

Quality Enhancement Plan

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Executive Summary

Western Carolina University

Western Carolina University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, has a current student enrollment of almost 8,900 students. Established in 1889, the university offers more than 120 undergraduate and 50 graduate programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, education, business, engineering, and health professions. WCU is located in Cullowhee in western North Carolina, near the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains.

The Quality Enhancement Plan

1. Overview

Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at Western Carolina University initiates and enhances connections among existing programs to create a more holistic approach to educating students. WCU faculty and staff recognize that a major challenge of higher education is the need for students to synthesize their curricular and co-curricular college experiences. The QEP uses *synthesis* – the ability to integrate knowledge from different areas into an original whole – as the driving framework for teaching and learning. This emphasis on synthesis enhances students' educational journey and helps prepare them for life beyond college. Many students view their courses and co-curricular experiences as isolated activities to be approached in check-list fashion. The QEP fosters synthesis across the disciplines, coordinating curricular and co-curricular experiences to facilitate students' development of a clearer purpose at the university. The plan's implementation will impact academics, residential life, service learning, student leadership, study abroad, and career planning/education. The outcome of the plan will be students who are intentional participants in their own educational journey.

2. Learning Goals/Outcomes of the QEP

The overarching learning goal of the QEP is one where students will synthesize knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning. Specifically, students will:

1. Identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations;
2. Modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences; and
3. Recognize the synthesis of their university experiences and evaluate those experiences relative to their future education and career goals.

3. Implementation

The successful implementation of the QEP will rely on a coordinated university effort centered on the principles of synthesis. The key elements of the plan's implementation are:

1. The creation of a QEP oversight structure that will implement, coordinate, and monitor the plan;
2. The development of a pilot study that will enable the university to implement, assess, and fund the QEP as it expands over time;
3. An enhancement of the services offered by the Coulter Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to enable faculty and staff through training to integrate the QEP into their teaching and university work;
4. An integration of the synthesis concepts into admissions, orientation, and other early academic/co-curricular services offered to students;
5. The coordination of advising, service learning, international programs, undergraduate research, and career education through the synthesis concept; and
6. The development of the "Education Briefcase": an electronic portal through which students will be able to interact with faculty, advisors, and career counselors; it is the literal manifestation of the student's learning plan.

Conclusion

Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at Western Carolina University intends to diminish barriers that inhibit students' abilities to identify and benefit from the interrelationships of their curricular and co-curricular experiences. The plan's knowledge base is derived from research on learning conducted by Bloom and his successors (1956) and reflected in his taxonomy of learning and D. A. Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning. The plan also incorporates many precepts presented in *Learning Reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience* (Keeling, 2004), *Learning reconsidered 2: A practical guide to implementing a campus-wide focus on the student experience* (Keeling, 2006), and *Greater Expectations: A new vision for learning as a nation goes to college* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002).

Quality Enhancement Plan

Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at Western Carolina University

Introduction

Western Carolina University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) identifies *synthesis*—the ability to integrate seemingly unrelated parts of experience from different areas into an original whole—as the driving framework for teaching and learning. Western's plan will connect undergraduate academics, advising, residential living, service learning, student leadership development, and career orientation so that students will explore, discover, and strengthen their sense of educational purpose. A coordinated, intentional university effort to assist undergraduate students with synthesizing their university experiences will equip them with the intellectual and experiential skills necessary to make more informed decisions about their lives and careers. The QEP calls for undergraduates, with guidance from faculty mentors and advisors, to apply the principles of synthesis and to develop a path (conceptual framework) for their university experience. The plan will commence with a focused pilot study that will allow gradual, careful expansion.

Introduction to the principles of synthesis will begin for students with recruitment and orientation activities. Content in promotional materials used in recruitment, presentations during orientation, and discussions in early curricular and co-curricular experiences will underscore for undergraduates the importance of synthesis in the university experience. Beginning in 2008, students in the pilot program will learn the foundational skills and concepts necessary for synthesis through coursework, advising,

and other venues. Mentored reflection leading to the learning outcomes identified in the QEP will begin in specially designed sections of USI 130, the university's transition course. As sophomores, juniors, and seniors, students will build on these foundations with continued mentored reflection in a sequence of specially enhanced courses within the major. Student reflection and artifacts created for the Education Briefcase will continue the synthesis of the university experience as students make key decisions, such as choice of major, career path, or graduate school. Through the course experiences as well as professional and academic advising, undergraduates will be encouraged to participate in activities that foster synthesis: service learning opportunities, WE LEAD (a program that links desired liberal studies outcomes with student leadership development), undergraduate research, study abroad programs, residential life programs, and cooperative (co-op) education and internships. Students in the QEP pilot will be encouraged to make culminating, public presentations that synthesize the university experience and career/graduate school plans as part of the capstone experience.

The Need for Synthesis at WCU

The National Picture

Western Carolina University selected synthesis as a focus for its QEP because too often college students fail to integrate their individual collegiate experiences into a coherent whole that leads to understanding, direction, and ultimately, a career. Colleges and universities have attempted an extensive variety of programs and techniques to address this failure. While changes in curricula, advising, pedagogy, student life, and other areas have each in their own right led to some improvement, no single approach has produced significant improvement. Conversely, we believe that the problem is a result of

the disjointed approach to education that most students experience. As Derek Bok (2006) observes in *Our Underachieving Colleges*, compartmentalizing curricular and co-curricular experiences is a problem “because student experiences inside the classroom and out are often too closely intertwined to be kept separate” (p. 53). Undergraduates who fail to synthesize their experiences tend to view their courses and co-curricular activities as isolated events and fall short of making the holistic and purposeful connections necessary to define their real world application to other related, yet disparate events.

The committee’s identification of the disconnected experiences of undergraduates and the proposed QEP were affirmed by the January, 2007 online report from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect.” “The undergraduate experience is often a fragmented landscape of general education, concentration, electives, co-curricular activities, and for many students ‘the real world’ beyond campus,” said Mary Huber, who co-directed the project. “An emphasis on integrated learning can help undergraduates find ways to put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that will prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional and civic life.” The objectives of this recent report nearly mirror the overarching goals the QEP Committee established in 2005.

The development of the Quality Enhancement Plan at Western Carolina University incorporated important research conducted for *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002), *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-wide Focus on the Student*

Experience (Keeling, 2004), and *Learning Reconsidered 2: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (Keeling, 2006). *Greater Expectations* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002) discusses the “misalignment of high school work with college entry expectations,” including the lack of any formal or informal exposition of why college-bound high school students should be prepared for the interactive or holistic approach to higher education (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002, p. 13). Furthermore, this disconnect is often repeated in college: students typically complete a list of courses while making no connection between the courses and they participate in extracurricular activities that shed little or no light on the importance of an integrated college experience. This lack of coherence in curricula and programs is underscored by the “absence of a plan for connected learning,” so that students often matriculate without understanding the relationships that exist between all aspects of their college experience (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002, p. 16). *Greater Expectations* outlines existing barriers to meeting the goals of higher education in the 21st Century and proposes important recommendations to meet those goals. Western Carolina University’s QEP embraces the desire proposed in *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2004) to create a university experience for students that is “a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other” (p. 18).

Learning Theory and Research Support for the QEP

A challenge exists in higher education as it pertains to life or career-based education—in particular, how an institution of higher education can build upon well-

established pedagogical strategies and help students intentionally integrate their exploration of life and career-based choices. The QEP will function as the framework for infusing synthesis intentionally and systematically within the broader curricular and co-curricular frameworks.

The notion of synthesis is derived in part from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956). The taxonomy classifies objectives and skills that educators establish for student learning according to levels within affective, psychomotor, and cognitive domains.

Synthesis is here defined as the putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole. This is a process of working with elements, parts, etc., and combining them in such a way as to constitute a pattern or structure not clearly there before. Generally this would involve a recombination of parts of previous experience with new material, reconstructed into a new and more or less well-integrated whole. This is the category in the cognitive domain which most clearly provides for creative behavior on the part of the learner. However, it should be emphasized that this is not completely free creative expression since generally the student is expected to work within the limits set by particular problems, materials, or some theoretical and methodological framework. [The student's] efforts should yield a product – something that can be observed through one or more of the senses and which is clearly more than the materials he began to work with. It is to be expected that a problem which is classified as a task primarily involving synthesis will also require all of the previous categories [comprehension, application, analysis] to some extent. (p. 162)

Our emphasis on synthesis builds on D. A. Kolb's model (1984) of experiential learning. Other models that have influenced this plan include the constructivist learning model of Lawson (1989), Vygotsky's model as framed by Moll (1990), and the scaffolded knowledge integration (SKI) framework developed by Linn, (1995). Kolb's framework organizes those instructional activities that best organize synthesis into four areas: reflective observation, active experimentation, concrete experience, and abstract

conceptualization (Kolb, 1994; Svinicki, 1990). Kolb's (1994) model of experiential learning focuses on the preparation of students for lifelong learning. It also values a *learner-centered approach* to assessment that is contextual or goal driven so the educator can accommodate the unique needs, goals, and learning styles of the student. Our plan will focus on pedagogical strategies or other alternate instructional techniques that foster the integration of the broader learning experience within the context of application and societal factors – academic and co-curricular experiences need to interact with real-life experiences.

Greater Expectations and previously cited works highlight the changing landscape of the American work place – more global in nature, more reliant on “creative problem-solving, team work, and adaptability,” and heavily dependent on high-level intellectual skills, such as evaluation, synthesis, analysis, and technological prowess (p. 6). Colleges and universities also are undergoing a metamorphosis as they try to meet their rapidly multiplying missions in an increasingly complicated society. Compounding this change are the outcomes and expectations for higher education that are desired by different constituents. High school and college students believe that completing a curriculum will prepare them for a career and advancement within that career. Employers, on the other hand, expect to hire employees who are not only trained for jobs, but who are able to “perform consistently well, communicate effectively, think analytically, help solve problems, work collegially in diverse teams, and use relevant skills of the profession” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002, p. 8). Similarly, policymakers are interested in meeting local and regional needs for economic development and the workforce. Faculty members expect students to be active learners

in their educational journey, to achieve greater intellectual understanding, and to master knowledge specific to their disciplines. They also expect students to be effective communicators and active contributors to society.

The Situation at WCU

Student Perspective

WCU baseline data, outlined below, indicate that students who persist at the university are satisfied with their academic and co-curricular activities. However, WCU's low retention and graduation rates (compared to UNC peers) suggest that students need to connect these experiences, which will facilitate their learning, and develop a plan that will take them through the university experience and its key decision points (selection of a major, co-curricular involvement) to degree completion and a career or graduate school.

Western Carolina University routinely collects and analyzes information on current students, alumni, and faculty with a variety of institutional, system, and national surveys. The Quality Enhancement Plan Committee reviewed this information as well as institutional and national trend data, to identify the area(s) that would ultimately become the focus for the QEP. The surveys and significant results, as well as data on retention and graduation rates, are detailed below.

The surveys administered by organizations external to WCU are:

- 1) Transition to College Inventory (TCI)
- 2) Your First College Year Survey (YFCY)
- 3) National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- 4) Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

The surveys administered by Western Carolina University are:

- 1) Freshman Surveys
- 2) Sophomore Institutional Evaluation Surveys
- 3) Graduating Senior Surveys, and
- 4) Faculty Survey on Technology

A recent analysis of these multiple measures of student achievement, student and faculty perceptions, and institutional performance, generated significant findings related to student learning expectations and outcomes and the learning environment at Western Carolina University. These findings are detailed below.

Administered to all first-time freshmen at Western in Fall 2004, the Transition to College Inventory (TCI) (http://planning.wcu.edu/Assessment/Surveys/exec_summ_tci.pdf) underscored the first-year students desire to pursue an undergraduate education to launch a career (99%) and possibly prepare for graduate school (79%). Despite this strong desire, only 45% had decided on a career path at the time the inventory was administered. This finding presents an opportunity for the university to assist students with this important decision.

