ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING:
CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS
THROUGH
ACTIVE LEARNING AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Submitted to
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Quality Enhancement Plan

I. Introduction

A. Goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The overarching quest of the University of West Florida’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to maximize student learning and attain learning goals at all levels: general education, undergraduate education, and graduate education. More specifically, the primary goals of the QEP are to:

- Improve student learning.
- Refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments.
- Increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies.
- Build communities of learners.
- Provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development.

The Quality Enhancement Plan will provide a mechanism to accelerate and sustain the University of West Florida’s instructional paradigm shift from instructor-based to learner-centered. An instructor-centered context places the means (delivery of instruction) in position of the institution’s purpose. A learner-centered context focuses the purpose on what students are expected to learn and accomplish as described in outcome statements at the University, college, program, and course level. According to Robert B. Barr and John Tagg (1995),

(1)n the Instruction Paradigm, a college aims to transfer or deliver knowledge from faculty to students; it offers courses and degree programs and seeks to maintain a high quality of instruction within them, mostly by assuring that faculty stay current in their fields. If new knowledge or clients appear, so will new course work. The very purpose of the Instruction Paradigm is to offer courses.

(1)In the Learning Paradigm, on the other hand, a college’s purpose is not to transfer knowledge but to create environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems. The college aims, in fact, to create a series of ever more powerful learning environments. The Learning Paradigm does not limit institutions to a single means for empowering students to learn; within its framework, effective learning technologies are continually identified, developed, tested, implemented, and assessed against one another. The aim in the Learning Paradigm is not so much to improve the quality of instruction—although that is not irrelevant—as
it is to improve continuously the quality of learning for students individually and in the aggregate (p.15).

To facilitate this paradigm shift, the University will have a clear set of university-level expectations as to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values students will have acquired as a result of the UWF educational experience. An assessment system will be in place to determine whether students have, in fact, acquired these competencies and are transferring them to the post-University experience. College- and program-level student learning outcomes will be developed in alignment with university-level student learning outcomes.

Each individual program that contributes to student learning will have (a) identified a clear set of student learning outcomes at the program and associated individual course/activity levels, (b) developed methods of assessing whether students have achieved the outcomes, and (c) reviewed and modified the instructional component of programs/activities to ensure that appropriate strategies are being used to help students achieve the desired outcomes. These strategies are expected to embody active learning approaches; to lead to increased levels of student and faculty/staff engagement in the learning process in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities; and to provide opportunity for effective participation of students, faculty, and staff as members of a community of learners.

The University will have in place a system for assisting units with developing and refining student learning outcomes and related assessment and learning strategies. In particular, the QEP will establish an organizational structure and funding source to support faculty and staff innovations designed to improve achievement of student learning outcomes.

The University will have in place a system for regular review and assessment of the university-, program-, and course/activity-level outcomes, assessments, and developmental strategies. This system will be developed and monitored as part of a strategic initiative to ensure continuous improvement.

B. Definition of Student Learning

For the purpose of UWF’s QEP, student learning is defined to include changes in students’ knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributed to the students’ experiences at the University of West Florida. At UWF this definition is operationalized as six domains of student learning: Content, Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Project Management, Values and Ethics, and Discipline Specific Outcomes. The Content domain includes the concepts, theories, and frameworks of the collective discipline areas. The Communication domain includes the various modes of communication essential for effective writing, speaking, and otherwise presenting or demonstrating
information and ideas. The Critical Thinking domain includes effective information literacy and management, problem solving, analysis of situations and issues, creativity, and discernment. The Project Management domain includes development of self-regulatory behavior, collaboration, reflection and self-assessment, and project planning and execution skills consistent with a particular discipline. The Values and Ethics domain includes academic integrity, discipline specific professional standards, and values-based decision making. Finally, the Discipline Specific Outcomes domain is optional and includes any special outcomes that distinguish a particular field of study such as professional certification or licensure.

C. Evolution and Rationale of the Theme

As an essential part of the University of West Florida’s reaffirmation of accreditation effort, the foundation for the Quality Enhancement Plan was laid in the Spring of 2003. The following reviews were conducted in order to construct a context for planning and organizing the QEP effort:

- Review of the required elements and criteria for judging the adequacy of a Quality Enhancement Plan as described in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools publication *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*.
- Review of statements related to the University’s vision, mission, strategic goals, strategic imperatives, and strategic priorities to determine what course of action related to enhancement of learning might be suggested.
- Review of the resource support and program enhancement sections of unit-level strategic plans to identify academic department needs that might be related to enhancement of learning.
- Review of the reports of undergraduate and graduate education task forces.
- Review of recommendations included in academic program reviews.
- Review of “enhancement” projects already in implementation and/or planning stages.
- Review of the President’s annual survey of students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders related to the University’s strategic goals and imperatives.
- Review of the strengths of the University as expressed by alumni.

A number of potential themes emerged from these reviews and discussions. These themes included:

- Identifying and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
- Utilizing Electronic Media to Increase Access to and to Enhance Instruction
- Incorporating Service Learning in the Curriculum
- Strengthening International and Diversity Components in the Curriculum
The University of West Florida’s SACS Leadership Team traveled to Atlanta in June of 2003 for an orientation meeting with representatives of the Association’s Commission on Colleges. In addition to what was known about the QEP process from the Principles, it was stressed at this orientation meeting that the QEP must focus on and lead to enhancement of student learning, that the QEP must be related to the University’s ongoing planning processes, that the QEP must have wide campus involvement, and that implementation of the QEP must be financially and fiscally feasible within the University’s expected resources.

Based on these considerations the UWF SACS Reaffirmation Project administrative team was asked to suggest to the University’s SACS Leadership Team a proposed theme and develop a related concept paper. The initial theme as approved by the University Leadership Team was “Adding Value through Active Learning and Student Engagement.” The concept paper included the following sections (see Appendix __ for full document):

- What is a Quality Enhancement Plan (relationship to SACS reaffirmation of accreditation, purpose, characteristics, considerations in selecting a theme, SACS definition of student learning)?
- What themes have been used by other institutions?
- How was UWF’s proposed theme identified?
- Who should endorse the theme?
- How are active learning and student engagement defined?
- How would a QEP based on this theme benefit members and components of the University?
- What priorities in the University’s strategic plan would be addressed by this theme?
- What process should be used to develop the QEP?
- Who should be represented on the QEP Task Force?
- How will those not directly involved in preparing the QEP be engaged in development of the QEP?
- What assurances are there that once the QEP has been developed, resources will be available to implement the QEP?
- What professional literature is available to support elements of the theme?
The theme’s wording was selected because it was felt that it reflected the University’s Vision and Mission and that it focused on strengthening further a characteristic of the University commonly believed to be a strength and an important part of the University’s “brand promise”: degree of interaction between students and faculty/staff. The theme also provided opportunities for a wide degree of involvement in development and implementation from units within the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The theme language also addressed the University’s strategic goals and imperatives, particularly the following:

- Promote a learning environment that encourages the development of individual potential in students, faculty, and staff by creating a new standard in education focused on student learning outcomes; demanding excellence in teaching, research, and service; and promoting integrity through intellectual inquiry and open discourse.
- Provide solutions to educational, cultural, economic, and environmental concerns by aligning University programs, activities and services with University and community needs and interest through teamwork and collaboration; and engaging in scholarly research and creative activity to solve regional problems and enhance the quality of life. (need citation)

The focus and theme of the Quality Enhancement Plan was influenced by a number of factors including the University’s vision and mission statements, consistency with the overall thrust of an operational enhancement plan currently underway (Making Way for Excellence), the potential for building upon current perceived University strengths and aspirations, the potential for cooperative and collaborative activities between Academic and Student Affairs, the potential for engaging all academic and student affairs departments over the projected five-year span of the QEP, and the potential for practical evaluation of learning outcomes and data-based decision making.

Although the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the University of West Florida encompass a variety of aspects important to many constituent groups, the primary purpose of the University is to educate students with the intention of producing individuals with a range of competencies. The vision statement – distinguish UWF as the premier creative, student-centered university focused on excellence—and the mission statement –Empower each individual we serve with knowledge and opportunity to contribute responsibly and creatively to a complex world—help define the University’s aspirations for its students in a broad and hopeful way and inform the articulation of university-level student learning outcomes (SLO’s) within the framework of knowledge, skills, and core values.

