



**UMW's First-Year Seminar:
Research, Write, Speak**

2013 Quality Enhancement Plan

Mr. Richard V. Hurley, President
Dr. John T. Morello, Accreditation Liaison

Dates of On-Site Review: April 15-17, 2013

February 1, 2013

Dr. Belle Wheelan
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033

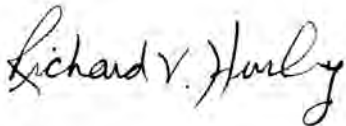
Dear Dr. Wheelan:

The University of Mary Washington is pleased to submit our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), "UMW's First-Year Seminar: Research, Write, Speak." This plan is the result of three years of investigation, development, and refinement by several QEP Planning Committees consisting of faculty, administrative, staff, and student representatives. This plan provides us with an important opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the First-Year Seminar requirement, which is an essential and foundational component of our general education curriculum and the entire UMW academic experience.

As we elaborate in this report, our proposed QEP connects directly to our University's mission and current Strategic Plan. We anticipate that implementation of this plan will help students develop the essential information literacy, writing, and speaking skills that are at the core of a 21st century liberal arts education. This plan will help strengthen a key component of the first-year student's academic experience and will also yield additional benefits that will ripple throughout the University.

We look forward to the visit of the SACS On-Site Review Committee on April 15-17, 2013.

Sincerely,



Richard V. Hurley
President

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Executive Summary and Plan Overview

The University of Mary Washington (UMW), a public comprehensive liberal arts university with approximately 4,500 undergraduate and 750 graduate students, has a long history of executing high impact practices to enhance student learning. The four-course writing intensive requirement (established in 1982) and a two-course speaking intensive requirement (established in 1997) were both supported by the establishment of peer consulting centers directed by professional staff. Following best practices and modeled by other institutions, UMW's efforts have bolstered its long-standing commitment to a liberal arts education.

As part of a sweeping overhaul of the general education program, UMW established a First-Year Seminar (FSEM) requirement in 2008. This three-credit course, required of all first-year undergraduates, was designed to help students cultivate the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary for liberal learning through the in-depth study of a topic in a seminar setting. One expectation of the course is the provision of instruction on how to gather and analyze information for the purpose of formulating and defending an opinion. With a 15-1 student-to-faculty ratio, individual FSEM courses are distributed across various academic departments, are taught by members of the full-time teaching faculty, and involve topics requiring no prior background or discipline specific knowledge. FSEM course titles reflect the rich diversity of experiences offered; courses have focused on topics such as "Mozart and 'Amadeus,'" "Finding Fashion," the "Graphic Novel," "Infographics," "Cinderella and Harry Potter," and "Energy Resources in the 21st Century." Since 2008, more than ninety individual FSEM courses have been developed by UMW faculty.

While the 2008 FSEM requirement established general course goals, it had ill-defined student learning outcomes and insufficient support for faculty who were tasked with implementing an ambitious introductory college-level experience in oral communication, written communication, and information literacy. Consequently, UMW's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to enhance the existing FSEM as a foundational liberal arts educational experience. The plan establishes a rigorous and clearly defined set of integrated FSEM learning outcomes in the areas of information literacy, writing, and oral communication. To enhance the realization of these outcomes, the plan develops online learning modules to support instruction. Over a three-year period, the plan envisions the creation of at least twelve modules distributed among the three skills areas. UMW is piloting this approach in spring 2013 with an information literacy module.

Framed by best practices drawn from multiple sources, the QEP is the result of thirty-six months of collaborative planning, reflecting, narrowing, and revising that included representatives from senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students. An open call for topic suggestions led to the creation of teams of faculty and staff who developed three potential topic areas in additional detail. Selection of the "first-year experience" as the principal subject area came about after the President and the Provost reviewed the topic proposals developed by the three teams. A call for volunteers to serve on the QEP Development Team resulted in 23 participants who began the work to develop the plan. In summer 2012, the QEP topic was narrowed considerably by a smaller group of individuals working with the Provost. The plan's focus on the FSEM course was in part prompted by analysis of both nationally normed and internal data sets indicating a need to improve student performance in common literacy skill sets during the first-year so that students could take full advantage of the rigorous academic programs UMW prides itself on offering, ones that focus on close faculty-student relationships, individual study, and undergraduate research. The plan was affirmed in fall 2012 by appropriate faculty governance bodies, including the University Faculty Council on December 6, 2012.

Chapter One: Introduction and Institutional Need

Mission, Goals, and Institutional Characteristics

The University of Mary Washington is a comprehensive regional public liberal arts university located in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The University's mission is to support "high quality instruction" in a "place where faculty, students and staff share in the creation and exploration of knowledge through freedom of inquiry, personal responsibility, and service."¹ In 2009, the University's Board of Visitors approved a five-year strategic plan outlining the University's goals through 2014 and reiterated its commitment to excellence in the liberal arts as its defining focus and noted that the university has "an established reputation for its outstanding faculty and for undergraduate and graduate programs where teaching and student achievements are priorities. "Academic excellence, the liberal arts, a student-centered learning environment, and outstanding teaching" represent the core of the University's educational philosophy.² The Quality Enhancement Plan's (QEP) emphasis on the First-Year Seminar (FSEM) specifically addresses one of the core values expressed in the Strategic Plan: "UMW values, supports, and emphasizes varied and effective teaching and learning environments informed by pedagogical research, theory, and best practices, in anticipation of a changing world."

Analysis of Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

The decision to focus the QEP on the FSEM grew from an analysis of the University's strengths and weaknesses which identified three exigencies that must be addressed in order for this required course to achieve its foundational purpose. First, FSEM courses are not fully realizing anticipated learning outcomes. Second, a changing student population requires that more attention be given to building basic research and communication skills in the FSEM. And, third, staffing patterns of FSEM have not resulting in offerings that are widely spread across the various UMW departments.

Learning Outcomes and the Evolution of the First-Year Seminar. In 2006, the faculty undertook the implementation of a FSEM in response to results from its administration of the 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Survey results indicated that first-year UMW students reported that they were significantly less likely than comparison groups to have (1) asked questions or contributed to class discussions, (2) made a class presentation, and (3) integrated information from multiple sources. UMW implemented a pilot program, of eight faculty and eight classes, designed to provide first-year students the opportunity to engage in content-oriented study and thus foster connections with students' chosen disciplines more quickly. In 2008, FSEM became a General Education requirement for all first-year undergraduates. The current Undergraduate Academic Catalog describes FSEM courses in this way: "The First-Year Seminar introduces students to the pursuit of intellectual inquiry. Students will study a non-traditional topic in a non-traditional way while exploring the concept of a liberal arts education."³ These seminars cover a wide array of topics, touch on a range of disciplines, and are offered across the curriculum during both fall and spring semesters. Class size is limited to fifteen students to ensure student engagement and interaction between faculty and students.

¹ The University's complete mission statement is available at <http://www.boarddocs.com/va/umw/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=8QMJQ34E3AD6>.

² The complete strategic plan is available at <http://president.umw.edu/strategic-plan/>.

³ http://publications.umw.edu/undergraduatecatalog/courses-of-study/ca/cas_courses_study/firstyear-seminar/

Although topically different, all FSEM courses emphasize information literacy and communication skills.⁴ As articulated in the “FSEM Call for New Course Proposals”:

The objective of the FSEM is to cultivate the intellectual skills necessary for liberal learning through the in-depth study of a topic and the provision of instruction on how to gather and analyze information for the purpose of formulating and defending an opinion Although First-Year Seminars will neither be part of the Writing/Speaking Intensive Program(s) ... all First-Year Seminars involve meaningful writing and speaking assignments in which students are given instruction and guidance on writing and speaking at the college level.⁵

These courses were intended to help students build the analytical, research, and communication skills that first-year students need as they progress through their academic programs. However, from the beginning FSEM course development has been driven more by a description of the sort of seminar experience desired, rather than by a coherent set of measurable student learning outcomes. The 2008 FSEM requirement merely identified course goals for a FSEM class:

- utilize active, discussion-based, participatory learning;
- be exploratory in nature, rather than just presenting established conclusions;
- have students read primary sources, not simply textbooks;
- introduce students to appropriate research and information retrieval techniques;
- use writing and speaking as tools for the exploration and expression of ideas and arguments;
- have students synthesize material from multiple sources to develop their own views on the topic; and
- be capped at 15 students.⁶

After adoption by the faculty, responsibility for FSEM curricular development and approval became the responsibility of the First-Year Seminar Committee, a committee of the University Faculty Council. In meeting the University’s target of developing a complete assessment regimen for the 2008 General Education Program, the Committee developed a set of student learning outcomes for FSEM. The Committee’s Spring 2012 Assessment Report identified four distinct learning outcomes:

- Students will engage in several writings assignments and become better writers.
- Students will engage in numerous discussions and other speaking assignments and become better public speakers.
- Students will make use of primary sources of information and be able to draw conclusions from the materials.
- Students will utilize research techniques and conduct research relevant to the subject⁷

⁴ History 201 and 202 and the first-year Honors seminar (HONR 100) also fulfill the first-year seminar general education requirement. Thus, these courses are equivalent to the FSEM course. For clarity’s sake, references to FSEM should be understood as referring to all courses meeting the first-year seminar requirement -- the two History courses, the Honors seminars, or any of the FSEM 100 seminars.

⁵ First-Year Seminar Advisory Committee, Call for Proposals for First Year Seminars (email to all faculty, September 1, 2008).

⁶ General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty. (2007, November). Report of the University of Mary Washington General Education Task Group.

Results of the Committee’s assessments provided a mixture of reassurance and concern about whether FSEM courses were accomplishing anticipated objectives. For example, analysis of course syllabi revealed that virtually every FSEM examined had assignments requiring the use of primary sources. However, syllabi did not match student survey results. Over 15% of the students surveyed by the Committee replied with “never” or “rarely” in response to the question, “How often do you use primary sources in your First-Year Seminar?” Similarly, over 50% of the students responded with “never” or “rarely” in response to the question, “How often do you use research techniques and conduct research in your First-Year Seminar?”

Outcomes assessment results for UMW’s first-year students also raised questions about the level of proficiency achieved in the FSEM goal areas. For example, UMW has conducted assessments of student writing as part of the core competency assessment of writing required by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The 2010 examination found that 25% of first-year students were not competent:

	Not Competent	Competent	Strong	N
Freshmen – Fall 2007	96 25%	276 73%	8 2%	380
Seniors – Spring 2010	13 14%	66 70%	15 16%	

Although the results depicted in Table 1 suggest that students benefit from the Writing Intensive Program over the course of their undergraduate career, there are areas for improvement. One of the conclusions in the report of the 2010 writing assessment expressed the following: “instilling good habits and clear expectations early on can only benefit the students. With that, working to further enhance the first-year experience courses at UMW is the logical place to begin with writing improvement.”

To more carefully calibrate deficiencies in student writing, the Writing Intensive Program examined student writing samples from fall 2011 FSEMs using a faculty developed rubric designed to discern student proficiency in four distinct areas: ideas, organization, rhetorical strategies, and editing.⁸ Samples of student writing were collected at both the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicated that while student proficiency generally improves during the course of the seminar, significant shortcomings remain. As Table 2 indicates, deficiencies are particularly evident with respect to editing (knowledge of writing conventions and correctness) since approximately half of the FSEM students were considered limited or minimally proficient in critical areas of the writing process.

⁷ First Year Seminar Assessment Report, Spring 2012. <http://academics.umw.edu/iae/outcomes-assessment-2/gen-ed-slos-requirements/>

⁸ First Year Seminar Assessment Report, Spring 2012. <http://academics.umw.edu/iae/outcomes-assessment-2/gen-ed-slos-requirements/>

	Beginning of Semester		End of Semester	
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Ideas	89%	11%	100%	0%
Organization	80%	20%	92%	8%
Rhetorical Strategies	65%	35%	83%	17%
Editing	46%	54%	50%	50%
Overall	62%	83%	75%	25%

The need for enhanced support of first-year student's written communication competencies is further bolstered by indirect evidence from student surveys. As the fall 2011 survey of FSEM students demonstrated, seven percent of students reported that there were "no significant writing assignments" in their FSEM course. This conclusion is supported by NSSE results which revealed that UMW lags behind comparison groups in the degree to which students perceive that the institution has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing (GNWRITE). For example, the 2010 NSSE results (Table 3) revealed that students who responded that UMW's contributed "very much" in the first-year was 6% lower than the COPLAC group and 10% below the Carnegie Class.

<i>Response Options</i>	UMW		COPLAC		Carnegie Class	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Very little	15	5%	148	4%	519	4%
Some	83	25%	791	22%	2,769	20%
Quite a bit	146	45%	1,549	42%	5,846	41%
Very much	80	25%	1,133	31%	4,840	35%
Total	324	100%	3,621	100%	13,974	100%

More recent 2012 NSSE results (Table 4) show growth in the number of students responding "very much," with UMW outpacing the COPLAC group. However, the University still lags behind both the Carnegie Class and UMW's selected Aspirational Peers.

<i>Response Options</i>	UMW		Carnegie Class		Aspirational Peers	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Very little	14	4%	1,235	4%	74	4%
Some	71	23%	6,353	20%	367	19%
Quite a bit	124	40%	13,530	40%	813	39%
Very much	107	33%	12,313	36%	831	38%
Total	316	100%	33,431	100%	2,085	100%

In short, there is sufficient evidence to cast doubt on the extent to which the written communication goal of the FSEM is being realized.

Similarly, data from outcomes assessment of oral communication proficiencies of FSEM students also point to areas for improvement (Table 5). UMW has conducted assessments of student speaking as part of the core competency assessment of oral communication required by

the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Oral communication proficiency was evaluated by measuring students' abilities in five speaking categories (Delivery, Word Choice, Organization, Purpose, and Support) as expressed in a speech delivered in a FSEM.

	Speeches rated not proficient	Speeches rated proficient	Speeches rated strong	Speeches rated proficient or strong
Number of speeches	18	12	0	12
Percent of total (n=30)	60%	40%	0%	40%

A speech rated as “not proficient” in even one category was deemed “not proficient” overall. If a speech was rated as “strong” in four categories, and “proficient” in the remaining category, the speech was deemed “strong” overall. Any rating pattern between these two end points yielded a rating of “proficient.” These results suggest that a majority of FSEM students struggle with basic oral communication skills.

In addition, a study of communication apprehension (CA) of first-year students, conducted by the Speaking Intensive Program (and referenced in the Spring 2012 First-Year Seminar Assessment Report) concluded that one-third of the first-year students who completed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) instrument scored high in communication apprehension in at least one of the categories measured. This widely used instrument to examine CA has been employed and studied by many communication scholars, who conclude that the effects of high CA are “progressively negative in a person’s life” (Francis and Miller, 2008, p. 39).

Finally, the ability to locate, evaluate and use information is fundamental to the communicative act. Consequently efforts to enhance oral and written communication must be similarly tied to efforts with respect to information literacy. The original goals for the FSEM recognized this interdependence even as the curriculum failed to articulate meaningful student learning outcomes for this area. The argument for enhanced support to first-year students in this area is backed by the University’s NSSE results which were comprehensively analyzed by the University Librarian as part of the QEP planning process.⁹ For example, as shown in Table 6, UMW first-year students were found to “work on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources” less often than their counterparts at both Carnegie Class and Aspirational Peer institutions.

<i>Response Options</i>	UMW		Carnegie Class		Aspirational Peers	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Never	9	2%	706	2%	19	1%
Sometimes	94	26%	6,766	18%	379	16%
Often	148	43%	16,622	42%	1,083	45%
Very often	103	29%	14,603	37%	964	38%
Total	354	100%	38,697	100%	2,445	100%

⁹ Rosemary Arneson, NSSE and Information Literacy, A Report Prepared for the QEP Development Team, September 2011.

As the UMW Librarian’s report concluded: “information literacy has not been integrated into the first-year experience.”