The 2004 administration of the Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey (http://planning.wcu.edu/Assessment/Surveys/YFCY_Survey_Results.pdf), a national survey developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), revealed that first year WCU students were more satisfied with the amount of faculty contact they experienced, opportunities for community service, relevance of coursework to every day life, and overall college experience, than students at other colleges and universities. However, of the WCU freshman class, 45% of females, and 47% of males, reported that

orientation did not prepare them for life at WCU. Approximately 33% of entering first-year students reported declaring a major during summer orientation, as compared to 29% who had not declared a major at the end of their first year; the remaining 15% and 14% reported declaring a major by the end of the Fall semester, and during the Spring semester, respectively. Forty-four percent reported receiving guidance and advice about their educational program from a professor, and a significant number of males (67%) indicated that they were concerned about life after college. In sum, the survey indicated that while students felt good about the academic experience early on, more program and career direction is needed in the first year.

Second-year students rate career services at WCU highly—this is clearly a program the QEP can build upon by introducing it to students earlier in their university experience. The 2004 Sophomore Institutional Evaluation (<http://planning.wcu.edu/Assessment/Surveys/Sophomore/SophSurv2004.htm>) was completed by 47% of Western sophomores, 94% of whom responded that opportunities for career assistance were good or excellent and 81% of whom rated overall career-related services as good or excellent. Both indicators reflected an increase from 77% in 2000. Ninety-eight percent indicated that faculty efforts to set high expectations for student learning were good or excellent and 91% reported that faculty members were good or excellent at encouraging them to be actively involved in learning, an increase of six points from 2000.

WCU participated in the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), for first and fourth year students in 2001, 2004, and 2006 [results are available at <http://www.wcu.edu/assessment/surveys.html>.] The NSSE data¹ illustrate

¹ NSSE data reported here are from 2006, earlier data can be found at

that while most students (87% of first year students and 85% of seniors) evaluated their experience at WCU as good or excellent, students reported mixed results related to items that track closely to those behaviors we hope to impact with our QEP. Almost half (46%) of first year students and nearly one third (30%) of seniors reported, for example, that they only sometimes or never put together ideas from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions. Almost 60% of first year and nearly half (47%) of seniors reported that they only sometimes or never talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor. One third of first-year students and one quarter of seniors reported that coursework emphasized synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences only very little or some of the time. Twenty percent of both first year students and seniors reported that they had not yet decided or did not plan to participate in an experiential learning activity such as a practicum, co-op experience, field experience or clinical assignment during their college career. Additionally, almost 2/3 of first year students and nearly half of seniors reported that they had not yet decided or did not plan to participate in a culminating educational experience such as a capstone course or senior project.

The internal Graduating Senior surveys were also very useful.

[\http://planning.wcu.edu/Assessment/Surveys/seniorsvy0506.htm;

<http://planning.wcu.edu/Assessment/Surveys/seniorsvy0304.htm>]. Completed by 56% of

graduates during the 2005-2006 academic year, once again the data showed that WCU

has an excellent faculty and staff to build upon but that WCU graduates still under-

perform in terms of beginning careers in comparison to national averages. The data

revealed that 91% of the seniors rated WCU faculty as good or excellent in encouraging

<http://www.wcu.edu/assessment/surveys.html>.

them to be actively involved in their learning, and the same percentage of seniors reported that WCU faculty, in general, were good or excellent at encouraging student-faculty interaction, inside and outside of the classroom. Of the graduating students who reported using career services, 77% rated their experiences as good or excellent, and again approximately the same percentage perceived that the resources available to them (career and internship information) were good or excellent. Seventy percent reported that access to employment opportunities and assistance with resume preparation was good or excellent. Of these same graduating seniors, 25% were unemployed at graduation, up from 23% the preceding year, and 27% had already accepted a job. Of the latter group, 74% indicated that the job was in their major field of study (96% felt that the overall quality of instruction in their major courses was excellent or good, as compared to 89% who rated the overall quality of instruction as good or excellent).

In a recent National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) study, an average of 49.8% of graduates for the 2003-2004 academic year had jobs at the time of commencement, approximately 22% higher than reported by Western graduating seniors (NACE 2004 Career Services Survey). Only eighteen percent of those surveyed at WCU planned to pursue graduate studies.

Faculty Perspective

Supplemental to the NSSE study, the first administration of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was conducted at WCU in Spring, 2006. Results of the FSSE can be found at <http://www.wcu.edu/assessment/FSSE2006.htm> and a comparison of the 2006 NSSE and FSSE results are located at <http://www.wcu.edu/assessment/NSSE-FSSE2006Comparisons.htm>. The FSSE results

reveal strong underlying support for the primary initiatives we plan to address with the QEP. Eighty-five percent of faculty, for example, reported that it was important or very important for undergraduates to participate in experiential learning activities such as practica, co-op experiences, study abroad, etc. Eighty-one percent of faculty felt it was important or very important for undergraduates to complete a culminating senior experience. FSSE data also reveal where we can achieve substantive improvements with the QEP initiatives. For example, most faculty (more than 75%) reported spending very little time (four hours or less) in a typical seven-day week working with students on activities other than coursework or in other interactions with students outside of the classroom. Faculty teaching lower division courses reported that less than 25% of students talked with them at least once about career plans. Over half (53%) of faculty teaching lower division courses and 43% of faculty teaching upper division courses considered putting together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions to be either not important or only somewhat important. Similarly, 60% of faculty teaching lower division courses and 51% of faculty teaching upper division courses structure those courses only very little or some so that students learn and develop their understanding of themselves.

A faculty survey dealing with technology use conducted at WCU in 2002 (http://planningwcu.edu/assessment/surveys/faculty_tech_2002.html <http://planningwcu.edu/assessment/surveys/faculty_tech_2002.html>) indicated an academic culture that would support the innovation of the QEP's Education Briefcase. Approximately 60% of faculty indicated that interactions between the faculty member and his or her students increased as a result of incorporating technology into teaching. Fifty percent of

the faculty who responded to the survey reported that active or engaged learning opportunities increased as a result of incorporating technology into their classes, and 42% felt their expectations of students performance increased as well. Finally, 46% of faculty reported that their teaching effectiveness increased because of computer technology.

Retention and Graduation Rates

The data cited above suggest that academic and co-curricular programs in place are working favorably for undergraduates at WCU. However, the survey results also revealed some weakness in student academic and career planning. In light of this weakness, it is not surprising that the university needs to improve in terms of retention and graduation rates. In a recent comparison of institutions designated as peers of Western Carolina University used by the WCU Office for Institutional Research and Planning, the graduation rate for Western students was 48.9%, compared with the peer group average of 53.9% [<http://planning.wcu.edu/peers/summary%202006.xls>]. Additional comparisons of peer institutions selected by NSSE based on our Carnegie Classification and of institutions that were self-selected by our decision to be part of the American Democracy Project (ADP) consortium are included in Table 1.

Table 1: College Retention Rates by Carnegie and American Democracy Project Peers

Fall 2006 Data		
<u>Institution</u>	<u>Retention Rate</u> <u>- F05-F06</u>	<u>Graduation Rate</u> <u>(6 year)</u>
WCU	70.9%	47.3%
Average	70.7	45.6
Carnegie Peers:		
Central Missouri State U.	68.0%	45.0%
Central Washington U.	79.1%	51.6%
Georgia College & State U.	69.0%	30.0%
Montclair State U.	72.0%	44.6%
Southern Connecticut State U.	67.0%	39.0%
Southern Illinois U. - Edwardsville	64.0%	63.4%

U. of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	76.0%	46.0%
ADP Peers:		
Fort Hays State University	66.5%	50.0%
Indiana University-South Bend	62.1%	21.0%
Indiana University Kokomo	58.0%	22.0%
The Richard Stockton College of NJ	81.4%	62.3%
University of Northern Iowa	81.4%	65.2%
University of South Carolina Aiken	60.2%	60.2%
Western Kentucky University	72.0%	44.6%
Average	68.8	46.4

Although WCU does not stand out negatively in the above peer group comparisons, the university is near the bottom of the 16-campus University of North Carolina system in terms of retention and graduation, as seen in the Table 2.

Table 2: UNC Retention and Graduation Rates, 2004-2005

UNC Retention/Graduate Rates (Fall 2004-05)			
<i>Ranked by retention rate</i>			
University	Retention Rate	4-Yr Graduation Rate	6-Yr Graduation Rate
UNC-CH	96.5	70.7	83.7
NCSU	88.7	36.7	71.7
ASU	85.8	37.1	64.0
UNCW	83.2	41.5	63.5
UNCC	78.7	26.4	48.7
UNCG	77.4	26.9	51.0
UNCA	76.4	33.2	53.1
ECU	75.9	25.5	54.4
NCCU	75.9	22.8	44.9
FSU	75.4	15.7	42.2
WSSU	75.3	20.2	47.9
ECSU	74.7	28.1	49.1
NCSA	73.9	46.6	57.0
NCA&T	72.5	20.1	39.5
UNCP	72.3	14.7	34.9
WCU	70.9	22.5	47.3
Average	73.72	30.54	53.30

Retention and graduation rate data suggest that undergraduates at WCU--despite good academic and co-curricular programs--still do not persist or graduate at a rate the student responses to individual programs would suggest. The QEP will encourage students to link these various programs and experiences into a coherent learning plan—a pathway toward intentional learning and matriculation. The QEP’s learning goals were designed to foster the development and completion of such a learning plan.

Learning Outcomes

Western’s QEP will encourage students to align their disjointed experiences into a coherent whole that has focus and direction. Students will be expected to apply synthesis throughout the university experience, from understanding as a first-year student to evaluation as a graduating student. Specific, measurable learning outcomes occur through the student’s on-going compilation of the Education Briefcase and the collection of data related to the student outcomes in the QEP pilot USI and major-level courses.

The overarching learning goal of synthesis learning is for students to integrate knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences and become intentional participants in their own learning and career plans. Specifically, students will:

1. identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations;
2. modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences; and
3. recognize the synthesis of their university experiences and evaluate those experiences relative to their future education and career plans.

Please see Table 3: Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning.

Table 3: Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning

Overarching Goal: In synthesis learning, students will integrate knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning and career plans..

What are we trying to effect in our students? (Learning Goals)	What do intentional learners do/know/value? (Learning Outcomes)	How will they demonstrate what they know/can do/value? (Key behaviors/activities)
Understanding of Self	Students will identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a realistic self-appraisal • Evaluate and explore career opportunities • Develop career, education, and personal goals • Develop preliminary career and degree plans
Flexibility/Versatility	Students will modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and participate in co-curricular experiences consistent with their goals and interests • Select a major (and concentration, minor, and, if necessary, a second major) and develop a degree plan • Reflect on what has been most useful, interesting, and challenging in their academic and co-curricular experiences • Refine their career and degree plans relative to new knowledge and skills
Integrated Learning	Students will recognize the synthesis of their university experiences and evaluate those experiences relative to their future education and career plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examine their self-appraisal • Articulate the value of setting goals • Reflect on their university experiences • Articulate how those experiences furthered their goals • Make connections between their academic experiences, co-curricular experiences, and their future plans • Prepare a career package (cover letters, personal statements, resumes) for employment or graduate school

Development of the QEP

Conceptualization of the Plan

Two significant events occurred during the 2004-2005 academic year that galvanized the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan at Western Carolina University. The first, a five-hour leadership retreat held on September 23, 2004 was attended by more than 100 faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Hosted by Chancellor John Bardo and Troy Barksdale, then Director of University Planning at WCU, this retreat introduced the concept of the Quality Enhancement Plan as an important new element of the SACS reaffirmation process and it opened discussions on potential topics. The retreat agenda included four presentations by three administrators external to Western who were knowledgeable about the new SACS reaffirmation process and the QEP in particular: Ephraim Schecter, formerly director of University Planning and Analysis at North Carolina State University (Schecter, 2004a; Schecter, 2004b), Houston Davis at Austin Peay State University (Davis, 2004), and Teresa Summers from Louisiana State University (Summers, 2004). Presentations by the director of WCU's 1996 SACS Self-Study, Frank Prochaska (Prochaska, 2004), and Troy Barksdale (Barksdale, 2004) framed the context for discussions by providing information about WCU's mission, the institution's past and current characteristics, and future challenges and opportunities. More than 150 potential topics were generated during the brainstorming session facilitated by Newt Smith, then Chair of the Faculty. These topics were subsequently clustered into 23 general themes and used later in the QEP development process (WCU-SACS Leadership Retreat, 2004).

