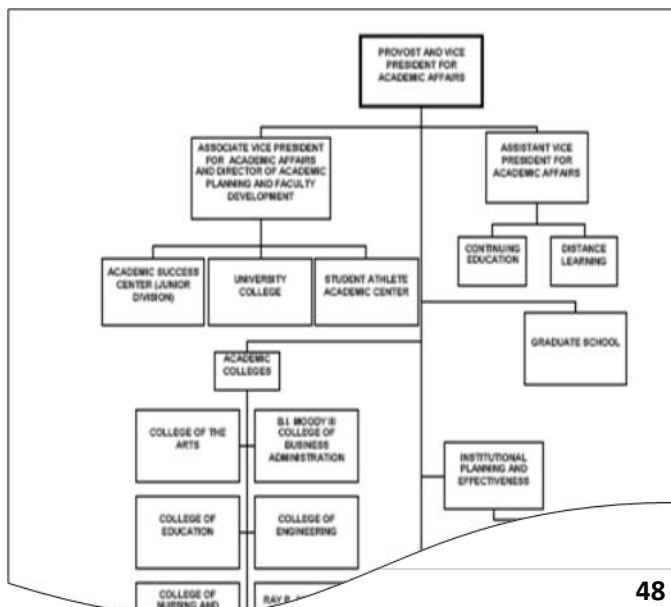
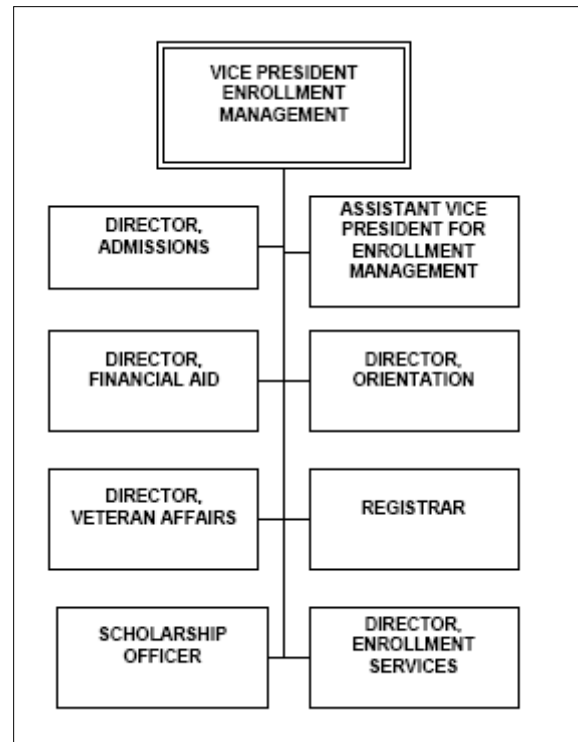
Monitor best practices and assessment results for needed changes in the Seminar curriculum or other aspects of operation.

Chapter VIII: Organizational Structure

Since assuming the Presidency in July 2008, Dr. Savoie has focused his internal efforts on the recruitment and engagement of students. This emphasis is consistent with the first two imperatives of the University's *Strategic Plan*, which call for strengthening enrollment processes and enhancing student success. Dr. Savoie has extensively modified the University's organizational structure to facilitate accomplishment in these areas. Of relevance to the QEP are two significant structural alterations: (a) the creation and filling of the position of Vice President for Enrollment Management, and (b) the expansion of the Vice President for Academic Affairs' role to that of Provost.

Enrollment Management has progressed significantly in its use of innovative approaches to recruiting students. Communication has been expanded in terms of intensity and media. There is earlier notice of aid awards, scholarships, and payment plans. Enrollment staff has increased contact with high-school counselors. This activity is intended to result in increasing number of academically prepared first-year students at UL Lafayette.

The Student Orientation Director is revamping Parent Orientation materials and programming. Important to the QEP, the Orientation Director will be providing information to incoming students about the First-Year Seminar. To coordinate this effort, the Orientation Director has served as a standing member of the Steering Committee and Implementation Committee.



Under the Provost's hierarchy, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Carolyn Bruder, has been promoted to Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. She serves as a standing member of the QEP Steering Committee, where she provides management input and liaises with SACS-COC. She also will be providing direct oversight of all freshman engagement experiences including the First-Year Seminars.

Additional structural changes necessitated by the transition of the QEP from the planning to the implementation phase are described below.

First-Year Seminar Coordinator. Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, Associate Professor of Psychology, will also be realigning her duties from serving in the Psychology Department to leading the First-Year Seminar project. Throughout seminar implementation, she will be responsible for monitoring the execution and assuring continuous quality improvement. Beginning Fall 2010, all of her time will be allocated as First-Year Seminar Coordinator reporting to Dr. Carolyn Bruder, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Coordinator's job description follows.

The First-Year Seminar Coordinator is primarily concerned with assuring the quality and effectiveness of the Seminar. Duties include: (a) establishing faculty selection and de-selection criteria and procedures, (b) identifying and/or developing curriculum and common content materials, (c) acquiring and maintaining requisite instructor resources, (d) providing ongoing faculty support to seminar instructors, (e) redesigning content to better meet learning outcomes as needed, (f) assisting the assessment coordinator in assurance of student learning, (g) creating a successful interface with learning communities, (h) coordinating with the Dean of Community Service on the service learning project, (i) coordinating with the career counseling and career services offices, and (j) collaborating with the training coordinator on needs. In sum, the incumbent is responsible for the quality of the instruction, content, and processes for the seminar. She will teach the seminar on an ongoing basis, and will integrate the course with other freshman year enrichment initiatives.

QEP Coordinator. Dr. Kerry Carson, Professor of Management, and Coordinator of the QEP Steering Committee, will be realigning his duties as QEP Coordinator during the implementation phase. Twenty percent of his time will be allocated as QEP Coordinator and 80% as a Management faculty member. The QEP Coordinator will provide project management and campus-level coordination, as well as budget control. On an ongoing basis, he will communicate and collaborate with academic and support administrators on campus to assure optimally effective implementation of the QEP. The QEP Coordinator will ultimately be responsible for drafting the Impact Report as part of the Fifth-Year Interim Report for SACS-COC. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the QEP Coordinator will work closely with the First-Year Seminar Coordinator.

QEP Implementation Committee. The QEP Implementation Committee will have overall responsibility for the execution and management of the QEP initiative. The First-Year Seminar Coordinator and QEP Coordinator will serve as co-chairs of the QEP Implementation Committee on an on-going basis. The Committee will have representation and appropriate expertise in each of the following domains: Career Planning, Assessment, Orientation, Peer Mentoring, Instructor Training, Community Service, Public Relations, Learning Communities (FYE component), and the Library Learning Commons (FYE component). Modification of the QEP plan can be handled by this Committee.

Identified below are the standing members of the QEP Implementation Committee; their current position titles, expertise and qualifications; and the requisite time estimated to be needed to accomplish their assigned duties (* indicates the incumbent is a member of the QEP Steering Committee).

Co-Chair & First-Year Seminar Coordinator* | Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, Associate Professor of Psychology. Dr. Wozencraft is a Licensed Psychologist in Louisiana who

received her M.S. and Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has served as Department Head in Psychology. Beyond teaching undergraduate and graduate-level courses, she oversees the Applied Psychology track of the Master's program in Psychology. She will devote all of her time as the First-Year Seminar Coordinator. In addition, she will receive 50% summer pay.

Co-Chair & QEP Coordinator* | Dr. Kerry David Carson, Professor of Management. Dr. Carson received his Ph.D. in Business Administration from Louisiana State University and his Master in Social Work from Indiana University. Prior to his academic career, he served as a clinical director of a mental health facility. He has taught graduate and undergraduate management courses at UL Lafayette for over 15 years. As the QEP Coordinator, he will receive 20% release time from his departmental duties.

Co-Career Planning | Kimberly A. Billeaudeau, Director of Career Services. Ms. Billeaudeau has a Bachelor of Arts in Interpersonal and Public Communication with a minor in English from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She has had increasing responsibilities in the Career Services unit, beginning as a Coordinator of Recruiting, Employer Relations and Special Projects, then as Assistant Director before becoming Director. Her time is 100% administration, and her duties will include coordinating the career planning component of the First-Year Seminar.

Assessment* | Dr. Paula Phillips Carson, Professor of Management and Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment. Dr. Carson holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration from Louisiana State University. She has served as a Management Professor, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, Acting Dean in the Moody College of Business, and Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment. Her time is 100% administration, and her duties will include coordination of assessment for the seminar.

Orientation* | Paul W. Eaton, Director of Orientation.. Mr. Eaton has a M.Ed. in College Student Personnel from the University of Maryland at College Park and a B.A. in English, History and Leadership Studies from the University of Minnesota. Before his present position, he was the Coordinator of New Student Programs at the University of North Texas. His time is 100% administration, and his administrative duties will include the coordination of student orientation with the seminar programming.