Changing Characteristics of UMW Entering Students. Another factor leading to the decision to focus the QEP on the FSEM were noteworthy trends evident in the academic profile of the students entering UMW. Analysis of data from the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and SAT scores revealed important trends that impinge on the academic success of students. As illustrated in Chart 1, the University has noted a decline in its students’ average SAT scores:

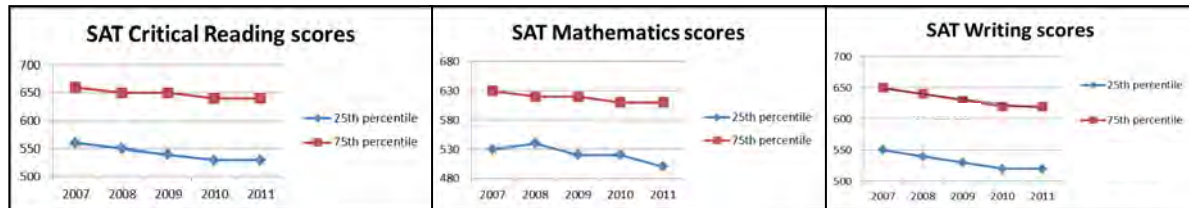


Figure 1. Trend of entering UMW students’ SAT scores.

Of course, this decline in SAT scores reflects national trends. SAT reading scores in 2012 are the lowest since 1972, and writing scores have dropped nine points on average since 2006. As more students of varying backgrounds take the SAT, especially first-generation students, those for whom English is a second language, and other non-traditional students, this drop should be expected. However, because part of the recruiting goals delineated in UMW’s strategic plan targets diversifying the student body, the University must be aware of and address the varying needs of students in terms of college-readiness.¹⁰

Data from the LASSI profile (2011), which specifically measures indicators that predict students’ college success, reveal that UMW first-year students fall below the national mean in attitude, self-testing, and time management.

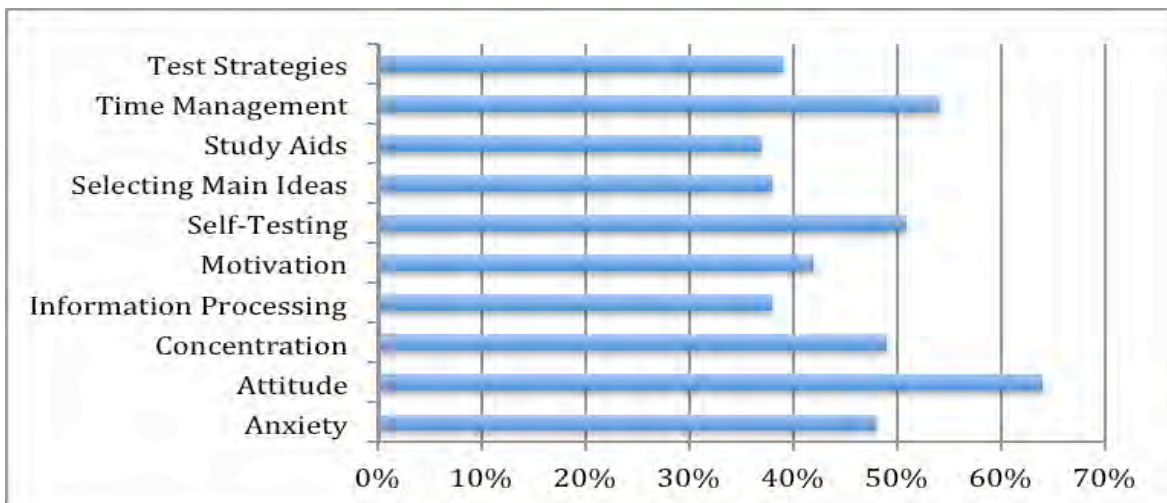


Figure 2. LASSI 2011 – Percentage of UMW students falling below the national mean (N=920)

¹⁰ See <http://admissions.umw.edu/undergraduate/especially-for-freshmen/entering-class-profile/> for documentation.

While scores on all items are of concern and require our attention, more than 60% of students surveyed fall below the national mean in attitude and more than 50% fall below the national mean in self-testing and time management. These students need to improve these skills to avoid serious problems that stand to prevent success in college and in careers. The FSEM course is the logical place to grapple with some these issues in order to ensure that they do not become serious impediments to the student's potential for future academic success.

Patterns of FSEM Offerings. Finally, a review of the pattern of offerings of FSEM's since the program's inception in 2008 revealed additional complications. Since fall 2008 326 FSEM courses have been offered. This includes sections of History 201, 202, and Honors 100 that satisfy the FSEM requirement (in addition to sections of FSEM 100). One third of these courses have been taught by faculty from one department (English, Linguistics, and Communication) with almost all of those coming from the faculty in English. The departments with the next greatest frequencies of offerings are Mathematics (8% of the sections) and History and American Studies (7%). In the ten semesters in which the FSEM requirement has been in effect, 11 of the 20 departments in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Colleges of Business and Education have offered an average of less than one FSEM course per semester. Given that the FSEM was designed to represent the breadth of the liberal arts and sciences through offerings distributed across the institution, current offerings are noticeably inadequate.

Increasing participation across the curriculum requires that departments have access to staffing resources that will enable them to participate more regularly through offering of FSEM courses. In addition to revised student learning outcomes and the development of online modules designed to introduce and reinforce basic communication and research skills students need, the QEP provides new incentives for faculty to participate in delivering these courses through development opportunities for faculty members and additional staffing resources made available to departments.

Conclusion

Because a FSEM is the University's only required course for first-year students and the foundation of the General Education curriculum, a QEP focused on this course will have widespread impact, ultimately reaching over 975 to 1,000 first-year students each year. Good results have emerged from FSEM, but the analysis of data sets, the knowledge of best practices in across-the-curriculum pedagogy, and the changes in our first-year student profile indicate the need to take stock and refocus the University's learning outcomes and assessment practice for this critically important course. Revised learning outcomes seek to codify expectations in the University's strong writing and speaking programs by focusing on the relationship between written and spoken argumentation. Furthermore, information literacy outcomes seek to revitalize the FSEM focus on research in the first-year. The addition of a reformulated strategy to engage students through online modules is a recent trend in higher education that fits well within our tradition of teaching excellence.

In addition to defining a more thoroughly developed set of learning outcomes, the University of Mary Washington's QEP also creates a plan to assist faculty in their efforts to ensure that students have adequate skills to take maximum advantage of the UMW curriculum. The extensive review of national trends and internal data sets suggests a new strategy is necessary to manage the shift in the level of preparation for college-level work especially during the first-year. Faculty and across-the-curriculum academic support units, such as the University's libraries, its writing center, and its speaking center, will work closely so that students can better understand academic expectations and succeed in their majors and careers. Training and

additional targeted resources for student tutors in the Speaking and Writing Centers and the Library will enable students in FSEM courses to have greater access to assistance than what is available now. Finally, additional staffing resources provide incentives for departments to offer FSEM courses on a more regular basis, thereby expanding the number of faculty who participate and the variety of approaches available to students.



Chapter Two: Elements of the QEP

Focus

The QEP will focus on four interrelated objectives. First, it will establish revised, measurable learning outcomes for First-Year Seminar (FSEM) based on the common skill sets necessary to enhance student learning in writing, speaking, and information literacy. These new learning outcomes have been identified as:

- Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- Improve development and organization of written arguments;
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication;
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

As a liberal arts institution, UMW has traditionally defined the critical common skill sets that enhance student success in terms of writing, speaking, and information literacy. These skills support all aspects of general education at the university and are at the root of across-the-curriculum strategies implemented through the Speaking and Writing Intensive requirements. Since almost all students experience some level of anxiety or difficulty with respect to at least one of these skills, courses that meet the FSEM requirement (FSEM 100, HONR 100, and HIST 201 and 202) are the logical place to focus enhancement efforts. To improve student achievement of the writing, speaking, and information literacy skills they need in order to be successful, the University must establish clearer learning outcomes for those skills and be able to measure those outcomes effectively. The implementation and assessment of these revised learning outcomes forms the larger focus of the QEP. A small group of six faculty volunteers will participate in a Spring 2013 pilot study to begin testing the new learning outcomes. The process to fully implement the new learning outcomes in all FSEM courses is outlined in Chapter Five below.

Second, the University plans to implement a set of online learning modules to support independent student learning that can directly connect to the topical foci of the FSEM courses. These modules will be interactive online applications that focus on discrete ideas and introduce a topic or a basic skill rather than provide an in-depth examination. Each module will therefore address a maximum of two or three specific measurable learning outcomes. Modules will be designed to be completed within an hour or less and without supervision by faculty or staff. These modules may include multi-media functions as appropriate but must engage students in tasks or actions that will guide them to the modules' learning outcomes. Each module will include multiple choice or short answer questions and thus embed assessment without taking away classroom time from the exploration of the subject of the seminar. The knowledge or skills gained from these modules will then be applied and reinforced in course assignments designed by the instructor. By employing this hybrid of interactive and face-to-face pedagogy, the modules will also allow faculty to flag students who may need additional help from academic support centers. The Spring 2013 pilot study will employ one module (on information literacy) in order to gain some insight into the opportunities and challenges this approach may create.

Eventually, completion of these learning modules will be a required component for FSEM courses. Faculty teaching the FSEM will help identify which learning modules are most critical to their pedagogical needs. The use of this technology is rapidly gaining currency among top liberal arts colleges across the nation. The decision to use online learning modules to assist faculty achieve these outcomes represents an effort to provide faculty teaching the first year seminars with more support for achieving the student learning outcomes defined for those courses.

Third, because methods for assessing current FSEM are not providing comprehensive data, the QEP will develop and employ a comprehensive assessment plan to gather evidence about the achievement of the revised student learning outcomes and also about the effectiveness of the new online learning modules that support those learning outcomes. These new assessment strategies will be initially explored through a pilot program and then evaluated and revised. Assessment is, of course, a recursive process and will need to be carefully monitored. This assessment plan is comprehensively addressed in Chapter Five below. As part of the plan for systematically gathering data about student achievement of the revised learning outcomes, the QEP will employ nationally distributed instruments, standardized rubrics, and questions embedded in online learning modules to measure the achievement of the revised student learning outcomes.

Fourth, it is essential that the University implement programming to assist faculty with the efficient use of modules and rubrics used to evaluate student work that may be outside the faculty member's area of expertise or familiarity with new technologies. Also included are opportunities for faculty feedback on the plan in the hopes that a dialogue among FSEM faculty can further improve the curricular experience for students. Faculty participation in teaching FSEM is voluntary; however, the University does anticipate that faculty development resources, the additional staffing resources for departments through the QEP budget, and active recruitment by the QEP / First-Year Seminar Director will result in more faculty offering FSEM courses. As a result, the QEP will broaden the scope of FSEM topics available to students. The relocation of the Writing Center, the Speaking Center, the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, and the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies (DTLT) to the new Information and Technology Convergence Center (scheduled to open in fall 2014) will also provide a physical space for students and faculty to integrate, coordinate, and enhance intentional learning.

QEP's Importance to the Institution

UMW's transition from a public liberal arts college to a comprehensive public liberal arts university has not diminished the institution's commitment to undergraduate academic excellence. Even as graduate programs are developed in all three colleges, undergraduate education remains UMW's pivotal focus and the general education curriculum is the center of any liberal arts and science undergraduate experience.

UMW's focus on the liberal arts requires attention to the ways in which the understanding of that concept has evolved. The National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (National Leader Council for LEAP) articulated the idea this way:

The council defines liberal education for the twenty-first century as a comprehensive set of aims and outcomes that are essential for all students because they are important to all fields of endeavor. Today, in an economy that is dependent on innovation and global savvy, these outcomes have become keys to economic vitality and individual

opportunity. They are the foundations for American success in all fields – from technology and the sciences to communications and the creative arts. (National Leadership Council for LEAP, 2007, p.14).

FSEM enable UMW students to explore a varied set of learning opportunities across and between disciplines. For example, a group of faculty collaborated to offer several sections of a FSEM course that focused the legacy of the civil rights movement and participants such as the late James Farmer, a former professor at UMW. That collaboration in turn created an opportunity for a co-curricular intersection with a commemoration of the Freedom Rides. The revised learning outcomes, online modules, and enhanced assessment methods will enable faculty to design better seminars that will introduce first-year students to the writing, speaking, and information literacy skills that are at the core of liberal education in the twenty-first century.

The QEP will provide resources and facilitate collaboration among students, faculty, and academic support units to ensure that even as the three colleges continue to expand, the University's central mission of excellence in undergraduate teaching continues. Therefore, the QEP's goals for FSEM have a larger importance to the University. They will not only strengthen General Education preparation, enhance academic and career preparation, and integrate our across-the-curriculum strategy but also improve the FSEM experience for faculty as well, thus encouraging more faculty to add their voices to the FSEM curriculum.



Chapter Three: Broad-based Community Involvement and Development of the QEP

The development of the final QEP topic evinces how a potentially contentious process can ultimately result in an actionable plan that reflects central concerns about the best ways to enhance student success. Many valuable ideas were developed during this nearly three-year process. Although all suggestions could not finally be included in the QEP, they offered important ideas to support students and supplement efforts to improve students' comprehensive experience. This process leading to the final identification of this QEP had three phases, outlined below.

Topic Selection¹¹

The process used to develop the QEP began with Provost Jay Harper's appointment of a preliminary topic selection committee in May 2010. The committee's charge was to encourage broad-based participation from all facets of the university community: faculty, staff, and students. The process needed to reflect on institutional effectiveness data and to take into account the broad constituencies that work cooperatively to create the University's distinctive educational experience. Further, the process needed to be transparent and emphasize open communication across the various divisions of the university, from physical plant resources to student services, from academic affairs to student life. The goal was to have this process integrated and thus parallel to the process by which students integrate disciplines.

The first phase of the process required the committee to forward its recommendations for the QEP topic to President Hurley and Provost Harper by April 2011. Senior administrators would then consider the recommendations and announce to topic to the university community by May 2011. The members of the preliminary planning committee included faculty from all three colleges, students, and Instructional Technology administrative faculty. The committee began its work in July 2010, after the chair of the QEP topic selection committee, the Provost, and the Director for SACS Compliance Certification, Timothy M. O'Donnell, Professor of Communication, attended the SACS-COC 2010 Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Tampa. In late July and again in early August the QEP topic selection committee met to review and discuss the selection processes at other institutions as well as to review some preliminary UMW institutional data. The committee agreed that it would use a selection process similar to that used by the University of Central Florida (UCF), outlined in a presentation by Robert Armacost at the SACS meeting. This process had the advantage of having been endorsed by SACS as both effective and credible, and the committee recognized that using an established process, modified only to account for relevant differences between the two institutions, would be the most efficient strategy for planning.

The following actions were part of the first phase of QEP topic development:

- Kick off and explanation of the QEP process to the entire UMW community by President Hurley;
- Institution-wide call for all constituencies to submit brief ideas;
- Organization of these ideas into broad-based themes by the topic selection committee;
- Announcement of themes and call for short proposals within theme areas;
- Selection of three short proposals for development;
- Development of proposals by faculty and staff into detailed preliminary QEP proposals;
- Circulation of preliminary proposals to community for feedback;
- Review and critique of preliminary proposals in light of institutional feedback;

¹¹ See Appendix I.A for the full list of the topic selection committee members.

- Forwarding of recommendation to the President and the Provost for their decision.

To ensure the goals of broad institutional engagement with the process, the topic selection committee launched a public website (qep.umwblogs.org) in September 2010. The website provided detailed information about the QEP, the process, a timeline, topic submission forms, and additional resources, including a schedule of meeting dates and deadlines. The committee also sent multiple announcements and broadcast emails to the entire university community. Finally, the committee initiated a series of informational meetings with a number of the university's constituencies, including senior staff, faculty governance groups, deans, and students.¹²

Initial Review of QEP Proposals

The deadline for submission of brief topics to the committee was October 1, 2010. The committee accepted proposals in several formats: electronically and on paper; anonymously; from departments; from individuals. In all, the committee received seventy submissions covering a wide range of topics. The committee met on October 14, 2010 to review all suggestions and developed six broad areas or 'themes' that recurred within the submissions:

- Enhancing the first-year experience and first-year engagement;
- Increasing experiential and other student-centered learning opportunities;
- Restructuring University-wide curriculum to enhance student learning;
- Increasing information fluency, digital fluency, or communication fluency;
- Introducing new interdisciplinary majors or new across-the-curriculum academic initiatives that enhance student learning and engagement;
- Increasing academic support and special academic programs to enhance student learning and engagement for a significant student cohort.