The University Mission

The second major initiative impacting the QEP's development was Chancellor Bardo's charge to the University's Strategic Planning Committee to review the institutional mission and to make recommendations for a revised mission statement. As a focused growth institution² within the UNC system, Western encounters many challenges as well as opportunities that significantly impact the institution's ability to serve our constituents and effectively fulfill our mission. A thorough review of the current mission, last approved in 2002, and the proposal of a new mission, accompanying vision, core values, strategic directions and goals resulted from the work of the Strategic Planning Committee during the 2005-2006 Academic Year (Western Carolina University, 2006a; Western Carolina University, 2006b).

Western Carolina University's revised mission statement provides direction for the institution to prepare students to be successful academically and personally through opportunities for engaged learning, experiential education, and service. The most recent review of the mission, which took place during the 2005-2006 academic year, emphasizes the importance of integrating the whole college experience:

Western Carolina University creates engaged learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research and service through residential, distance education and international experiences. The university focuses its academic programs, educational outreach, research and creative activities, and cultural opportunities to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in the region, state, and nation. (Western Carolina University, 2006a)

² Focused Growth Institutions – seven public institutions in North Carolina identified in 1998 as having excess physical capacity and smaller enrollments agreed to pursue aggressive enrollment growth of 20 percent or more by 2003. The institutions received special funding and support provided by the General Assembly and the UNC Office of the President, to develop comprehensive enrollment growth plans, improve instruction, develop new academic programs, promote greater operating efficiencies, enhance development offices, strengthen facilities management capabilities, and reduce additional stresses on campus services associated with enrollment growth.

The mission of the university is based on its espoused core values:

The university prepares students to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens in a global community. By working independently, collaboratively, and in teams, graduates of the University should demonstrate:

- Integrity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and both written and oral communication skills;
- Proficient and responsible use of information and technology;
- Appreciation for the arts, sciences, humanities, and technologies;
- Intellectual competence and professional and technical skills; and
- Continued personal development and lifelong learning.

To encourage and protect the free and open interchange of ideas, the university strives to provide experiences that foster the development of respect among all its members toward the larger communities of which it is a part. Accordingly, the University encourages its students, faculty, and staff to display the following traits of citizenship:

- behavior characterized by honesty, integrity, and responsibility;
- service to others;
- awareness of and sensitivity to the concerns of diverse people and cultures; and
- commitment to stewardship of the natural and cultural environment (Western Carolina University, 2006b).

The revision of the mission statement and the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan are connected in several ways. First, several faculty, staff, and administrators who served on the QEP and Strategic Planning Committees injected relevant information to each process. Second, early in the process and several times thereafter, the Director of the SACS Review met with the Strategic Planning Committee to discuss the relationships between institutional mission, strategic planning, budgeting, assessment, and the QEP. Third, several documents were used jointly to guide and inform both processes: the internal and external scanning documents produced for the revision of the mission in 2002 and 2005 (Western Carolina University Strategic Planning Committee, 2001a; 2001b; 2005a; 2005b); the list of potential QEP Topics produced at

the Leadership Retreat held on September 23, 2004 (WCU-SACS Leadership Retreat, 2004); University Fact books; and various assessment results presented previously.

Quality Enhancement Plan Committee

The Quality Enhancement Plan Committee, composed of faculty, staff, administrators and a student, was established in December, 2004, with input from the Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellors, SACS Director, Deans, and some Department Heads and Directors (Burton, 2006). Letters of invitation to serve on the QEP Committee were distributed in early January, 2005. The SACS Director then trained committee members in the SACS reaffirmation and QEP processes in February 2005 (Burton, 2005). Co-chairs Brian Railsback, Professor of English and Dean of the Honors College, and Scott Philyaw, Associate Professor of History, were selected in early March by the Provost and the Director of the SACS Review and the committee met for the first time on March 22, 2005 to formulate strategies for developing the QEP. The QEP Committee met throughout the summer and fall of 2005 to review and refine the QEP topic, solicit input, and to update the university community on the potential topics (WCU QEP Committee, 2006a).

Selection of the QEP Topic

During the final weeks of the Spring Semester, 2005, the QEP Committee issued campus-wide emails about the QEP process and all members of the Quality Enhancement Plan Committee conducted visits to more than 30 academic, extracurricular, and student groups, as well as WCU's Board of Trustees, Staff Forum, University Advisory Council (UAC), Council of Deans, and Faculty Senate, and student Honors College Board to

discuss the concept of the QEP, and to solicit ideas on potential areas of focus for enhancing student learning (WCU QEP Committee, 2005b). The unit discussions were based on guiding principles established by SACS (WCU QEP Committee, 2005c) and those discussions resulted in the development of a master document that reflects the collective wisdom, and professional judgment of faculty, students, and staff, administrators, alumni, and Board of Trustees members (WCU QEP Committee, 2005d). The QEP Committee synthesized the master document into 20 potential QEP topics after eliciting feedback from the university community (WCU QEP Committee, 2005e). Throughout the process of refining the topic, the recurring themes of student and faculty engagement, community service and experiential learning, study abroad experiences, and application of knowledge emerged.

The working theme that guided the work of the committee in the summer of 2005 was: *From students to educated citizens: learning through engagement (enhancing student learning by application of knowledge, experiential education, and professional endeavor in a regional and global community)*. In October, 2005, after input from the university community, the QEP Committee proposed the following revision for Western's QEP: *Academic Engagement Inside and Outside the University (AEIOU)*. Subcommittees were formed to investigate four areas identified as keys to implementing AEIOU: academic and co-curricular programs, service learning, faculty development, and careers/internships/co-ops. The subcommittees' charge to connect the classroom or on-campus experience with the wider community was achieved by raising and addressing the following questions for each of the four areas:

1. How does this engagement activity positively impact student learning?

2. How can this impact be assessed in terms of student learning outcomes?
3. How does this activity relate to the university mission and strategic plan?
4. What resources are needed to increase positive student learning in relation to this engagement activity?

In November 2005, Dr. Ann Chard, the SACS Liaison from the Commission on Colleges for Western Carolina University visited the campus to provide feedback on our progress on the SACS Review and to respond to questions from members of the SACS Committees, faculty, and administrators. Dr. Chard's feedback was clear regarding the QEP: the current version was too broad and unnecessarily complicated. The QEP Committee revised its earlier draft after a series of discussions on the real purpose of the desired outcomes of the QEP. Building upon these revisions the Provost, SACS Director, and QEP Co-chairs identified synthesis as a potential focusing element. The QEP Committee continued its review and revision through several meetings as the early stages of the synthesis model evolved into the present topic. The implementation plan for the QEP, presented in the next section, was developed by a subcommittee of the QEP Committee.

Implementation of the QEP

Western Carolina University's Quality Enhancement Plan is an enhancement of several on-going campus operations coordinating heretofore disjointed aspects of the students' academic and co-curricular activities. Relating learning outcomes to synthesis and a developing campus-wide attention to synthesis learning comprise the enhancement. Under the coordinating authority of the Office of the Provost and the QEP Implementation Committee, the QEP links several campus support offices that have traditionally been treated as separate in mission, services offered, and administrative structure. As the implementation of the QEP integrates the work of these various campus offices it will serve as an example of the kind of synthesis thinking and learning we aim to foster among our students.

Intentionality will be reinforced through planning and reflection. The longitudinal and complimentary nature of these activities will anchor our students' increased understanding and appreciation for synthesis. University faculty and staff will systematically alert students to various synthesis experiences; educate about the value of synthesis; encourage student participation; and, through student reflection, deepen understanding.

The areas that will initially experience the greatest impact of the QEP are student orientation, advising, academic departments that volunteer to be in the pilot study, the faculty center, and career services. As students progress through the university, the key areas of student recruitment/orientation (introduction of synthesis), advising and special courses (reinforcing the synthesis concept), and career services (applying synthesis learning to student plans at graduation and beyond) will be critical. The Myron L. Coulter Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will serve a central role in training

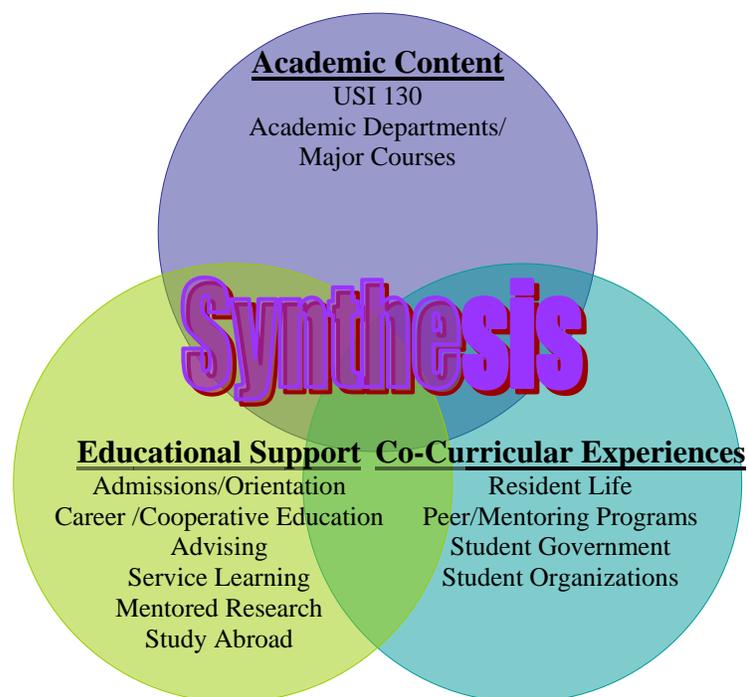
faculty and staff on the integration of synthesis activities within coursework, advising, and other departmental activities; the center will also continually introduce the plan to new faculty members as the pilot study expands to several departments or other units.

There are four key components for the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan:

- I. Oversight of the Plan
- II. Training of Faculty and Staff
- III. Learning Outcomes
- IV. QEP Pilot Study

I. Oversight of the Plan

Administrative oversight of the QEP will be under the direction of the Office of the Provost. A Project Manager for the QEP (half-time faculty or administrative staff position, reporting to the Provost) will chair a Quality Enhancement Plan Implementation Committee and will appoint chairs for subcommittees that emerge from the larger group. The entire QEP Implementation Committee will meet at least once a semester, or more frequently as needed. The figure below represents campus constituencies that tie into the synthesis plan and that will be represented on the Implementation Committee.



Working with the Provost, academic deans, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate, the

Project Manager will form a committee consisting of:

- Director of Assessment
- Director of Institutional Research and Planning
- Chair of the Faculty Senate or designee
- One faculty representative from three of the academic colleges (Applied Sciences, Business, and Education/Allied Professions); three faculty representatives from the College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty representatives will be appointed by the Provost in consultation with the college dean.
- A Student Affairs division representative (Vice Chancellor's appointment)
- Director of the Coulter Faculty Center
- New Faculty Fellow of the Coulter Faculty Center

- Associate CIO, IT Division
- Director of Orientation
- Director of Advising and Student Success
- Director of Career Services
- Director of International Programs
- Coordinator of USI 130
- Two Students (appointed by the QEP Committee)
- Director or Associate Director of Service Learning
- A representative from Residential Living appointed by the Director of Residence Life
- A representative from the Graduate School appointed by the Graduate Dean.