Peer Mentoring* | Dr. Julia C. Frederick, Director, University Honors Program. Dr. Frederick earned her Ph.D. in History at Louisiana State University and her Masters in Latin American History from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now UL Lafayette). Before becoming Director, she was an Assistant Professor of History at the University. Her time is 80% administration, and her administrative duties will include training and managing the peer mentors.

Co-Career Planning | Lucy C. Gammon, Coordinator of the Career Counseling Center/Junior Division. Ms. Gammon has a BS in Secondary Education from Loyola University in New Orleans. She is bilingual, holding a Louisiana State Certification in English and Spanish. Since August 2002, her center has counseled an average of 2,000 students per year in occupational and major selection. Her time is 100% administration, and her duties will include coordinating the career planning component of the First-Year Seminar.

Public Relations* | Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll, Assistant Professor of Communication. Dr. Givens-Carroll received her M.A. in Journalism from Louisiana State University and her Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has taught communications in university settings and performed as a practitioner in public

relations roles. As part of her service expectation at the university, she will be promoting the First-year Seminar to relevant stakeholders.

Instructor Training* | Dr. Paula S. Montgomery, Associate Dean, College of Education. Dr. Montgomery earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Research from the University of Southern Mississippi and her Master of Education, Guidance and Counseling from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now UL Lafayette). Before her present position, she served as the Department Head of Educational Foundations and Leadership. Her time is 80% administration, and her administrative duties will include seminar instructor training.

Community Services* | Dr. David N. Yarbrough, Associate Professor of Child and Family Studies and Dean of Community Service. Dr. Yarbrough received his Ph.D. in Family Studies from the University of Tennessee and a Master of Social Work from the University of Alabama. Before coming to UL Lafayette, he was Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Texas State University in San Marcos. His time is 20% administration plus ½ pay for summer, and his administrative duties will include coordinating the community service component of the Seminar. His release time will increase to 40%, then to 60% over the 5-year implementation period.

FYE, Learning Communities* | Dr. Melinda Oberleitner, Associate Dean of Nursing & Allied Health Professions. Dr. Oberleitner received her Doctor of Nursing Science from Louisiana State University Medical Center in New Orleans and her B.S. in Nursing from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now UL Lafayette). Before her present position, she served as Professor and Department Head for the BSN and MSN programs. Her time is 100% administration, and her administrative duties will include the development of the Learning Communities.

FYE, Library Learning Commons* | Susan Richard, Head of Reference Edith Garland Library and Associate Professor of Library Science. Ms. Richard received her Master of Library Science from Louisiana State University and her B.S. in Elementary Education from the same institution. Before her present role at UL Lafayette, she was a reference and an interlibrary loan librarian. Her time is 100% administration, and her administrative duties will include the development of the Library Learning Commons.

Assurance of Program Goal Accomplishment

Major program goals for the QEP are summarized in the following table. The Implementation Committee will be monitoring a number of processes and metrics related to these goals as indicated in the second column below.

Major Program Goals	Program Evaluation Process and Metrics
(1) Monitor conformance with proposed roll-out schedule and ongoing scalability challenges.	(a) Hold annual budgetary meeting with Provost and CFO. (b) Ensure adequate pool of qualified and trained FYS instructors.
(2) Collect, analyze and respond to feedback from stakeholders.	(a) Regular meetings with FYS Instructors. (b) Feedback from community service agencies served. (c) Feedback from the academic deans. (d) Feedback from standing members of the QEP Implementation Committee (to include the Dean of Service Learning, Career Services Director, Library representative and Peer Mentor Coordinator).
(3) Achievement of the 14 student learning outcomes.	Process described in Chapter 10.

Major Program Goals	Program Evaluation Process and Metrics
(4) Monitor quality of training and instruction.	(a) Feedback from instructors and peer mentors on FYS training. (b) Peer mentors to receive feedback at mid-semester from both FYS instructors and participants. (c) Student course evaluations (d) In-class observation of new instructors.
(5) Long-term Impact	(a) Track GPA, student persistence, and D/F/W rates. (b) Monitor student usage of campus resources.

Chapter IX: Resources

Current Introductory Course Offerings

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is currently investing significant financial resources in the provision of freshman seminars. Albeit a somewhat uncoordinated and fragmented effort, 124 seminar sections were offered across campus in 2008. The type, quality, depth and breadth of these seminars vary greatly from college to college with most having a discipline-specific focus. Preliminary plans for implementing the new First-Year Seminar in each college are explained below.

- The **College of the Arts** awards degrees in 10 majors. Incoming students in 4 of the 10 are required to enroll in a 3-credit hour course titled "Introduction to Design." One of the majors takes a 1-credit hour course titled "Introduction to the Visual Arts." Students in three of the 10 majors take the introductory course in their discipline. However, Music and Performing Arts majors currently are not required to take an orientation or freshman seminar course. Many of the current offerings have large sections. For example, in Fall 2008, there were 150 students registered in the only section offered for "Introduction to Design, and in Spring 2009, there were 80 students in the section. In this case, additional sections will need to be offered and one hour will need to be added to this 3-credit hour course to accommodate the First-Year Seminar. Other students in the College of the Arts will need to add the 2-credit hour First-Year-Seminar to their curriculum
- In the B. I. Moody III College Of Business Administration, all 9 majors take a 2-credit hour course titled "Business Orientation." In the Fall 2008, there were 12 sections capped at 40 students each. In Spring 2009, there were 6 sections capped at 35 students each. This 2-credit-hour course will be modified to the QEP standards. Three lectures will be available for presentation of discipline-specific issues.
- In the College Of Education, students in 19 of the 21 majors take a 3-credit hour course (with a combination of lecture and lab) titled "Orientation to Teacher Education." In Fall 2008, 18 sections were capped at 22 students each, and in Spring 2009, 12 sections were capped at 20. The other 2 majors take a 3-credit course titled "Introduction To Kinesiology" with 8 sections capped at 45 students each. The 2-credit hour First-Year Seminar will be added to the curriculum.

- In the College Of Engineering, Chemical Engineering majors take an “Introduction to Chemical Engineering” course, which is a 2-credit hour laboratory. Civil Engineering majors take a 1-credit-hour “Introduction to Civil Engineering.” Industrial Technology majors take the 3-credit-hour First-Year Seminar titled “Introduction to Industrial Technology.” Each section of this course is capped at 20 students. There is a 1-credit-hour “Introduction to Mechanical Engineering” class capped at 50 students. Petroleum Engineering majors take a 1-credit-hour class titled “Introduction to Petroleum Engineering,” which offers one section in the fall for 50 students and one section in the spring for 35 students. Electrical Engineering majors were offered a newly designed 1-credit-hour seminar in Spring 2009. Except for Industrial Technology, the 2-credit-hour First-Year Seminar will be added to the curriculum.
- The College of Liberal Arts offers 14 majors, and all take a 1-credit-hour course titled “Explorations in Liberal Arts,” with classes capped at 19 students. Upwards of 13 sections are offered in the Fall, and generally fewer than 10 are offered in the Spring. Staffing issues have limited the number of sections available. This 1-credit-hour offering will be expanded to 2-credit-hours.
- In the College Of Nursing and Allied Health Professions, Nursing majors take a 2-credit-hour course titled “Healthy for Life” and a 1-credit-hour course called “The Nurse As Professional.” Sections range from 25 to 50 students. Dietetics majors take a 1-credit-hour course titled “Introduction to Dietetics,” with 65 to 75 students per section. The 2-credit-hour First-Year Seminar will be added to the curriculum.
- In the Ray P. Authement College of Sciences, Health Information Management majors take a 1-credit-hour course titled “Health Information Management Orientation.” Other majors take “Explorations in Sciences,” a 1-credit-hour course capped at 35 students. These 1-credit-hour courses will be expanded to 2-credit-hours per the QEP.
- Students who are admitted by exception to the University’s admission standards are required to enroll in a 2-credit course, Academic Skills 100. The course incorporates much of the content of traditional freshman seminars. It will likely be continued but redesigned to complement the First-Year Seminar.

Course Schedule Planning for Proposed First-Year Seminars

As presented in the spreadsheet below (Estimated Costs for First-Year Experience Courses – Spring 2010 and Fall 2010), the number of sections of freshman seminars now being taught for the 2010 calendar year at UL Lafayette is 123. If all sections for the First-Year Seminar were offered in 2010, the requisite number of sections needed for the QEP is 154. Because many of the original 123 discipline-specific orientation courses will remain in place, an additional 258 credit-hours would need to be offered if, hypothetically, the First-Year Seminars were offered campus-wide in 2010. With instructor compensation at \$1000 per student credit hour, or \$2,000 for the course, the annualized, incremental direct salary costs for covering the instruction in the QEP initiative would be \$258,000. However, the First-Year Seminars are being phased in over a 4-year period.