The selection committee published these six themes in a broadcast email on October 18, 2010 and requested members of the community to submit short (2- to 3-page) proposals to narrow these overarching themes into a viable QEP plan. Proposers with similar themes were encouraged to collaborate. The instructions for short proposal submission were both emailed to the community and published on the website, with a deadline of November 22, 2010. The committee received sixteen short proposals from individual faculty, individual staff, and several small groups of faculty, staff, and students who collaborated.

As this process moved forward, the committee worked with the Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness to review common data sets and to discuss relevant institutional data, including NSSE data, internal surveys of admitted students and graduating seniors, the strategic plan and its role in focusing the QEP, and general institutional effectiveness data. Thus the committee could develop effective criteria for evaluating each proposal. To improve proposal evaluations, the committee expanded its membership to include faculty, administrators, and staff with relevant expertise with respect to the viability of the proposals within larger university goals and priorities.¹³ Each member reviewed all sixteen proposals, evaluated them according to the following criteria, and assigned rating scores (possible points are in parentheses):

- Explains rationale, need, and importance to UMW (0-10);
- Describes potential actions that might be taken to improve student learning (0-8);
- Identifies a topic that is focused yet has broad interest and relevance (0-6);

¹² See Appendix II for the pertinent documents.

¹³ See Appendix 1.C.

- Affects a well-defined and generally large or important group of students (0-6);
- Builds on an existing UMW strength (0-3);
- Suggests the level of department and unit involvement (0-3);
- Represents a new endeavor or a significant extension of ongoing efforts (0-3);
- One bonus point was awarded for the potential to increase UMW's distinctiveness in the Commonwealth and/or increase UMW's regional engagement.

After considerable discussion, the committee selected three primary focus areas, often integrating two or three proposals that shared considerable overlap. The three final topics were:

- An Integrated First-Year Experience;
- High-Impact Student Learning: Understanding by Design;
- Digital Knowledge Project.

On March 21, 2011 the completed proposals were sent out to the UMW community and posted on the QEP topic selection website for comments. These were accepted in a variety of formats, including via the website (anonymously or not), email, and paper. The chair and other members of the selection committee actively solicited input from specific campus groups, including academic departments, faculty governing bodies, administrative offices and divisions, and student groups. The committee asked the community to consider each proposal carefully and take into account the following questions:

- Which topic area do you think will best meet the educational needs of our students?
- Which topic area will best support our core educational mission and advance the university in its stated goal of achieving excellence as a liberal arts institution?
- What do you think are the positives and negatives of each plan?
- For the one you believe should be our final QEP topic, what areas/issues do you think need to be addressed as that proposal goes forward; what recommendations do you have to improve or develop the proposal if it is chosen?

The selection committee also shared its criteria for evaluating each proposal:

- How the rationale for the topic grows out of and is supported by data from institutional effectiveness efforts or other institutional sources;
- How the project clearly advances the University's mission and Strategic Plan;
- How the proposal describes a direct connection to student learning outcomes that have depth and importance and can be measured and assessed;
- How the project affects a well-defined and generally large or significant cohort of students;
- How the project builds on existing strengths or targets a significant area that needs strengthening;
- How the proposal can be developed to include a substantial, ongoing, viable assessment plan;
- How the proposal can engender broad-based input, feedback, and support from faculty, students, and staff.

On April 14, 2011 the expanded topic selection and review committee met to review the commentary and feedback on the three proposals and make final recommendations to the Provost. He asked that the committee not rank the three proposals but provide a summary of their strengths and weaknesses. The committee's final report was submitted to the Provost on

April 22. On April 29 the committee met with the Provost and the President to discuss the committee's thoughts about the proposals.

QEP Final Topic Development

After the eighteen-month process to identify the QEP topic, President Hurley and Provost Harper announced their selection of "Understanding and Improving the First-Year Experience" in May 2011. Acknowledging that this selection combined ideas from all three of the final proposals, the Provost explained the rationale for the choice. First, this QEP would promote sound educational initiatives that would help UMW attract high quality students whom the University can then effectively support during their first-year. Second, the QEP would build a better foundation of high quality student learning that is fundamental to a liberal arts education. Third, the QEP would design key ingredients to supplement and expand the overall UMW experience while creating an effective way to enhance and measure the institution's distinctive position as a liberal arts university.

This extremely broad identification of the topic offered both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it afforded the opportunity to reflect and narrow the best aspects of three important themes of concern to the university community. On the other hand, the breadth of the topic posed an exceptionally difficult challenge to the committee charged with developing and narrowing these ideas into a manageable QEP.

To continue the broad involvement established within the topic selection, the Provost appointed a new chair to support the QEP's development and called for volunteers from across the University to participate on the development committee. This second phase of developing the QEP's topic began in July 2011. All students, faculty, and staff received an open invitation to participate in the QEP development meetings, and an invitation to participate in the process through the QEP development website. The final group that emerged contained a remarkably diverse group of eight faculty, ten staff members, five administrators, and one student.¹⁴ The development committee wished to ensure transparency and protect potentially sensitive data from public access outside the community. Therefore, the development committee created a new website (qepteam.umwblogs.org) that included a password-protected portal accessible with a UMW log-in.

At its initial meeting on July 6, 2011, the committee agreed to address the first-year experience comprehensively and to address student engagement with the various literacies that inform the liberal arts, both within academic affairs and in the larger campus community. It was important to the committee that an effective plan would include a clear model for collaboration across all divisions of the university community. The committee agreed to consider how such a vision for the first-year experience might take shape in time for its August meeting. The committee initially conceived its task as reconciling the three final proposals by extrapolating their shared concerns and then designing a first-year experience that would be accountable to meaningful assessment. As a result, the development committee initially developed a QEP that attempted too much. In retrospect, though, the process did raise awareness about key central concerns and created a discursive environment where multiple constituencies contributed varied perspectives on the nature of the first-year experience.

On August 16, 2011 the committee reconvened and formally received its charge from the Provost:

¹⁴See Appendix 1.D for the development committee membership.

- To conduct a study designed to examine current practices related to the first-year experience;
- To collect data to assess the efficacy of UMW's existing practices;
- To identify areas for improvement in those practices based on these data;
- To identify student learning outcomes for the first-year experience at UMW;
- To submit an action plan to the provost containing a refined set of focused recommendations to realize those outcomes, including a preliminary budget and implementation timeline.

The committee chair also shared information gained from his attendance at the SACS Summer Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation and provided a preliminary sketch of the planning process. The committee then brainstormed to identify themes that would enhance student learning in the first-year. These themes included:

- Improving decision-making skills;
- Increasing student engagement with the UMW community;
- Improving intentional learning skills with respect to understanding the purpose of a liberal arts education;
- Accelerating the acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, and analytical literacy;
- Improving students' effective use of campus resources;
- Emphasizing the importance of the UMW Honor Code;
- Improving collaborative skills;
- Accelerating the development of personal responsibility skills;
- Improving active learning by spurring intellectual curiosity.

The committee felt these nine themes were important to all components of university life, including academics, student affairs, student academic resources, financial aid, and academic services. Therefore, to ensure that each of these components was adequately represented in the process, small task-oriented groups with diverse representative memberships were charged with reviewing each of the above topics, exploring how these themes could fit into the QEP topic, and developing appropriate learning outcomes for each theme. This collaborative model was used throughout the QEP development process.

The committee agreed that learning outcomes for first-year students should build upon two existing platforms: First-Year Seminar (FSEM) and first-year advising. These fundamentally sound, high-impact programs would provide a strong general basis as well as an established way to incorporate the committee's learning outcomes into both curricular and co-curricular goals. Task forces were then asked to develop a system whereby the broad learning outcomes for the first-year experience could be incorporated into these existing programs. In addition, one task force was specifically asked to think more creatively and relay program ideas that might be considered as alternative ways to deliver these outcomes.

After several lengthy discussions, the committee decided to adopt two new program ideas: online learning modules that would help students become familiar with the wide variety of information necessary for success, and peer mentors who could create a bridge between traditional academics (including the Writing and Speaking Centers, the library, academic services, and so forth) and co-curricular activities. Although these were not necessarily new ideas, they had multiple advantages. Online learning modules could embed assessment components, and peer mentoring could engage first-year students with the larger student community and thus contribute to the development of leadership skills for all students.

Additionally, the committee believed that by expanding access to these programs, this plan would create an integrated and coherent first-year experience without adding an undue increase in workload for any of its participants.

Committee discussion in December 2011 and January 2012 finalized two specific groups of learning outcomes: communication and information literacy outcomes and personal responsibility outcomes. The committee also agreed to establish three programmatic priorities for the QEP: a strong peer mentoring program, first-year advising cohorts supplemented by these peer mentors, and online learning modules.

The committee submitted the initial draft of the QEP to the University community on March 15, 2012. It held two open meetings and several constituent group meetings (e.g. faculty governance groups) to provide a broad picture of the first-year experience programs and their learning outcomes and to solicit feedback from faculty, staff, and students. The committee also solicited focus groups of faculty, staff, and students to gather detailed opinions about the QEP project and its utility in enhancing the first-year experience at the University.

Process to Focus and Narrow the Topic

Members of the larger UMW community quickly identified the primary problems with the initial draft: the plan was too broad and failed to identify a specific problem that could be solved efficiently within the context of a QEP. At the public forums, faculty and staff expressed these concerns with special emphasis on its focus and purpose. The need to focus on one specific clearly defined problem centered the critique of the initial plan. Additionally, there was considerable concern expressed by senior administrators about whether the expense that the plan would entail was realistic. Although the development committee realized that these concerns would need to be addressed, the necessary guidance in refocusing the plan was briefly complicated by the resignation of the Provost and the attendant appointment of an interim Provost in April 2012. The interim Provost reviewed the work of the committee and, while applauding the goals articulated in the initial plan, directed the committee to narrow the proposal significantly. The committee deliberated about the final focus of the proposal and agreed to define its parameters as FSEM. Once those parameters were set, a smaller core group of faculty worked with the library director and the directors of the writing and speaking centers over the summer to craft a revised plan. A stronger emphasis on student tutors housed within the writing and speaking centers replaced peer mentoring and first-year advising.

This QEP creates a strategy to establish a clear and explicit set of learning outcomes for information literacy, speaking, and writing for the courses that fulfill the FSEM requirement (FSEM 100, HONR 100, and HIST 201 and 202) as well as a specific plan to assess outcomes. The plan also calls for the development and implementation of online learning modules that focus on academic components of the curriculum and are designed to enhance the achievement of these new learning outcomes. When the committee shared a brief summary of this plan with a representative from SACS, that summary was very favorably received. An expanded version of the summary was then shared with the faculty in August 2012. The final draft of the QEP was presented to the university community for final comments on October 19, 2012. At this time, the First-Year Seminar committee, a standing committee of the University Faculty Senate, reviewed the final QEP and made their recommendation. The University Faculty Senate accepted the final QEP on December 4, 2012.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

Liberal Education as a Starting Point

The Association of American Colleges and Universities defines liberal education as “an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change” (AAC&U, 2012, no page). In *College Learning for the New Global Century*, the AAC&U’s National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise identified essential learning outcomes related to a liberal education as: knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative and applied learning. The report states that “helping students master the arts of inquiry, analysis, and communication is the signature strength of a liberal education” (National Leadership Council, 2007, p. 18) and that teaching the arts of inquiry and innovation is one of the seven principles of excellence articulated in the report. Universities need to develop programs that help their students develop “the intellectual and practical skills basic to inquiry, innovation, and effective communication” (National Leadership Council, 2007, p. 31).

The University of Mary Washington is proud to be one of Virginia’s outstanding public liberal arts universities. The liberal arts and sciences are central to the University’s mission, and the community agreed at the outset that the improved first-year experience developed through this QEP should be done within a framework of the liberal arts. The review of the literature thus focused on identifying best practices in the development of oral and written communication skills and information literacy competencies in first-year students and on the research that informed these programs.

The First-Year Seminar

Upcraft & Gardner (1989) describe the first-year seminar as “the glue that holds together and solidifies all efforts to enhance freshman academic and personal success” (p. 5). UMW’s First-Year Seminar (FSEM) helps students make the academic transition from high school to college by introducing them to the practices of intellectual inquiry. The course covers non-traditional subjects in non-traditional ways and allows students to explore the concept of liberal education. All first-year students take an FSEM course, and the FSEM courses share learning outcomes relating to writing, speaking, and information literacy. These skills are foundational to academic success as the students move through the General Education curriculum and into their major programs.

In reviewing the history of first-year seminar programs, Gordon (1989) notes that these programs fall into two categories: courses aimed at helping students become oriented to university life and seminars aimed at introducing students to the nature and value of a liberal arts education. Bovill, Bulley, and Morss (2009) reviewed the literature on curriculum design for first-year programs and derived a number of principles and guidelines that institutions can use in designing curricula. Among these were the development of academic skills throughout the program of study, the generation of engaging learning experiences, and course content that integrates research into teaching.

Pascarella (2005) researched the cognitive impacts of the first-year of college and concluded that the learning and cognitive growth of the first-year student is impacted most by the academic and co-curricular programs of the institution. First-year students show considerable growth in certain content areas and in critical thinking skills. Small class size and

the use of innovative instructional approaches such as collaborative learning and active learning contribute in significant ways to this growth in student learning. “Irrespective of the characteristics of the institution one attends, there are a number of purposeful instructional behaviors and approaches one can implement that have been shown to have substantial impacts on knowledge acquisition and cognitive skills” (Pascarella, 2005, p. 131).

Writing

Although important in all courses, writing is crucial in FSEM. In an effort to keep up with the changing needs and learning styles of students, UMW has designated FSEM as a first-year course that embeds writing along with other essential skills. This structure allows students to enroll in classes that appeal to their interests and career aspirations. Blair (1988) offered that a university’s English department should have no special role or leadership in writing-across-the-curriculum programs. UMW followed this approach in making the FSEM discipline-specific and writing-intensive. This transition to writing in FSEM also addresses the concerns of writing theorist Chapman (1998), who asserts that first-year composition courses often neglect students’ interests and are viewed as obstacles that must be navigated merely to get to courses related to students’ majors. However, Chapman further asserts that first-year writing courses taught by faculty from any discipline cannot truly serve the purpose of teaching writing competency since all instructors are not trained in writing pedagogy. FSEM courses should therefore adopt the best theoretical and pedagogical aspects of the two types of aforementioned courses and combine them so there is a theme or discipline of interest to which students may gravitate. Moreover, the instructors teaching those courses are well versed in the writing praxis within their particular disciplines. Finally, such courses are structured so that the instructor and the students are curious and passionate about the subject matter. This should culminate in a rigorous academic experience that sets the stage for future writing experiences.

Literature focusing on writing frequently asserts that a commitment to writing begins with a positive attitude towards writing, stimulated and reinforced by continual opportunities for expression and positive substantive feedback. Moreover, the more positive interpersonal interactions reinforce writing opportunities, the more positive attitudes towards writing will be fostered. UMW takes into consideration the work of theorists such as Elbow (2000), Murray (2005), Emig (1977), and Anson (1990) who stress the need to underscore the importance of writing early on in one’s academic career and to present writing in meaningful positive ways. Instructors and courses must capture students’ attention while articulating practical applications for writing. In the proper environment, all this culminates in writing-to-learn.

Writing-to-learn is not synonymous with learning to write. The two create a recursive and mutually reinforcing set of acts where one cannot have one without the other. One must learn to write before one can write-to-learn, but the activity of writing-to-learn is not exhausted by the activity of learning to write. This is because writing-to-learn is more expansive. As Walker (1988) explains, when instructors in any discipline incorporate writing into instruction, students benefit in three ways. Students understand content better, can retain more knowledge, and begin to write better. Similarly, Friere (1970) asserted that writing-across-the-curriculum assists in checking students’ passivity, and Steffens (1988) showed that when students are active in the classroom, they are active participants in their educations. Through writing, learning becomes a dialogue between learners and their surrounding contexts.