The Project Manager and the members of the committee may opt to alter the size of the committee as they deem necessary. The committee will advise and assist the Chancellor and Provost on the QEP implementation and oversight. Specific areas of emphasis by the committee include:

- Faculty and staff training in preparation for the QEP.
- Phasing in the QEP and meeting deadlines set forth in the plan.
- Monitoring the use of resources and the budget set forth in the plan.
- Assessing the implementation and success of the plan.
- Recommending adjustments to the plan as a result of ongoing assessment.
- Preparing for the next SACS review of the plan, including writing the five-year Impact Report, based on assessment of the Plan's implementation.
- Creation of a Training/Resource Manual and coordination of training activities with the Coulter Faculty Center.

The committee will establish sub-committees in the following areas:

- QEP IT Services Sub-Committee: charged with working with the Implementation Committee and specifically creating and monitoring the Education Briefcase, co-curricular transcript, assessment tools, QEP Web site, and other aspects of the QEP requiring technological solutions/infrastructure.
- QEP Assessment Sub-Committee: charged with assessing the implementation and success of the plan, and making recommendations for improving the plan.
- The Project Manager will establish additional sub-committees as necessary.

II. Training of Faculty and Staff

The role of the Myron L. Coulter Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will be critical in the implementation of synthesis learning for the QEP. The center's role will

be to assist with faculty/advisor training and the integration of synthesis content and learning activities into syllabi and curricula for specially designed USI and major courses. A curriculum design specialist will be responsible for conducting research, providing resources, and leading training on synthesis. In addition, summer retreats devoted to the QEP (led by selected faculty from an early adopter department) will facilitate the incorporation of synthesis learning into the curriculum. These retreats will be modeled on Faculty Center summer retreats already in place. Faculty workshops and a Faculty Learning Community will be sponsored during the academic year and synthesis-related activities will also be integrated into other Faculty Center events.

In consultation with the QEP Implementation Committee, the Faculty Center will support the:

- development of a training/resource manual based on the QEP for faculty and staff.
- selection of campus personnel who will assist in QEP training.
- emphasis of on-going training of key personnel (such as advisors and new faculty participants as the pilot expands) on the QEP.
- identification of relevant consultants and advisors external to WCU to enhance training efforts.

III. Learning Outcomes

Table 4, WCU's Pathway to Synthesis Learning, illustrates the students' progress through the QEP and the connection of learning outcomes to general timeframes in undergraduate life. The map includes a listing of assessable artifacts related to learning outcomes that would be created under the guidance of course instructors from the first to senior year. Of course, not all traditional undergraduates will follow this path so neatly. However, the process map suggests the typical trend. Following the process map are discussions of key support areas for the QEP, including the Education Briefcase, instructors, advisors, and a variety of support offices across campus.

Table 4: WCU’s Pathway to Synthesis Learning

<i>Overarching learning goal of the QEP:</i> In synthesis learning, students will integrate the knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning and career plans.				
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	F
Learning outcomes	<p>Students will identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations.</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formulate a learning plan - demonstrate synthesis 	<p>Students will modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences.</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connect the academic and student life components of their experience. - refine their learning plan 		<p>Students will recognize the synthesis of their university experiences and evaluate those experiences relative to their future education and career plans.</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate the connections - review and revise their learning plan
Activity (Data Collection Points)	<p>In USI 130, students will be led through prompts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do a realistic self appraisal • write out their life goals (include personal and educational goals) • develop an educational plan to achieve their career/graduate plans • identify career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities. • articulate the relationship between academic and co-curricular experiences. • articulate a rationale for the selection of academic major, co-curricular experiences, and career choices. • Make use of campus resources 	<p>In 200-level major course, students will be led through prompts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-examine their self appraisal • re-examine their life goals • re-examine their educational goals • revise their career plan with an accompanying essay about changes • revise their educational plan with a personal assessment about what has been most useful, most challenging, and most interesting • write a proposal or application for a coop/internship or international experience that incorporates knowledge obtained in a variety of course work and knowledge and experience gained outside class. • participate in coop/internships, study abroad, or service learning activities. 	<p>In 300-level major course, students will be led through prompts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-examine their self appraisal • re-examine their life goals • re-examine their educational goals • revise their career plan with an essay about changes • revise their educational plan with a personal assessment about what has been most useful, most challenging, and most interesting • write a proposal or application for a coop/internship or relevant co-curricular activity that incorporates knowledge obtained in academic work and 	<p>In 400-level major capstone course, students will be led through prompts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare an extended career package for employment or graduate school • re-examine their self appraisal/life goals • revise their career plan with an essay about changes • revise their educational plan with a personal assessment about what has been most useful, most challenging, and most interesting • write an essay about how their beliefs have changed and why • write an essay reflecting and evaluating how their university experience prepares them for post-graduation plans.

			knowledge gained outside class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate in coop/internships or other relevant activities. 	
Assessable artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-appraisals Goal statements Essays on connecting academic/co-curricular experiences, major/minor selection, and career choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal statements Essays on career and educational plans/reflective narratives Reflection statement on Internship/coop experience, study abroad experience, or other co-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal statements Essays on career and educational plans/reflective narratives Internship/coop experience or reflection statement on relevant co-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career package materials Career and educational plans Essays/reflective narratives

The Role of the Education Briefcase

The Education Briefcase (EB) will support the pathway charted above as a collaborative space where students and university personnel share information to facilitate the holistic, personal development of each student’s educational career. The EB will be an electronic portal that supports student planning and reflection mentored by instructors and advisors. Students will use the EB to chart their educational progress, social activities, experiential learning, and future educational/career plans. Advisors and instructors will use the additional information available in the EB to understand more fully the student’s total education to better advise and guide a student through her decision-making processes.

The briefcase will be a repository for sharing learning plans, resumes, academic and co-curricular transcripts, templates, questions and suggestions from the advisor, student reflections/essays on university activities, and other synthesis-related documentation. Access to the student’s EB will be restricted to relevant instructors,

advisors and career counselors, and university personnel assisting in assessing sample briefcases.

The Education Briefcase will be the literal manifestation of the student's learning plan and will include information that reflects the evolution of the student's plan as degree and associated experiential objectives are completed. The EB provides the advisor, student, faculty member, or staff person with information to assist in the formation of a student's educational experience.

Items automatically included in the education briefcase:

- Information on high school activities and interests from each student's application to WCU.
- Information from Orientation's CatWalk on possible majors and other interests.
- Data from the Personality Mosaic for those students who complete it as part of orientation.
- Student papers or other work indicative of students' interests in majors and careers submitted from USI instructors.
- Reports, job descriptions, reflections, and other relevant materials for student internships and co-ops included from Career Services.
- Resumé (to be updated on a regular basis).
- Links to students' co-curricular transcripts, the Leadership Program, and other activities submitted from Students Affairs.
- Students' reflection essays job descriptions, and other documents generated for service learning activities submitted by the Service Learning Department.
- Reflection papers and other documents generated by Study Abroad experiences.
- Students' electronic proposals (and possibly their research papers) as submitted to the Undergraduate Research Expo.
- Notes, questions, feedback and other information for the student submitted by the Advising Center staff.

Students could voluntarily submit other materials germane to their major, minor, or career interests.

The Role of QEP Instructors

The mentored reflection and the instruction necessary for students to begin working in the synthesis concept will occur in the first semester at WCU, through

modified sections of USI. Upon declaring their major, students will take courses in the major that have been modified to accommodate the QEP learning objectives. (Please see the Pilot Study section below). Instructors involved in the QEP, beginning with early adopters in the pilot study, will receive training in the summer before working with students and shorter follow-up training sessions afterward. Early adopter faculty will in turn work with the Faculty Center to train other instructors added as the QEP expands from the pilot study.

While faculty members in 200 and 300-level courses will reinforce the synthesis concept introduced in USI, the 400-level “capstone” experience will be critical. Many WCU programs require some type of culminating academic experience. These include activities as varied as capstone courses, internships, public performances and presentations, research projects, and other activities depending on disciplinary differences. The Faculty Center will support academic programs with resources and training as needed to enhance such capstone experiences in relation to the learning objectives of the QEP. Students will be encouraged to offer a public presentation of the synthesis experience (see Pilot Study section below).

The Role of Advisors

Using the materials collected in the Education Briefcase, professional advisors will confer individually with students (initially, those students in the pilot) about learning plans and the synthesis concept to reinforce the work by instructors in the USI courses. Upon declaration of a major, students will confer with trained major advisors to integrate academic and co-curricular experiences along with other activities that prepare undergraduates for graduation and beyond.

The Role of Co-Curricular and Support Offices

Admissions

As the initial point of contact, Admissions recruiters and counselors will introduce the concept of synthesis to prospective students and their parents, as well as high school and community college faculty and staff. Initially, recruiters will be trained to introduce the synthesis concept to prospects who indicate an interest in a major offered by the early adopter academic departments. Letters and brochures that define the synthesis concept will support this effort.

Orientation

The Orientation Program introduces new students to the college classroom and will set the tone for the enhancement of learning that occurs as a result of promoting synthesis. Orientation staff, including student counselors, faculty, and administrators will introduce the synthesis concept to new students and their parents. The implementation of the QEP will capitalize on existing elements of orientation and will foster the development of new initiatives, such as teaching students to make connections between curricular and co-curricular experiences, providing them with real-life examples of integrated learning and its benefits, and fostering self-awareness by administering career and personality inventories. Special orientation sessions will be arranged for first-year students who indicate an interest in a major offered by an academic department in the QEP pilot project.

Information Technology (IT) Services

Instructors and advisors will use the Education Briefcase to monitor academic and co-curricular progress of students; the QEP IT Services Sub-Committee will monitor progress of the electronic aspects of the plan and coordinate IT support for the EB.

WCU, as part of its technology infrastructure upgrade, is actively creating systems to support the student, faculty, advisor, and career counselor interaction. We anticipate the adoption of Microsoft's Share Point Education Briefcase portal system in conjunction with existing enterprise systems. A new staff position will be created to maintain and manage access to the shared Education Briefcase. Upon full implementation every student will have an Education Briefcase that is accessible by the student, his or her advisor, select faculty members, staff members, and career counselors.

Service Learning

The mission of the Service Learning Department is to promote service learning as a special form of experiential education whereby students engage in organized activities designed to enhance their intellectual, social, and personal development while meeting community needs. Service Learning administrators and faculty fellows will be trained in the principles of synthesis to enhance existing efforts to focus students' attention on integrating academic and community service experiences with career plans. The Service Learning Department currently promotes integrated learning by encouraging and assisting faculty to combine academic goals with civic, social, and career-related goals through the service-learning component of courses. Service Learning faculty fellows assist their faculty colleagues to use service learning reflection effectively. Through structured reflection, students think about, discuss, and document knowledge, skills, attitude change, and accomplishments resulting from service experiences in relation to coursework. This reflection process, already in place, will support the QEP as Service Learning personnel mentor students who create reflection artifacts for the Education Briefcase.

The Service Learning Department will produce a Reflection Manual primarily for faculty use. Detailed reflection procedures, activities, and assessment criteria related to the QEP will be included in the manual.

Undergraduate Research

Mentored research or creative work at the undergraduate level, encouraged at WCU for many years, requires students to synthesize several skills (including research methodology, written communication, and public presentation). Students currently present their research in a variety of local, regional, and national venues including the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. In 2006, WCU was second in the nation in number of presentations at this conference.

Faculty and staff will expect students to participate in mentored research and public presentations in venues such as department symposia, public presentations and local, regional, and national research conferences. The Honors College will continue to encourage and support mentored research by allocating funds to underwrite a campus Undergraduate Research Expo, WCU's participation in the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, the Undergraduate Projects Grant Program, and printing the publication *Imagine* to highlight such endeavors.

Undergraduate research or creative work has a natural connection to the objectives of the QEP as students will be expected to participate in mentored research and connect such activity to the evolving learning plan contained in the Education Briefcase. As more departments are phased into full implementation, there may be an opportunity to modify the existing Undergraduate Expo so students in specially designed capstone courses will have a public venue to present culminating synthesis projects.