If the State's economy continues to show improvement, sufficient funds are anticipated to fund the QEP. UL Lafayette is well-positioned to benefit from revenue increases allocated to higher education, as it is the second largest university in the state. Also, the State is becoming more flexible in allowing universities to increase tuition. Further, to offset some of the costs associated with the QEP, a \$100 fee is being proposed for the First-Year Seminar.

From a budgeting perspective, student enrollment and persistence remain a strategic priority for the University. However, in case the economy is slow in its recovery, the QEP will be initially offered in a more low-cost manner. For example, the Moody College of Business already provides 2-credit hour sections. To keep the classes at 25 students or less, only 5 additional sections will need to be offered in 2010. If the economic situation remains stagnant, the Authement College of Science and the College of Liberal Arts will be in the 2011 rotation to institute the 2-credit hour First-Year Seminar. In this economic scenario, the Authement College of Science will replace the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions in the second year of implementation, because it already has a 1-credit hour seminar where the College of Nursing would have to add a new 2-credit hour course. Finally, the College of Education has a new orientation course, so in a slow economy, a learning community approach may be considered for the college rather than adding the First-Year Seminar.

Chapter X: Assessment

Through a collaborative process based on literature reviews, peer institution benchmarking, national higher education priorities, best practices research and internal discussions, fourteen student learning outcomes (SLOs) were created for the First-Year Seminar. To ensure a singular focus on developing the most appropriate objectives without regard for potential measurement challenges, the operationalization of assessment was never considered until the Core Content Subcommittee had reached consensus about the learning goals. This segregation was necessary to ensure that potential barriers or perceived difficulties in measuring student accomplishment of the outcomes would not dilute or alter the substance of what the QEP Committees advocated as being integral to student success in the course.

In May 2009 the fourteen (14) SLOs were presented to the University's chief assessment officer for the purpose of identifying and developing appropriate instruments to assess collective student achievement of the goals. In pursuing this task, the Assessment Team (Drs. Bruder, P. Carson, Guidry-Hollier and Wozencraft) determined desired characteristics of proposed assessment instruments. This determination was guided by the established body of literature on essential characteristics of learning assessment approaches. Specifically influential were the seminal works of Wiggins (1990), who elaborated on the components of an authentic assessment process, and Hibbard (2000) who defined characteristics of effective performance-based learning assessment instruments.

Characteristics of Effective First-Year Seminar Assessment Exercises

The characteristics identified as being necessary in instrument design, development and selection included the following.

Assessments Employ Direct Measures. First-year student seminars are becoming fairly institutionalized in universities on a global basis. They manifest in various forms, including extended orientation, 2- and 3-hour courses, and basic study skills courses (2006 National Survey on First-Year Seminars conducted by the National Resource Center at the University of South Carolina). As a result, benchmarking opportunities abound in the domains of textbooks, shared reading selections and even syllabi. Yet information on assessment of common learning outcomes covered in First-Year Seminars is dominated by two streams: (a) indirect survey measures, published and validated by a variety of vendors; and (b) standardized summative exams. Indeed, UL Lafayette currently uses both of these types of instruments in its assessment of General Education, academic learning outcomes, and student services and support program goals (i.e., UL Lafayette administers, among others, NSSE, BCSSE, ACT SOS, iSkills/IC3, CLA, ETS Major Fields Tests, and MAPP).

However, a comprehensive examination of these options led to the conclusion that existing assessment instruments limited the ability to directly assess articulated learning outcomes for the First-Year Seminar. While the results and findings of many of these instruments were critical to the QEP process in terms of informing topic selection and content development, they were found to be less functional for and applicable to assessment of the defined outcomes.

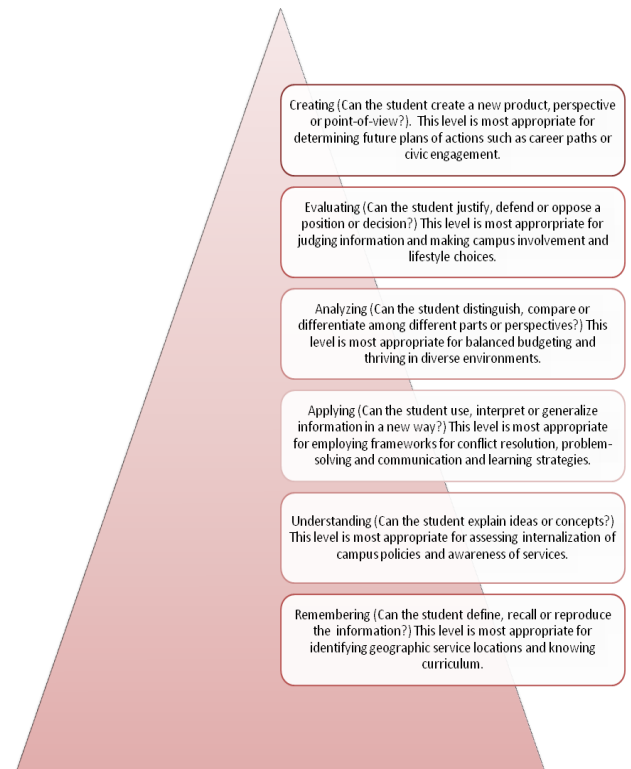
With specific reference to the indirect measures, while the ability of surveys to corroborate assessment results of direct indicators was recognized, the campus culture has been migrating toward an emphasis on direct outcomes assessment. With regard to the standardized summative exams, the obvious challenge was that existing commercial instruments lacked content and criterion validities for the goals established for the seminar.

Assessments Most Often are Course-Embedded. While the necessity of summative assessment was of paramount importance, the QEP Steering Committee was similarly interested in formative feedback, particularly through the beta-testing and pilot programs. And indeed, it has recently been suggested that assessments that can serve both formative and summative functions are ideal. As Benjamin and Chun (2009, p.1) conclude:

It is important to develop an integrated strategy that combines formative and summative dimensions in order to make realistic progress toward a more systematic approach to improving teaching and learning. This approach recognizes that faculty are the ultimate stakeholder of assessment. Unless there is formative value, faculty will not take assessment seriously; and in turn, they will not use the data to change practice to improve learning. Appropriate summative assessment is actually necessary in order to give faculty and administrators information they need to help frame a well-grounded formative assessment program.

As such, course-embedded assessments seemed the logical choice, as they can be summative in nature (and could be administered immediately following intended student mastery of the material), yet could also provide timely feedback on pedagogical alterations needed prior to the full-scale implementation of the Seminar across all colleges. Relatedly, course-embedded assessments meet the desire of some proposed faculty to use the instruments for student-level assessment (i.e., course grading) as well as for seminar (program) level evaluation.

Assessments are Engaging and Developmental. When the instructor opts to not use an assessment exercise for individual grading purposes, the issue of students' intrinsic motivation to complete the task to the best of their ability becomes both challenging and essential. In the absence of extrinsic gains (such as 'points' or credit) for completing exercises, it becomes critically important that the instruments be "engaging" and "activating" to students (Hibbard, 2000). To this end, the portfolio of proposed assessment instruments was designed to be diverse and varied in the tasks, structure, expectations, media and skills used. To accomplish this, the QEP Assessment Team employed Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of Educational Objectives to strategically design



assessments that demonstrated a good fit between the levels of thinking and learning and the content of the outcomes.

It was further intended that the assessment devices be developmental instead of simply evaluative, and that they complement, extend or supplement delivered content. This was often accomplished by incorporating an integrative resource (such as a summary article), a different form of media (such as streaming video) or a contextual reference (such as a case) into the exercise. Indeed, it was important that assessments evolved into something greater than evaluation by offering students the opportunity to further enrich themselves.

Assessments are Time-efficient. Careful and meticulously-planned utilization of class time was always honored as a guiding principle in the seminar-development process in order to maximize content coverage in the two-hour course. Because some of the assessments were designed to be course-embedded, those intended to be administered during class needed to be clearly structured and concise.

Yet, reflection on the learning outcomes led to the realization that not all were conducive to being assessed in such an abbreviated time span. Evaluation of learning in other goal areas was contingent upon accessing information, resources, and technology not generally available to individual students in the seminar classroom setting. It was therefore determined that about half of the proposed assessment exercises should be designed to be administered in the classroom setting, and about half should be conducive to being completed on a “homework” basis. As a result, two forms of assessments evolved: (a) “R U Getting It” exercises, which are designed for in-class completion; and (b) “Did It Click and Did It Stick” exercises, which are intended for out-of-



class completion. In many cases, however, there is nothing to prohibit “R U Getting It” exercises from being assigned for home completion. Despite the setting in which the student will complete the assessment, estimates on the amount of time necessary to complete the exercises range from 10 minutes to 90 minutes, with the only exception being an exercise that requires students to evaluate four distinct campus events.