Oral Communication

Just as increasing the scientific and technological knowledge of students is important, strengthening their communication skills, creativity, and problem-solving capability is crucial. Employers repeatedly report that they seek college graduates with the ability to adapt, innovate,

synthesize data, communicate effectively, learn independently, and work in teams. Just as regularly, employers complain that U.S. postsecondary institutions fail to adequately develop these skills in students.¹⁵

A multitude of surveys and studies state that effective communication skills are essential for student learning and future success. In its 1998 study *Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*, the Boyer Commission called attention to the need to “link communication skills and course work,” (p. 24) noting that “undergraduate education must enable students to acquire strong communication skills, and thereby create graduates who are proficient in both written and oral communication” (p. 24). The Carnegie Foundation underscored these conclusions in its *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: Three Years after the Boyer Report* (2003), reporting that faculty and administrators, like potential employers, are concerned about students’ lack of refined oral communication skills. The role that basic instruction in oral communication plays in students’ academic and personal success is well documented, with research noting that basic communication instruction can make a difference in students’ self-assessment and growth in terms of competence, confidence, and willingness to communicate (Allen, 2002; Ford & Wolvin, 1993; Veerman, Andreiessen & Kanselaar, 2002). Communication apprehension and reluctance to communicate can undermine academic performance, underscoring the central role that oral communication skills play in students’ success across the university (Allen, 2002; Rose, Rancer, & Crannel, 1993).

Because communication skills are essential for student learning, students must be able to express themselves clearly when demonstrating mastery of any subject. There is no class discussion without effective communication skills, because students’ inability to engage their peers interpersonally in essence removes these students from the classroom. The AAC&U recognizes this and includes effective oral communication skills as one of the essential skills that should be included in any institution’s General Education program. In a thematic analysis of 93 journals and newspaper articles, reports, and surveys, researchers report in *Communication Education* that communication instruction is essential to develop “the whole person” and that it is critical to a student’s future personal and professional success (Morrealle & Pearson, 2008, p. 225).

Information Literacy

Information literacy consists of the ability to recognize the need for information, find information efficiently, and evaluate and use information effectively. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries, “[i]nformation literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning” (ACRL, 2000, no page). The literature on information literacy programs and library programming for first-year students is abundant. *The Role of the Library in the First College Year*, edited by Hardesty (2007), provides a comprehensive overview of information literacy programs directed toward first-year students by libraries across the United States. Hardesty (2007) suggests that successful first-year programs in libraries are characterized by close collaboration among librarians, teaching faculty, and other academic support centers and by the innovative use of technologies that engage students in active learning. The case studies included in this book provide excellent examples

¹⁵ See Arne Duncan, “Back to School: Enhancing U.S. Education and Competitiveness” *Foreign Affairs* October 18, 2010 as well as the survey commissioned by the AACU 2010, “Raising the Bar: Employers’ Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Downturn.” Hart Research Associates: Washington, DC.

of best practices in developing first-year information literacy programs, including the development of online tutorials and information literacy rubrics. Scott Walter (2004) also offers an annotated bibliography on libraries and the first-year experience for the ACRL First-Year Experience Task Force. Walter's bibliography has been maintained and updated by the ACRL Instruction Section's Teaching Committee. This resource compiles the latest research on information literacy instruction for first-year students and describes best practices at colleges and universities. (ACRL, no date)

UMW's QEP involves close collaboration between the Writing Center, the Speaking Center, and the University's libraries in developing the communication skills of first-year students and will draw upon contemporary discussions in this arena. Sonntag (1999) describes the process of creating and implementing web-based modules for information literacy instruction in a "University 101" seminar. Einfalt and Turley (2009) describe the collaborative model used at the University of the Sunshine Coast to improve academic and research skills among first-year students. Librarians and composition faculty at West Virginia University have taken a similar collaborative approach to information literacy and writing instruction with first-year students (Brady et al. 2005).

Student Persistence

In March 2010, Virginia's Governor Bob McDonnell established the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment. The Commission's report called on the Commonwealth's institutions of higher education to "establish targeted policies and incentives to promote improved retention and graduation rates throughout the Virginia higher education system" (Preparing for the top jobs of the 21st century, 2010, p. 3). This call has been centrally heeded in the final articulation of UMW's QEP.

Student retention from the first-year to the sophomore year and student graduation rates are indirect measures of the success of first-year experience programs, and research supports that strong programming in the first-year leads to higher retention and graduation rates. Levitz and Noel (1989) state, "It has been our experience that fostering student success in the freshman year is the most significant intervention an institution can make in the name of student persistence. More than any other, the freshman year presents attrition hazards that institutions must counter" (p. 65). Levitz and Noel (1989) found that the factors leading to first-year attrition include academic boredom, a sense of irrelevance, limited or unrealistic expectations of college, insufficient academic preparation, difficulties with transition, uncertainty about majors or careers, and incompatibility. A strong first-year experience that fosters learning and growth can help students overcome these factors and succeed in the classroom.

Jamelske (2009) studied the relationship between the first-year experience programs, student GPA and retention and found that students enrolled in the first-year experience course earned higher GPAs than their non-FYE counterparts. Jamelske also found that the first-year program had greater impact on retention for students who were classified below average. In a similar study, Schnell, Louis, and Doetkott (2003) examined the relationship between enrollment in a first-year seminar and college graduation rates. Like Jamelske, these researchers found that the effect of the seminar was greatest for students from middle to lower high school deciles.

Online Learning Modules

In addition to the documentation cited above, best practices in the development of connecting online learning to positive student outcome are emerging in the literature (Sonntag 1999). Hybrid or blended learning strategies that retain contact with both professors, librarians, and writing and speaking centers appear to be the most effective (Anderson 2010). Additionally,

Johnston (2010) and Domínguez-Flores & Wang (2011) assert that required assessment of interactive learning modules should be part of any strategy for their effective use. The development and inclusion of online learning resources must be carefully planned and assessed over time. Na’Gambi & Brown 2009 note that careful strategic planning, monitoring the utility of content, providing student support, and checking evaluation must be handled proactively with appropriate faculty development to enhance online teaching and learning competence. Groom & Campbell (2011) state that UMW has a strong tradition of creatively deploying blended and hybrid courses. However, the relationship between online components to traditional face-to-face classroom experiences has not been widely explored (Anderson 2010). As Na’Gambi notes, students behave differently when engaging in traditional learning formats and in online learning formats. Significant for this QEP, one “intended consequence was that a blending of face-to-face with online interaction extended student engagement beyond the limitation of a classroom and provided a forum for further collaboration and consultation. An unintended consequence was that the tools provided the lecturer with diagnostic information that was used to impact on pedagogical designs” (Na’Gambi & Brown, 2009, p. 316).

The QEP proposes that customized tutorials will connect content to online modules to improve information literacy, diagnose communication competencies across learning styles, and strengthen written and oral argumentation skills. This strategy increases student satisfaction and confidence (Kraemer, Lombardo, & Lepkowski 2007). This strategy also helps students understand how online components positively affect their performance and outcomes on assignments and assessments (Clark & Chinburg 2010).

Most of the established research for online assessment of modules focuses on information literacy, and the assessments are mapped to the ACRL Competency Standards for Information Literacy. Both Clark & Chinburg (2010) and Burkhardt, Kinnie & Cournoyer (2008) suggest that assessments should be embedded in the course content and supported by face-to-face instruction. The hybrid or blended module appears to best support this QEP’s goals for student learning outcomes.



Chapter Five: Implementation and Assessment

Pre-QEP Preparation

Implementation and assessment will have several phases. The pre-QEP strategy includes identifying a cohort of pilot First-Year Seminars (FSEM) and instructors to test the new learning outcomes, developing an initial online module, creating adequate faculty development to support the project, and assessing the pilot program. This step is being conducted in the spring 2013 semester. Further, the FSEM faculty will be surveyed to determine the priority of the module development, and a director of the QEP will be appointed. A small group of faculty and staff, including the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies will develop a single online learning module for the pilot.

On September 25, 2012, the chair of the QEP development committee sent a call to all teaching faculty for five volunteers to participate in the pilot study during the Spring 2013 semester.¹⁶ The call was limited to faculty teaching FSEM, but all faculty were solicited to ensure that they are aware of the process. Additional sections of FSEM, with additional modules, will be added to the pilot cohort during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Our choice of topic for the pilot online learning module is based on best practices in library research and our observations that students struggle with retrieving and evaluating sources of information. The American Library Association defines information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. The FSEM pilot group will use a single online module, developed collaboratively by academic support units and Division of Teaching and Learning Technology staff on information literacy, focused on evaluating sources. The pilot online learning module will be built around an instrument called the Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose Test (CRAAP test), created by Sarah Blakeslee (2010) of the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico. This test "is a list of questions to help you evaluate the information you find" (no page). The content for the module and its embedded assessment are appended.¹⁷

The pilot / module development group conducted two faculty development workshops in the Fall 2012 semester to help faculty design FSEM course content that will integrate the pilot online learning module with their FSEM topic. In other words, because the module focuses on skills, faculty will be able to create and assign content used to apply skills from the module.

The assessment for the pilot study will include administration of Project SAILS, embedded assessment questions in the online learning module, and assessment rubrics for information literacy. Project SAILS, an assessment based on the information literacy standards, will be given to all first-year students, and scores will indicate students' strengths and weaknesses across all information literacy learning outcomes. FSEM faculty participating in the pilot module will be able to track which students complete the module and note their scores on the module quizzes. Librarians will use class assignments from all students and apply a standard rubric to assess information literacy outcomes and to refine the modules as needed.

The quality and utility of the pilot online learning module will also be assessed during the Spring 2013 pilot program. Feedback on the pilot learning module will inform improvements to this module and provide data for developing a call for proposals to develop an online learning

¹⁶ See Appendix III. A.

¹⁷ See Appendix III.B.

module publishing platform. This feedback will come from pilot FSEM students and faculty who have used the online learning module will be asked to evaluate its ease of use and effectiveness.

In preparation for further learning module development, past and present FSEM faculty will be surveyed to determine the priority of topics for new online learning modules. The first online learning module topic was chosen by the development team, but future development will be guided by a broader group. Future information literacy modules may incorporate additional topics such as understanding citations and their purpose, understanding plagiarism, and retrieving information. Speaking modules may focus on topics such as preparing for presentations, using best practices for class discussion, communicating online, coping with communication apprehension, and listening actively. Writing modules may focus on topics such as using grammar and punctuation correctly, organizing arguments, understanding genre conventions, developing content, and being rhetorically aware.

An internal search for a QEP/First-Year Seminar Director will need to be completed so that the new Director is in place by Spring 2014. The Director will be a tenured faculty member responsible for organizing the identification of interested faculty, implementing faculty development workshops, overseeing a consultant to complete the design of the interactive online modules, and coordinating with the University's SACS team through the Office of the Provost. The Director would receive a two-course teaching load reassignment each semester and an annual salary stipend. The Director should demonstrate a high level of competence in across-the-curriculum courses, FSEM, information literacy, online pedagogy, and assessment. Further, the Director will also work with the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, the Director of the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies, the consultant who will develop the modules, the University Librarian, the Writing Program and Writing Centers Director, the Director of the Speaking Intensive Program, and the Speaking Center Director. A new half-time support position to assist the Director of the QEP is also anticipated to assist with assessment, the organization of faculty development workshops, and the work of the module consultant. The job descriptions are appended.¹⁸

Implementation of the QEP

The QEP will be fully implemented incrementally over five years, beginning with a phase-in period in Fall 2013. To ensure that the plan achieves its goals, the following strategy for implementation and assessment has been designed to increase the number of FSEM sections participating in the plan, to provide adequate faculty development to respond to revisions, to develop a robust student tutor training program, and to incorporate revisions to the initial structure of the plan through careful assessment. In anticipation of the University's expectations for enrollment growth, the total number of sections of FSEM (or its equivalents) will need to be expanded during the five-year period. The University currently offers approximately sixty sections of FSEM each academic year. A portion of the QEP budget targeted for "diversification" aims to expand the number of courses offered by 10% (or roughly 6 additional seminars in a given year). This budget item also provides funds to encourage departments that have found it difficult in the past to offer FSEM sections by providing resources to adjust staffing patterns. Some FSEM instructors and/or topics change from year to year, while others remain the same. The incremental increase will ensure that all FSEM instructors have the opportunity to participate in the QEP, both new and veteran FSEM instructors. Additionally, the QEP (starting in 2014-15) will add ten FSEM sections per year staffed by faculty prepared to take full advantage of QEP resources, like online learning modules, academic support unit resources

¹⁸ See Appendix IV.

and tutoring support. All first year seminars will be expected to meet the modified student learning outcomes being implemented through the QEP. But by the fifth year of the QEP (2017-18), the goal is for 45 of the roughly 66 FSEM sections to be employing all the resources made available through the QEP. The QEP / First-year Seminar Director will continue to recruit faculty into the QEP faculty development beyond the QEP five-year timeline.

All faculty teaching an FSEM as part of the QEP will participate in a faculty development program that will focus on the differences between the current FSEM curriculum and those of the plan. QEP-participating faculty will: add revised student learning outcomes to their FSEM course learning outcomes, assign one or more online learning modules to all students in their course, develop and implement student experiences that engage them in the QEP student learning outcomes, and encourage and support student interaction with academic support staff and/or student tutors about QEP student learning outcomes.

As a result of increased interactions between FSEM students and academic support centers (the Writing Center, the Speaking Center, and the Libraries), student tutors will be trained to understand first-year student needs, both in general and in connection to FSEM student learning outcomes. Since the pool of student tutors is not stable in the way that faculty and staff are, this training will be added to the standard, new-tutor training in each academic support center. It may also be adjusted annually to account for feedback from assessment activities.

One portion of tutor training will be similar for tutors in all academic support centers and a second portion will be different. All student tutors will need to understand the common challenges for all first-year students as they transition into college. So, a portion of tutor training will be in the same time and place for all tutors. The second portion of tutor training will be designed and implemented by each academic support center and will focus on the FSEM student learning outcomes particular to each center. For example, student tutors in the libraries will need to understand and focus on the first QEP student learning outcome: students will utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments. Writing Center tutors would focus primarily on the second and third learning outcomes (which emphasize writing), and the student Speaking Center tutors would work primarily on learning outcomes four and five (related to oral communication). Student tutors will also be trained to recognize and work with first-year students seeking assistance with specific FSEM assignments. This will be possible because the QEP director and academic support centers will be aware of the assignments in FSEM as they relate to QEP student learning outcomes.

Assessment of the QEP

Student learning outcomes assessment provides the link between learning objectives and teaching program improvement. Because our QEP student learning outcomes are measurable, faculty and administrators can track QEP program strengths and weaknesses. In the same way that institutional data informed UMW's QEP topic and learning outcome choices, assessment data will inform us of program successes and continued program improvement.

All assessments and assessment data described here will be applied to understanding and developing student learning in the FSEM program. Assessment activities will be useful for QEP managers as well as individual instructors of FSEM. Assessment data collected from all FSEM courses will inform program managers about what most students in a program know and can do. Assessment results might show that students in all QEP FSEM classes have reached target proficiencies for one student learning outcome and yet have not reached those of a second outcome. These results would guide program managers to improve the activities leading to the

second learning outcome, such as rethinking student learning tasks, improving faculty development, or changing the online learning module or modules.

Assessment data collected within an individual course can likewise inform instructors about what students know and can do. These results would guide instructors to revise components of their individual courses, such as rethinking student learning tasks, incorporating a new online learning module, or working one-on-one with individual students.

This chapter describes two distinct target areas for assessment: student learning outcomes assessment: (SLO assessment) and operational goals assessment. SLO assessment will be the direct or indirect measures of what a student knows or can do upon completion of a task or assignment during or upon completion of an FSEM course. Operational goals assessment will be the indirect measurement of what students, faculty, and student tutors have accomplished while completing the QEP. This chapter also describes student cohorts for assessment comparisons, a timeline for implementing assessment instruments, and individuals responsible for collecting assessment data, analyzing and interpreting it, and planning for change.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. As noted in Chapter II, student learning outcomes for the UMW QEP are:

- **SLO 1:** Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- **SLO 2:** Improve the development and organization of written arguments;
- **SLO 3:** Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- **SLO 4:** Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication;
- **SLO 5:** Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

Direct assessments are questions or tasks students complete that indicate whether or not they can perform one or more skills described in learning outcomes. Indirect assessments include questions about students' perceptions of their mastery of learning outcomes or a record of tasks that should elicit learning outcomes. Table 1 is a detailed matrix that matches assessments with student learning outcomes.