Office of International Programs

The Office of International Programs, which has hosted nearly 1,000 students in Study Abroad advising sessions since 2001, is well-prepared to incorporate the synthesis concept in advising meetings with students. International Programs advisors already work closely with study abroad students to ensure that experiences overseas tie back to WCU coursework and student degree plans. Also, in reviewing applicants for study abroad, staff members consider the student's total university experience (courses, major plans, and co-curricular activities).

Career Services

Using the Education Briefcase, counselors in Career Services will guide students in the formation of their career plans and translate those plans into specific outcomes (job or graduate school applications). Students will be able to see how their social and academic activities have prepared them for related job/graduate school opportunities. With guidance, students will be able to create the documents needed (resumes, cover letters, etc.). If this process is begun in the junior year, students will have an opportunity prior to graduation to reflect on and enhance areas that might need additional development.

The co-op/internship opportunity for students is an excellent synthesis activity coordinated by Career Services and selected academic departments. As students participate in a job or activity that is directly related to their major, they have a focused opportunity to draw on their university experiences and apply these to the field. After their experience, students return to school with an understanding of what they need to know and how that knowledge contributes to their educational and career goals.

Advisors, Career Services staff, and department faculty (initially in pilot departments) will encourage students to participate in on- and off-campus internships and

co-ops that support students' academic and career goals. Career counselors will review student reflection essays and employer evaluations and ensure that these artifacts are added to the Education Briefcase.

IV. QEP Pilot Study and Expansion

While the QEP will provide a context for synthesis learning at WCU through faculty, staff, and advisor training—as well as the Education Briefcase—a pilot study will allow phased implementation of the QEP initiatives that is informed by assessment processes and actual student learning in the QEP. Initially, the pilot will serve as a model to assess QEP learning outcomes, evaluate effectiveness of mentored reflection, and evaluate the mentors (department faculty members participating in the pilot). Depending on the assessment of the pilot, the QEP Implementation Committee will make recommendations for expanding or adjusting the model as it moves from the pilot phase to the mainstream. The expansion of participating departments will, in early phases, be voluntary and it is recognized other approaches to synthesis may emerge over time as the Implementation Committee continues to manage the QEP.

The QEP Pilot Study

The pilot study serves several needs identified by the QEP Committee and through feedback from the Chancellor, Provost, Faculty Senate members, and other university constituents.

Table 5: QEP Pilot Model

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
<i>QEP Learning Objective 1:</i> Students identify aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate future goals and aspirations	<i>QEP Learning Objective 2:</i> Students modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from academic and co-curricular experiences	<i>QEP Learning Objectives 2-3:</i> QEP Objective 2, and Students recognize and evaluate the synthesis of university experiences relative to future education and career plans	<i>QEP Learning Objective 3:</i> Students recognize and evaluate the synthesis of university experiences relative to future education and career plans
Course: USI 130 ; fall term for pilot study	Course: 200-level major gateway ; fall term for pilot study	Course: 300-level mid-major course selected by department; fall term for pilot study	Course: 400-level major capstone course ; fall term for pilot study
<i>Structured activities related to QEP Learning Outcomes; students will:</i> *Create Education Briefcase (EB) *Do mentored reflection of the EB (student/instructor conferences) *Write self-appraisal for EB *Write life goals statement (personal, educational, career goals), articulating academic and co-curricular connections for EB *Write rationale for selection of major/minor (EB) *Identify career choice based on assessment of interests, values, and abilities (EB) <i>Assessable artifacts:</i> *Sampling of EBs *Written appraisal and essays	<i>Structured activities related to QEP Learning Outcomes; students will:</i> *Revise Education Briefcase (EB) materials *Evaluate EB materials (student/instructor conferences) *Revise student self-appraisal for EB *Revise life goals statement for EB *Write a proposal or application for a service learning project, internship, study abroad plan, or undergraduate research/creative project (EB) *Write a statement reflecting on the total university experience and how it helped in writing the proposal/application; statement may include reflection on internship, study abroad, service, or research/creative activities already completed (EB) <i>Assessable artifacts:</i> *Sampling of EBs *Revised materials, applications, statements	<i>Structured activities related to QEP Learning Outcomes; students will:</i> *Revise EB materials (self-appraisal, life goals statement) *Evaluate EB materials (student/instructor conferences) *Write or revise proposals or applications as in the 200-level course *Write a statement reflecting on how the university experience to date has enhanced progress toward graduate or career objectives (EB) *Write a statement projecting what university experiences are yet needed to further graduate school or career objectives (EB) <i>Assessable artifacts:</i> *Sampling of EBs *Revised EB materials *Written statements *Evaluations by academic and external evaluators of student internship experiences (if internship is completed)	<i>Structured activities related to QEP Learning Outcomes; students will:</i> *Revise EB materials (final self-appraisal, life goals statement) *Prepare cover letters, resumes, and application materials for graduate school or career (EB) *Present culminating undergraduate research/creative work for public presentation at university or external conferences (EB) *Present “What I Learned, Where I’m Going” (synthesis statement) for the capstone seminar, which synthesizes academic and co-curricular experiences and ties these to graduate/career plans (EB) <i>Assessable artifacts:</i> *Sampling of EBs *Cover letters, resumes, and other materials for graduate/career plans *Culminating research/creative presentation *Synthesis statement/presentation

Time line (first three years)

200(7)8-09:

***Initial department volunteers for pilot study identified (no later than May 2007)**

*QEP Project Manager named (Summer, 2007)

*QEP Implementation Committee formed (Fall 2007)

*Initial faculty members for pilot study are trained in a summer 2008 workshop

*Professional advisors trained in a spring workshop

*Education Briefcase technology in place for three pilot USI courses (no later than July 2008)

*Three special sections of USI 130 taught in fall 2008; these will be populated with first-year students who have indicated/declared a major in the volunteer department

First department in the pilot identifies 200, 300, and 400-level courses for study and modifies curricula in those courses to accommodate QEP learning outcomes (note: QEP learning outcomes are in addition to traditional content learning outcomes)

*Two additional departments volunteer for pilot

Estimated number of student participants for first year: 60-70 first-year students

2009-10:

*Assessment report for USI 130s; six sections taught in fall 2009

*Special 200-level courses taught in fall 2009

*Training of faculty from two new departments proceeds throughout the year

*New departments identify/modify curricula for 200, 300, and 400-level courses for participation

*On-going assessment of USI 130 as more courses are added

*First 200 level courses assessed; report in spring 2009

*Two more departments volunteer for pilot by Spring 2008

*RFP for new approaches to the QEP in early fall 2009; awards made in spring 2010 for implementation in 2010-11

Estimated number of student participants for second year: 120 first-year students; 30 sophomores

2010-11

*Ten sections of USI taught in fall 2010

*Process described above continues with a total of five departments participating

*Three departments offer 200 and 300 courses in fall 2009

*Based on assessment, QEP Implementation Committee creates a standard program from the pilot models; more departments invited to participate

*First alternate model(s) based on grant awards implemented

*Based on assessment, QEP Committee makes recommendations for continuation of the model(s), expansion, adoption by other departments, and projected number of participating departments from 2011 to 2014

Estimated number of student participants for third year: 200 first-year students; 75 sophomores; 45 juniors

Training

Faculty members and department support staff in the volunteer department(s) will all be trained in the QEP in special summer training sessions and sessions throughout the academic year. These will be organized by the Coulter Faculty Center.

Faculty Compensation and Evaluation

*Faculty members will receive a stipend for participation in the summer seminar.

*Faculty members who teach a course in the QEP will receive a research allotment for each course taught (money can be spent on travel, books, or equipment related to professional development).

*Faculty continuation in the program will be guided by feedback of performance administered at the end of each course; the evaluations will be used for *assessment in the QEP only and not for AFE/TPR purposes* although faculty have the option of including QEP feedback in their AFE/TPR documents. Decisions based on the evaluations will be determined by the QEP Implementation Committee (or a designated sub-committee) in consultation with the faculty member.

Conclusion: A Case Study

Another way to look at the implementation of the QEP would be to follow a hypothetical student (let's call her Karen) through the proposed plan.

Karen is introduced to the concepts of synthesis and the WCU Quality Enhancement Plan by an admissions recruiter. She is approached by the recruiter because she has indicated an interest in one of the majors in a department that has volunteered to be an early adopter in the QEP (let's say, English). At her summer orientation, she and her parents are reminded of the QEP concept at a special session and she confirms that she is still interested in being an English major.

In fall 2008, she is enrolled in one of the three specially designed USI sections for English majors. In this one-hour course, the synthesis concept is reinforced and she works with her instructor to create several artifacts for the Education Briefcase related to her learning plan; she begins to think of her university experience—from social activity to coursework—as interconnected. She is assigned a professional advisor who will support what she is learning in USI. She also enrolls in a special section of “Jumpstart” (a

course before the beginning of the term that introduces freshmen to relevant technology at WCU—this non-credit course is already in place, but Karen’s class has been modified to introduce how to use her Education Briefcase). In the spring term, she declares English as her major (consulting with her professional advisor) and then is advised by a QEP-trained advisor in the English Department. She continues to add artifacts to her EB in consultation with her new advisor.

In fall 2009, she enrolls in a special gateway course into the major: English 303 (Introduction to Professional Writing). Along with the regular course content, Karen is encouraged to keep up with her EB (which her instructor periodically reviews) by adding special writing assignments. As she explores activities at the university that reinforce her major and career goals, she becomes interested in Study Abroad and Service Learning. Her instructor directs her to meet with QEP-trained counselors in both offices. Because she plans to be a journalist, she decides to write press releases for a non-profit organization in Sylva (REACH). Meeting with a Study Abroad counselor, she realizes she cannot afford a full year away but she opts into a summer program in Mexico to reinforce her Spanish minor.

In fall 2010, she takes a special section of English 306 (Creative Nonfiction) where the instructor—after reviewing her EB—encourages her to continue her successful service work with REACH of Jackson County. In addition, she works on an assignment in class designed for presentation at the Undergraduate Expo on campus in the spring of 2011. She also submits an abstract to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research but it is not accepted. Her instructor and advisor, reviewing the evolving goals Karen has added to her EB, encourage Karen to go to the Career Center. There, another QEP-trained staff member reviews her EB and together with Karen they decide she

should apply for a summer co-op (English 389). Karen also uses her EB materials to apply for a position with the campus newspaper, the *Western Carolinian*. Given Karen's hope to work for a newspaper in North Carolina, she applies to co-ops in the Charlotte area (her hometown). She finds a co-op with *Charlotte Magazine* and works there throughout the summer of 2011.

Because Karen did a capstone experience with her 389 course, she does not take a QEP course in the fall of 2011. Prompted by the career counselor she has been working with and her department advisor, however, she continues to develop her EB. Karen has already learned that the artifacts generated in the EB form a useful foundation for her job application materials (cover letters, resume, and writing portfolio). Karen focuses her job search on positions with a news desk for a daily paper. She also considers magazines and e-media—thanks to her integrated learning experiences she can easily articulate her qualifications in these related fields. Another complication is her fiancé, Rex, who will soon begin graduate school at the University of South Carolina. Karen would like to be in graduate school as well, but her GPA of 2.89 makes that a dim possibility. Working with her advisor and career counselor, she decides not to graduate in May but instead to take another Engl. 389 course in the summer (putting off graduation until August).

Because of her earlier experiences at the *Charlotte Magazine* and her off and on work for REACH and the *Western Carolinian*, she lands a co-op at *The State* in Columbia, SC. After graduating in August, Karen—now with letters of recommendation from two editors and an excellent portfolio of work developed from her experiences and EB—finds a job as a beginning news reporter for the *Lexington County Chronicle*. She keeps in contact with her editor at *The State* in case a job opening comes up.

Although the scenario described above is possible today at Western Carolina University, at present the burden of making all the connections described would be on the *student*. The enhancement of the QEP is the formation of learning objectives that encourage synthesis with a network of courses, instructors, advisors, and staff members across campus that can—with the foundation of the EB—collectively mentor a student to keep a holistic approach to university life with a constant focus on learning and career goals.