For those assessment exercises that require access to digital resources that students are not expected to self-identify, a beta version of a website was created ([First Year Student Seminar Beta Website](#)). On this site are posted relevant links and documents requisite for assessment exercise completion. In addition, the beta site, which will eventually be hosted on the University server, includes the student learning outcomes for the course, the syllabus and other necessary course information, valuable first-year student resources, a slideshow of campus, and two blogs--one embedded in the site and an external blogspot to which students can post.

Assessments are Valid and Reliable. Recognized as fundamental attributes of authentic assessments, the foundational concerns of validity and reliability were vigilantly considered. Evidence of face and content validity of the developed assessment will be established by having at least three subject matter experts review each instrument and explicitly address two issues and rate concurrence on a scale of 1

(strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree; Fink, 1995). Preliminary data will be available at the time of the on-site review. The two statements asked of each SME were:

- (1) This instrument measures accomplishment of the relevant stated learning goal.
- (2) This instrument appears to be a reasonable way to gain insight about student accomplishment of the relevant learning goal.

Regarding reliability, in cases in which student responses were not strictly correct or incorrect in an objective sense (e.g., those related to knowledge about university policies or resources), evaluators were trained on the relevant rubrics or other evaluation devices employed. In all cases where student performance is subjectively determined, at least two rates will evaluate each product. Additionally, instructors will be trained on the appropriate administration of the assessment instrument and on their latitude to offer assistance to students completing the exercises. Evaluator calibration sessions will be conducted regularly. The initial expectation for reliability is 80% concurrence on assessments.

The Proposed Assessment Exercises and Instruments

With these criteria as guiding principles in the construction of the assessment exercises, 16 original instruments were developed. They will be available upon request and/or on-site for the SACS-COC visiting team, and are summarized and categorized here.

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Description of Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Bloom's Level of Knowledge</i>	<i>Estimated Time Required for Completion</i>
<i>To increase awareness about the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and to benefit from its programs, services and resources, students will:</i>				
1 Comprehend the philosophy, function and value of the General Education curriculum.	CLICKnSTICK What's Gen Ed Got To Do With It?	Students will be assigned to watch two brief videos: (a) "College Learning for the New Global Economy" created by the AAC&U, and (b) the "2008 Did You Know 3.0" created by Karl Fisch. They will also be asked to read an excerpt from Harvard University's 2007 <u>Report of the Task Force on General Education</u> on the 'Reason for a Liberal Education.' Based on these three sources of information, students will be asked to develop a 300-350 word blog aimed at high school seniors arguing for the value of carefully selecting and succeeding in their general education courses.	Creating	90 minutes
	CLICKnSTICK The GPA Thing	Students are given multiple academic performance and financial aid scenarios, and are asked to use a GPA Calculator to compute actual and predicted GPAs, as well to assess their understanding of how difficult it may be to recover from a semester in which they perform poorly. UL Lafayette has received written permission to adapt, brand and embed the "GPR Calculator" designed by Randy Potter of Clarion University for this purpose. At the present time, the GPA Calculator is posted on the beta UL Lafayette First-year Student Website .) This site also hosts other digital resources needed to complete proposed assessment exercise.	Applying	15 minutes

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Description of Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Bloom's Level of Knowledge</i>	<i>Estimated Time Required for Completion</i>
2 Identify available student services and locations of support units offering academic assistance, health care, financial aid, arts and multicultural programming, career planning, and technology resources.	CLICKnSTICK Where Do You Go If You Want To?	Seminar participants are given a diverse list of 11 typical tasks that a first-year student may need to do and a campus map with each building labeled by name but not by function. Students are asked to indicate on the map where they would go to accomplish the defined tasks. The task list is intended to include specific offerings (such as water aerobics or contribute to a Cajun Card balance) that the students may not know exist, but within sufficient context that they should be able to apply critical-thinking skills to solve. (For example, they will be taught that physical education activities are located in Bourgeois Hall, but may not be aware of water aerobics as a specific option. Similarly, they should know the Bursar handles financial transactions but may not know that personal checks can be cashed there.) This represents an example of the intended developmental and authentic nature of the proposed instruments.	Remembering	15 minutes
<i>To comprehend the purpose and structure of higher education and to enable student assimilation, progress and success, students will:</i>				
3 Know and apply time management techniques and effective learning strategies.	CLICKnSTICK Where Does the Time Go?	Students are asked to read a two-page list of time management tips and select from the 57 presented which 5 are most personally valuable and why. Following this, they are asked to identify a specific behavioral change they intend to make based on their mastery of time management techniques and how they believe this will impact their lives. The tips present information included in the seminar in a reorganized manner, but specifically focus on the practical implementation of time management strategies, thereby aiding students in translating theory into action and providing an opportunity to evaluate their understanding of the strategies.	Evaluating	20 minutes
	CLICKnSTICK VARK: How Do You Like To Learn?	The seminar will employ the Learning and Study Strategy Inventory (LASSI) to address content on learning strategies. However, the VARK is a cost-free and complementary exercise that will be utilized for assessment purposes. Students will be directed to the VARK website where they will complete a 13-question inventory, receive results about their learning preferences and be guided through strategies and techniques for studying, learning, and note- and test-taking based on their preference. The assessment exercise will evaluate the degree to which they understand and can adapt their practices and habits to their preferred style.	Analyzing	50 minutes
4 Select, locate and evaluate information resources held in Dupré Library and in digital formats.	CLICKnSTICK Is it T.R.A.S.H?	Students are given URLs to five websites containing information on King Arthur and the Round Table and will be asked to evaluate the information contained on each site based on five criteria: (1) timeliness, (2) relevancy, (3) accuracy, (4) credibility, and (5) objectivity. The intent is to determine the ability of students to evaluate and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate information and data.	Analyzing	45 minutes
5 Define academic integrity and delineate the forms, harm and consequences of academically-dishonest behavior.	R U Getting It? Is It Academically-Dishonest?	Students are presented 30 actions (e.g., having another student attend class and take notes for you), and are asked to determine if the action is academically-dishonest or not. They are then asked to identify the source location of the University's academic integrity policy.	Understanding	5 minutes
<i>To create opportunities to build social, support and professional networks, student will:</i>				

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Description of Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Bloom's Level of Knowledge</i>	<i>Estimated Time Required for Completion</i>
6 Realize the advantages of student engagement and become involved in campus life.	CLICKnSTICK Cajun Passport	Students are asked to select, attend and evaluate four different types of campus events: (1) a fine arts performance/event, (2), a student organization meeting/talk, (3) an athletic event, and (4) an event with an intercultural or diversity focus. The exercise will provide evidence of their ability to identify and locate relevant events, as well as their ability to recognize the value of such campus opportunities.	Understanding	5 hours
7 Describe responsible social networking and effective communication etiquette.	R U Getting It? Communicating With Your Prof	Students are presented with an e-mail written by a fictitious peer to her English professor in a style that would be more fitting for an informal correspondence with her friend. The exercise asks the student to rewrite the e-mail in a manner appropriate for communicating with a faculty member.	Creating	10 minutes
8 Recognize emotionally-intelligent approaches to conflict resolution.	R U Getting It? The Struggle With Shirkers	This exercise deals with social-loafing and presents students with a real blog authored by a recent college graduate complaining about her teammate who is slacking. In the ranting blog, no functional solution is presented. Students are asked to consider the scenario and apply conflict-resolution skills that will result in a more favorable outcome for all involved. This context was chosen as it is both: (a) very common, and (b) very difficult for students to effectively handle in college.	Applying	30 minutes
<i>To start building the foundation for fulfillment and success in and beyond college, students will:</i>				
9 Determine occupational interests, and research and evaluate information about career paths.	For this objective, the comprehensive career exploration exercise will be examined and evaluated. This exercise will be part of the course assignment for every student. However, the precise rubric to be used will be developed by Ms. Lucy Gammon and a team of instructors and will be considered for both grading and course assessment.			
10 Apply a logical and rational problem-solving model to address a relevant challenge.	R U Getting It? The Hoopla Over Helicoptering	The scenario presented is that a student's mother e-mails her a recently published article from the <u>Boston Globe</u> (which the students will read) on the benefits of being a "helicopter" parent and subsequently asks the student for his/her CLID (UL login ID) and password. The student is hesitant to reveal the password, and is asked to apply the problem-solving model presented in the seminar to determine how to best handle the situation. The context is very contemporary and real, and "helicoptering" is discussed and discouraged at UL Parent Orientation.	Applying	40 minutes
11 Understand wellness, health maintenance and injury and illness prevention practices.	R U Getting It? For the Health Of It	Students are asked to read a short article from <u>ScienceDaily</u> on the statistically significant relationship established between college grades and health-related behaviors. Given the impact shown, students are asked to recall three best practices/ strategies for optimizing health and lifestyle choices in four domains: (1) sleep, (2) stress, (3) infection control, and (4) physical activity.	Remembering	15 minutes
12 Demonstrate techniques for establishing and maintaining a balanced budget.	R U Getting It? Balancing the Budget	This is a complex and integrative exercise that presents students with a "friend's" budget (income and expenses). The budget is not balanced as expenses exceed income by about \$700/month (intentionally selected because an obvious and easy solution to remedy this deficit would be for the student to obtain an off-campus job). The seminar participant is asked to make recommendations for balancing the budget. Yet, the most expedient solutions will likely have a detrimental impact on academic success and personal wellness. In this exercise, students have the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking and mastery of several content areas covered in the seminar (please see the evaluation guidelines for detailed examples). As such, this assessment will be assigned late in the semester.	Creating	40 minutes
13 Translate their	For this objective, student reflection narratives will be examined and evaluated. These reflections will be part of the course assignment for every student. However, the precise rubric			