The QEP, with its focus on improving student learning, is an appropriate companion activity with an operational excellence plan currently being implemented. Making Way for Excellence is an effort intended to bring about a cultural shift in campus leadership and management by focusing on staff development and continuous process improvement strategies.
The theme selected also focused on further strengthening a characteristic of the University thought to be a strength and an important part of the University’s “brand promise.” The degree of interaction between students and faculty/staff is a well known and accepted part of the institution’s view of itself and it is commonly stated that one of the things that make UWF special is the availability of smaller classes and the accessibility of the faculty and staff. Analysis of the data from the annual surveys of faculty, students, and friends of the University and the National Survey of Student Engagement suggest that there is a gap between perception and reality. This apparent gap provides additional support for the focus of the QEP effort in that it will move the University toward its desired student learning centered culture.

The notion of cooperative and collaborative activities between Academic and Student Affairs is already woven into the University’s strategic plan. Additionally, opportunities for such collaboration are suggested and supported by the literature surrounding some of the key concepts underpinning the QEP theme: student engagement, active learning, and community of learners.

D. Theoretical and Philosophical Framework

1. Student Engagement

Student engagement is the student’s degree of involvement and integration, the amount of psychological and cognitive effort involved, time on task issues and interaction with the environment. Student engagement is a broad concept, including level of academic challenge; active and collaborative learning; student-faculty interaction; enriching educational experiences; and supportive campus environment (NSSE Viewpoint, Nov. 2001, p. 2). It is consistent with Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement (1984), which proposes that when students are involved in both social and academic aspects of higher education, their learning is enhanced. Research suggests that academic involvement is associated with increases in learning, academic performance, and retention (Astin, 1993). Furthermore, students report increased educational benefits from courses and other experiences that engage them in the learning process (Light, 2001). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) suggest, after a review of two decades of research, that student engagement plays a substantial role in the cumulative effect of student learning in college. While academic and student affairs professionals are likely to have an intuitive notion of what is meant by student engagement, the term is somewhat slippery, so for the purposes of this QEP effort the Taskforce looked to the literature to provide a research-based operational definition. Such a definition was found in recent research on learning communities.
Using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Zhao and Kuh (in press) have linked participation in learning communities to student engagement and to academic achievement. In the context of their study, Zhao and Kuh operationalized student engagement as the level of effort students expend in academic activities, higher-order thinking, active learning, and interaction with faculty members.

This construct of student engagement used by Zhao and Kuh (in press) was consistent with the definition used by Chapman (2003). Similar viewpoints have defined student engagement as the extent to which students use cognitive strategies in the learning processes (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). The desired outcome of student engagement is to increase the depth of student learning so that students can apply the knowledge that they have constructed to a variety of new contexts.

For the purpose of this Quality Enhancement Plan, student engagement is defined as the student's degree of involvement and integration, the amount of psychological and cognitive effort involved, time on task issues, and interaction with the environment.

2. Promoting Student Engagement

The relationship between student engagement and learning has been documented in sources such as Knight (2003), Pintrich and De Groot (1990), Wawrzynski (XXXX), and Zhao & Kuh (in press). While some of the factors that affect student engagement are internal to the student, environmental factors have also been shown to affect student engagement (Wawrzynski, XXXX). Internal influences on student engagement include intrinsic motivation and personal interest. Environmentally, it is important to create a learning environment that is rich in challenge, but non-threatening (American Psychological Association’s Board of Educational Affairs [BEA], 1997; National Learning Infrastructure Initiative [NLII], 2003). Additionally, integrating authentic activities into the learning tasks can foster personal interest and increase students' intrinsic motivation. Increased motivation to learn can also lead to an increased expenditure of effort towards learning, thereby boosting the behavioral component of student engagement (Chapman, 2003). When students are motivated to learn, the effort expended towards complex tasks increases and persists (BEA, 1997; Chapman, 2003).

It is also important to provide a learning environment that stimulates cognitive growth. In an investigation of the link between faculty behaviors and student engagement, Wawrzynski (XXXX) found that institutions with higher percentages of faculty who solicited academically challenging behaviors from students resulted in students who reported higher levels of higher order thinking. However, when a higher percentage of faculty activity was devoted to research (as opposed to teaching), levels of student engagement were lesser. The
implications for these findings are that faculty should spend significant time communicating high expectations for academic performance and should structure activities in a manner that elicits academically challenging responses. To further enhance learning, educators can increase student engagement by helping learners develop strategies for assimilating new knowledge into existing knowledge, develop learning strategies that are appropriate for the level of complexity of the learning tasks and for the developmental level of the learner (BEA, 1999).

3. **Active Learning**

In order for students to be engaged, they must also partake in active learning. Similar to student engagement, active learning has been broadly defined throughout the literature. The definition that best aligns with the idea of student engagement described above is that the process of active learning involves “students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing” (Bonwell & Eison, 2003, 2). Specifically, active learning requires that students engage in higher order thinking. Conditions that must be present for active learning to occur include problem-solving in real-world contexts, situational exploration, and practice and reinforcement. This type of learning in which students actively construct meaning while performing authentic learning tasks is closely aligned with the principles of constructivism (need citation?) To promote active learning, learning tasks must be structured to allow students to relate new knowledge to their prior experience (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) and test their constructions of the knowledge (Modell, 1995).

Active learning refers to the proactive acquisition and reinforcement of knowledge or skill through thinking about, working with, and applying what has been presented through reading or other modes of information presentation. Active learning strategies include but are not limited to service learning, internships, study abroad, problem-based learning, collaborative projects, participation in inquiry-oriented discussion of course material, and active application of concepts to situations beyond those in which they were learned. Often active learning strategies involve an element of choice and self-direction on the part of the learner. For example, engaging in “metacognition,” such as the planning, monitoring, and deliberate modification of learning strategy, is another form of active learning. Active learning has been shown to lead to more effective learning, application, integration, and retention. In addition, it leads to greater transfer of learning to new situations (e.g., Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully, & Salas, 1998), which is consistent with the purpose of the higher education experience.

For the purpose of this Quality Enhancement Plan, active learning is defined as the proactive acquisition and reinforcement of knowledge or skill through thinking about, working with, and applying what has been presented through reading or other modes of information presentation.
4. **Community of Learners**

The notion of “a community of learners” as used in this Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is perhaps best reflected in the report *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* issued by three higher education associations (American Association of Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1998). This document has the potential to offer special insight into the QEP since the project is expected to reflect cooperative and collaborative efforts between the Academic and Student Affairs divisions.

*Powerful Partnerships* provides 10 principles related to student learning and how to enhance it, particularly how the academic units and the student affairs units can work together. Many of these principles actively address the issues of collaboration and environment. A few of these principles have been selected to help define the term “community of learners” within the context of our Quality Enhancement Plan:

- Learning is fundamentally about making and maintaining connections: biologically through neural networks; mentally among concepts, ideas, and meanings; and experientially through interaction between the mind and the environment, self and others, generality and context, deliberation and action...

- Learning is enhanced by taking place in the context of a compelling situation that balances challenge and opportunity, stimulating and utilizing the brain’s ability to conceptualize quickly and its capacity and need for contemplation and reflection upon experiences...

- Learning is done by individuals who are intrinsically tied to others as social beings, interacting as competitors or collaborators, constraining or supporting the learning process, and able to enhance learning through cooperation and sharing...

- Learning is strongly affected by the educational climate in which it takes place: the settings and surroundings, the influence of others, and the values accorded to the life of the mind and to learning achievements...

- Much learning takes place informally and incidentally, beyond explicit teaching or the classroom, in casual contacts with faculty and staff, peers, campus life, active social and community involvements, and unplanned but fertile and complex situations...

(p 1-12)

These principles suggest that opportunities to integrate experiences in the classroom with meaningful out-of-class activities can support the process of forming essential learning enhancing connections. These activities should take advantage of purposeful facilities and opportunities for relationships with a broad
range of others. Participation in clubs and organizations, living on campus, and interacting with faculty and peers in both formal and informal settings influence student success. Active learning and student engagement strategies such as learning communities, first year experience programs, group projects, service learning opportunities, and supervised research activities that bring students and faculty together in settings outside the classroom are also essential.

The importance of appropriate and sustained co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (peer-group programs, student-development activities, and student-support services) has been well documented by Pascarella and Terenzini. In their 1991 *How College Affects Students*, they presented a synthesis of over 2500 studies on college learning and development outcomes. They concluded that,

The environmental factors that maximize persistence and educational attainment include a peer culture in which students develop close on-campus friendships, participate frequently in college-sponsored activities, and perceive their college to be highly concerned about the individual student, as well as a college emphasis on supportive services (including advising, orientation, and individualized general education courses that develop skills). It is worth noting that some of these environmental influences on educational attainment persist even after college size and student body selectivity are taken into account (p. 604).