QEP Budget

The implementation of the QEP pilot study will necessitate funding the budget in Table 6.

Table 6: QEP Pilot Budget

January 2, 2008 - December 15, 2008

Department: SACS - QEP

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter information in the yellow boxes. Insert additional rows as needed.
ALL OTHER TOTALS WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY CALCULATED

Section A: Budget Line Items - Personnel

Purpose/ Object Code	Account Title	FTE	Salary Amount	Total Amount
111010	EPA Regular Salaries			
	Professional Master's level position/career counselor	0.0	42,000	42,000
	Curriculum Design specialist		55,000	55,000
	IT Accounts Manager - Education Career Briefcase		42,000	42,000
	Upgrade Existing Advisors-College Advisor Status		55,000	55,000
	Project Manager		40,000	40,000
	Benefits			31,590
	EPA Regular Salaries Subtotal:	0.0	234,000	265,590
121010	SPA Regular Salaries			
	Half Time Support Staff person- Career Center	0.0	18,100	18,100
	Coordinator – Teaching & Learning Events/Staff Support		35,000	35,000
	Benefits			7,168

SPA Regular Salaries Subtotal:	0.0	53,100	60,268
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115010 EPA Academic Salaries

Provost Office – Faculty incentives-course development			
Training and dept. incentives-capstone courses		25,000	25,000
EPA Academic Salaries Subtotal:	0.0	25,000	25,000

135050 Student Wages

2 graduate students - Career Center	0.0	14,000	14,000
2 graduate students - Assessment	0.0	14,000	14,000
FICA			2,142
Student Wages Subtotal:	0.0	28,000	30,142

131010 Temporary Wages

	0.0		0
	0.0		0
Temporary Wages Subtotal:	0.0	0	0

Section A: Budget Line Items - Pools

Purpose/ Object Code	Account Title	Total Amount
2100BP	Purchased Contractual Services	
	Career Education Center - External Consultants	3,000
	Faculty Center - External Consultants	2,500
	Purchased Contract'l Services Sub:	5,500
2200BP	Utilities	
	Utilities Subtotal:	0
2000BP	Purchased Services	
	Purchased Services Subtotal:	0
3000BP	Supplies	
	Career Center: office supplies	450
	Advising Center: office supplies	650
	Faculty Center: office supplies	350
	Supplies Subtotal:	1,450

4600BP

Art, Library, & Learning Resources

Creation of Service Learning Reflection Manual			800
Career Center/Advising: Interest Inventories			2,200
Art, Library, & Learning Subtotal:			3,000

5000BP

Other Expenses & Adjustments

Career Center Travel - establish and supervise interns			5,000
Advising Center: Upgrade Advisortrac			1,100
Admissions - training for admissions counselors			950
Promotional materials on QEP/Synthesis			5,500
Campus Forums on Synthesis Learning			2,200
Career Center - new publications			1,800
Career Center - diagnostic instruments/software			2,000
Assessment - expand assessment measures/QEP			25,000
Advising Center - training & professional conferences			5,000
Other Expenses & Adjust Subtotal:			48,550
Total (not including P,P,&E below):			439,500

Section B: Equipment Requested

	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Cost per Unit</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
4000BP	Property Plant and Equipment			
	Career Services: computers w/ docking stations	2.0	2,100.00	4,200
	career Services: work desks	2.0	650.00	1,300
	Career Services: desk chairs w/mats	2.0	400.00	800
	Career Services: filing cabinets	3.0	355.00	1,065
	Career Services: scanner/printer	2.0	650.00	1,300
	Career Center: computer tables	2.0	350.00	700
	Faculty Center: desk chairs	2.0	400.00	800
	Faculty Center: computers w/ docking stations	2.0	2,100.00	4,200
	Faculty Center: printer/scanner	1.0	650.00	650
	Faculty Center: work desks	2.0	650.00	1,300
	IT Services: computer and software for accts. mgr.	1.0	8,200.00	8,200
	Property, Plant, & Equip. Subtotal:	21	16,505.00	24,515

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST \$464,015

QEP Assessment

I. Assessment Strategies, Protocols, and Procedures

The long-term viability of the Quality Enhancement Plan depends on a manageable and sustainable process of assessment. The ambitious nature of the QEP will require not only a greater institutional commitment to providing deliberate experiences through which students will demonstrate their understanding and application of the synthesis concept, but will demand a creative and flexible approach to assessing the quality of student achievement related to synthesis.

The definitive measure of the Quality Enhancement Plan's effectiveness will be determined by student learning—how it has been improved and how university processes enhance it. As Gary Hanson (2004, p. vii) has noted, the success of any higher education initiative is “not only about the educational outcomes we produce, but also the educational process we use to achieve those outcomes.” Synthesis, like other complex learning, is not achieved in a single course, experiential activity or co-curricular experience--assessment of synthesis can not be reduced to a single summative measure. Consequently, assessment of the QEP will take many forms, but will focus on two primary dimensions: 1) process evaluation/assessment of institutional support and effort, and 2) the extent of student learning. To that end, the initial approach to assessment of the QEP will include:

1. An investigation of students' ability to synthesize information across content and context as impacted by:
 - QEP program initiatives, and

- Student affective characteristics, such as academic motivation, self-efficacy, general coping ability, anxiety, cognition, and modes of critical thinking and problem solving.
2. An analysis of the QEP programs and procedures that promote synthesis to determine which are most effective.
 3. A development of formative and continuous feedback and analytic mechanisms to shape further QEP program enhancements and institutional efforts.

It is expected that, much like the process of complex learning, the reliability and validity of QEP assessments will improve over time.

II. Process Evaluation and Assessment of Institutional Support and Effort

Process evaluation for WCU's QEP will be modeled on the general evaluation work of Patton (1997), Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987), and Posavac and Carey (1980).

Specifically, process evaluation will focus on three primary areas including:

1. staff, student, and program context,
2. types and amount of services, and
3. fidelity to program design (program theory and model description, model deviation, implementation strategy, satisfaction, budget allocations, and cost effectiveness).

Process evaluation will function primarily as context for the interpretation of assessment results, capitalizing on those results which improve programs, and/or demonstrate how programs and the related assessment frameworks can be applied in other contexts (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987; Patton, 1997; Posavac & Carey, 1980).

Structured interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted each term with students, faculty, and staff (initially those participating in the pilot) to understand this context. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will coordinate these focus groups (see Appendix B for focus group questions).

In addition to the qualitative approach discussed above, we will collect key output data related to institutional support and effort, which will provide additional context for interpreting outcomes. These measure the level and extent of the university's commitment to the stated goals and outcomes of the QEP. Table 7 summarizes the means by which institutional support and effort will be assessed.

Table 7: Key Objectives Related to Institutional Support and Effort

<u>Key Objectives by Area of Responsibility</u>	<u>Methods of Assessment</u>	<u>Criteria for Success</u>
Offices of the Chancellor/Provost		
Provide adequate funding to ensure successful implementation of the QEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare initial budget proposals outlined in the QEP and initial allocations based on those recommendations - Compare subsequent annual budget requests from the QEP Implementation Committee with final allocations approved by Executive Council 	Allocation of funds will be adequate to support approved QEP initiatives.
Establish and support campus leadership for the QEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Provost will identify and name an existing faculty or staff member to be Project Manager for the QEP - Based on recommendations outlined in the QEP and feedback from key stakeholders, the Provost will appoint and charge a QEP Implementation Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Manager will be named and in place no later than August 2007. - The QEP Implementation Committee will be appointed and charged by early fall 2007. Membership on the committee will be representative of the critical support units outlined in the plan.
Coulter Faculty Center		
Provide training and support for faculty to incorporate QEP learning outcomes, activities, and assessments in their courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training workshops and seminars offered - Rates of participation in training workshops and seminars - Rate of participation in QEP Faculty Learning Community - Feedback on surveys and evaluations by faculty on their satisfaction with the amount and quality of training opportunities. - Number of course syllabi that explicitly address QEP learning goals and outcomes - Analysis of results from the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one summer training workshop will be developed and conducted in the first year of the QEP and will increase in number annually consistent with the number of departments participating in QEP initiatives. - The annual rate of participation in the QEP Faculty Learning Community will be comparable to that of other faculty learning communities. - Faculty will report high levels of satisfaction with the amount and quality of training opportunities offered by the Coulter Faculty Center in support of the QEP. - Results of the FSSE will reflect an increase in classroom activities that promote the concepts of synthesis learning.
Partner with the Advising Center and Information Technology to provide training and support for faculty advisors to incorporate the goals and outcomes of the QEP in student advising sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training opportunities offered - Rate of participation in training workshops - Feedback on evaluations by faculty regarding their satisfaction with the amount and quality of training provided - Analysis of results from the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least two summer training workshops will be developed and conducted in the first year of the QEP and will increase in number annually consistent with the number of departments participating in QEP initiatives. - Faculty advisors will report high levels of satisfaction with the amount and quality of training opportunities offered by the Coulter Faculty Center in support of the QEP. - Results of the FSSE will reflect an increase in advising activities that promote the concepts of synthesis learning.

Promote the goals and outcomes of the QEP among all faculty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Coulter Faculty Center events with themes and/or tracks consistent with QEP goals and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to the QEP training workshops, at least two events sponsored by the Coulter Faculty Center will have a QEP-related theme or track
Information Technology		
Develop and implement a secure, user-friendly Education Briefcase (EB; see discussion in the Implementation Section) that seamlessly integrates with existing enterprise systems and allows posting and organization of new documents and materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessibility of EB interface - Integration of EB with existing enterprise systems - Focus groups of students and faculty on the design of the EB interface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB interface will be accessible to students in the initial cohort and their advisors by Summer 2008. Accessibility to all students and advisors will occur on a phased implementation schedule in accordance with the overall QEP timeline. - All information currently available to students and their advisors on existing enterprise systems (i.e., academic transcripts, co-curricular transcripts, course schedules, etc.) will be accessible through the EB. - Feedback from the focus groups will indicate that students and faculty find the EB interface to be easily accessible, navigable, and user-friendly.
Develop training modules for students, faculty and staff related to access and use of the Education Briefcase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training modules developed and implemented in Faculty Center workshops for faculty and in Jumpstart for students. - Evaluations by faculty of EB training in QEP workshops and by students of EB training in Jumpstart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training materials for the EB will be provided to the Coulter Faculty Center and Jumpstart coordinators by mid-Spring 2008 - Students and faculty will report high levels of satisfaction with training provided on the use of the EB.
Career Services		
Strengthen programming offered by Career Services in support of the QEP goals and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of and participation in co-ops and internships - Number of contacts with students - Participation in Career Services events - Hits to Career Services website - Focus groups of students and faculty on the amount and quality of career services programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of co-ops and internships available to students will increase as will the number of students requesting and participating in them. - Career Services Counselors will contact each student in the initial pilot study at least once per semester. - Students in the initial pilot study will participate in at least one Career Services event each semester. - In feedback from the focus groups, students will report that Career Services Counselors helped them make connections between career plans and their academic and co-curricular experiences.
Advising Center		
Enhance student advising in the context of the QEP to include guided reflection regarding the connections between students' academic and co-curricular experiences relative to their future goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of advisor evaluations - Number of advisor contacts - Focus group and structured interview questions related to student-advisor interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 75% of students in the initial pilot study will indicate satisfaction with their advisor and will report that their advisor made consistent use of materials from their Education Briefcase during their advising sessions. - Advisors will contact students in the pilot

		<p>study at least twice per semester during the first year and at least once per semester in subsequent years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A majority of students participating in focus groups or structured interviews will be able to provide examples of how their advisor used materials from their Education Briefcase during their advising sessions.
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Outcomes Assessment

Assessment of synthesis and the related QEP learning outcomes will be based on the expected developmental trajectory of students as outlined in the implementation section above. For those students initially recruited as part of the pilot project, assessment of the QEP outcomes will be structured as a longitudinal study that will begin in fall of 2008. Subsequent entering cohorts will be assessed using the same key measures identified below. Assessment will begin prior to matriculation and will continue in the specially designated USI 130 sections and in designated major courses as the student progresses toward graduation as outlined in the table below (see Implementation Section for a complete discussion of the QEP framework).