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Description of Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Bloom's Level of Knowledge</i>	<i>Estimated Time Required for Completion</i>
service learning experience into a plan of meaningful civic participation.		to be used will be developed Dr. David Yarbrough and a team of instructors and will be considered for both grading and course assessment.		
14 Analyze their own worldview in relation to those of other cultures, demographics, and aspects of human diversity.	CLICKnSTICK Minding the Gap	The demographic characteristic which provides the framework for this assessment exercise is age. Students are directed to a SlideShare PowerPoint presentation on the four age-cohorts or generations likely to be found intermingling on a college campus. After being prompted to review this material, students are asked to provide specific examples of effective and ineffective interactions between Millennials and Baby-Boomers.	Evaluating	75 minutes
Summative Indirect Assessment of All Fourteen (14) Student Learning Objectives	CLICKnSTICK First Year Seminar Student Survey Hosted on UL SurveyMonkey	To triangulate evidence and gather information on the psychometric properties of assessment instruments, each semester all students will be asked to complete this four-part survey. The choice was made to develop an instrument internally for several reasons: (a) no commercially available questionnaire comprehensively addresses the 14 SLOs; (b) the QEP Team was less interested in cross-sectional benchmarking than in longitudinal analysis of learning gains; and (c) to a lesser extent, budgetary restrictions, internal expertise, and concerns about the relative value led us to develop rather than purchase a survey.	N/A as assessment is indirect and opinion-based	15-20 minutes

Sampling Strategy

Instructors of First-Year Seminars will be asked to retain and/or remit to the First-Year Seminar Assessment Team the unmarked (but not anonymous) products submitted by all students. These will be tracked by section number to enable identification of any course-specific contamination or problems. Upon remittance, the Assessment Team will utilize a random number selector (such as <http://www.random.org/>) to generate a list of 5 numbers between 1 and 7 (see graphic sidebar). These numbers represent the sequence of papers pulled from a randomly distributed stack of products. The sequence will be repeated until the appropriate sample size is extracted from the class population.



In the beta-test and pilot phases of implementation, instruments will be administered and modified as necessary based on student and instructor feedback. Administration during this phase will be oriented toward tweaking the instruments to ensure they meet assessment needs.

The sampling strategy upon full campus implementation will be as follows: At least 40 products of each of the 17 different instruments will be evaluated as outlined in the table in the following section entitled “Metrics of Success: Evaluation Tools and Minimum

Acceptable Performance Levels.” These products will be selected from at least three different sections/instructors. Each semester, instructors will be randomly assigned to deliver specific assessment instruments to students. Every semester, all students will complete the Service Learning Reflection Narrative as well as the Career Exploration exercises. Individual instructors will be asked to administer at least three additional course-embedded assessments throughout the semester. The specific instruments will be assigned by the Assessment Team, and while the instructor may choose to administer more, or may choose to use them for student-level assessment, the instructors will be obligated to administer at a minimum the three specific assessments required by the Assessment Team. This structured approach is necessary to ensure consistency of content delivery across classes and colleges.

While many departments, programs and colleges currently offer an incoming student seminar, the content, pedagogy and philosophy varies dramatically. There is currently not a course on campus that closely resembles the proposed content of the First-Year Seminar. As a result, until full implementation of a pilot, there will not be an opportunity to “field” test the intended assessment instruments with a student population. A proposal to gather baseline data on the course-embedded assessments from current incoming students was deliberated; however, consensus indicated that this would constitute an intrusion into existing courses and may also frustrate and potentially alienate students, who predictably would not understand the purpose and would not likely perform well. Additionally, seminar student learning objectives are not phrased as value-added; hence a longitudinal research design does not seem to be most appropriate for the long-term. Notably, however, baseline data from indirect measures, such as the NSSE, is being archived and tracked. These data will serve as indicators of the ongoing relevance, currency and necessity of the curricular components. Collecting baseline or pre-learning data on specific instruments which fail to demonstrate appropriate psychometric properties and/or which indicate repeated failure to achieve minimum performance levels will be considered as a “closing the loop” intervention.

Metrics of Success: Evaluation Tools and Minimum Acceptable Performance Levels

For each assessment exercise, an “Assessment Instrument Evaluation” protocol has been developed. These protocols are included in the appendix and are summarized in the table below.

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Determination of Successful Performance</i>
1 Comprehend the philosophy, function and value of the General Education curriculum.	CLICKnSTICK What's Gen Ed Got To Do With It?	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are, the student: (1) demonstrates understanding of the purpose, reason and philosophy of Gen Ed; (2) understands what Gen Ed actually is; and (3) expresses the value of a general education. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of “meets expectations” with no dimension being evaluated as “does not meet expectations.”
	CLICKnSTICK The GPA Thing	There are seven questions/items which can be objectively evaluated as being correct or incorrect. Success is indicated when at least 70% of assessed student products randomly selected answer all seven items correctly.
2 Identify available student services and locations of support	CLICKnSTICK Where Do You	There are 11 services for which students need to identify the correct delivery location. Success is indicated when at least 75% of

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Determination of Successful Performance</i>
units offering academic assistance, health care, financial aid, arts and multicultural programming, career planning, and technology resources.	Go If You Want To?	assessed student products randomly selected answer at least 10 (or 90%) of the inquiries correctly. Assessment of this instrument is objective.
3 Know and apply time management techniques and effective learning strategies.	CLICKnSTICK Where Does the Time Go?	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) thoughtful selection of the five tips, (2) appropriate justification of the tips chosen, and (3) understanding of the efficacy and potential impact of the strategies chosen for implementation. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
	CLICKnSTICK VARK: How Do You Like To Learn?	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) an understanding of the student's learning preference, (2) insight into how this knowledge may be translated into more effective learning and academic success, and (3) a reasonable action plan for using information about his/her learning preference. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
4 Select, locate and evaluate information resources held in Dupré Library and in digital formats.	CLICKnSTICK Is it T.R.A.S.H?	Summary information is presented on each of the websites for the evaluators' reference. A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 4 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) demonstrates understanding of the TRASH criteria, (2) comprehensively and critically analyzes the information presented in the websites, (3) reaches appropriate conclusions, and (4) elaborates cogently on reasons for conclusions. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
5 Define academic integrity and delineate the forms, harm and consequences of academically-dishonest behavior.	R U Getting It? Is It Academically-Dishonest?	There are 30 statements for which students need to determine whether academic-dishonesty occurred. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected answer at least 27 (or 90%) of the inquiries correctly. Assessment of this instrument is objective. A product is further counted as successful only when the student correctly identifies the location of academic integrity policies as being in Sections 15 and 18 of the <u>Student Handbook</u> .
6 Realize the advantages of student engagement and become involved in campus life.	CLICKnSTICK Cajun Passport	At least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected will report that the student identified and attended an appropriate event given the criteria, and that the student could (on a YES/NO scale): (1) communicate the value of attending the event, and (2) demonstrate insight into the benefit of attending the event.
7 Describe responsible social networking and effective communication etiquette.	R U Getting It? Communicating With Your Prof	A model e-mail is provided for the evaluators' reference. A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) content of the rewritten e-mail comprehensively contains the questions embedded in the sample (original) e-mail, (2) student identified and corrected the most inappropriate components of the correspondence, and (3) professionalism and tenor of the e-mail is appropriate. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
8 Recognize emotionally-intelligent approaches to conflict	R U Getting It? The Struggle	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student