Chickering (1993) argues that educational environments exert powerful influences on student development and suggests seven key factors. First, institutional goals must be clear and specific with objectives that guide the development of programs and services and that lead to greater consistency in policies, programs and practice while clearly declaring the value of the institution. Second, significant participation in campus life and satisfaction with the college experience are important if development is to occur. Bigger is not necessarily better if the opportunities for significant participation are not available to enough students. Third, student/faculty relationships must be extensive and varied since interaction among faculty and students facilitates development. Fourth, a relevant curriculum is needed, one that is sensitive to individual differences, offers diverse perspectives and helps students make sense of what they are learning. Fifth, teaching should involve active learning, student faculty interaction, timely feedback, high expectations, and respect for individual learning differences. Sixth, meaningful friendships and diverse student communities in which shared interests exist and significant interactions occur will encourage development. Communities may be informal friendship groups or more formal groups such as residence hall floors. Seventh, collaborative efforts by faculty and student affairs professionals are necessary to provide developmental programs and services. Student affairs administrators should seek to identify themselves as educators.
Light (2001) says that after extensive interviews with students graduating from Harvard and other institutions of varying characteristics, he has found that “(t)hose students who make connections between what goes on inside and outside the classroom report a more satisfying college experience” (p. 14). More specifically, in terms of the issue of community, Light (2001) found that substantial academic learning takes place outside the classroom, that classes which are structured to encourage or require collaboration increase both learning and engagement, that the diversity of the community is important, and that time spent focused on academic work with faculty and/or peers outside of the classroom is critical.

Baxter-Magolda (2001) suggests that for students to succeed after college they must have “a complex mind…and a complex self” (p. 326). This integration requires engaging the student in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes in settings both in and out of the formal classroom. She suggests that active collaborations and partnerships between academic and student affairs is essential to creating an environment rich in opportunities for community building among appropriate peer groups, student and faculty interactions, leadership and service activities, campus employment situations, and diversity.

Powerful Partnerships (American Association for Higher Education, 1998) concludes by identifying the essential roles to be played by each member of the community of learners that we seek to cultivate. A selection of these roles are provided below:

Students take charge of their own learning and organize their educational programs to include a broad array of experiences both inside and outside the classroom; become aware of the cumulative nature of their education, and consequently plan and monitor their development; and establish personal relationships with faculty and staff as an essential part of their education.

Faculty become masters of cognitive studies; develop pedagogy and curricula that draw upon and embody learning principles; become involved in all aspects of their institution's community life; and work in partnership with staff and community supporters to create learning activities based on the learning principles.

Scholars of cognition share their findings widely with faculty colleagues and higher education audiences and be attentive in their writings to the application of new findings to the conduct of teaching and learning.

Administrative leaders rethink the conventional organization of colleges and universities to create more inventive structures and processes that integrate academic and student affairs; align institutional planning, hiring, rewards, and resource allocations with the learning mission; offer professional development opportunities for people to cooperate across institutional boundaries; use
evidence of student learning to guide program improvement, planning and resource allocation; and communicate information on students' life circumstances and culture to all members of the college or university community.

Student affairs professionals and other staff take the initiative to connect to each other and to academic units; develop programs that purposefully incorporate and identify learning contributions; and help students to view their education holistically and to participate fully in the life of the institution and the community. …

All those involved in higher education, as professionals or as community supporters, view themselves as teachers, learners, and collaborators in service to learning. (pp. 11-12)

For the purpose of this Quality Enhancement Plan, community of learners is defined as collaboration between all segments of the University community to enhance student learning and success.

In summary, each of the three major elements of the QEP theme (student engagement, active learning, and community of learners) provides a key part of the foundation of the QEP’s actualization. Promotion of student engagement, described above as the degree of psychological and cognitive investment by the student in the learning process, enhances student learning by getting students more involved and invested in their own learning outcomes. Active learning, described above as both constructivist and authentic, involves both faculty and students in the learning process through strategies designed to promote higher level thinking and problem solving. A community of learners, described above as a collaborative and purposeful environment focused on student learning, is at once part of the process and part of the product of the intended QEP impact. By focusing scholarly and creative attention on the process of student learning and by promoting appropriate partnerships, collaborations, and structural changes the University of West Florida will move toward a sustainable learner-centered community.

E. Campus Involvement in the Development of the Plan

Prior to final approval of the theme by the University Leadership Team, endorsement of the Quality Enhancement Plan theme was requested from the following governance-related organizations: Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Deans Council, and Division of Student Affairs Directors. During discussions with the Faculty Senate, Senate members recommended changing the wording of the theme to “Creating a Community of Learners through Active Learning and Student Engagement” to provide a greater degree of specification to the reason why students and faculty should use active learning and student engagement strategies. The modified theme was approved by the UWF SACS Leadership Team. Subsequently, the theme was approved
by the Programs & Resources Committee of the University Planning Council and then by the Planning Council itself.

During the Fall Semester 2003, an initial Quality Enhancement Plan Task Force was convened with representatives from the three Colleges and the Division of Student Affairs. It was decided that the Task Force should be collaboratively chaired by representatives from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. It was also decided that additional representatives would be added in the Spring Semester 2004 and that the Task Force could create ad hoc work groups involving both Task Force members and others from the University community.

As with any group process, the collection of individuals involved went through the typical dynamic transitions often characterized as forming, storming, norming, and performing. This group dynamic was complicated by a number of factors. First, there was the ambiguity of the co-chair system that led to some confusion and tentativeness about agenda-setting during the spring and early summer of 2004. Then the original academic co-chair resigned from the project due to other commitments and responsibilities. This resulted in a short transition period during June and July of 2004. A new academic co-chair was selected and briefed on the project. These two situations extended the so-called forming and storming phases of the project. Finally, and most critically, the University was closed for three weeks due to the unprecedented impact of a catastrophic hurricane in September of 2004. The entire University community was significantly impacted personally and professionally. The student affairs co-chair was engaged in emergency recovery activities for the three weeks the University was closed plus at least an additional week after re-opening. This interruption came at the time when the QEP team should have been working at its most productive level.

Despite these complicating factors, the QEP team did accomplish a great deal. The process began with preliminary meetings which focused on the purpose of the project and determining a plan of work. Discussions among Task Force members through the end of February 2004 revealed the following:

- Confusion over what exactly is to be enhanced. Confusion over what “problem” is to be solved.
- Lack of clarity in what is meant by a community of learners, active learning, and student engagement and the relationship between these three concepts. To some degree, the confusion resulted from student engagement being both a desired student learning outcome and an active-learning-based instructional strategy used to secure other learning outcomes.
- Difficulty in identifying appropriate measures related to desired student learning without clear specification of the student learning outcomes.
- Perception that the University lacks a clear set of university-level student learning outcomes.
• Perception of a lack of alignment of strategic planning documents at different levels.
• Perception that the theme presupposes solutions without full analysis of underlying problems.
• Perception that although units may have identified unit-level student learning outcomes, there is little valid and reliable measurement data being collected and used with respect to the stated outcomes.
• Perception that the identification of the theme may not have been as data-driven as it might have been.

Discussions among the QEP Leadership and Task Force members continued throughout the spring of 2004 as the group worked on identifying best practices external to the University via literature review and Web searches and identified the types of data that would be necessary. Also during this period of time, the National Survey of Student Engagement was administered electronically with a response rate of 40% (slightly above the national average for participating institutions). Preliminary work was done on planning an evaluation design.

One of the major challenges of the QEP team was to align student learning outcomes to all levels of the University’s planning processes. Early on, the perceived lack of alignment between the university-level strategic plan and the program- and activity-level student learning outcomes had been identified as a potential gap. Two very important activities emerged that addressed this issue: a revision of the University’s strategic plan and the evolution of university-level student learning outcome domains.

Based on feedback from the QEP group and from other constituent groups, the language of the University’s strategic plan was updated to better reflect the direction of the QEP. Key concepts such as communities of learners, and education focused on student outcomes, were included in the University’s Goals and Imperatives. New or revised University Priorities were included such as

• (E)ngaging students in . . . programs that will prepare them to make life-long contributions to society,
• Aligning innovative curricula and co-curricula to the University’s mission, and
• Identifying and systematically assessing learning outcomes.

These changes in the University’s central strategic planning document were endorsed by the University Planning Council in April 2004 and by the University of West Florida Board of Trustees in June 2004. The updated Strategic Plan was seen as a prelude to the upcoming Quality Enhancement Project and an essential message to the entire University community that the enhancement of student learning was central to the University’s mission.
The second major factor contributing to the improved alignment of student learning outcomes to all levels of the University's planning processes were the resolutions adopted in April and July of 2004 by the Florida Board of Governors requiring all state universities to create and publish Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs) for their baccalaureate degree programs. These ALCs must, at a minimum, identify the expected core student learning outcomes and related assessments in the areas of content/discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills. Because the development of university-level student learning outcomes had already been identified as a gap by the QEP group, the University's academic leaders embraced this requirement as an opportunity to meet or exceed the requirements of the State while creating what was effectively an essential prerequisite to the QEP implementation. In addition to the three required domains, three additional “value added” outcome domains were crafted: project management, values and ethics, and discipline specific outcomes. The results of this work were the university-level student learning domains described elsewhere in this document.