Direct Assessment. The Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) test will be used, as in the QEP pilot FSEM, to assess the QEP's information literacy learning outcomes (SLO1). Project SAILS is based on the information literacy standards and learning outcomes set by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). Project SAILS assesses and reports on eight skills sets aligned with ACRL information literacy outcomes. Analyses of individual and cohort statistics show the test to be valid and reliable as a measure of ACRL information literacy standards and outcomes.

Table 1					
Matrix Mapping QEP Assessment Instruments to Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)					
	Student Learning Outcomes				
Assessment	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5
Project SAILS test	D				
Personal Record of Communication Apprehension (PRCA)				I	I
Learning Modules, Information Literacy, embedded assessment	D				
Learning Modules, Writing embedded assessment		D	D		
Learning Modules, Speaking, embedded assessment				D	D
Rubric(s), information literacy	D				
Rubric(s), writing organization		D			
Rubric(s), writing argument		D			
Rubric(s), editing			D		
Rubric(s), oral communication	D			D	D
Personal reflection, discussion participation	I				I
<i>D = Direct Assessment; I = Indirect Assessment</i>					

The QEP SLO1 is also based on ACRL information literacy outcomes. Therefore, SLO1 outcomes align with ACRL standards on which the Project SAILS test is based. Project SAILS calculates test scores between 0 and 100 for each of the eight skill sets. The Project SAILS test will be used to do pre- and post-assessment of SLO1 for students in FSEM courses.

Student learning outcomes will also be measured when students complete online learning modules. Each module will include embedded assessment questions that align with the module's outcomes. For example, the module developed for our QEP pilot FSEM, "Evaluating Sources of Information," will introduce students to standard criteria for evaluating sources of information. One learning outcome for this module is "Student will determine if the citation is too old (i.e. currency) to be relevant for his/her research." This module also includes assessment questions about citation currency such as:

“If you are researching recent developments in methods to combat cancer in humans and you found a reference from 10 years ago, which of these statements might be true?”

The reference is not

- A. Current
- B. Relevant
- C. Authoritative
- D. Accurate

This question exemplifies the embedded module assessment that will be used to assess all student learning outcomes by using data from all students who complete modules.

Grading rubrics will also be incorporated in the QEP’s outcomes assessment. Rubrics are direct assessment tools that focus evaluation on an assignment’s learning outcomes and describe criteria for levels of proficiency for individual learning outcomes. Grading rubrics will be used by FSEM instructors and QEP program assessors to assess student products from assignments or artifacts, such as bibliographies, papers, projects, and speeches. Faculty and academic support staff will collaborate to design and use course assignments and rubrics that measure the QEP learning outcomes.

Bibliographies or papers from FSEM students will be assessed using the rubric in Figure 1. Each of the five objectives in the rubric addresses different components of SLO1. FSEM faculty may use this rubric and librarians will apply this rubric to materials from all FSEM sections.

The “Writing Assessment Rubric” (Figure 2) is the rubric that will be used to assess QEP writing outcomes. Writing proficiencies are defined for individual learning outcomes and for overall writing proficiency. The rubric outcomes called “Ideas” and “Organization” align with QEP SLO1 and SLO2. The “Process” outcome aligns with QEP SLO3. This rubric will be used by FSEM faculty and program evaluators to assess writing assignments by students.

Students’ primary exposure to basic theories and principles of oral communication will take place in online learning modules. Students’ understanding and application of the basic theories and principles of oral communication (QEP SLO4) will be directly assessed through the quiz questions embedded in the related online learning module. Students’ application of those theories and principles will be indirectly viewable during their in-class presentations and class discussions. Both in-class presentations and class discussions will be assessed using rubrics to evaluate sample presentations and discussions. Figure 3 shows the “Oral Communication Rubric – Student Presentation.” All categories of this rubric align indirectly with QEP SLO4.

QEP SLO5 requires that FSEM students will communicate effectively as public speakers and during group discussions. The “Oral Communication Rubric – Student Presentation” and the “Oral Communication Rubric – CSRS/Class Discussion” (Figure 4) provide criteria by which we will assess this student learning outcome. All categories of the “Oral Communication Rubric – Student Presentation” rubric align with effective communication in public speaking. The “Oral Communication Rubric – CSRS/Class Discussion” rubric aligns with effective communication in group discussions. The Conversational Skills Ratings Scale (CSRS) rubric was developed, and is supported, by the National Communication Association, and has been found to be reliable and valid in many contexts (Spitzberg & Adams, n.d.). Following the guidelines outlined by the developers of the CSRS rubric, evaluators will rate students in the four subscales (attentiveness, composure, expressiveness, and coordination).

Objective	Proficient	Competent	Developing	Emerging
1. Students will demonstrate the ability to focus and articulate their information needs	The student's research objective is clearly articulated, appropriate to the assignment, original, and focused.	The student's research objective is clearly articulated, appropriate, and focused, but lacks originality.	The student's research objective is appropriate to the assignment, but lacks clarity and focus.	The student failed to develop a research objective.
2. Students will interpret bibliographic citations from the search results and locate the materials cited	The student has located reliable sources of information appropriate to the topic and course.	The student has located quality information from a variety of sources.	The student located some information on the topic, but the information lacks depth.	The student located minimal information on the topic.
3. Students will evaluate the information retrieved for currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose	The information located is current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and appropriate to the topic. The information reflects a high level of scholarship on the student's part.	The information located is generally current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and appropriate.	The information located in general, dated, or lacking in authority.	The information located shows only a minimal effort.
4. Students will incorporate retrieved information into writing assignments and oral presentations	The student's final product is of high quality, showing the appropriate level of scholarship and creativity.	The student successfully integrates the information retrieved into the final product.	The student is minimally successful at integrating information into the final product or uses information inappropriately.	The student is unable to integrate information into a coherent final product.
5. Students will properly attribute the sources of information used in those assignments	All sources are cited using an accepted citation format. Citations are accurate.	Sources are cited and most citations are correctly formatted.	Sources are cited incorrectly or incompletely.	The student fails to cite sources. The student quotes from sources without attribution.

Figure 1. Information Literacy Rubric

Scoring Criteria	(1) Limited Proficiency	(2) Minimal Proficiency	(3) Average Proficiency	(4) High Proficiency	Score/ Rating
(LO1) Ideas: Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the varying strategies to convey arguments, main ideas, and support/ evidence.	No evidence of a controlling idea; no substantiation of argument; no evidence or support; no references.	Some evidence of a controlling idea but may wander from the argument; some evidence or support; minimal substantiation of argument	Adequate controlling idea or argument; satisfactory references; satisfactory substantiation of argument; adequate examples and support.	Exceptional controlling idea or argument; significant amount of references and/ or evidence/ support; excellent substantiation of argument	P= 3 or higher F=2 and below
(LO2) Organization: Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the varying patterns of composition organization and development.	Does not demonstrate a working knowledge of varying patterns of composition organization and development; argument or main idea is difficult to decipher and/ or follow; little to no development of the argument/ main idea occurs.	Demonstrates some knowledge of the varying patterns of composition organization and development; argument or main idea is minimally evident; some development occurs but not enough to clearly substantiate the argument/ main idea.	Demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the varying patterns of composition organization and development; argument or main idea is evident; development of this main idea or argument occurs but is not sophisticated to which collegiate writing should aspire.	Demonstrates a superior knowledge of the varying patterns of composition organization and development; argument or main idea is clear and concise; development of this argument/ main idea occurs with sophistication.	P= 3 or higher F=2 and below
(LO3) (Appropriate Writer's Voice): Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of appropriate voice, tone, and rhetorical strategies for a specified audience.	Does not demonstrate knowledge of audience awareness or use of appropriate rhetorical strategies; word choice and tone may not be appropriate for specified audience; slang and clichés may be used.	Demonstrates some knowledge of audience awareness and/ or use of appropriate rhetorical strategies; may lapse into inappropriate tone or word choice periodically; some use of slang and clichés may be used.	Demonstrates an adequate knowledge of appropriate audience awareness and use of rhetorical strategies; minor lapses in tone and word choice may occur within the paper.	Demonstrates a superior knowledge of appropriate audience and use of rhetorical strategies; skillfully employs rhetorical strategies when needed; word choice and tone are appropriate for the intended audience; is not without a few minor lapses in voice and tone.	P= 3 or higher F=2 and below
(LO4) (Process): Students will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the writing process.	Does not demonstrate a working knowledge of the writing process; shows no substantial evidence of the writing process.	Demonstrates some knowledge of the writing process but the evidence may be inconsistent.	Demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the writing process; there may still be errors and inconsistencies, but the process is still clear and understandable.	Demonstrates a superior knowledge of the writing process; while the essay is not error-free, the process is clearly defined and consistent.	P= 3 or higher F=2 and below
Total Score/ Rating	An overall score of 11 or higher is passing				/16

Figure 2. Writing Assessment Rubric: (LO1) Ideas and (LO2) Organization state criteria for QEP SLO1 and SLO2

Oral Communication Categories	Not Proficient	Proficient	Strong
Delivery: The speaker spoke clearly and expressively, using appropriate articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, and intonation.			
Word Choice: The speaker demonstrated careful word choice appropriate to the audience and showed sensitivity in the use of language regarding gender, age, ethnicity, or sexual/affectual orientation.			
Organization: The speaker presented ideas using an appropriate organizational structure that included an introduction, main points, transitions, and a conclusion.			
Purpose: The speaker distinguished between different purposes and goals in communication (persuading, informing, etc.), and included a clear, specific, appropriate purpose for the speech.			
Support: The speaker provided appropriate support material and developed the content of the message to enlighten the audience.			
<p>Notes:</p> <p>Assessor Places “X” in appropriate column.</p> <p>Not Proficient. The speech does not meet the level of competency defined for the category. The flaws are so numerous or significant that they undermine satisfactory communication.</p> <p>Proficient. The speech is at least minimally competent, or acceptable, in the category as defined in the chart below. Though the speech may exhibit some flaws, the flaws are not so numerous or so significant that they disallow a rating of proficient.</p> <p>Strong. The speech more than adequately meets the definition of proficiency for a particular category; it exhibits strength in the category.</p>			

Figure 3: Oral Communication Rubric - Student Presentation: Assessment of individual speeches.

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Observer Rating of Conversant Form)

Your Name:		Partner Name:	
Your ID:		Partner ID:	
Date:	Class:	Activity:	

Rate how skillfully **THIS INTERACTANT** used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	INADEQUATE	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	FAIR	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	ADEQUATE	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	GOOD	(use was better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	EXCELLENT	(use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate this person's overall performance:

POOR CONVERSATIONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

Figure 4: Oral Communication Rubric – CSRS/Class Discussion: Assessment of group discussion (Spitzberg & Adams, n.d.)

In addition, they will rate individual overall performance on an unskilled-to-skilled scale. (See last five items on the rubric in Figure 4). A self-rating form with identical rating categories and items will be made available to faculty and students, and will be referenced in online learning modules related to class discussion.

Indirect Assessment. Indirect assessment of the QEP's student learning outcomes is students' self-reports of what they know and are able to do. Indirect assessment provides important data that complements direct measures.

The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) is a nationally distributed standardized questionnaire that is widely used to measure communication apprehension in college students. FSEM students will complete the PRCA-24 at the beginning of their FSEM course, and the results will serve as an indirect assessment of SLO4 and SLO5. PRCA questions are grouped into four communication situations in which a person might be anxious or apprehensive: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal communication, and public speaking. A student's individual responses to PRCA questions provide a total communication apprehension score and four situational scores. Comparison of individual scores to national average scores provides information about a student's anxiety relative to a large cohort. This information will provide a starting point from which the student, the instructor, and tutors from the Speaking Center can develop strategies to manage and decrease personal communication anxiety. Management of communication anxiety will allow first-year students to overcome personal and academic barriers that often arise from communication apprehension (Francis and Miller, 2008; McCroskey, 1997) and potentially to become more effective speakers.

Operational Goals Assessment. Operational goals are activities or tasks completed by students, faculty, or student tutors during the course of the FSEM that indirectly contribute to FSEM student learning outcomes. Operational goals assessment is, by its nature, an indirect assessment of student learning outcomes. While operational goals assessment does not directly measure what students know or can do, it does measure completion of activities that will move first-year students toward the achievement of learning outcomes. The QEP's operational goals are:

- **Module completion:** Students will complete one or more online learning modules during the semester they enroll in an FSEM course.
- **Engaging course work:** Students will complete class-related tasks that actively engage the students in QEP student learning outcomes.
- **Academic support unit interaction:** Students will interact with academic support unit staff or student tutors about QEP student learning outcomes while completing FSEM assigned tasks.
- **Academic support unit interaction:** Students will interact with academic support unit staff or student tutors outside FSEM assigned tasks.
- **Faculty participation:** Faculty will participate in QEP-related faculty development workshops.
- **Student tutor participation:** Student tutors will participate in QEP-related tutor training workshops.

Module completion by students in QEP FSEM, for example, is a key tool by which students will learn introductory ideas and skills related to QEP student learning outcomes. Tracking the number of students per QEP section who complete each module creates a record of how many students have used the online learning modules. Figure 5 is the worksheet/check sheet that will

Assessment semester year	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2014	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2015	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2018
	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2015	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2018	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2019
Name	Description	Measure; instrument	Timeline for data reporting	Status	Comments
Module completion	Students complete one or more online learning modules during the semester they enroll in an FSEM course	# online modules completed per student per FSEM section; completion counts from individual modules	2-weeks after end of final exams of each semester of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	
Engaging course work* # of paper revisions per FSEM section, SLO3, and syllabus review;# of assignments / FSEM section requiring integration of evidence, SLO1 and SLO2, and syllabus review;# speeches per FSEM section, SLO4 and SLO5, and syllabus review.	Students complete class related tasks that actively engage them in QEP / FSEM student learning outcomes	# tasks per FSEM section and # QEP / FSEMs per semester; FSEM syllabus review	2-weeks after end of final exams of each semester of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	
Academic support unit interaction, FSEM related	Students interact with academic support unit staff or student tutors about QEP / FSEM student learning outcome, while completing FSEM assigned tasks	# students per FSEM section visiting academic support unit; academic support unit visit reporting forms	2-weeks after end of final exams of each semester of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	
Academic support unit interaction, not FSEM related	Students interact with academic support unit staff or student tutors outside of FSEM assigned tasks	# students per FSEM section visiting each academic support unit; academic support unit visit reporting forms	2-weeks after end of final exams of each semester of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	
Faculty development	Faculty participate in QEP related faculty development workshops	# faculty completing each faculty development workshop; development workshop reporting form	May 15 of each academic year of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	
Tutor development	Student tutors participate in QEP related tutor training workshops	# students completing each tutor development workshop; development workshop reporting form	May 15 of each academic year of QEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Complete	

Figure 5: UMW QEP operational goals assessment: Assessment descriptions and check sheet.

track operational goals assessment. QEP operational goal assessment will be completed each semester or once at the end of the academic year, depending on the goal. Figure 5 also details the assessment timeline for each goal.

Assessment Timeline and Use of Assessment Data

The UMW QEP will use a prospective cohort design for FSEM assessments. During each semester of QEP implementation, a subset of FSEM faculty, who have experienced QEP faculty development, will teach FSEM sections. Other faculty, who have not experienced QEP faculty development, will teach the remaining FSEM sections. These two groups of students will allow for comparative assessment of those participating in the QEP and those not. These groups should be similar in all respects except for QEP interventions, because they are first-year students with identical semester standing who have self-selected randomly into FSEM sections with no knowledge of the QEP's program.