<i>First-Year Seminar Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Instrument</i>	<i>Determination of Successful Performance</i>
resolution.	With Shirkers	performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) understanding of conflict-resolution models, (2) appropriate application of the model to the context of the case, and (3) justifiable conclusions and recommended courses of action consistent with application of the conflict-resolution model. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
10 Apply a logical and rational problem-solving model to address a relevant challenge.	R U Getting It? The Hoopla Over Helicoptering	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) understanding of problem-solving models, (2) appropriate application of the model to the context of the case, and (3) justifiable conclusions and recommended courses of action consistent with application of the problem-solving model. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
11 Understand wellness, health maintenance and injury and illness prevention practices.	R U Getting It? For the Health Of It	Numerous examples of best practices are provided for the reference of the evaluators. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a "PASS" on the assessment. A "PASS" is defined by a student identifying at least 10 total effective practices. A FAIL is defined by a student identifying fewer than 10 total effective practices.
12 Demonstrate techniques for establishing and maintaining a balanced budget.	R U Getting It? Balancing the Budget	Substantive examples of effective budget balancing strategies are identified. A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 4 dimensions. The dimensions are that the recommended strategies: (1) are rational, logical and well-conceived; (2) are feasible and practical; (3) consider both the short- and long-term ramifications; and (4) will likely be very effective. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
14 Analyze their own worldview in relation to those of other cultures, demographics, and aspects of human diversity.	CLICKnSTICK Minding the Gap	A 5-point rubric (does not meet expectations, barely meets expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations and far exceeds expectations) will be applied to assess student performance on 3 dimensions. The dimensions are: (1) understands the age cohorts and their unique preferences and values, (2) demonstrates empathy by balancing personal needs with those of the "professor," and (3) respects those who are demographically different. Success is indicated when at least 75% of assessed student products randomly selected achieve a total average score of "meets expectations" with no dimension being evaluated as "does not meet expectations."
Summative Indirect Assessment of All Fourteen (14) Student Learning Objectives	CLICKnSTICK First Year Seminar Student Survey Hosted on UL SurveyMonkey	Success is indicated when the average student response to Section 1 questions on "HOW MUCH HAS THE CLASS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR ABILITY TO..." queries equals or exceeds "Moderately" and when the average student response to Section 2 questions on "WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION SO FAR OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS:" equals or exceeds "OK."

Closing the Loop

Assessment results will be shared digitally and interpersonally on a semester-basis with all seminar instructors as well as with the QEP Implementation Team. As with all learning assessment initiatives on campus, failure to achieve success will trigger an immediate intervention.

When assessments of student learning results fail to meet expected levels of performance, several actions will be considered after an initial in-depth examination of the findings. These will involve replicating substandard results across time or sections, administering different instruments, isolating temporal or instructor influence and impact, and implementing an assessment “audit” process that includes one or more of the following:

- Reexamine the assurance of learning process.
 - Are student learning outcomes appropriate?
 - Are the requisite skills and knowledge sets being taught or delivered?
 - Are the measurements/instruments current, authentic, valid and appropriate?
 - Are rubrics sufficiently clear and easy-to-use?
 - Is the performance expectation appropriate?
 - Are evaluators committed, trained and calibrated?
- Determine if students require additional resources.
 - Is tutoring or supplemental instruction needed?
 - Is access to technology, services (e.g., library) or infrastructure needed?
- Evaluate whether curricular alterations are needed.
 - Is course content sequenced appropriately?
 - Is anything missing?
 - Are co-requisites needed?
 - Is the curriculum current?
 - Is the time-sequencing of the course appropriate?
- Consider pedagogical issues.
 - Are learning materials current and appropriate?
 - Is the pedagogy sufficiently engaging and active?
 - Are instructors optimally qualified?
 - Is there sufficient time to allow for comprehensive coverage of concepts?
 - Is the learning environment/facility a hindrance?
 - Is the course timing and length appropriate?
 - Are class sizes problematic and interfering with subject matter mastery?
 - Are there any communication barriers with students?
 - Was there any atypical disruption or disaster (e.g., hurricane damage or closure) during the semester?
- Determine whether students are academically-qualified and prepared to learn material.
 - Do students need any ‘non-academic’ out-of-class assistance or support?
 - Are students’ expectations appropriate?
 - Do they understand the content and importance of student learning outcomes?
 - Is there a problematic culture among students?
 - Is communication with students a challenge?

Contingent upon findings, experimentation and actions will be taken to remediate problems and enhance student learning.

APPENDIX

QEP References

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Learning Communities

Although not a formal component of the UL Lafayette QEP, the Appendix presents a report on the intended Learning Community initiative, as it was co-investigated with the First-Year Seminar plans and is known to be an effective co-curricular opportunity.

Learning Communities Introduction

In higher education, the term “learning communities” is used to describe efforts to link or cluster freshman courses as part of the First-Year Experience. The link or cluster of freshman courses may include a common cohort of students; for example, the same cohort of students is enrolled in all of the clustered or linked courses. Courses may be clustered around a common theme, which is often interdisciplinary in nature, or they may be linked based on major or discipline.

According to the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, one of the pioneers in coordinating freshman-year experiences, there are three general methods for structuring learning communities:

- Student cohorts/integrative seminar. Students enroll as a cohort in larger classes that are not coordinated by faculty. The learning community cohort of students also enrolls in a separate integrative seminar which allows for knowledge and experiences to be shared by students in the cohort.
- Linked courses/course clusters. In this structure, faculty members coordinate activities in the linked or clustered courses. Course content is often designed around a common theme, which is purposefully threaded through the linked/clustered courses. Students enroll in the linked or clustered courses as a cohort.
- Coordinated study. Learning communities may also be structured around course work which is team taught by involved faculty.

Over time, the three general structures for designing and implementing learning communities have been adapted, and other models have evolved to meet the needs of learners. Examples of these hybrid models include residential learning communities, online communities, and learning communities which function in virtual environments such as Second Life.

Evidence Base

The results of research related to the impact of participation in learning communities by freshman students reveal that likely outcomes include increased: (a) student engagement in peer groups and in campus life, (b) student retention beyond the first semester of the freshman year, and (c) academic achievement and intellectual development. Learning communities may be especially important to the retention and future academic success of “at risk” students. From the faculty perspective, involvement in learning communities facilitates interaction with colleagues from a variety of disciplines and allows for the integration of pedagogical approaches which are active, student-centered and collaborative. Recognizing the importance of the impact of participation in learning communities on student retention and achievement,

approximately 75% of research-extensive universities incorporate learning community experiences as part of the freshman year experience (Laufgraben, 2005).

Learning Communities (LC) Planning Committee

To support the efforts of the underlying QEP goal to expand and improve the freshman-year experience, a committee was formed in Fall 2008 to investigate and recommend options for incorporating LC into the freshman year experience at UL Lafayette. The LC Committee comprises faculty representatives from all academic colleges at the University. In addition, a faculty member from the library, two staff members from the Office of Information Systems, including the manager for database systems, and a staff member from the Academic Success Center are members of the Committee. The Committee, which has been very active, convened monthly during AY2008-2009. An aggressive agenda of subcommittee work takes place between the monthly meetings of the larger committee.

Activities of the Committee during Fall 2008 focused on exploration and analysis of best practices related to LC as reported in the literature and from exploration of various LC models in existence at universities across the country. Traditional LC models which were examined include programs at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Georgia State University, Ohio University and the University of Memphis. Non-traditional models were researched including the LC program at Brigham Young University and other models reported in the literature. One subcommittee focused its efforts on investigation of residential learning communities (also known as living-learning programs) at universities such as the University of Louisiana at Monroe, Georgia College and State University, Iowa State, the University of Southern Maine, UAB, and the University of Florida.

In addition to the work of the subcommittees, telephone conferences were conducted with Dr. Daniel Poje, Assistant Vice Provost of Academic Programs and Assessment at the University of Memphis, and Dr. Marilyn Kurata, Director of Core Curriculum Enhancement and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs at UAB. Purposes of the telephone conferences were to clarify information about LC posted on the respective universities' websites and to gather additional information as to how LCs are integrated, managed, and nurtured at these institutions.

Early in Spring 2009, the Learning Communities Committee chair met with Emily Kimball, now affiliated with UL Lafayette as a Graduate Recruitment Specialist. Ms. Kimball came to UL Lafayette from Texas A&M University and was integrally involved with LC initiatives at Texas A & M. Ms. Kimball provided valuable information as to the structure and function of LC at that institution.

Committee Recommendations

Following a comprehensive exploration of various LC models and an investigation as to how they have been implemented at other universities, Committee members recommend adoption of the following LC goals at UL Lafayette:

- Support students' intellectual, personal, and social growth while in college.
- Create opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning.