During the summer of 2004 work groups were assigned to develop tools to establish a baseline of practice at UWF related to student engagement and active learning strategies and assessment of student learning. In June of 2004, the Director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning coordinated a visit by consultant Bill Hill from Kennesaw State University. Dr. Hill’s visit included meetings with the QEP work groups and leadership team. Dr. Hill made presentations entitled Developing Student Learning Outcomes: Strategies and Challenges; Assessment Plans and Strategies, and Enhancing Instruction: Needs, Strategies and Opportunities. Dr. Hill also provided an external review of UWF’s QEP draft and presented observations and suggestions. This consultation visit helped focus the organization and work plans of the QEP team on a tighter integration of student learning outcomes, assessment, and learning strategies.

At the same time the QEP was being developed, resources became available for implementation of a Faculty Fellows Program through the Center for University Teaching and Learning. The Center chose to emphasize components of the QEP – mentoring, instructional strategies, and assessment – in this faculty development program. Three fellow positions were advertised; potential candidates were effective teachers who possess organizational and leadership abilities as well as a concrete vision for what they could accomplish as a CUTL Fellow. Any full-time, tenure-track faculty member with at least 3 full years of experience at the University was eligible; reapplication for an additional consecutive term is permissible. Successful candidates receive a course release each semester, a $2500 stipend, and a summer stipend. At the end of the fall 2004 term, the selection committee had identified two fellows: Mentoring Fellow and Assessment Fellow. The Mentoring Fellow will develop programs and initiatives that contribute to faculty and student success in addition to mentoring individual faculty. The Assessment Fellow will contribute to the inclusion of
effective assessment techniques in the accomplishment of student learning outcomes. An Instructional Strategies Fellow is anticipated for the fall of 2004 to advance effective strategies for student engagement and active student learning.

The fall of 2004 was complicated by Hurricane Ivan, which closed the University of West Florida to regular business for 3 weeks and challenged all areas of the campus to participate in intensive recovery activities. After reopening the University, the QEP Leadership Team was enhanced by the addition of a representative from the Faculty Senate and the original Task Force was reconstituted into a broader Steering Committee (see Appendix XXX). The Steering Committee was charged with a number of tasks essential to completing the planning stage of the QEP effort. Agreement was also reached on the overall administrative and governance structure once full implementation takes place in the Fall Semester 2005 (see Section IV. D).

The principal outlines of the QEP were presented to the University community at the President’s Fall Semester Town Hall Meeting on November XX, 2004. Previously, presentations had been made to the Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, and College Councils as part of the semester update on activities related to the QEP and to a meeting of department chairpersons and faculty on the development of the university-level student learning domains associated with the Academic Learning Compacts project.

During the latter part of Fall Semester 2004 work was done to establish a Web site to host a variety of information resources for faculty and staff related to the QEP theme and processes. A process for soliciting project proposals (RFP – Request for Proposals) was created. The surveys designed during the summer were formatted, piloted, and then distributed electronically to all academic chairpersons and faculty. The QEP document was drafted during the Fall Semester of 2004 and submitted to the campus community for review and response early in the Spring Semester of 2005.
II. Charting the Course: What Do We Know About Current Conditions?

This Quality Enhancement Plan, as would any change activity, occurs within the context of a dynamic environment. The movement of the University does not stop while new initiatives are rolled out. There is no analog in a university setting to the industrial model of shutting down the plant to retool for production of a new model. Therefore, this planning process has influenced and been influenced by a number of environmental factors. These include the overall University strategic plan, divisional planning in both Academic and Student Affairs, the movement toward a student learning outcome paradigm represented by the development of the Academic Learning Compacts and the Student Affairs planning and assessment initiative, results from formal and informal assessments, and other related campus initiatives. The most important of these environmental factors are described below and in designated appendices.

A. University Strategic Plan and Related Assessments

As detailed above, the University Planning Council and the University Board of Trustees developed and approved a new strategic plan for UWF. The new strategic plan replaced the Partnership Strategic Plan that was adopted in January, 2000. All organizational units are updating their individual strategic plans in support of the new strategic plan.

The strategic plan includes the following major strategic goals for the University of West Florida:

- Promote programs and activities, and learning and living environments that encourage the development of individual potential in students, faculty, and staff; communities of learners; and the valuing of lifelong learning.
- Attract and inspire a diverse and talented student body committed to uncompromising academic excellence.
- Provide solutions to educational, cultural, economic, and environmental concerns.
- Manage growth and development responsibly through focus on continuous quality improvement of programs and processes.

B. Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Strategic Plans and Related Assessments

The Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs also publish strategic plan documents. These are intended to link the university-level plan to the program- and service-level activities.
The Academic Affairs strategic plan includes the following major strategic goals:

- Offer high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education/distance education programs.
- Foster high-quality research and other creative and scholarly activities.
- Engage in high-quality public service.
- Provide quality learning and work environments.
- Strengthen contributions to the development of the University of West Florida.
- Support the advancement of higher education through professional service, personal professional development, and educational partnerships.

The Student Affairs strategic plan includes the following major strategic goals:

- Provide a student-focused environment that encourages the development of the whole person, enhances the quality of the UWF experience for all students, and promotes active student learning through engagement.
- Provide student services that meet the unique needs of students in a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate manner.
- Create a professional environment that promotes and recognizes growth, quality work, a sense of community, and synergy.
- Integrate technology into student affairs programs to become “leaner, meaner, and more efficient” in business practices allowing us to be more individually engaged with student relationships.
- Identify and develop “centers of excellence” within the functional units of the division.
- Articulate the essential role of Student Affairs in the mission of the University through formal and informal communications; participation in University planning, programming, and governance activities; and relationship networks with a cross section of the University community.

C. Student Learning Outcomes

The movement toward a learner-centered culture at the University of West Florida is manifested in two major divisional initiatives. Academic Affairs, responding to both the gaps identified in the reaffirmation of accreditation process and new requirements of Florida’s evolving higher education governance structure, initiated work on Academic Learning Compacts. Student Affairs, seeking to enhance collaboration with Academic Affairs and to better engage the departments and units of the division in the academic enterprise, initiated a planning and assessment framework that embraces both program outputs and learning outcomes.
1. **Academic Learning Compacts**

At its April 22, 2004, and July 22, 2004, meetings, the Florida Board of Governors, adopted policy resolutions requiring all universities in the State University System of Florida to adopt, through their respective Boards of Trustees, Academic Learning Compacts for baccalaureate degree programs.

**UWF Definition of Program.** At a minimum, each academic department is to prepare Academic Learning Compacts for each of its baccalaureate and graduate degree programs listed by six-digit CIP codes on the State University System Inventory of Degree Programs. In cases where an academic department offers multiple programs under one six-digit CIP code and the programs so offered are substantially different with respect to core student learning outcomes, a separate Academic Learning Compact is to be prepared for each program.

**Board of Governors Policies and Procedures.** Each university is to construct and publish clearly defined policies and procedures for developing, implementing, and reviewing Academic Learning Compacts and associated activities. A current copy of each university’s policies and procedures regarding Academic Learning Compacts is to be filed with the Division of Colleges and Universities. These policies and procedures are to be aligned with System policies and are to include, but not be restricted to the following elements:

I. For each baccalaureate program on the State University System Academic Degree Inventory, university personnel are to develop and make Academic Learning Compacts available to students that:
   A. Identify, at a minimum, the expected core student learning outcomes for program graduates in the areas of
      1. content/discipline knowledge and skills;
      2. communication skills;
      3. critical thinking skills; and
   B. Identify corresponding assessments used to determine how well student learning matches those articulated expectations.

II. University personnel are to develop the evaluation systems (including external validations) necessary to corroborate that the assessments referenced above truly measure student achievement against the expected core learning outcomes. Such evaluations are to serve as validation of the confidence levels associated with the assessment mechanisms used in the program, and results are to be used to improve student achievement and program effectiveness.
**Action Plan.** During the initial phase of implementing the policy, university personnel are to develop an action plan that is to be approved by the university’s Board of Trustees and submitted to the Division of Colleges and Universities. The plan is to include the following:

- A proposed timeline for developing policies and implementing procedures to capture each element above, as well as in making Academic Learning Compacts readily available to students.
- A description of how university personnel will certify that each baccalaureate graduate has completed a program with clearly articulated core learning expectations and corresponding robust and effective assessment mechanisms.

The UWF Board of Trustees approved the UWF Action Plan at its November 2004 meeting (see Appendix XXX).