Project SAILS will be administered to all UMW first-year students beginning in the fall of 2013 and each fall after. The fall 2013 Project SAILS data will establish a baseline for the QEP. These data will also be used to refine the information literacy modules to target areas where students show the greatest need for improvement. Project SAILS will be re-administered to students completing their first-year at UMW, beginning in the spring of 2014, the first full year of the administration of the QEP. Comparison of the University's prospective cohort will provide data on how well students have developed information literacy skills with and without the QEP's interventions. Students will complete embedded assessment quizzes each time they complete a module, and librarians will evaluate samples of students' FSEM course work from modules using grading rubrics, at the end of each semester.

QEP writing outcomes assessment will be administered as a component of the University's Writing Intensive Program's outcomes assessment. The Writing Program Director will collect writing samples from all FSEM students during the first two weeks of the semester and again at the end of the semester and then oversee the evaluation of these writing samples, using grading rubrics. Comparison of student writing with and without our QEP will come from our prospective cohort design. Comparison of writing samples from the beginning and the end of the semester will supplement assessment from the prospective cohort.

QEP oral communication outcomes assessment will be administered as a component of the University's Speaking Intensive Program's outcomes assessment. The PRCA will be administered to all FSEM students during the first or second week of the semester. A sample of student oral presentations and class discussions in FSEMs will be videotaped in the last third of each semester. The Speaking Program Director will oversee evaluation of these videotaped presentations, which will be evaluated using the oral communication rubrics described.

Data from all the described assessment instruments will be collected during the first three years of the QEP. Staff in the Office of Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness (IAE), in consultation with the QEP Director, Academic Support Unit Directors and the Assistant Provost for IAE, will analyze all assessment data from the QEP during the fourth year of the QEP. Table 2 shows expected proficiencies for student learning outcomes as measured by assessment instruments. These expected proficiencies will guide interpretation of FSEM students' achievement of the QEP's student learning outcomes. During the fifth year of the QEP, the QEP Director and the FSEM advisory committee will recommend changes in QEP teaching and learning programs and prepare the University's fifth-year interim report for SACS COC.

Table 2 Expected Proficiencies for Measurement Instruments.		
Instrument	Definition of Individual Proficiency	Cohort Proficiency Expectations; Annual improvement goal
Project SAILS	70% of possible score	100 % of students in cohort score 70% of possible score; Annual improvements over baseline percentages
Learning module embedded assessments	100% of possible score	70% of students in cohort answer 100% of possible score; Annual improvement over baseline percentages
Grading rubrics; Writing and CRSC Rubrics	70% of possible score	100 % of students score 70% of total possible; Annual improvement over baseline percentages
Grading rubric; Presentation Rubric	Proficient or strong in every category	70 % of students score proficient or strong; Annual improvement over baseline in percentage of, at least, proficient scores



Chapter Six: Institutional Capability and Initiation of the Plan

Management Plan

UMW's QEP integrates and enhances several existing programs to provide first-year students with opportunities in which, under the coordinating authority of the Provost and the Director of the QEP, academic support and faculty development units that have traditionally operated separately will combine efforts and resources to support first-year students in achieving program goals and outcomes. The QEP/First-Year Seminar Director will work with the Provost, the Provost's staff, the Chair of the University Faculty Council, and other appropriate faculty governance committees to appoint the QEP Advisory Committee.

Academic Support Centers and the QEP. All students are encouraged and sometimes required to use (1) the Writing Center, (2) the Speaking Center, and (3) the University's libraries. Staff and student consultants help all students, including first-year students, to improve their skills and understanding of communication and information literacy while discussing specific course assignments and activities.

The Writing Center and its Director support the UMW Writing Intensive Program and writing learning outcomes. The Writing Intensive Program implements the institutional belief in writing competence as an essential ingredient of a liberal arts education. The Writing Center offers free tutorial assistance to students, faculty, and staff, regardless of major, class level, or skill level. Further, the Writing Center offers assistance on all types of writing projects: reports, papers, cover letters and resumes, and research projects. The Writing Center can also help students prepare for in-class essay exams and standardized tests that include essays, such as the Praxis I writing exam.

While the Writing Center will continue to offer assistance to any UMW student, the Center will take on new roles directly connected to the QEP. The Center's Director will contribute to the development of the online modules dealing with topics and issues in writing. Topics selected for these modules will be the result of input solicited from faculty who teach FSEM classes as well as from observations made by the Center Director and staff regarding the major writing issues that first-year students struggle with. Results of the ongoing assessments of student writing will also contribute to the development of the particular writing-focused online modules to be developed.

Furthermore, concentrated and pointed effort will be made for a representative of the Writing Center to visit FSEM courses and discuss why visits to the Writing Center are useful, how the Writing Center works, what is expected at a tutorial, and how the Writing Center is not a place of remediation but a place to develop standard practice. Moreover, the Writing Center will continue to make a concentrated effort to remain a presence during group campus visits, preview days, and orientations. Those affiliated with the Writing Center understand how important such academic support centers are with regards to retention and success. Finally, as noted in chapter seven (Budget), the QEP provides new resources to increase the number of Writing Center tutors and to train them to work specifically with students in FSEM courses.

The Speaking Center supports the UMW Speaking Intensive Program and speech communication learning outcomes. The Speaking Center provides multimedia resources, and center consultants offer individuals and groups advice on a variety of oral communication activities. The Center's goal is to provide individualized consultation sessions and print, audio-visual, and web resources to assist the University community in achieving its liberal arts education goals. The Center houses a collection of instructional resources (books, handouts,

videotapes, and equipment) that address a variety of topics ranging from public speaking anxiety to the construction of effective visual aids. The Speaking Center recognizes the importance of reaching out to FSEM students, so that they may begin to improve oral communication skills that are foundational to academic success.

As with the Writing Center, the Speaking Center will take on new and prominent roles in the implementation of the QEP. Participation in the development of the oral communication specific online modules will be one of those new tasks. As with the development of the writing modules, input from faculty who teach FSEM classes and have seen first hand the particular communication issues presented by new students will influence the focus of the oral communication modules to be developed. The Speaking Center will also be supported with additional funds through the QEP budget to increase the number of student speaking consultants and to prepare them to work specifically with students in FSEM courses.

The UMW Libraries are committed to supporting the University's mission of creating an environment where students, faculty, and staff share in the creation and exploration of knowledge in the development of academic and professional interests and in the practice of the habits of mind necessary for life-long learning. Reference librarians work with the faculty teaching FSEM classes on developing assignments that introduce students to the libraries' resources. They work directly with students at the reference desk and through individual research appointments. The subject librarians provide instruction in the use of library resources as requested by the faculty. Classroom instruction is supplemented by online library guides (<http://libguides.umw.edu/>).

The librarians will be centrally involved in the development of the various online modules related to information literacy. In anticipation of the role the libraries will play in implementing the QEP, the University Librarian changed one of the reference librarian positions to become the Reference Librarian and Coordinator of First-Year Programs. This librarian will be responsible for developing the information literacy modules and for coordinating the libraries' assessment activities relating to the QEP. The QEP budget provides additional funding for librarians to extend their contact with students, possibly through the use of student tutors similar to what the Writing and Speaking Centers provide.

Faculty Development and the QEP. The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation will collaborate with the QEP / First-year Seminar Director to create effective faculty development programs for the QEP and faculty teaching FSEM. All faculty will benefit from programs that challenge prevailing pedagogical assumptions. In addition, students will more likely reach QEP learning outcomes, as FSEM faculty will be better prepared to employ the online learning modules, design engaging in-class and out-of-class experiences, and creatively apply assessment strategies.

Online Learning Module Development and the QEP. The Division of Teaching and Learning (DTLT) staff consult with faculty about academic technologies on every scale from revising existing assignments to wholesale digital redesign of a course. The DTLT Director and staff are actively exploring new and emerging technology trends, best practices in using technology for teaching and learning, and the impacts of technology on higher education. DTLT will provide advise about the technological design of the online modules to be created and will work with faculty to help them understand how to employ them to best advantage.

Organizational Chart

The University's QEP emphasizes collaboration between academic support centers, faculty support units, the faculty governance structure, and the faculty as facilitated by the QEP/First-Year Seminar Director. Reporting to the Provost, the QEP/First-Year Seminar Director coordinates the activities of a variety of academic support offices and units that will be contributing to the QEP. Each of the academic support unit directors will collaborate with the QEP/First-Year Seminar Director on activities and programming related to the QEP. It is important to emphasize that these units will not report to the QEP Director regarding their other activities and operations. The Office of Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness, assisted by the Administrative Support position for the QEP, will provide necessary support for information gathering and assessment activities. These relationships are depicted in the following diagram:

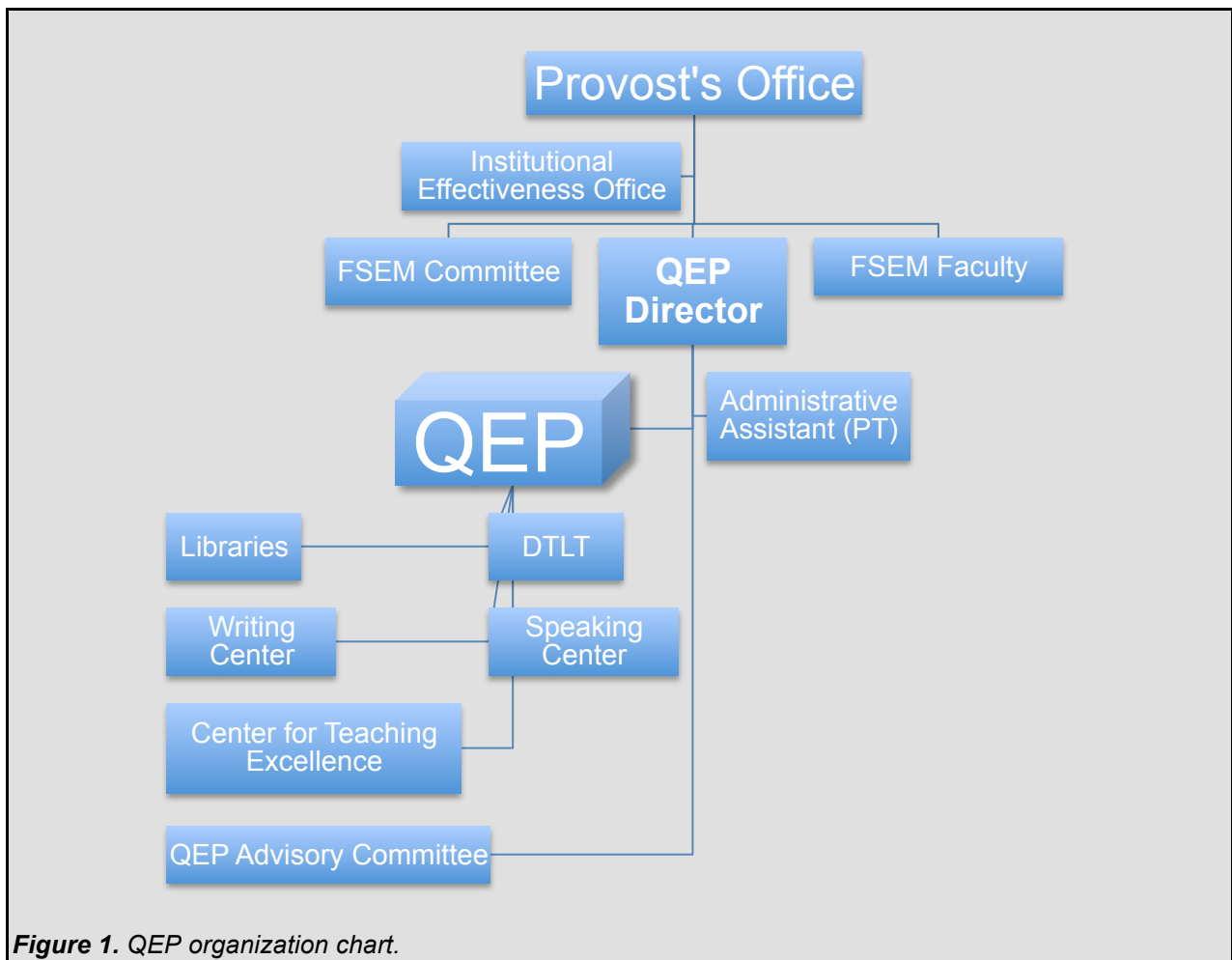


Figure 1. QEP organization chart.

The interactions necessary to advance the QEP successfully will be enhanced by the University's new Information and Technology Convergence Center scheduled to open in fall 2014. This state-of-the-art building is next to the Simpson Library and will connect directly to the Library on one floor. The Speaking and Writing Centers will move from their current locations to the fourth floor of this building. DTLT and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation will also be located on the fourth floor. With the academic support and faculty development units involved with the QEP will soon to be located in convenient proximity to one another, the opportunities for collaboration are increased.

Several spaces included in the design of the new building will provide opportunities for collaboration among students, faculty, and staff. Conference rooms and seminar-style rooms are designed to support multiple functions including faculty development activities, technical training, workshops, demonstrations, and videoconferencing. A multi-media editing studio on the fourth floor will provide DTLT staff and faculty clients ready access to computers with video editing and other similar software necessary for doing sophisticated digital productions. The building will also include a small video production studio, potentially useful in the development of some of the material for the various online modules to be developed. A number of self-service collaboration rooms will enable student groups to work together on projects in environments that are fully equipped to support a variety of digital technologies. The building also includes a number of classrooms with the latest equipment.

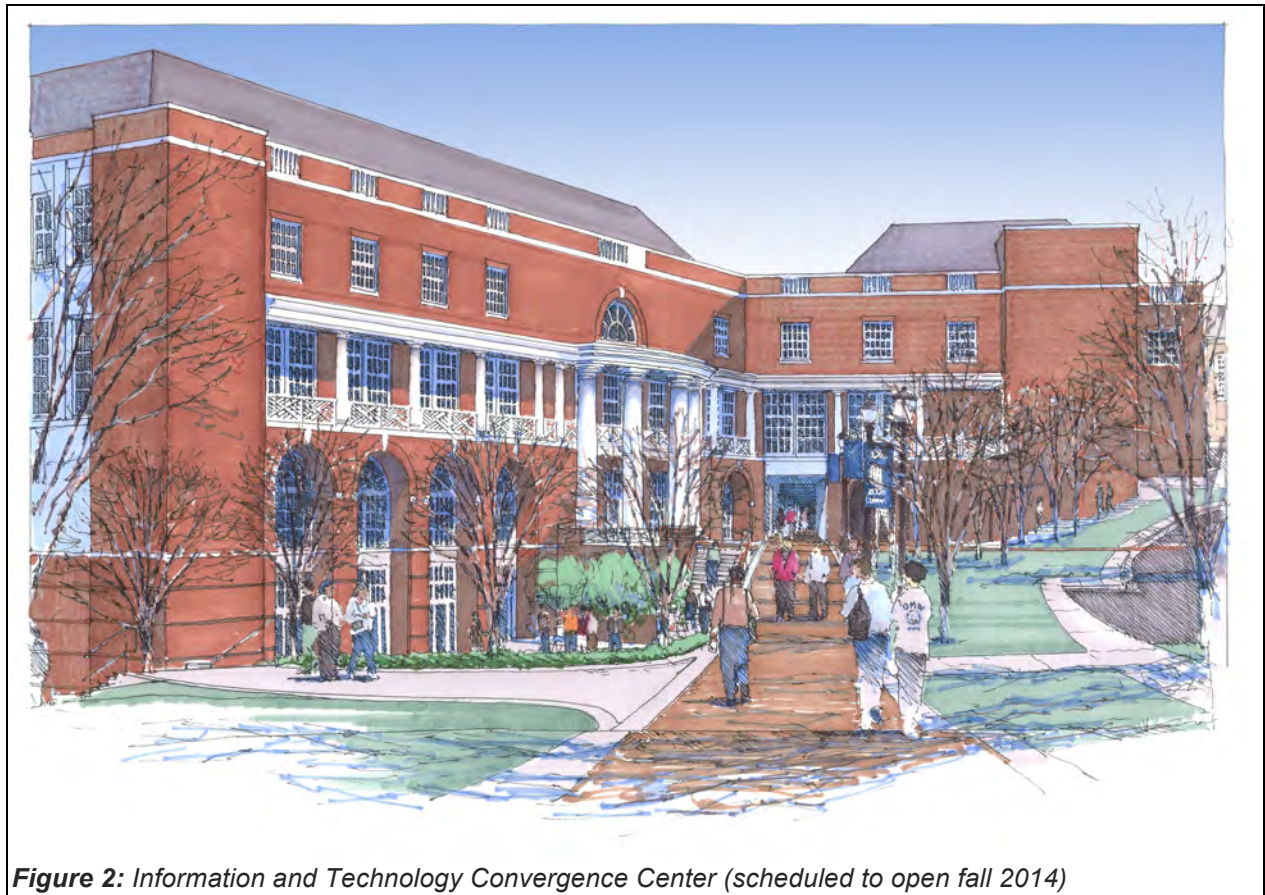


Figure 2: Information and Technology Convergence Center (scheduled to open fall 2014)

While this building's design originated long before the decision about the QEP, there is no question that the new building will readily support and extend a number of the activities that will be part of the QEP. Additional details about the building may be found at:

<http://provost.umw.edu/convergence-center/>

Staff Expertise

The QEP/First-Year Seminar Director will be a tenured faculty member selected through an open, internal search process. The position description (see Appendix V) outlines the qualifications anticipated for the person eventually selected to head the project. A number of

the other persons who will contribute to the implementation of the QEP are current staff who will bring considerable expertise to the project.