Table 8. QEP Framework Linked to Key Assessment Measures

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
<i>QEP Learning Outcome 1:</i> Students identify aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate future goals and aspirations	<i>QEP Learning Outcome 2:</i> Students modify behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from academic and co-curricular experiences	<i>QEP Learning Outcome 2-3:</i> QEP Objective 2, and Students recognize and evaluate the synthesis of university experiences relative to future education and career plans	<i>QEP Learning Outcome 3:</i> Students recognize and evaluate the synthesis of university experiences relative to future education and career plans
Course: USI 130 ; fall term for pilot study	Course: 200-level major gateway ; fall term for pilot study	Course: 300-level mid-major course selected by department; fall term for pilot study	Course: 400-level major capstone course ; fall term for pilot study
Key Assessment Measures: - BCSSE (summer prior to matriculation) - Evaluation of selected work products (fall semester) - Focus groups/structured interviews (fall/spring semesters) - NSSE (spring semester) - ASSIST (fall semester) - Test of critical thinking/problem-solving (fall semester)	Key Assessment Measures: - Advisor evaluation (fall semester) - Evaluation of selected work products (fall semester) - Focus groups/structured interviews (spring semester) - UNC Sophomore Survey (spring semester)	Key Assessment Measures: - Advisor evaluation (fall semester) - Evaluation of selected work products (fall semester) - Focus groups/structured interviews (spring semester)	Key Assessment Measures: - Advisor evaluation (fall semester) - Evaluation of selected work products (fall semester) - Focus groups/structured interviews (spring semester) - NSSE (spring semester) - UNC Graduating Senior Survey - Test of critical thinking/problem-solving (fall semester)

The assessment measures identified in Table 8 will provide a large and comprehensive set of data from which to assess the extent to which students perform relative to key QEP-related outcomes. The evaluation of selected student work from the EBs and of student feedback from the focus groups and structured interviews will, in particular, provide a rich and informative pool of information on actual student learning. Results obtained from these key assessment measures, administered at consistent points, will allow the QEP Implementation Committee to better target where breakdowns may be occurring and work with faculty, program directors, advisors and counselors to ensure the QEP is successfully implemented. A full description of each assessment measure and a summary of responsibility for data collection and analysis are provided in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Outcomes Assessment Measures

Year 1

Assessment	Description	Data Collection/Analysis
Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)	The BCSSE measures students' pre-college involvement in academic and co-curricular activities as well as their expectations for involvement in and the importance of educationally purposeful activities in college. BCSSE provides student-level data which will be utilized as a control on the outcomes analysis and to undertake comparisons between students in the initial pilot cohort and those who do not participate (see Appendix X for sample BCSSE Survey).	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for BCSSE administration and analysis. Results will be disseminated to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Evaluation of selected student work products	Faculty teaching the designated USI sections will be asked to use specific reflection, writing, and review activities related to the student's Education Briefcase that promote the synthesis approach to learning. Student work from the Education Briefcase will be evaluated using specially designed rubrics (see Appendix X for a general example). Review of student work over time will form the basis for judging progress toward the outcomes of the QEP.	Trained faculty reviewers will evaluate student works relative to predetermined rubrics. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will ensure reviewers are appropriately trained following the training protocols and procedures outlined in Wolcott and Legg (1998) and White (1989) to ensure meaningful results. Readers will be trained at the beginning and at regular intervals throughout the project. Summary of analyses will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Focus Groups/Structured Interviews	Students will participate in focus groups or structured interviews. These sessions will focus on student experiences with and perceptions of the various QEP initiatives in which they have participated.	Faculty and staff with appropriate expertise will conduct the focus groups and structured interviews relative to predetermined scripts. Summary of results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	The NSSE measures a range of student academic and co-curricular experiences and level of engagement in college. The NSSE provides a body of extremely well-tested and reliable data that research has consistently shown to be empirically linked to student learning and development. Although an analysis of the	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for administration and analysis of the NSSE. Results will be disseminated to the QEP Assessment

	complete NSSE results will be conducted, items of highest interest that track closely with our QEP outcomes include Items (1d), (1i), (1k), (1o), (1s), (2c-e), (7h), (11e), (11m) . NSSE provides student-level data and this information will be utilized as a control on the outcomes analysis and to undertake comparisons between students in the initial pilot cohort and those who do not participate (see Appendix X for sample survey instrument).	Subcommittee.
Approaches and Study Skills Inventory (ASSIST) (Entwistle, 2000)	ASSIST is based on two primary dimensions: conceptions of learning and approaches to learning. The first four subscales attempt to ascertain whether or not a student has an instrumental approach to learning which indicates a conception of learning as oriented toward reproducing knowledge, while the remaining four subscales ascertain the degree to which the participant views learning as involving personal understanding and development (see Appendix X for sample instrument).	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for administration and analysis of the ASSIST. Results will be disseminated to faculty teaching the designated USI 130 sections and to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Assessment of general critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Students will participate in a test of critical thinking and problem solving in Years 1 and 4. The specific instrument has not been selected, but will be either the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or the Assessment of Critical Thinking (Project CAT)	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for administration and analysis of the selected test of critical thinking skills. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.

Year 2

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Description</u>	
Advisor Evaluation	Students will be required to rate their advisors on a variety of subscales related to satisfaction, approachability, empathy, and effectiveness. An online evaluation form is currently in development.	The Office of Assessment and the Advising Center will provide oversight for the administration and analysis of the Advisor Survey. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Evaluation of selected student work products	Faculty teaching the designated 200-level major course section(s) will be asked to use specific reflection, writing, and review activities that reflect a student's ability to use the synthesis concept. Student work from the Education Briefcase will be evaluated using a specially designed rubric (see Appendix X for example). Review of student work over time will form the basis for judging progress toward the outcomes of the QEP.	Trained faculty reviewers will evaluate student works relative to predetermined rubrics. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will ensure reviewers are appropriately trained following the training protocols and procedures outlined in Wolcott and Legg (1998) and White (1989) to ensure meaningful results. Readers will be trained at the beginning and at regular intervals throughout the project. Summary of analyses will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Focus Groups/Structured Interviews	Students will participate in focus groups or structured interviews. These sessions will focus on student experiences with and perceptions of the various QEP initiatives in which they have participated.	Faculty and staff with appropriate expertise will conduct the focus groups and structured interviews relative to predetermined scripts. Summary of results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
UNC Sophomore Survey	The UNC Sophomore Survey is currently mandated by the UNC General Administration. Additional items related to student perceptions of their abilities relative to the QEP learning outcomes and their perceptions of and satisfaction with critical support functions	The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for the administration and analysis of the UNC Sophomore

	such as the Advising Center, International Programs and the Career Center will developed and included on the standard instrument. Responses of students in the initial cohort will be compared with those of other students not in the pilot study.	Survey. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
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Year 3

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Data Collection/Analysis</u>
Advisor Evaluation	Students will be required to rate their advisors on a variety of subscales related to satisfaction, approachability, empathy, and effectiveness. An online evaluation form is currently in development.	The Office of Assessment and the Advising Center will provide oversight for the administration and analysis of the Advisor Survey. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Evaluation of selected student work products	Faculty teaching the designated 300-level major course section(s) will be asked to use specific reflection, writing, and review activities that reflect a student's ability to use the synthesis concept. Student work from the Education Briefcase will be evaluated using a specially designed rubric (see Appendix X for example). Review of student work over time will form the basis for judging progress toward the outcomes of the QEP.	Trained faculty reviewers will evaluate student works relative to predetermined rubrics. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will ensure reviewers are appropriately trained following the training protocols and procedures outlined in Wolcott and Legg (1998) and White (1989) to ensure meaningful results. Readers will be trained at the beginning and at regular intervals throughout the project. Summary of analyses will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Focus Groups/Structured Interviews	Students will participate in focus groups or structured interviews. These sessions will focus on student experiences with and perceptions of the various QEP initiatives in which they have participated.	Faculty and staff with appropriate expertise will conduct the focus groups and structured interviews relative to predetermined scripts. Summary of results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.

Year 4

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Data Collection and Analysis</u>
Advisor Evaluation	Students will be required to rate their advisors on a variety of subscales related to satisfaction, approachability, empathy, and effectiveness. An online evaluation form is currently in development.	The Office of Assessment and the Advising Center will provide oversight for the administration and analysis of the Advisor Survey. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Evaluation of selected student work products	Faculty teaching the designated 400-level major course section(s) will be asked to use specific reflection, writing, and review activities that reflect a student's ability to use the synthesis concept. Student work from the Education Briefcase will be evaluated using a specially designed rubric (see Appendix X for example). Review of student work over time will form the basis for judging progress toward the outcomes of the QEP.	Trained faculty reviewers will evaluate student works relative to predetermined rubrics. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will ensure reviewers are appropriately trained following the training protocols and procedures outlined in Wolcott and Legg (1998) and White (1989) to ensure meaningful results. Readers will be trained at the beginning and at regular intervals throughout the project. Summary of analyses will be provided to the QEP

		Assessment Subcommittee.
Focus Groups/Structured Interviews	Students participate in focus groups or structured interviews. These sessions will focus on student experiences with and perceptions of the various QEP initiatives in which they have participated.	Faculty and staff with appropriate expertise will conduct the focus groups and structured interviews relative to predetermined scripts. Summary of results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	The NSSE measures a range of student academic and co-curricular experiences and level of engagement in college. The NSSE provides a body of extremely well-tested and reliable data that research has consistently shown to be empirically linked to student learning and development. Although an analysis of the complete NSSE results will be conducted, items of most interest that track closely with our QEP outcomes include Items (1d), (1i), (1k), (1o), (1s), (2c-e), (7h), (11e), (11m). NSSE provides student-level data and this information will be utilized as a control on the outcomes analysis and to undertake comparisons between students in the initial pilot cohort and those who do not participate (see Appendix X for sample survey instrument).	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for administration and analysis of the NSSE. Results will be disseminated to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
UNC Graduating Senior Survey	The UNC Graduating Senior Survey is currently mandated by the UNC General Administration. Additional items related to student perceptions of their abilities relative to the QEP learning outcomes and their perceptions of and satisfaction with critical support functions such as the Advising Center, International Programs and the Career Center will developed and included on the standard instrument. Responses of students in the initial cohort will be compared with those of other students not in the pilot study.	The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for the administration and analysis of the UNC Graduating Senior Survey. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.
Assessment of general critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Students will be required to participate in a test of critical thinking and problem solving in Years 1 and 4. The specific instrument has not been selected, but will be either the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or the Assessment of Critical Thinking (Project CAT)	The Offices of Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning will provide oversight for administration and analysis of the selected test of critical thinking skills. Results will be provided to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.

In addition to the key measures outlined in Table 8, university programs with defined roles in the implementation of the QEP (see implementation section for a complete discussion of the role of supporting units) will be required to identify and assess unit-specific objectives and outcomes relative to QEP learning goals. These assessments will occur annually and will be reported to the QEP Assessment Subcommittee.

Dissemination and Use of Assessment Results

Specific oversight of assessment of the QEP will be the responsibility of the QEP Assessment Subcommittee (QEP Project Manager, the Director of Assessment, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning, select faculty members, and others as necessary). The Assessment Subcommittee will be responsible for research design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results to the QEP Implementation Committee.

The Assessment Subcommittee will prepare an annual report of its activities and findings to the QEP Implementation Committee and other university groups as needed. The QEP Project Manager will share the assessment results with key university constituencies and facilitate the use of those results to make program improvements as appropriate.