**Information Available to Students.** University personnel are to provide students and prospective students with concise statements of what active and successful participants in the joint teaching-learning process will know and be able to do, expressed in terms of the core learning outcomes embodied in the requirements for each baccalaureate degree. The Academic Learning Compacts made available to students also will list the types of assessment used in the program.

University policies and procedures are to delineate how and where Academic Learning Compacts will be made readily available to students.

Academic Learning Compacts must be made available to students beginning no later than the fall semester of 2005. As of the date of the preparation of the UWF QEP, decisions related to the place of publication of the Academic Learning Compacts at UWF is still under consideration.

**Inclusion in State-Mandated Academic Program Reviews.** As part of the mandated review and continuous improvement process for State University System degree programs, university personnel are to submit to the Division of Colleges and Universities an electronic copy of the Academic Learning Compact for each baccalaureate degree program under review.

At UWF, effective with academic program reviews conducted in Academic Year 2004-2005, program review self-studies and final reports must include the Academic Learning Compact and related curriculum maps and assessment plans. Program Review Teams will be required to comment on the sufficiency of the Compacts, curriculum maps, and assessment plans. Given the University’s five-year rotation of academic program reviews, inclusion of this component in
program reviews will ensure that all Academic Learning Compacts are reviewed on a regularly scheduled basis.

**UWF Core Student Learning Outcomes/University-Level Domains.** At UWF, each baccalaureate and graduate degree program is expected to present program-level Academic Learning Compact core student learning outcomes for each of the following domains:

- **Content**—concepts, theories, and frameworks of the discipline.
- **Critical Thinking**—information management; higher-level cognitive skills; problem solving; creativity.
- **Communication*/Literacy**—written (reading and writing); spoken (listening and speaking); quantitative; technological other communication skills as appropriate to the discipline.
- **Integrity/Values**—decision making, academic integrity, professional standards for discipline integrity.
- **Project Management**—project planning and execution pertinent to the discipline.

In addition, degree programs may present student learning outcomes representing

- **Discipline Specific Skills**—special outcomes that distinguish program completers not identified in the five domains listed above.

*Note: Areas required by Board of Governors policy.*

**UWF Curriculum Maps/Matrices.** At UWF, each program is to identify where in the program the key learning activities and key assessments related to the program-level core student learning outcomes are found in the program. There is to be clear identification by course and other curriculum components of the program-level student learning outcomes, key teaching-learning activities, and key assessments associated with the Academic Learning Compact.

**UWF Assessment Plans.** At UWF, in addition to identifying the types of assessments to be used to ascertain whether students have acquired the core learning outcomes, the assessment plan must address the following as stipulated in Board of Governors policy:

University personnel will develop the evaluation systems (including external validations) necessary to corroborate that the assessments referenced truly measure student achievement against the expected core learning outcomes. Such evaluations will serve to validate the confidence levels associated with assessment mechanisms used in the program, and results will be used to improve student achievement and program effectiveness.
Certification of Program Completion. At UWF, effective with first-time-in-college (FTIC) students entering UWF in the Fall Term 2005, departmental and college approvals of baccalaureate candidates for graduation will include verification that the candidates have completed programs with “clearly articulated core learning expectations and corresponding robust and effective assessment mechanisms.”

Relationship to Requests for New UWF Programs and Program Modifications. At UWF, effective with requests for implementation of new programs and requests for program modifications to be reviewed and considered after August 1, 2005, such requests must include an appropriate Academic Learning Compact and related curriculum map and assessment plan. Inclusion of this requirement in program change request policy and procedures will ensure that all new and revised programs develop Academic Learning Compacts and related curriculum maps and assessment plans in a timely fashion.

2. Student Affairs Planning and Outcome Assessment

Historically, there have been three major philosophical movements in student affairs practice: student services, student development, and student learning. (Doyle, J. A. (2004). “Where have we come from and where are we going? A review of past student affairs philosophies and an analysis of the current student learning philosophy.” The College Student Affairs Journal, 24, 66-83.) Each of these movements has a unique and essential place in the past, present and future of student affairs work.

The student services approach, with its roots in the American Council on Education’s Student Personnel Point of View (1937, 1949), suggested that the primary purpose of the profession was to provide specialized services to support the academic mission of the institution. From these two seminal documents the notion that the academy should provide “student personnel services” designed to integrate the classroom and outside the classroom.

The student development movement emerged as student affairs practitioners sought to regain relevance to the direct educational mission of the academy. Though there are many models of student development, the basic premise is the same. Student Development reflects theories of human growth and environmental influences as applied to in-class and out-of-class personal learning opportunities. The central element of student development as an intentional activity is the interaction between the student and the educational environment. The notion of most student development theories is that all aspects of the student’s life should be attended to because they all impact the
developmental outcome. Environmental elements both challenge the student and provide the support needed to meet these challenges catalyzing more advanced levels of growth and development.

**Student learning** as a focus addresses more specifically the measurable outcomes associated with the collegiate experience. The student learning approach focuses on the questions of what students will know, be able to do, and value as a result of engagement in the academy. Student learning is by its nature defined in terms of observable student behaviors and actions. A student learning focus suggests that it is the responsibility of student affairs to proactively seek ways to contribute to the enhancement of student learning.

Which of these guiding philosophies is the “right way”? It can be argued that each of the three approaches has a place in the functioning of the Division of Student Affairs at the University of West Florida. The student services orientation is well reflected in the organization of programs, services, and facilities to meet the needs of students and to focus on student satisfaction. Student service initiatives have direct impact on the quality of life of students and provide the essential safety nets for students in need. The student development perspective represents the more global aspirations for students and the professional value structure that embraces the notion that student affairs work makes a difference in students’ lives.

Based on the discussion above, the next stage of evolution for UWF’s Division of Student Affairs is to align planning and assessment process with these three frameworks. To accomplish this, planning and assessment efforts must be organized into three components:

- **Program outcomes** should be stated to describe what programs, services, and facilities should accomplish. Outcomes and assessments might include usage data (attendance, number of events, number of clients), satisfaction surveys, benchmarking, and other direct and indirect measures.

- **Student development outcomes** should be stated to describe how we believe students will experience personal growth from participation or exposure to our programs, services, and facilities. Outcomes and assessments might focus on how students move from concrete and simplistic to abstract and complex thought processes, from absolute to relativistic belief systems, and from external to internal control. Assessment for these sorts of outcomes would necessarily be long term and broad and likely best effected at a divisional or institutional level via national instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or institutionally developed alumni surveys.

- **Student learning outcomes** (SLOs) should be stated to describe what students are expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and values due to our programs, services, and facilities. The
focus of student learning outcomes and related assessments are discussed more fully below.

A Context for Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes. An ad hoc task group of professional and pre-professional staff convened to develop a common model of student learning outcomes that can serve as the foundation for all Student Affairs departments and units. The committee drew upon a variety of resources from the literature and the experience (and files) of the members. After two sessions of brainstorming and refining a proposed general model was developed.

University Level Student Learning Outcome Domains. Although the mission and strategic goals of the University of West Florida encompass a variety of aspects important to many constituent groups, the primary purpose of the University is to educate students with the intention of producing individuals with a range of competencies. These competencies, in aggregate, help define the University’s aspirations for its students in a broad and hopeful way. These competencies also inform the articulation of University level outcomes within the framework of knowledge, skills, and core values.

Within the context of UWF’s place as a state supported institution, these competencies and learning outcomes align out to the Academic Learning Compacts described above. Within the area of Student Affairs, each program or service should have articulated student learning outcomes that can be aligned with University student learning outcomes and which are in general support of the Academic Learning Compacts process. These co-curricular program outcomes will drive the development of event, activity, or service delivery outcomes.

Operationalizing and Assessing Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes. Because they are intentionally broad and general there is no “silver bullet” for quickly and easily operationalizing and assessing these outcomes. Successful learning strategies and assessment must therefore occur at the program and activity level where these broad outcomes are expressed more specifically and actualized by a specific program or service. At that point the questions that guided the development of the outcomes can be adapted to guide assessment:

- What do the students know? (Knowledge)
- What can the students do? (Skills)
- What will the students choose to do? (Values)
For example, if the divisional learning outcome is that “our students will know about the world of work including career possibilities, how to search for jobs, how to prepare resumes, and professional expectations” then a learning outcome for the Career Services Resume Workshop might be that “students will produce a clean and effective resume.” The assessment of this activity level learning outcome might be a simple rubric by which the resume can be judged “clean and effective.” Asking what the student can do in relation to creating a resume will in fact be an assessment of both the extrapolated departmental learning outcome and the root divisional learning outcome. If departmental learning outcomes are aligned with the divisional outcomes then assessment (both formative and summative) can roll up to the divisional level.