The Writing Program and Writing Centers Director, who has a Ph.D. in English, has directed writing centers at two other universities in addition to UMW. She is in her second year at UMW and has presented actively at a number of professional conferences on topics involving writing centers, technology, and the application of social media. She also manages the Writing Intensive Programs assessment activities.

The Director of the Speaking Intensive Program holds a Ph.D. in Communication. He manages the Speaking Intensive Program's assessment activities. He has studied the use of new media (including social networking and micro-blogging) and has been a technical and creative consultant for documentary productions. The Director of the Speaking Center also holds a Ph.D. in Communication, is an active member of the national Association of Speaking Centers, and has published a guide for working with ESL students in basic communication courses and also a detailed study of communication centers and across the curriculum communication programs.

The DTLT Director is a nationally prominent expert on a variety of topics in technology and higher education who has been recently featured in a number of articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education and the New York Times. The five staff in DTLT each bring a number technological specialties to the QEP ranging from audio and video production to learning management systems to web site applications and design.

The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Teacher Development. She has published on a number of topics directly related to teaching innovation and excellence, such as: project-based approaches to support teachers' technological skill development and pedagogical understandings; integrating learner-centered theory and technology; blended learning; and faculty development and adult learning.

Finally, all librarians to be involved with the QEP hold advanced degrees in Library Science. In particular, the "Subject Librarians" are specialists in particular areas (such as the social sciences or arts and humanities) and they work directly with both faculty and students on specific approaches and strategies for conducting research within particular disciplines.

Chapter Seven: Budget

Funds for conducting the pilot study for the QEP are already committed in the University's budget and the University has incorporated future costs associated with the QEP in its Six-Year Plan submitted to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The following table provides for the projected costs associated with the QEP.

Budget Item	Year 1 2013-14	Year 2 2014-15	Year 3 2015-16	Year 4 2016-17	Year 5 2017-18	Total
QEP/First-Year Seminar Director	\$18,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$162,000
Administrative Support	\$8,075	\$16,150	\$16,150	\$16,150	\$16,150	\$72,675
Module Development	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000			\$150,000
Faculty Development	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$12,000	\$10,000	\$56,000
Academic Support - Student Tutors	\$4,000	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$56,500
Operating Budget	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$24,000
Assessment Costs	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$67,500
First-Year Seminar Diversification	\$25,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$425,000
Total	\$125,575	\$243,150	\$250,650	\$198,150	\$196,150	\$1,013,675

The budget includes a \$20,000 annual stipend and a two-course reassignment for the **QEP/First-Year Seminar Director** that will be supported through adjunct hiring. The Director's academic department will be authorized to hire adjunct faculty to cover the two-course reassignment; the proposed budget includes funding based on the top amount as authorized by the current adjunct salary scale. Amounts shown for year one are less than those for subsequent years because the QEP's proposed starting point is the spring 2014 semester. The Director's job description appears in Appendix IV.

Administrative support is calculated at the prevailing hourly rate for such positions at the University (\$15 per hour), assuming 20 hours per week plus the associated FICA costs to the University. The Administrative Support position is calculated at one half of the full cost for year one on the assumption that both posts will not be staffed until January 2014. The job description is provided in Appendix IV.

The University plans to send out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit bids for module development. The requirements and specifications for that RFP will be developed based on the pilot module used in Spring 2013. Staff from the Writing Center, the Speaking Center, the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, the Library, and the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies will collaborate with the module developer on the design of the various

modules with input from faculty who teach FSEM courses (especially those who were part of the pilot programs).

Faculty development costs include stipends for faculty who participate outside the term of their contract year, stipends for facilitators, and a modest sum for refreshments. These costs are planned with incremental increases to accommodate growth in the number of faculty who will be trained on the use of the QEP resources.

Academic support for student tutors supports the recruitment, training, and tutorial time peer tutors will provide for first year seminar students who go to the Writing Center, the Speaking Center, and the Library to seek additional assistance as they encounter the writing, speaking, and research/information literacy tasks required in their first year seminar courses. Both the Writing and Speaking Centers currently offer student tutors who assist the students who come to those centers. The workload will increase as a result of the QEP, thus requiring additional tutors to accommodate demand. Tutors will also need to be trained to understand the unique assignments of the various FSEM courses and how the online modules are being employed. The Library does not currently have student tutors who assist the Reference Librarians but may need to employ some in order to meet new demands for Library services.

The **operating budget** includes the costs for an office for the Director of the QEP and the administrative support person, computing equipment, and copying and other costs during the first year of the plan's implementation. Costs for subsequent years reflect a smaller budget for basic clerical supplies.

Assessment costs are calculated by assuming the costs of administering the Project SAILS instrument once in 2013-14 and then twice per academic year thereafter at \$4.00 per student. Average first-year class (excluding transfers) is 975 (with expectations of growth to 1,000). Other associated assessment costs include compensating faculty assessors for the speaking and writing components of the QEP and the purchase of additional server space to accommodate the data.

The final budget item, **First-Year Seminar diversification**, provides funding to enable more departments to offer first year seminar courses. As noted in chapter one, some departments have been unable to fully contribute to offering first year seminars because of staffing limitations. The QEP budget would provide additional staffing support in two ways: (1) additional adjunct positions designed to release full-time faculty so that they could offer FSEM courses, and (2) the creation (beginning in year 2) of a rotating visiting faculty position that would be extended to a department that makes a commitment to offer 6-8 first year seminars in an academic year in exchange for the services of the visitor who teach other departmental courses enabling full-time continuing faculty to offer first year seminars. The QEP/First-Year Seminar Director would solicit applications for this position and would decide where to allocate it. The position would be approved a year in advance in order to facilitate planning and it would be shifted between departments in order to encourage maximum participation.

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Appendix I: QEP Committee Memberships

QEP Topic Selection Committee Membership

Nina Mikhalevsky, Professor of Philosophy (Chair)
 Taiwo Ande, Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment
 Jack Bales, Humanities Librarian
 Richard Finkelstein, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
 Dana German, Chief Information Officer
 Mary Gendernalik-Cooper, Dean of the College of Education
 Steve Greenlaw, Professor of Economics
 Shannon Hauser, Student Representative
 Norah Hooper, Professor of Education
 Jack Kramer, Professor of Political Science
 Tim O'Donnell, Professor of Communication; Chair, SACS Compliance Committee
 Rick Pearce, Vice President for Budget and Finance
 Larry W. Penwell, Acting Dean, College of Business
 Cedric Rucker, Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life
 Kelli Slunt, Professor of Chemistry

Final Three Proposal Committees

1. Digital Knowledge Project:

Jeff McClurken, Associate Professor of History (Point of Contact)
 Ernest Ackermann, Professor of Computer Science
 Rosemary Arneson, University Librarian
 Jack Bales, Humanities Librarian
 Martha Burtis, Special Projects Coordinator, DTLT
 Paul Butler, Assistant Systems Librarian
 Clay Calvert, Student, College of Business
 Teresa Coffman, Associate Professor of Education
 Cheryl Hawkinson-Melkun, College of Business
 Elizabeth Kilgallin, Student, College of Arts and Sciences
 Sonia Morris, Student, College of Education
 Andy Rush, New Media Specialist, DTLT
 Sharon Teabo, Associate Professor of Education

Executive Summary available at qep.umwblogs.org/final-proposals/digital-knowledge-initiative

2. High-Impact Learning: Understanding by Design

Tamie Pratt-Fartro, Assistant Professor of Education (Point of Contact)
 Laurie Abeel, Associate Professor of Education
 Gail Brooks, Professor of Computer Technology
 Alan Griffith, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences
 Suzanne Houff, Professor of Education
 Jane Huffman, Associate Professor of Education
 Holly Schiffrin, Assistant Professor of Psychology
 Hilary Stebbins, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Executive Summary available at qep.umwblogs.org/final-proposals/high-impact-learning

3. Integrated First-Year Experience

Mary Rigsby, Professor of English (Point of Contact)
Jason Matzke, Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Anand Rao, Associate Professor of Communication
Doug Searcy, Vice President for Student Affairs
Carol Stevens, Assistant Dean of Academic Services
Suzanne Sumner, Professor of Mathematics

Executive Summary available at qep.umwblogs.org/final-proposals/integrated-first-year-experience

QEP Development Committee

Alan Griffith, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Director
Rosemary Arneson, University Librarian
Rosemary Barra, Professor of Biological Sciences
Courtney Chapman, Director, Leadership and Strategic Initiatives
Courtney Clayton, Assistant Professor of Education
Rosalyn Cooperman, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs
Stephen Davies, Assistant Professor of Computer Science
Christina Eggenberger, Director, Service (Student Affairs)
Gwendolyn Hale, Director, University Writing Centers
Meagan Holbrook, Chair, Student Government Academic Affairs Committee
Teresa Kennedy, Professor of English and Chair of English, Linguistics, and Communication
Katherine Lister, Associate Director, Financial Aid
Katie Locke, Assistant Director, Career Services
Jason Matzke, Associate Professor of Classics, Philosophy and Religion
Frederick Pierce, Associate Provost, Enrollment Management and Student Services
P. Anand Rao, Associate Professor of Communication and Director, Speaking Intensive Program
Lynne Richardson, Founding Dean, College of Business
Cedric Rucker, Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life
Bradley Scaggs, Assistant Director, Financial Aid
JoAnn Schrass, Associate Dean, Academic Services
Steven Thomas, Interim Director, Student Activities and Engagement
Marsha Zaidman, Professor of Computer Science

Focus Committee

Alan Griffith, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Director
Taiwo Ande, Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
Rosemary Arneson, University Librarian
Rosemary Barra, Professor of Biological Sciences
Gwendolyn Hale-Director, University Writing Centers
Teresa Kennedy, Professor of English, QEP Proposal Editor
John T. Morello, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
P. Anand Rao, Associate Professor of Communication and Director, Speaking Intensive Program

Appendix II: Documents Demonstrating University-Wide Inclusion

Message from the UMW President – QEP Launch

Welcome to the University of Mary Washington's QEP website. This fall, 2010, we begin the first phase of development and implementation of our Quality Enhancement Plan, part of our preparation for SACS reaffirmation in 2013. The purpose of our QEP is to enhance student learning at UMW and as a liberal arts university, student learning is at the very heart of what we do. UMW's outstanding faculty, dedicated staff, and talented students work together in a rich and engaging learning environment where we foster student-faculty relationships, promote challenging academic programs, and support the development of each student. Our QEP will draw from and build on this strong commitment to student achievement.

The first phase of developing our QEP is for us to identify the topic for the plan. This website contains detailed information about the topic selection process of the QEP and there will also be regular communication and additional information coming from the QEP planning committee as the academic year progresses.

I strongly encourage everyone in the UMW community—faculty, staff, and students—to submit ideas and recommendations to the planning committee. While this is important to our SACS reaffirmation, more importantly it is a great opportunity for us to develop and implement a significant initiative that will draw from our knowledge, creativity, innovation, and expertise in teaching. This is an opportunity for us to research and talk with each other about what we do well and what we can strengthen, to share our ideas and experience with each other, and to collaborate on a QEP that will enhance our students' learning, further our mission, and continue to define us as an excellent liberal arts university.

Richard V. Hurley

Letter from the Provost – QEP Topic Announcement

On Campus Walk: A Periodic Newsletter from the Office of the Provost
QEP Topic Selected
Published May 2011
From Dr. Jay Harper, Provost University of Mary Washington

I am pleased to announce that President Rick Hurley and I have selected “Understanding and Improving the First-Year Experience” as our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic. With that decision, the planning process for QEP topic moves to a new stage. Our next step is the formation of a QEP Project Team that will develop our full QEP proposal and report. At this time, I am calling for volunteers who would like to work on the QEP project team. Please let me know if you are interested in serving.

Members of the project team can and will come from all divisions of UMW (all three colleges, student affairs, business and finance, etc.). I expect to announce a chairperson to lead the project team by the end of the month. The ultimate aim of the QEP is that we embark on the five-year plan that should result in improved student learning. This is extremely important work that is an integral part of our SACS reaffirmation. The final project planning, led by the QEP Project Team, will take place over the next year and a half, culminating in a final report produced in 2012.

Before explaining the processes and criteria involved in making the QEP topic selection, I want to publicly thank the following QEP Planning Committee members for their diligent and effective work: Norah Hooper, Kelli Slunt, Jack Kramer, Jerry Slezak, Steve Greenlaw, Shannon Hauser, Larry Penwell, Taiwo Ande, Jack Bales, Tim O'Donnell, Mary Gendernalik-Cooper, Richard Finkelstein, Cedric Rucker, Rick Pearce, Dana German, and Nina Mikhalevsky (committee chair). They reviewed several ideas for a possible QEP, funneled the many initial suggestions into a few broader themes for further development, and ultimately arrived at three final proposals that were made available for general comment and reflection by the university community. Without their efforts, we would not be at a place where we could select the focal point for our QEP.

In the hopes that you might find some explanation about how the selection of the QEP topic was made, here's a short review of the steps leading up to the decision.

President Rick Hurley and I reviewed the three final proposals submitted by the QEP Planning Committee. We took note of the care and effort that went into the development of these three plans and we obviously thank the faculty and staff who contributed their expertise to the development of those proposals. Space isn't available in a short newsletter to mention the names of all the faculty and staff members who contributed to the three final QEP proposals. But you can see for yourself who was involved in developing the “Integrated First-Year Experience,” the “Digital Knowledge Initiative,” and the “High Impact Learning” proposals by going to <http://qep.umwblogs.org/final-proposals>. President Hurley and I are extremely grateful for the energy and creativity exhibited by everyone who took the time to contribute to the QEP process through the development of a short proposal or one of the three final proposals.

Although there was much to value in each proposal, we needed to make a topic selection in order to spend the next year refining our selected focus area and developing our final QEP proposal. There is no question that our current first-year experience needs greater coherence. Selecting this area as the focus of our QEP squares directly with the

strategic plan and acts on a shared concern that the president and I have — to promote sound educational initiatives that will help UMW attract high quality students that we then effectively support during their first year. Through an enhanced first-year experience, we build a better foundation for the high quality student learning that we see as a fundamental part of a liberal arts education. An enhanced first-year experience can also become a key ingredient in the overall UMW experience, something we can make a measure of our distinctive place as a liberal arts university.

In making our decision, the President and I were guided by what SACS says about the QEP in its Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation. When developing the QEP, SACS suggests that, “Institutions need to build into their development process sufficient time for extensive investigation, discussion, and refinement of the topic as well as time for drafts to be circulated, debated, and revised in ways that continue to gather and build support for the QEP.” SACS also states that, “An institution should expect the focus and framework for the QEP to shift and evolve as the research, writing, talking, and campus participation occur.”