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APPENDIX A: QEP BUDGET 2-3 years

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions (Process Evaluation)

1. What constitutes an active student and/or faculty participant in the QEP and what does this individual actually do in the program? What are their primary activities (in detail)? What do they experience?
2. What are the program's key characteristics as perceived by various stakeholders--for example, students, administrators, advisors, the QEP assessment and implementation team, faculty (term, full-time, part-time) actively participating and directly connected to the QEP initiative? How similar or different are those perceptions? What's the basis?
3. What is the consensus about next steps for the QEP Structure? Services?
4. How do the parts of the QEP structurally/programmatically fit together? Are there perceived gaps or disconnects?
5. After the initial pilot, what has changed from the original design and intentions of the QEP and related program elements and why? On what basis are adaptations from the original design being made? Who needs to "approve" such changes?
6. What is the participation rate of faculty in QEP related initiatives?
7. What parts of the curriculum evidence direct influence from the QEP initiative and why?
8. How is evaluation built into the delivery of our services? What are the primary capture points? Additionally, what are possible capture points moving forward?

9. What's working as expected? What's not working as expected? What challenges and barriers have emerged? How have we responded to these barriers?
10. How well are students, administrators, advisors, faculty (term, full-time, part-time) teaching in the program functioning together? What are their perceptions about what's working and not working? Do they know what outcomes they're aiming for? Do they "buy into" the program's goals and intended outcomes?

Appendix C: Sample Rubric for Evaluation of Student Work

This is a multi-definition rubric developed by Bowling Green State University to assess the ability of students to make connections, a type of complex integrative learning similar to what we have defined as synthesis. Faculty in the early adopting department(s) will utilize this descriptive model to develop analytic rubrics that measure the extent and quality of synthesis in a disciplinary context.

Beginning

- Describe similarities and differences in a collection or set of items
- Categorize items or observations into groups
- Recognize simple links among topics or concepts in a course
- Offer accurate definitions of terms and concepts
- Describe the setting (e.g., context, environment, culture, domain) in which connections are being made.

Intermediate

- Organize groups of items into ordered collections and specify the organizing principles (s)
- Recognize links among topics and concepts presented in different courses
- Relate and use information from other courses or experiences in the current setting
- Formulate generalizations about collections or set of items
- Distinguish concrete and abstract representations
- Identify disciplinary concepts (theories, frameworks) and instances of their application

Proficient

- Use disciplinary frameworks and concepts to illuminate relationships among apparently diverse items
- Examine phenomena from multiple viewpoints, both concretely and abstractly
- Specify the limits or boundaries within which generalizations apply
- Apply abstract academic knowledge to solve concrete practical problems

Advanced

- Identify ways to reconcile diverse or conflicting priorities, viewpoints, or options.
- Call attention to something that has not been adequately noticed by others (e.g., a subtle or deep relationship, novel findings or interpretations, the context or frame of reference)
- Apply frameworks from multiple domains of knowledge and practice to create a culminating work (e.g., exhibition, business plan, musical composition, thesis, capstone paper, research project, etc.
- Integrate diverse elements into a product, performance or artifact that fits its context coherently.

Appendix E: NSSE



National Survey of Student Engagement 2006

The College Student Report

1 In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: or

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never		Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	r. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Made a class presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	v. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Worked with other students on projects during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
m. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
q. Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

2 During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix F: FSSE

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement 2004

Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: or

1 How important is it to you that undergraduates at your institution do the following?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Community service or volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Participation in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Work on a research project with you outside of course program requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Study a foreign language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Study abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Independent study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Self-designed major	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Culminating senior experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 Select the box that you believe best represents the quality of student relationships with *other students*.

Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation	Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

3 Select the box that you believe best represents the quality of student relationships with *faculty members*.

Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic	Available, Helpful, Sympathetic
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

4 Select the box that you believe best represents the quality of student relationships with *administrative personnel*.

Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid	Helpful, Considerate, Flexible
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

5 To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
a. Requiring students to spend significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Providing students the support they need to help them succeed academically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Providing students the support they need to thrive socially	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Encouraging students to participate in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, social fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Encouraging students to attend campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural events, symposia, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Encouraging students to use computers in their academic work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 About how many hours do you spend in a *typical 7-day week* doing each of the following?

# of hours per week	0	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-30	More than 30
a. Teaching undergraduate students in class	<input type="checkbox"/>							
b. Grading papers and exams	<input type="checkbox"/>							
c. Giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students	<input type="checkbox"/>							
d. Preparing for class	<input type="checkbox"/>							
e. Reflecting on ways to improve my teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>							
f. Research and scholarly activities	<input type="checkbox"/>							
g. Working with undergraduates on research	<input type="checkbox"/>							
h. Advising undergraduate students	<input type="checkbox"/>							
i. Supervising internships or other field experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>							
j. Working with students on activities other than course work (committees, organizations, student life activities, orientation, intramurals, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>							

Appendix G – ASSIST Sample by N. Entwistle (2000)

ASSIST

Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students

(Short version)

This questionnaire has been designed to allow you to describe, in a systematic way, how you go about learning and studying. The technique involves asking you a substantial number of questions which overlap to some extent to provide good overall coverage of different ways of studying. Most of the items are based on comments made by other students. Please respond truthfully, so that your answers will **accurately** describe your **actual** ways of studying, and work your way through the questionnaire quite **quickly**.

Background information

Name or Identifier Age years Sex M / F

University or College Faculty or School

Course Year of study

A. What is learning?

When you think about the term 'LEARNING', what does it mean to you?

Consider each of these statements carefully, and rate them in terms of how close they are to your own way of thinking about it. Very Quite Not so Rather Very

- Making sure you remember things well. 5 4 3 2 1
- Developing as a person. 5 4 3 2 1
- Building up knowledge by acquiring facts and information. 5 4 3 2 1
- Being able to use the information you've acquired. 5 4 3 2 1
- Understanding new material for yourself. 5 4 3 2 1
- Seeing things in a different and more meaningful way. 5 4 3 2 1

© 1997a Centre for Research on Learning and Instruction, University of Edinburgh **Please turn over**

B. Approaches to studying

The next part of this questionnaire asks you to indicate your relative agreement or disagreement with comments about studying again made by other students. Please work through the comments, giving your **immediate** response. In deciding your answers, think in terms of **this particular lecture course**. It is also very important that you answer **all** the questions: check you have.

5 means agree (✓) 4 = agree somewhat (√?) 2 = disagree somewhat (x?) 1 = disagree (x).

Try not to use 3 = unsure (??), unless you really have to, or if it cannot apply to you or your course.

- I manage to find conditions for studying which allow me to get on with my work easily. 5 4 3 2 1
- When working on an assignment, I'm keeping in mind how best to impress the marker. 5 4 3 2 1
- Often I find myself wondering whether the work I am doing here is really worthwhile. 5 4 3 2 1
- I usually set out to understand for myself the meaning of what we have to learn. 5 4 3 2 1
- I organise my study time carefully to make the best use of it. 5 4 3 2 1
- I find I have to concentrate on just memorising a good deal of what I have to learn. 5 4 3 2 1
- I go over the work I've done carefully to check the reasoning and that it makes sense. 5 4 3 2 1
- Often I feel I'm drowning in the sheer amount of material we're having to cope with. 5 4 3 2 1
- I look at the evidence carefully and try to reach my own conclusion about what I'm studying. 5 4 3 2 1
- It's important for me to feel that I'm doing as well as I really can on the courses here. 5 4 3 2 1
- I try to relate ideas I come across to those in other topics or other courses whenever possible. 5 4 3 2 1
- I tend to read very little beyond what is actually required to pass. 5 4 3 2 1
- Regularly I find myself thinking about ideas from lectures when I'm doing other things. 5 4 3 2 1
- I think I'm quite systematic and organised when it comes to revising for exams. 5 4 3 2 1
- I look carefully at tutors' comments on course work to see how to get higher marks next time. 5 4 3 2 1
- There's not much of the work here that I find interesting or relevant. 5 4 3 2 1

17. When I read an article or book, I try to find out for myself exactly what the author means. 5 4 3 2 1
18. I'm pretty good at getting down to work whenever I need to. 5 4 3 2 1
19. Much of what I'm studying makes little sense: it's like unrelated bits and pieces. 5 4 3 2 1
20. I think about what I want to get out of this course to keep my studying well focused. 5 4 3 2 1
21. When I'm working on a new topic, I try to see in my own mind how all the ideas fit together. 5 4 3 2 1
22. I often worry about whether I'll ever be able to cope with the work properly. 5 4 3 2 1
23. Often I find myself questioning things I hear in lectures or read in books. 5 4 3 2 1
24. I feel that I'm getting on well, and this helps me put more effort into the work. 5 4 3 2 1
25. I concentrate on learning just those bits of information I have to know to pass. 5 4 3 2 1
26. I find that studying academic topics can be quite exciting at times. 5 4 3 2 1
27. I'm good at following up some of the reading suggested by lecturers or tutors. 5 4 3 2 1
28. I keep in mind who is going to mark an assignment and what they're likely to be looking for. 5 4 3 2 1
29. When I look back, I sometimes wonder why I ever decided to come here. 5 4 3 2 1
30. When I am reading, I stop from time to time to reflect on what I am trying to learn from it. 5 4 3 2 1
31. I work steadily through the term or semester, rather than leave it all until the last minute. 5 4 3 2 1
32. I'm not really sure what's important in lectures so I try to get down all I can. 5 4 3 2 1
33. Ideas in course books or articles often set me off on long chains of thought of my own. 5 4 3 2 1
34. Before starting work on an assignment or exam question, I think first how best to tackle it. 5 4 3 2 1
35. I often seem to panic if I get behind with my work. 5 4 3 2 1
36. When I read, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what's being said. 5 4 3 2 1
37. I put a lot of effort into studying because I'm determined to do well. 5 4 3 2 1
38. I gear my studying closely to just what seems to be required for assignments and exams. 5 4 3 2 1
39. Some of the ideas I come across on the course I find really gripping. 5 4 3 2 1
40. I usually plan out my week's work in advance, either on paper or in my head. 5 4 3 2 1
41. I keep an eye open for what lecturers seem to think is important and concentrate on that. 5 4 3 2 1
42. I'm not really interested in this course, but I have to take it for other reasons. 5 4 3 2 1
43. Before tackling a problem or assignment, I first try to work out what lies behind it. 5 4 3 2 1
44. I generally make good use of my time during the day. 5 4 3 2 1
45. I often have trouble in making sense of the things I have to remember. 5 4 3 2 1
46. I like to play around with ideas of my own even if they don't get me very far. 5 4 3 2 1
47. When I finish a piece of work, I check it through to see if it really meets the requirements. 5 4 3 2 1
48. Often I lie awake worrying about work I think I won't be able to do. 5 4 3 2 1
49. It's important for me to be able to follow the argument, or to see the reason behind things. 5 4 3 2 1
50. I don't find it at all difficult to motivate myself. 5 4 3 2 1
51. I like to be told precisely what to do in essays or other assignments. 5 4 3 2 1
52. I sometimes get 'hooked' on academic topics and feel I would like to keep on studying them. 5 4 3 2 1

C. Preferences for different types of course and teaching

5 means definitely like (✓) 4 = like to some extent (√?) 2 = dislike to some extent (x?) 1 = definitely dislike (x).

Try not to use 3 = unsure (??), unless you really have to, or if it cannot apply to you or your course.

- a. lecturers who tell us exactly what to put down in our notes. 5 4 3 2 1
- b. lecturers who encourage us to think for ourselves and show us how they themselves think 5 4 3 2 1
- c. exams which allow me to show that I've thought about the course material for myself. 5 4 3 2 1
- d. exams or tests which need only the material provided in our lecture notes. 5 4 3 2 1
- e. courses in which it's made very clear just which books we have to read. 5 4 3 2 1
- f. courses where we're encouraged to read around the subject a lot for ourselves. 5 4 3 2 1
- g. books which challenge you and provide explanations which go beyond the lectures. 5 4 3 2 1
- h. books which give you definite facts and information which can easily be learned. 5 4 3 2 1

Finally, how well do you think you have been doing in your assessed work overall, so far?

*Please rate yourself **objectively**, based on the grades you have been obtaining*

Very well Quite Well About average Not so well Rather badly

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Thank you very much for spending time completing this questionnaire: it is much appreciated.