**Mapping the Co-Curriculum.** The next step is to position the divisional learning outcomes within the division’s strategic plan. In addition each department or unit must begin identifying and articulating outcomes that can then be aligned with the divisional outcomes. The divisional outcomes should offer sufficient opportunities for every department and unit to find ways to nest both their learning and program outcomes within the division and the University.

A framework for mapping student learning outcome strategies and assessment efforts has been designed that will chart at macro and micro levels the activity and event level learning outcomes extrapolated from the general model. A division level map (spread sheet) will identify which learning outcomes and associated assessments are linked to each department. Each department will have (at minimum) a department level map that more specifically articulates the learning outcomes associated with the department in terms of measurable student behaviors and actions. Departments with more complex structures and programs will likely need to create another level of map to drill down to the activity/event level.

**Using Planning and Assessment for Organizational Effectiveness.** Each department within the division of Student Affairs should already have a strategic plan in place and published on the UPIC website. The UPIC system, the official posting site for University planning and assessment activities, must eventually contain all the essential information on divisional planning and assessment. In preparation for submitting information to UPIC it is recommended that each department or unit use the following general outline as an organizational tool.

I. Department or unit vision, mission, and values – review to ensure that these are in appropriate alignment with the divisional and university level vision, mission, and values.
II. Department or unit strategic goals – review to ensure that these are in appropriate alignment with the divisional and university level strategic goals.

III. Department or unit program outcomes and assessment methods – review to ensure that program outcomes are clearly stated and assessment methods are sufficient and appropriate.

IV. Department or unit student learning outcomes and assessment methods – create and map student learning outcomes and assessment plans for these outcomes.

V. Assessment implementation and reporting plans
   a. Select at one person who will be the department’s assessment director. If your department is large and complex, a committee should be appointed to support and assist this person.
   b. The departmental assessment director will create a listing of assessment activities (program outcomes and student learning outcomes)
      i. When (including frequency) will assessment occur?
      ii. How will it be reported to the university community?
   c. Each department will establish a plan to analyze assessment results regularly and use results to make changes intended to improve departmental effectiveness.

VI. A divisional assessment “homepage” will be established as a way of making assessment information available to all our stakeholders:
   a. Introduction to assessment documents
   b. Documents
      i. Summaries of student learning outcome assessments
      ii. Summaries of Program assessments
      iii. Internal assessment
         1. Campus surveys
         2. Focus groups
      iv. External assessments
         1. EBI
         2. NSSE
         3. Consultant reports
      v. Analysis
      vi. Recommendations/Actions

D. National Survey of Student Engagement

To Be Added

E. Chairpersons and Faculty Surveys
To identify current levels of usage of student engagement/active learning instructional strategies and student learning outcomes assessment practices by programs and by individual faculty, surveys of chairpersons and of individual faculty were conducted in December 2004 through the Provost’s Office. (An earlier administration of the surveys was planned but proved not to be feasible because of the closure of the University for Hurricane Ivan.)

The Chairperson Survey and Faculty Survey both focus on student engagement/active learning instructional strategies and outcomes assessment but from different perspectives. The Chairperson Survey deals with instructional practices and assessment processes at the program level. The Faculty Survey deals with instructional practices and assessment process at the course level. The intent of these surveys was to establish baseline data on current instructional and assessment practices at the program and course levels. Data from the surveys has also been used to assist in the identification of strengths and weakness of programs and courses with respect to assessment of student learning outcomes and the utilization of student engagement/active learning teaching strategies.

The Chairperson Survey was sent to the XXX chairs of academic departments. Responses were received from XXX (YYY%) of the chairs.

The Faculty Survey was sent to XXX regular faculty and XXX adjuncts who taught in the Fall Semester 2004. Responses were received from XXX (YYY%) of the regular faculty and XXX (YYY%) of the adjuncts.

Summary of Results

Chairperson Survey

Student Engagement/Active Learning Instructional Strategies

To Be Added

Outcome Assessment Processes

To Be Added

Faculty Survey

Student Engagement/Active Learning Instructional Strategies

To Be Added

Outcome Assessment Processes
F. Related Campus Initiatives

This Quality Enhancement Plan is one project among several that relate to achieving the University of West Florida’s strategic plan. Other concurrent initiatives include efforts to achieve excellence in campus services, improve the campus information technology environment, develop the “electronic” campus and facilitate online learning, focus on enrollment management, and manage facility needs according to an appropriate master plan.

1. Making Way for Excellence

The University of West Florida has initiated a service enhancement effort that has been named Making Way for Excellence. The excerpt below, taken from a recent Presidential newsletter (August 26, 2004) (http://nautical.uwf.edu/comm/enews/DispEnews.cfm?EnewsID=13827), describes this effort.

The focus of every great college or university is students. That’s true here at UWF. The major changes that we have implemented in the area of human resources and the application of technology to many of our processes have laid the groundwork for taking our university to the next level to create the best learning environment possible. In a world of business as usual, we are moving past the expected in an effort to create better services and better solutions. Our new Argus portal and our new electronic human resource and financial accounting systems are just two examples on the technology front. And it’s not just about being different . . . we are determined to be the best at what we do. In fact, we are going to be the best comprehensive university in America. This is not a stretch. We are already a very good university on course to becoming an excellent one.

Making Way for Excellence is the name we’ve put on setting this course for UWF. This isn’t a program or an initiative; it’s a fundamental change in our culture. It’s an uncompromising commitment to excellence. For us, it’s creating a learning environment like no other . . . a place where creativity, caring in its largest sense and intellectual excellence are intrinsic to the people who work and study here . . . a place where nothing is more important than maintaining personal relationships that nurture the mind and spirit, empowering those we serve as well as each of us, to reach our full potential.
It is anticipated that the Quality Enhancement Plan, focusing on excellence in student learning, will be a notable and appropriate counterpart to Making Way for Excellence and its focus on excellence in service.

2. Information Technology Plan

In spring of 2004, the University Planning Council (UPC) approved a new strategic plan for Information Technology Services. The excerpt below describing the plan is taken from the planning document presented to the UPC (April 22, 2004 minutes -- http://nautical.uwf.edu/files/org/UPC/April_22_04_UPC_Minutes.doc).

Information technology is a tool to be used. However, it is also a force transforming higher education today, and is thus also an external pressure to which we must react. It is also an area of great expense, effort, and risk to the University, and therefore demands careful management to insure effective and efficient use. This plan takes into account all these aspects of information technology.

This plan establishes six strategic goals for the use of information technology at UWF. The first three goals concentrate on the utility and transforming nature of information technology in using technology in support of the University’s strategic goals. The final three goals concentrate on the prudent management and effective use of information technology to address the associated risk and expense. These strategic goals are:

1. Use information technology to enrich the educational experience of students by enhancing the quality of learning, access to learning, student services, and student engagement in the university community.
2. Use information technology to provide an environment that enables leading-edge scholarship and research by faculty and students.
3. Use information technology to enable the University to provide high-quality information and services to its clients and partners, and to conduct University operations effectively and efficiently.
4. Provide a quality, reliable, sustainable, consistent, and secure information technology infrastructure that enables contemporary teaching, learning, research, service, and administrative operations to flourish.
5. Ensure that all staff are skilled to be able to productively use information technology appropriately and effectively.
6. Ensure the effective governance, design, deployment, and management of information technology resources, guided by institutional priorities and stakeholder needs.

For each goal, the plan identifies specific imperatives (i.e., objectives) as well as near and midterm priorities to address. Because changes in information technology and the higher education landscape are many, rapid, and often unpredictable, this plan proposes broad, guiding strategies that are flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances. It is left to University, divisional, college, and departmental leadership to develop specific tactical action plans for information technology that are in harmony with the principles of this plan, and responsive to organizational priorities and changing conditions.

This plan specifically addresses enhancement of student learning and the educational environment of the University of West Florida and therefore is well aligned with the direction of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

3. Academic Technology Center

In November of 2003, the establishment of the Academic Technology Center (ATC) was announced. (http://uwf.edu/atc/) The purpose of the ATC is to support colleges and faculty in all efforts related to designing and delivering priority distance learning programs at UWF through:

- Professional Development
- Strategic Program/Course Development Services
- Desire 2 Learn Support System
- Interactive Distance Learning Studio Support System
- ATC Special Initiatives
- Online Campus Portal Project

The ATC will provide essential faculty and program development support to ensure that student learning is enhanced in the “electronic” campus. Representatives from the ATC have been involved in the QEP development process to ensure that goals and activities are appropriately aligned.