The selected QEP topic, Understanding and Improving the First-Year Experience, is a modification of one of the proposals originally put forward by the QEP Planning Group. The modification is grounded on this advice from SACS: “Institutions are encouraged to base their selection of the topic for the QEP on an analysis of empirical data... A QEP topic based on a needs assessment, for example, will have more validity and credibility than one stemming from anecdotal evidence.” While the original topic proposal on the first-year experience proffered many fine ideas for strengthening our first-year experience, and thus student learning, my observation (supported by the public comments received by the QEP Planning Group) was that this proposal would be strengthened by a more systematic data framework supporting recommendations for changing the first-year experience. This is not to say that the initial QEP topic proposal on the Integrated First-Year Experience did not present some of the necessary evidence upon which proposals for developing a first-year experience might be based. Rather, both President Hurley and I believed that a more extensive resource base to ground any possible directions we might want to explore for our first-year experience would both strengthen the QEP proposal and produce a better end result in the way of new initiatives for the first-year experience.

Once formed, the QEP Project Development Team will spend several months gathering and analyzing any and all assessment data related to the first-year experience. Following this period of data gathering, President Hurley and I believe that the QEP Project Development Team will be in a substantially stronger position to propose the “best practice” options that UMW should consider implementing in our effort to advance and improve the first-year student experience.

Let me repeat my thanks to every faculty and staff member who contributed to the QEP process by the submission of initial “short proposals” or through work on the development of one of the three final proposals. Your contributions were instrumental in moving this process forward in a positive way. And, again, thanks to the members of the QEP Planning Committee for their work in moving the selection process forward. We are on our way towards defining a substantial and important quality enhancement agenda that will enable us to improve the quality of the first-year experience that future UMW students will encounter when they join us

Letter from the Development Committee Chair – QEP Meetings Invitation

October 28, 2011

Hello all,

As you know, we completed our initial search for a topic for our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a center piece of the UMW SACS reaffirmation. Our university wide search led to our choice of QEP topic, “Enhancing the First Year Experience at UMW.” The development team has chosen to limit the target population for our QEP to First Year / First Time students to UMW. You can follow the planning and development of the UMW QEP on our website <http://qepteam.umwblogs.org/>. Please save this to your favorites so you can visit the site as we develop the UMW plan to enhance the first year experience (FYE) for UMW freshmen. Our QEP meetings are also open to anyone from the UMW community, as we all have an interest in developing a focused plan. You will find meeting schedules on the QEP website. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email (agriffit@umw.edu) or call (654-1422). You will also find all committee members names on the website.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan B. Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "G".

Alan B. Griffith
Associate Professor
Chair, QEP Development Committee

Letter to all Students – QEP Meetings Invitation

To: All UMW Students

From: Meagan Holbrook, Student Liaison to Faculty Committees

RE: Quality Enhancement Plan – UMW First Year Experience

The Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, is being developed by the University in order to create a better experience for students, and it is a cornerstone of the UMW SACS reaccreditation. In the past year, several proposals have been considered, and input from students, faculty, and staff was given regarding what plan would be most helpful to the University. The plan that was chosen at the end of the last school year was “Enhancing the First Year Experience at UMW.” This plan will be geared toward all first year - first time students at the University, and will help strengthen integral parts of the early stages of education at UMW. The team looking at the development of this program is made up of faculty, staff, and administrators, along with me, as the student representative to the Team.

As we continue to develop this program, I want to make sure that students’ voices are heard on this issue. We have all had good and bad experiences in our first year that have influenced how we view the University, our friendships, our relationships with professors, administrators, and staff members, and what we learn. These all stem from the idea that we are here to expand our knowledge and participate in a liberal arts education. It is extremely important to the QEP that students are actively involved and our knowledge is shared. I urge all students to take a minute to educate yourselves about the QEP at <http://qepteam.umwblogs.org>. I also urge each of you to participate in upcoming Town Hall Meetings regarding the QEP.

On the website, you will find dates for all of the upcoming QEP meetings. Meetings are open and anyone from the UMW community is welcome. SGA will also be holding a Town Hall Meeting on this topic, and I hope that all students will voice their opinions on what is needed to enhance, strengthen, and improve the First Year Experience.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me (mholbro2@mail.umw.edu), or Dr. Alan Griffith, QEP Development chair (agriffit@umw.edu). Take some time to understand the plan, SACS reaffirmation, and to think about what UMW needs to do to make the First Year Experience a positive one for all.

Sincerely yours,

Meagan Holbrook

Letter from the Development Committee Chair – QEP Pilot Study Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) pilot study needs five faculty volunteers who are scheduled to teach First-Year Seminars in Spring 2013 and who would be interested in participating in the QEP/FSEM pilot. Courses in the pilot will use an online information literacy learning module. Students and faculty participating will be surveyed to determine their reactions to module, and students will be assessed to determine if using the online module had an impact on their grasp of important information literacy concepts. Additional details about the pilot study and its relation to the overall QEP are available in the expanded QEP summary that Interim Provost Newbould shared with all faculty in August.

UMW's proposed QEP focuses on improving student learning outcomes in the First-Year Seminar, specifically in the areas of information literacy, speaking, and writing. The plan calls for the development and implementation of several online learning modules designed to complement in-class teaching. The Spring 2013 pilot study will test the concept and effectiveness of one online module. By focusing on just one module, we can gather useful information about the strengths and limitations of the approach and thereby be better prepared to use the results of the experiment as additional modules are prepared.

It is not unusual for institutions to run pilot studies prior to formal approval and implementation of their QEP. The idea for such a pilot was favorably received by Dr. Rudolph Jackson, our SACS Vice President, during his preparatory visit this past July. The Spring 2013 pilot project will use a single module developed by the UMW Libraries in concert with the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies (DTLT). The module is an interactive, web-based application centered on evaluating sources of information, a critical component of information literacy. Students will complete the module independently. They will also complete an information literacy assessment called Project SAILS. The instrument is designed to assess information literacy competency standards for higher education as defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Assessment activities are embedded within the module; faculty will not be required to do anything to administer or evaluate the assessments but they will learn the results.

The final QEP proposal envisions several online learning modules designed to support the University's objectives for the FSEM course in the areas of information literacy, writing, and speaking. Participation in the pilot involves a minimal commitment: 1) attending a faculty development workshop, 2) incorporating the online learning module as part of a larger class-assignment, 3) delivering copies of student assignments, an annotated bibliography or final research paper, to librarians for assessment, and 4) participating in an end-of-semester focused discussion and reflection with other faculty participants.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me by October 31, 2012. Either email me at agriffit@umw.edu or call 540-654-1422. If you have questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to ask me.

Best wishes,
Alan B. Griffith
Associate Professor
Chair, QEP Development Committee

Appendix III: Sample Content: Information Literacy Module

Evaluating Sources of Information – Using the CRAAP Test

Introduction

You've found some resources for your assignment, but are they appropriate for your research? It's easy to find articles in databases and websites on the Internet, but are they reliable?

With so much information available, both print and online, researchers need to develop skills in evaluating the resources they locate. For example, Val Greenwood's *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy* was first published in 1973. Would you count on it for websites and online search strategies? Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* is the author's "case against the presumed extermination of European Jewry." Do you think this is a solidly researched work of historical accuracy? You should always examine your books, articles, and websites to determine whether they are reliable and appropriate for your research needs.

The CRAAP Test (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) was created by Sarah Blakeslee of the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico, and "is a list of questions to help you evaluate the information you find." The questions in the tabbed sections above have been reprinted or adapted from this original set of evaluation criteria and are used by permission of the Meriam Library. UMW librarians are responsible for the examples that illustrate the questions.

Currency

- When was the information published or posted? Does your topic require up-to-date research, or will older sources work as well?
- If the information is a web page, are the links functional? When was the page last revised?

Relevance

- Does the information relate to your topic?
- Does it answer your questions? Do you need additional information?
- Can you find the same or better information in another source?
- Who is the intended audience? Is the information at an appropriate level for your needs (that is, not too elementary or advanced)?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper? Does it fit the parameters of your assignment?

Authority

- Who is the author / creator / sponsor? Does the person's background suggest a knowledge of the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or an email address?
- If the information is a web page, does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
- If the information is from a group or organization, what can you find out about it?

Accuracy

- Where does the information come from? Is it supported by evidence?
- Are there bibliographies or notes? Does the author present evidence to support his or her case?
- Can you verify / refute any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Are there grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors?

Purpose

- What is the purpose of the information? Inform? Teach? Sell? Entertain? Persuade?
- Do the authors / sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda? Are there any biases?

Conclusion

Evaluating information is subjective. If you are in doubt about the usefulness of information you find during your research, consult with one of the reference librarians and with your professor to determine if it is appropriate for your project. The information you use in your class project will not pass the CRAAP test if you do not cite it properly! If you need help citing sources:

- Complete the Citing Resources module
- Check the Citing Resources library guide (<http://libguides.umw.edu/citing>)
- Consult the Writing Center
- Consult a reference librarian
- Check the print style guides

Assessment*Information Literacy Rubric for FSEM Students*

Students will be presented with a set of information resources and asked to apply the CRAAP test, using the rubric on the following page. This module was adapted from the library guide created by Jack Bales, Reference and Humanities Librarian, <http://libguides.umw.edu/information>. The rubric was adapted from a similar form used at Rickman Library, Southern Wesleyan University.

Checking for CRAAP

Currency			Score
	Most recent work on the topic. Article is less than 2 years old. Website created/updated within the last two years, and external links work. Or the work is the appropriate primary source for this topic, regardless of date.	3	
	Later editions or resources exist, but not available in the UMW Libraries. Contains some primary and secondary source materials relevant to the topic, regardless of date. Article/website was published within the last 5 years. Most of the external links on the website work.	2	
	Source is over 5 years old, and there is more current and reliable literature available.	1	
	Information in this resource is out of date, or no date is given	0	
	TOTAL		
Relevance			
	Completely related to the topic. Addresses the appropriate audience. Reflects the appropriate level of scholarship.	3	
	Contains some information on the topic, or it provides an overview or background information.	2	
	Somewhat related to the topic, but not appropriate to the audience.	1	
	Not related to the topic.	0	
	TOTAL		
Authority			
	Author is an authority in the field. Organization behind the publications is well-known and highly credible.	3	
	information on author's credentials is incomplete or out-of-date.	2	
	Author is not a scholar in the field.	1	
	No information is available on the author's background or credentials.	0	
	TOTAL		
Accuracy			
	Information is reliable, error-free, and correctly cited.	3	
	Some references are given, but more material could be documented	2	
	Information is out-of-date, and/or it contradicts other sources. Few sources of information are given.	1	
	Information is incorrect or biased	0	
	TOTAL		
Purpose			
	Supports scholarly research with factual information.	3	
	Source is factual, but with some opinion and/or biases.	2	
	Source created primarily to sell, persuade, promote, or entertain.	1	
	Source is largely opinion, with little information supported by facts.	0	
	TOTAL		
	GRAND TOTAL		

Information Literacy Rubric for FSEM Faculty (for Evaluation of Student Assignments)

Objective	Proficient	Competent	Developing	Emerging
Students will demonstrate the ability to focus and articulate their information needs	The student's research objective is clearly articulated, appropriate to the assignment, original, and focused.	The student's research objective is clearly articulated, appropriate, and focused, but lacks originality.	The student's research objective is appropriate to the assignment, but lacks clarity and focus.	The student failed to develop a research objective.
Students will interpret bibliographic citations from the search results and locate the materials cited	The student has located reliable sources of information appropriate to the topic and course.	The student has located quality information from a variety of sources.	The student located some information on the topic, but the information lacks depth.	The student located minimal information on the topic.
Students will evaluate the information retrieved for currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose	The information located is current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and appropriate to the topic. The information reflects a high level of scholarship on the student's part.	The information located is generally current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and appropriate.	The information located in general, dated, or lacking in authority.	The information located shows only a minimal effort.
Students will incorporate retrieved information into writing assignments and oral presentations	The student's final product is of high quality, showing the appropriate level of scholarship and creativity.	The student successfully integrates the information retrieved into the final product.	The student is minimally successful at integrating information into the final product or uses information inappropriately.	The student is unable to integrate information into a coherent final product.
Students will properly attribute the sources of information used in those assignments	All sources are cited using an accepted citation format. Citations are accurate.	Sources are cited and most citations are correctly formatted.	Sources are cited incorrectly or incompletely.	The student fails to cite sources. The student quotes from sources without attribution.

Appendix IV: Job Descriptions

QEP and First-Year Seminar Director: Position Description

Position Details: This is a “Special Assignment” for a tenured member of the University of Mary Washington faculty. The Director will report to the Provost. Compensation includes a half-time teaching load in the fall and spring semesters and an annual stipend. The position will involve summer responsibilities as needed to ensure successful implementation and oversight of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP); the annual stipend is the compensation for summer work.

Duties:

- Oversees and directs all aspects of the University’s QEP;
- Manages the QEP budget, and tracks expenditures;
- Ensures that the necessary online learning modules for the QEP are developed on schedule and are of high quality;
- Oversees the process for selecting the consultant that will advise/assist in the production of the required online modules;
- Organizes and implements necessary faculty development workshops required to introduce colleagues to the online modules and other QEP resources that will be developed and be made available for use in First Year Seminar courses;
- Oversees QEP assessment activities, coordinating with other staff and offices as necessary to ensure that assessment activities included in the QEP are carried out;
- Establishes and chairs a QEP Advisory Committee that will act as a resource and decision-making group as QEP activities are carried out;
- Coordinates with the following persons and facilitate their involvement in the implementation of the QEP: University Librarian, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation, Writing Center and Writing Program Director, Director of the Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies, Speaking Intensive Program Director, and Chair of the First-Year Seminar Committee;
- Ensures that an adequate number of sections of first-year seminar courses are offered each term by a variety of disciplines and actively recruits additional sections as needed;
- Ensures that the necessary number of First Year Seminars each semester employ the online learning modules as part of the course;
- Ensures that all necessary communication about QEP plans, activities, and results are communicated to all necessary audiences and stakeholders, including (but not limited to) faculty, staff, students, alumni, the Board of Visitors, and the public;
- Produces all required SACS QEP reports;
- Performs other QEP related duties as necessary and as assigned by the Provost.

Qualifications: In addition to standing as a tenured faculty member, the QEP Director should (1) have excellent organizational, teamwork, oral communication, and written communication skills; (2) be knowledgeable of QEP requirements and best practices; (3) be familiar with a variety of pedagogies and instructional technologies; (4) be familiar with information literacy, writing, and oral communication teaching issues; (5) have experience with the first-year seminar.

Selection Process: A call for applications for the position will be distributed to all UMW faculty who will be encouraged to submit applications or nominations. The Provost will convene and chair a search committee that will review applications, conduct interviews, and make the selection. All details of University Policy D.6.8 (“Faculty Special Assignments to Part-Time Administrative Roles”) will be strictly adhered to as the selection process is conducted.

QEP Administrative Assistant: Position Description

Position Details: This is a part-time wage position, reporting to the QEP / First-Year Seminar Director.

Duties:

- Provides administrative assistance and support in all areas as needed by the University's QEP Director, including handling financial responsibilities as required by the Office of Budget and Finance;
- Assists with the management and tracking of the QEP budget;
- Purchases supplies and materials required by the QEP;
- Assists with the organization and conduct of QEP faculty development workshops;
- Maintains the QEP Program web site;
- Assists with the production and dissemination of all necessary communication about the QEP, as instructed by the QEP Director;
- Assists with the development of required SACS QEP reports;
- Assists with the implementation QEP assessment activities;
- Performs other QEP related duties as necessary and as assigned by the QEP Director.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree preferred. Significant computer expertise required, to include the suite of Microsoft Office applications, and experience/familiarity with publishing materials to web environments. Strong writing, proofreading/editing skills required. Excellent oral communication skills required. Strong organizational skills required. Ability to work under deadline pressure and to manage multiple tasks simultaneously preferred. Experience working in higher education environments preferred.

Selection Process: The position will be advertised through the UMW Office of Human Resources. The QEP / First-Year Seminar Director will convene and chair a search committee to review applications, conduct interviews, and make the final selection.

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