- Promote active learning and teamwork skills in meaningful contexts.
- Develop students' basic communication skills (written, oral, numeric, graphic, and visual).
- Increase student retention.

In addition, Committee members offer the following recommendations regarding implementation of LC at UL Lafayette:

- Pilot LC in the Moody College of Business (MCOB) with one class of marketing majors.
 - 25 students maximum.
 - Target LC pilot date is Fall 2010.
- Implement the linked/clustered courses model.
 - Link 2 or 3 courses including the First-Year Seminar.
- Link courses using a thematic approach with a marketing focus/slant.
- Schedule one "free" period between required courses to encourage student participation in on-campus activities.
- Limit enrollment in the LC courses to only the marketing students who are participating in the LC pilot.

Long-term recommendations include:

- Consider physical space requirements to incorporate residential learning communities for all new on-campus housing projects as new student housing is designed and constructed.
- Create opportunities for non-traditional students to be involved in learning communities, e.g., veterans, nontraditional students, etc.
- Explore the creation of virtual or online learning communities.
- Designate student participation in LC on the official university transcript.

Future Directions

During Spring 2009, the LC Committee developed a timeline for implementing the LC pilot. Committee members were divided into subcommittees to begin addressing some of the issues and were charged with the following responsibilities/activities.

Subcommittee charges/activities:

- Devise LC 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs) for faculty and students, and recommend methods for dissemination.
- Draft call requests directed to faculty for LC proposals and themes.
- Recommend incentives for faculty designing and teaching LC courses.

The benefits of establishing a learning community on campus are evident. The LC Committee welcomes the opportunity of collaborating with the University administration, faculty, and staff to create an engaging and rewarding freshman experience.

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Library Learning Commons

Although not a formal component of the UL Lafayette QEP, the Appendix presents a report on the intended Library Learning Commons initiative, as it was co-investigated with the First-Year Seminar plans and has been shown to be an effective initiative in terms of its positive impact on student learning.

Edith Garland Dupré Library Learning Commons Introduction

Plans are underway to transform the majority of the first floor of Edith Garland Dupré Library into a 'Learning Commons.' The Learning Commons will incorporate critical student services from across campus into one convenient and inspiring location. Students will be able to access one-on-one assistance from experts in research, technology, writing and information literacy, and academic support in one place.

In Fall 2008, the Library joined the University's SACS QEP to propose the Learning Commons. To enrich educational experiences for first-year students, library personnel conceived the Learning Commons to enhance the Library's role as a vital and effective resource for students. The purpose of the Commons is to involve faculty, students, librarians, and other university professionals in many aspects of the learning and teaching activities taking place in the library. The Learning Commons will offer far more than technology. It will bring other student support services to the library, creating a physical space dedicated to meeting the rapidly changing needs of students and faculty in a centralized location. A tutoring lab, the Writing Center, and IT services are part of this plan.

Edith Garland Dupré Library

The Edith Garland Dupré Library building is centrally situated on the main campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The Library is open to university users and the public an average of 90 hours per week and 24-hours per day during spring and fall examination periods. The Library provides a wide variety of services that reflect its mission "to support fully the instructional and research programs of the University through the provision of information services and access to printed materials, multi-media, and electronic resources."

Learning Commons Group

The Learning Commons Group was formed in September 2008. The Library Director charged the Committee to investigate the creation of a Learning Commons in Dupré Library. The first few meetings were attended by library faculty and staff, and once the initial plans were determined, faculty and staff from other university departments joined the group. Group members are working together to create a space that provides the physical infrastructure for collaborative learning, as well as the technological services on a variety of computing platforms that connect students and professors alike. The group compiled a proposal for the Learning Commons and submitted the proposal in November 2008.

Research

To become familiar with the concept of a learning commons, the core members of the Learning Commons Group read selected articles. Malenfant (2006) documents the importance of incorporating the University's Information Technology (IT) Department into the commons. Franks (2007) supports the idea of merging IT with library services. Nikkel (2009) discusses the criticality of providing students access to cutting-edge technology and space for collaboration. Church (2005) presents the concept of a "one-stop shopping" environment for students. Bennett (2008) focuses on the need to work with academic departments across the campus while envisioning a commons. And, Sinclair (2007) stresses the importance of creating a human-centered (i.e., with modular clusters, movable tables, and docking stations for laptops) commons that is open, wireless, comfortable, inspiring, and practical.

As part of the group's research effort, some members visited the library on the campus of Louisiana State University (LSU), which features a popular Information Commons. Funded by the LSU Student Technology Fee, the \$1 million, two-level Information Commons provides over three hundred computers, print-release stations, audio and video editing software, flatbed scanners, group study computer clusters, comfortable furniture, a writing center, a student supplies machine, and a coffee shop.

Learning Commons Proposal

The Learning Commons in the UL Lafayette Library will consist of the following areas:

- Computer labs with centralized printing
- Group study tables with dual monitors, promoting collaborative learning
- Public access computer lab
- ADA/ADAAA-compliant computer equipment
- IT assistance (satellite location)
- Full service copy area (includes large format)
- Circulating laptops/digital cameras/video cameras/portable DVD players
- Tutoring from the Academic Success Center (after 5:00 p.m.)
- The Writing Center of the Department of English (permanent location)
- Presentation/film screening studio with podium/equipment
- Coffee shop
- Vending machine for school supplies (i.e. scantrons, pens, flash drives)

Computer Labs

The existing Student Technology Enhancement Program (STEP) computer lab provides Internet access and common application software, as well as assistance and printing services to support the instruction and research needs of students and other users of Dupré Library. Plans for STEP lab expansion include a place for students to pursue course projects individually, as well as collaboratively, and to facilitate the printing of coursework and other class materials. The physical layout will encourage productivity by providing flexible spaces to suit a variety of learning needs, with open tables for laptops and multi-monitor arrangements to supplement the traditional rows of computers.

The Reference Department already provides a computer lab dedicated to searching reference online databases, the library's online catalog, and U.S. government information resources. Reference librarians provide information and research assistance to users. Printing will be facilitated by the STEP computer lab's centralized printing services.

Library Instruction Classroom

Library faculty will provide instructional sessions to first-time library users, introducing them to the library's online catalog and databases. The Gloria S. Cline Bibliographic Instruction (BI) Laboratory, a SMART classroom, will be incorporated in the Learning Commons.

IT Services

The Help Desk is a division of Computing Support Services, whose primary mission is to provide first-level academic computing support to UL Lafayette users. UL Lafayette currently maintains one location of the IT Help Desk. The Learning Commons will provide space for a satellite office of the University's IT Help Desk.

Tutoring Services

Tutoring services are offered by the Academic Success Center. Tutoring services will take place in a satellite office in the Learning Commons after the Academic Success Center closes on weekdays. Tutors support most 100 and 200 level classes.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is currently located across campus from the Library. The Center is funded by the English Department. The staff assists students from all disciplines at any stage of the writing process, from preliminary brainstorming to final editing. The Learning Commons proposal includes a permanent space for the Writing Center in the Library.

Presentation Room

The Presentation Room, a new facility for the Learning Commons, will be a dedicated space for students and other university personnel to develop and rehearse multi-media presentations individually or in small groups. The practice presentation space will be equipped with tools to assist students in the development of oral and visual presentations and projects, supporting an important General Education goal.

Coffee Shop

The Learning Commons proposal included the addition of a coffee shop which opened on November 16, 2009. The Library is promoting the coffee shop as a place where students can use their laptops to wirelessly connect to the University's network, work together on assignments, and meet with faculty members for informal instruction.

Conclusion

The Library's Learning Commons will be implemented in phases. Once completed, the Learning Commons will be a learning environment where library and IT resources blend with academic services and where users meet to collaborate in a first-class showcase of IT tools, library resources, and student support services.

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CMCN 425 Public Relations Campaign Class Executive Summary

In the Fall of 2009 a class of eleven women came together in Public Relations Campaign Management, a capstone course of the public relations curriculum. They were assigned the task of developing a campaign for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Steering Committee. In this campaign, they developed a plan to be implemented and deployed for the Spring 2010 Semester at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The QEP hired the public relations class to help inform the Universities' students, staff, and faculty of the first-time Freshman Seminar that would soon be established on campus. In order to establish accreditation for this program, they created widespread knowledge of the first-time Freshman Seminar, as well as, the QEP. The Southern Association of College Schools (SACS) will be visiting the University of Louisiana at Lafayette between February 23 and February 25, 2010, performing a random sampling of the university's stakeholders to establish whether or not individuals were aware and educated about this program.