4. Enrollment Development Plan

To Be Added
5. **Facilities Master Plan**

   To Be Added

**III. QEP Development and Implementation Timeline**

The development and implementation timeline below was developed by the SACS Reaffirmation Project Administrative Team and the QEP Task Force. Although a fluid document, it does much to provide essential focus and structure to the QEP concept and process and continues to serve as the principal guide to action.
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<td>III</td>
<td>Pilot Projects</td>
<td>Continue Phase II exploratory projects as appropriate.</td>
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<td>*Evaluation of Phase II exploratory and Phase III pilot projects.</td>
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| 2006-2007 |               | IV        | Pilot Projects       | *Continue Phase II exploratory and Phase III pilot projects as appropriate.  
*Phase IV pilot projects implemented: at least 1 additional project @ CAS, CoB, CoPS, and SA.  
*Implement Phase IV faculty/staff development activities.  
*Evaluation of Phase II exploratory and Phase III pilot projects.  
*Phase II exploratory and Phase III pilot projects information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of Phase IV pilot projects.  
*Phase IV pilot projects information dissemination.  
*Review Academic Learning Compacts.  
*Evaluation of second year of implementation of QEP.  
*QEP modification based on evaluation.  
*Plan for Stage 1 of expansion of projects across the University.  
*Select Stage 1 expansion projects. | *CUTLA, Deans, U  
*CUTLA, Deans, U  
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| 2007-2008 |               | V         | University-Wide Expansion: Stage 1               | *Continue Phase II exploratory and Phase III and IV pilot projects as appropriate.  
*Begin implementation of Stage 1 of campus-wide expansion.  
*Implementation of Phase V faculty/staff development activities.  
*Review of Academic Learning Compacts.  
*Evaluation of Phase II exploratory and Phase III and IV pilot projects.  
*Phase II exploratory and Phase III and IV pilot project information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of Stage 1 of campus-wide expansion.  
*Expansion Stage 1 project information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of third year of implementation of QEP.  
*QEP modification based on evaluation.  
*Plan for Stage 2 of expansion of projects across the University.  
*Select Expansion Stage 2 projects. | *CUTLA, Deans, U  
*CUTLA, Deans, U  
*CUTLA  
*AVP/Acad. Director  
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| 2008-2009 | VI | University-Wide Expansion: Stage 2 | *Continue Phase II exploratory, Phase III and IV pilot, and Expansion Stage 1 projects as appropriate.  
*Begin implementation of Stage 2 of campus-wide expansion.  
*Implementation of Phase VI faculty/staff development activities.  
*Review of Academic Learning Compacts.  
*Evaluation of Phase II exploratory, Phase III and IV pilot, and Stage 1 Expansion projects.  
*Phase II, III and IV, and Stage 1 project information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of Stage 2 of campus-wide expansion.  
*Expansion Stage 2 projects information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of fourth year of implementation of QEP.  
*QEP modification based on evaluation.  
*Plan for full institutionalization across the University. | *CUTLA, Deans, U  
*CUTLA, Deans, U  
*CUTLA.  
*AVPAcA, Director  
*QEP SC subcomm  
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| 2009-2010 | Submit 5th-Year Report | VII       | Full Institutionalization  | *Continue Phase II exploratory, Phase III and IV pilot, and Expansion Stage 1 and 2 projects as appropriate.  
*Begin implementation of full institutionalization.  
*Implement Phase VII faculty/staff development projects.  
*Review Academic Learning Compacts.  
*Evaluation of Phase III and IV pilot projects and Phase 1 and 2 Expansion projects.  
*Phase 1 and 2, Phase III and IV project information dissemination.  
*Evaluation of fifth year of implementation of QEP.  
*QEP modification based on evaluation.  
*Plan for maintenance of full institutionalization across the University.  
*Prepare and submit 5th-Year Report. |
Each year of the QEP process will include at least the following:
- Dissemination of information about the overall QEP efforts for that year.
- Solicitation and selection of QEP projects for funding in subsequent year.
- Dissemination of information about individual projects (e.g., Exploratory Projects, Pilot Projects, Stage 1 and 2 Expansion Projects).
- Evaluation of individual projects.
- Review of Academic Learning Compacts.
- Evaluation of overall QEP project.
- Continued dialogue about student learning outcomes, assessment, and instructional strategies.
- Consultative support and facilitation for units engaged in developing and implementing projects.
- Review of relationship of University Strategic Plan and QEP.
IV. Setting Sail: Engaging in the Process

This Quality Enhancement Plan is intended to maximize student learning and attain learning goals at all levels: general education, undergraduate education, and graduate education. The following more specific objectives have been identified for each of the primary goals of the QEP:

1. Improve student learning.
   a. Unit-based projects funded through the QEP RFP process will demonstrate improvements in student learning.
   b. Assessment conducted in conjunction with the Academic Learning Compacts requirement will demonstrate improvements in student learning.
   c. The majority of responses to the President’s Annual Surveys of Friends, Faculty/Staff, and Students on items related to student learning will be in the “fully agree” category.
   d. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings on Items 11a-o on the National Survey of Student Engagement will increase by 0.5 standard deviation. (Need to identify what these items were about.) (Rosemary: Your draft shows an increase of 1 SD for these items—we need to double check to see which is correct.)
   e. Over the 5 years of the implementation of the QEP, student ratings on Item 13 of the National Survey of Student Engagement will increase by at least 0.5 standard deviation unit. (Need to identify what these items were about.)

2. Refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments.
   a. By the end of Academic Year 2009-2010, general education, baccalaureate, master’s, education specialist, and doctoral programs will have in place a set of program-level student learning outcomes and related assessments that align with the University’s strategic plan and university-level student learning outcomes.
   b. By the end of Academic Year 2004-2005, each degree program will have established student learning outcomes associated with the Board of Governors required Academic Learning Compacts.
   c. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, responses of Chairpersons on the QEP-related Survey of Chairpersons, will show increased use of multiple methods of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.
   d. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, annual reports of progress on implementation of recommendations of program review teams will show action on recommendations related to student learning outcomes and related assessments.
e. By the end of Academic Year 2005-2006, all program and course Curriculum Change Requests (CCRs) will include appropriately stated student learning outcomes and related assessments and with program-level outcomes being consistent with university-level outcomes.

f. By the end of Academic Year 2009-2010, all course syllabi will include appropriately stated student learning outcomes and identify related assessments.

3. Increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies.
   a. Unit-based projects funded through the QEP RFP process will demonstrate increased use of student engagement/active learning instructional strategies.
   b. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP responses from chairpersons and faculty on the QEP-related Survey of Chairpersons and Survey of Faculty will show increased use of student engagement/active learning strategies.
   c. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for the Active and Collaborative Learning benchmark on the National Survey of Student Engagement will reach the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 80th percentile for seniors.
   d. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for Items 7a, b, d, and f of the National Survey of Student Engagement will increase by at least 0.5 standard deviation units. (Need to identify what these items were about.)
   e. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for Items 1a-e and 1g-v will increase by at least 0.5 standard deviation units. (Need to identify what these items were about.)

4. Build communities of learners.
   a. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for the Supportive Campus Environment benchmark on the National Survey of Student Engagement will reach the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 80th percentile for seniors.
   b. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for Items 1h will increase by at least 0.5 standard deviation units. (Rosemary: Item 1h is also included in Objective 3.e. above; did we duplicate that item in our listing?)
   c. Over the 5 years of implementation of the QEP, student ratings for the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark on the National Survey of Student Engagement will reach the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 80th percentile for seniors.

5. Provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development.
   a. Annually, engage at least two external consultants to provide guidance and counsel on effective use of student
engagement/active learning instructional strategies and outcome assessment practices.
b. Annually, support individual and group faculty and staff travel to professional meetings and workshops related to the goals of the QEP.
c. Provide through the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Web site, resource information on student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and student engagement/active learning instructional strategies. (Rosemary: May need to add an assessment measure related to this objective.)
d. Provide support for faculty and staff preparing manuscripts for journal articles and other publications on activities and projects related to the QEP. (Rosemary: May need to add an assessment measure related to this objective.)

This Quality Enhancement Plan embraces three primary strategies for achieving the goals and objectives described above. Academic Learning Compacts will address the refinement and alignment of program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments. Faculty and staff development activities will be facilitated by the Center for University Teaching and Learning and by the Division of Student Affairs. In order to achieve the remaining primary goals and supporting objectives of the QEP, an infrastructure is proposed that will provide for quality enhancement projects, an evaluation plan that provides for both formative and summative evaluation, essential resources, and a leadership structure designed to facilitate continued collaboration. It is anticipated that project activities or strategies that prove successful will be institutionalized. These projects and a comprehensive evaluation plan is described below.

A. Academic Learning Compacts

The principal vehicle for achieving the goal of refining program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments will be carrying out the Board of Governors mandate for development of Academic Learning Compacts. (See Section II. C. above.) Whereas the Board of Governors requirement involves only baccalaureate-level programs, the University will use the occasion of this requirement to develop Compacts for all degree programs regardless of level and for general education.