The class named the first time freshman seminar "The Cajun Connection" as a correlation to the surrounding Cajun culture that has brought so many people to the Acadiana community and the university. The Cajun Connection would eventually be added to every student's curriculum in order to provide the first time freshmen with the connectivity and close mentorship needed to increase first time freshmen retention. The goal is to educate these students about all of the activities, organizations, and functions in which they can involve themselves to maximize their university experience creating a connected, collective community at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

This class would offer a variety of information about the culture, campus and their specific major. Each class would also have a specially trained, higher level student who would serve as a peer relationship developer, and go-to person, to help ease the transition from high school to college life.

Research was conducted to get a better understanding of what current freshmen connect with at the university, what assets about university life are most pertinent to their learning process, and what makes them have the drive and desire to continue their studies. We established that peers and friends are a large motivator when connecting, studying, and becoming involved with University life. Students rely heavily upon one another, and this public relations campaign maximized those relationships, reaching students where they are most comfortable. The university must now reach out to the students, not vice versa, which has been the tradition and accepted practice for dozens of years.

In these unique first time freshmen classes, students will have a chance to create one-on-one connections with other students who have the same major and upper classmen volunteers who have experienced the college community life. These volunteers can aid and guide these young adults towards successful college careers.

As a freshman it is easy to feel overwhelmed or lost on a campus, even if it is a small size. The Cajun Connection will provide assistance in the basics on a much smaller scale, to minimize confusion, and facilitate greater understanding concerning all positive aspects of University life. The Cajun Connection will promote positive involvement on campus and in the classroom.

The QEP will distribute information through flash drives and tote bags to allow the most informative and pertinent content to be easily accessible for the incoming freshmen. These items will be labeled with The Cajun Connection Logo along with the QEP branding. Items are to be distributed at the start of the Spring 2010 semester in order to disseminate information about the Cajun Connection and the QEP into the public eye. This will begin creation of the recognizable 'Cajun Connection' brand for when the SACS accreditation team comes to the University for the random-sampling in February 2010.

Insights from the First-Year Seminar Beta-Test

Two colleges at UL Lafayette participated in the beta-testing of five elements of the new First-Year Seminar in the 2009 fall semester. Five sections were taught by two instructors in the Moody College of Business (BADM 100) and one section was taught by an instructor in the College of Liberal Arts (HUMN 101). Of the 190 students enrolled in these sections, only 6% of the students withdrew from the course.

The First-Year Seminar student learning outcomes addressed by these five elements follow:

- (1) Determine occupational interests, and research and evaluate information about career paths.
- (2) Translate students' service learning experience into a plan of meaningful civic participation.
- (3) Select, locate, and evaluate information resources held in Dupré Library and in digital formats.
- (4) Know and apply time management techniques and effective learning strategies.
- (5) Demonstrate techniques for establishing and maintaining a balanced budget.

Three of the five elements were selected because they entail significant involvement of university staff in design and implementation. These three elements were career planning and exploration, service learning, and information literacy. One element, time management, was offered in two formats: (a) a time management activity in HUMN 101, with opportunity for evaluation and revision of time management practices and (b) a traditional pedagogical approach to teaching time management principles at a point in the semester where need for the skills is particularly high. The final element, money management, necessitated the permissions acquisition and customization of the NEFE-sponsored CashCourse website.

The career planning and exploration element was implemented in all six sections. Students in all six sections spent approximately 2.5 class periods being instructed by Mrs. Lucy Gammon and Mrs. Kim Billeaudeau, from Career Counseling and Career Services, respectively. These two career professionals designed an instructional curriculum and assignments aimed at helping students to begin their career exploration journey. Students were asked to complete skills, work interests, and values assessments that are part of a computer-based career exploration program. The vast majority of students completed the three assessments ($\geq 76\%$ of all enrolled students) in the new FOCUS2 program. It is estimated that at least one quarter of the students completed the career assessment process in the CHOICES program, which has traditionally been used in the BADM 100 course. A small percentage completed the assessment process using both career assessment programs. This provides an opportunity to examine differential outcomes with SLO attainment and perceived utility across the two programs. Of note is that students engaged in several additional program assessment components provided by FOCUS2. The vast majority of students ($\geq 74\%$) completed the preparation component, "Personal Development Needs," and the self-assessment components for personality and leisure interests. The two most often selected career exploration components were searching for occupation by name (21%) and matching major with careers (33%).

The service learning element was designed by Dean of Community Service, Dr. David Yarbrough, Director of AmeriCorps, Mr. Judd Jeansonne, and Implementation Committee Co-Chair, Dr. Theresa Wozencraft. Mr. Jeansonne coordinated with three community service agencies to provide service sites. UL Lafayette students participating in the beta sections had the opportunity to provide service to Habitat for Humanity (Habitat), Bayou Vermilion District (BVD), and Earthshare Gardens. One section included participation as a mandatory course activity and the five BADM 100 sections presented participation as one of two options for fulfilling course obligations. On October 10th, the first service experience day, 18 students participated in Habitat and BVD activities. The Earthshare Gardens activity had to be cancelled due to weather-related issues. On October 17th, 46 participants provided service at all three sites. For the one section in which the activity was an embedded, graded activity, only 7 out of 17 (41%) students attended. The BADM choice of options yielded an average service-learning participation rate of 43%, although the individual sections ranged from 33% to 66% of a section participating. Thus, giving a choice to participate versus mandating participation yielded similar overall outcomes. One section required reflection journals (n=7), which revealed quite positive attitudes about providing community service, very favorable self-ratings of level of participation, and a majority of students indicating that they plan to continue community service in the future. The Dean of Community Service will conduct an independent assessment of the service learning outcome at the end of the semester, providing an opportunity for time-lag assessment of attitudes and intentions.

Information literacy activity planning led to active collaboration between Implementation Committee Co-chair, Dr. Theresa Wozencraft, and Dupré Library faculty, Mr. Lance Chance, Mrs. Susan Richard, and Dr. Charles Triche. The information literacy assignment addressed both First-Year Seminar and Dupré Library learning outcomes. Students were taught information literacy skills by the bibliographic instruction librarian, Mr. Chance, in the 5 BADM 100 sections and by the instructor in the HUMN 101 section. Students learned how to use the online library catalog, the online databases, the difference between scholarly and lay literature, and the functions of various areas of the library. Graded library assignment outcomes were not available as of the time of this writing.

All six sections presented information about time management strategies and philosophies. In the HUMN 101 section, students kept a log of all activities during their waking hours on three days of the week. They were then asked to reflect upon their time management practices and to state specific goals for change and an action they planned to take to better manage their time in accord with their goals. The majority of students participated in this mandatory course activity. Approximately three-fourths indicated that they desired to change some aspect of their time management. The activity was rated approximately a 4 on a 1-5 scale of helpfulness, with 5 being most helpful. Outcomes for the BADM100 sections are awaiting implementation of the time management unit. BADM 100 sections will approach time management through a more traditional pedagogical approach rather than an activity. BADM 100 sections are teaching time management later in the semester, embracing a “just in time” philosophy for heavier end of semester workloads, when it is anticipated that students will be highly motivated to learn the time management principles.

The beta test of the student learning outcome concerning budget management supplied an opportunity to bring a new resource to campus. CashCourse, a website for college students created and maintained by the National Endowment for Financial Education,

provides college students with resources to assist them with managing their basic finances, planning for new acquisitions such as cars, study abroad, or spring break trips, and dealing with debt and overspending. This semester, the beta sections were invited to use CashCourse as a resource. Some sections will use the budget planning activity available on the site as part of the instructional experience, while others will use their customary educational materials with CashCourse as an additional resource. At the time of this writing, outcome data were not yet available.

Pilot First-Year Seminar Master Syllabus

Core Syllabus for Pilot
BADM 100
Spring 2010

Course Goals: The goal of BADM100 is to prepare you to be successful in college and life. The course has been redesigned to offer you the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to fully and successfully engage in your college experience.

Course Text: Santrock, J. W. & Halonen, J. (2010). Your guide to college success: Strategies for achieving your goals. (6th ed.). Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.

Course Shared Reading: The Kite Runner

Course Pedagogy: You will be taught using a combination of readings, on and off-campus activities, lecture, and discussion.

Course Content Areas

Campus Resources
General Education
Study Strategies
Time Management
Problem-solving
Conflict Resolution
Career Planning
Service Learning
Responsible Social Networking
Money Management
Information Literacy
Health and Wellness
Academic Integrity
Engaging in Campus Life
Effective Communication

Shared Course Activities

Career Exploration
Shared Reading – The Kite Runner
Information Literacy
Money Management
Study Skills and Style Assessment
Service Learning (see below)

Scheduled Off-Campus Activities

March 13, 2010 – Service Learning Activity – All sections of BADM 100 will participate in a service learning activity to assist you in developing a sense of your community's needs and possible ways for you to be involved in meeting those needs.