By the end of Academic Year 2004-2005, all departments offering baccalaureate degree programs will have established program-level student learning outcomes consistent with the university-level student learning outcome domains for undergraduate programs, identified appropriate assessment strategies, and prepared curriculum maps for each baccalaureate degree program. By the beginning of Academic Year 2005-2006, each department
offering graduate degree programs will have established program-level student learning outcomes consistent with the university-level student learning outcome domains for graduate programs. By the end of Academic Year 2005-2006, graduate departments will have identified appropriate assessment strategies and prepared curriculum maps for each graduate degree program. By the end of Academic Year 2005-2006, the unit responsible for the University’s general education program will have refined the general education student learning outcomes consistent with university-level student learning domains for undergraduate programs, identified appropriate assessment strategies, and prepared an associated curriculum map.

(Note to all: The timing of completion of the ALC-related components as developed above is not quite the same as we have in the Goals/Objectives and Evaluation Sections. Need to resolve which is more realistic and which will sit better with the SACS review committee.)

B. Faculty Development

To facilitate implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan, the University will provide faculty development and services through a variety of activities. Among the types of support which will be provided each year are the following:

• Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Fellows
• On-campus workshops for faculty, adjuncts, and graduate teaching assistants.
• Resources to send faculty to regional and national workshops and conferences that emphasize active learning and assessment.
• External consultants.
• Faculty teaching faculty sessions on best practices in active student learning.
• Pilot project reports to the university community.
• Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Web site.

C. Quality Enhancement Projects

1. Focus of Projects

The principal vehicles for achieving the goal of increasing the use of student engagement/active learning instructional strategies will be faculty development activities (e.g., participation in on- and off-campus workshops, interacting with external consultants, and attendance at professional meetings related to improving instruction) and development of academic- and student
affairs-based unit projects. Funding will be available during the period 2005-2010 to assist academic and student affairs units to develop projects leading to enhanced student learning through the use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies. Projects must show a direct relationship to the unit’s program level student learning outcomes (developed in conjunction with the Academic Learning Compact requirement) and must include direct measures of student learning. The basic intent of these funds is to provide seed funds for units to develop and evaluate new approaches to instruction and assessment, rather than ongoing support of existing activities. Approximately five to six projects will be funded annually. Projects are expected to be completed within an academic year period. Multiyear projects will be considered provided they have a cross-unit character involving at least three administrative units.

2. Exploratory Projects for 2005

To test the feasibility of the project dimension of the QEP and to provide examples of the types of projects for which funding will be available, the three colleges and the Division of Student Affairs, have each been asked to identify an exploratory project for initial implementation in the Spring Semester 2005 with funding available up to $5000 per project. The Deans and Vice President for Student Affairs were asked to submit initial ideas for these exploratory projects to the Deans Council in December 2004 for discussion and subsequent consideration by the QEP Leadership Team.

Subsequent to approval of the initial concepts by the QEP Leadership Team, the Deans and Vice President were asked to provide additional detail about each project using the following template:

Summary of Planned Project

Project Title:
College/Division:
Contact Person:
Telephone:
E-mail:
List of Individuals Involved:
Brief Description of Project:
Rationale:
Project Student Learning Outcomes:
Relationship to Quality Enhancement Plan Goals:
Relationship to Academic Learning Compact Domains:
Desired Student Learning Gains:

Outcomes Assessment Procedures:
Instructional Strategy Enhancements (focusing on active learning/student engagement):
Assessment Plan:
  Baseline:
  Formative:
  Summative:
Information Dissemination Plan:
Institutionalization Plan:
Resources to Be Used:
Timeline for Project Activities and Events:

The four Spring 2005 exploratory projects include:
- Development of an information management system for program- and course-related assessment data associated with university-, college-, and program-level student learning outcomes. (College of Professional Studies)
- Development of a capstone course with associated program-level assessment procedures for undergraduate programs. (College of Business)
- Development of an instructional module related to information literacy as a component of the University’s general education program. (College of Arts & Sciences in collaboration with the University Libraries)
- Development of an instructional module and associated student manual for the University’s freshman year experience courses. (Division of Student Affairs in collaboration with the University Advising Center)

3. Request for Proposals Process

A draft of the Request for Proposals (RFP) has been prepared (see Appendix XXX) with the intent that the RFP for Academic Year 2005-2006 projects will be issued following the SACS site visit in March 2005.

Proposal Format and Content
Proposals should include the following:
- Complete cover sheet with required signatures
- Narrative that addresses the overall significance of the project to the unit, college/division, and university, and identification and discussion of each of the project proposal elements as listed on the cover page.
- Detailed budget request, including information on matching or other available funds. (Because it is anticipated that funding of these projects will be through E&G sources, funds allocated through this
proposal process may spent only in accordance with E&G expenditure policies.)

**Required Elements in the Proposal**

- Rationale
- Project student learning outcomes
- Relationship to program’s Academic Learning Compact student learning outcomes and the University’s QEP goals
- Desired student learning gains
- Outcomes assessment procedures
- Instructional strategy enhancements focusing on active learning/student engagement
- Assessment plan: baseline, formative, summative
- Information dissemination plan
- Institutionalization plan
- Resources needed
- Timeline for project activities and events

**Proposal Submission**

Proposals are to be sent via e-mail to Gary Howard, Director, Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment by April 15, 2005, at ghoward@uwf.edu.

**Evaluation**

A review committee comprised of members of the QEP Steering Committee will review proposals and make recommendations to the QEP Leadership Team. Awards will be made by the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs. Recommendations for funding will be made by May 15, 2005. Funding decisions will be announced not later than June 1, 2005. Proposals will be selected on the likelihood of success of the project and compliance with the goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

**Required Reports**

A brief interim report will be required by April 30, 2006, with a full final report by August 30, 2006. Units with funded projects will be required to share findings from the project in the annual Quality Enhancement Plan Symposium to be held during the Fall Semester of each academic year.

**D. Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation of UWF’s QEP will involve two components. One deals with evaluation of the individual projects that will be planned, implemented, and evaluated by individual units within Academic and Student Affairs. The other is more broad, incorporating and expanding upon the first by providing an overall
evaluation of the QEP itself over a period of several years. Both components will be guided by the overall goals and specific objectives of the QEP as stated on pp. 43-45 of this document:

- Improve student learning.
- Refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments.
- Increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies.
- Build communities of learners.
- Provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development.

Evaluation of individual projects.

The plan for evaluating an individual project will be embedded in the information provided in the proposal as described in the draft RFP. Among the required elements for a successful proposal are the following:

- Project student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- Relationship to program’s Academic Learning Compact student learning outcomes (for academic programs) and the University’s QEP goals (for academic and student affairs programs).
- Desired student learning gains.
- Outcomes assessment procedures.
- Instructional strategy enhancements focusing on active learning/student engagement.
- Assessment plan: baseline, formative, summative.

The evaluation of each project will begin with the identification of the knowledge or attributes which are the focus of the project and the collection of baseline data on these measures for students who participate in the project. If feasible given the design of the project, data should also be collected on another comparable group of students who are not participants.

For projects in academic units, these measures should be relevant to the program’s Academic Learning Compact. For all projects, the measures should be relevant to the University’s QEP goals.

Approximately mid-way through the project, information should be gathered that will show whether the project appears to be operating as planned so as to have the desired impact on student learning. This will constitute the project’s formative evaluation. This mid-point evaluation may also include a “site visit” or other consultation with members of the QEP Evaluation Team. If alterations are made in the project on the basis of this interim information, this should be documented and a rationale for the alteration should be provided. A discussion of this process should be included in the project’s interim and final evaluative reports.
At the conclusion of the project, data should be collected to evaluate the project’s impact on student learning outcomes. If baseline data were collected from a comparison group of non-participants, they should be retested as well. The assessment measures must include direct measures of student learning.

The final evaluative report should include:
- a brief description of the project including its rationale
- a statement of the desired learning gains as described in the proposal
- analysis of data to show whether these desired learning gains were attained
- a discussion of what worked, what didn’t, and what could be improved.
- a discussion of the appropriateness of and opportunities for extending the project to other students or other units at UWF

After the final evaluative reports for individual projects have been submitted, the QEP Evaluation Team will review each project and evaluate how well it met the goals of the QEP itself:
- Is there evidence of improved student learning?
- Did the project help to refine program- and/or course-level SLOs and related assessments?
- Did the project increase the use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies? If so, how?
- Did the project build a community of learners?
- Did the project provide opportunities for faculty and staff development?

These project reviews will be retained and incorporated into the overall evaluation of the QEP itself.

**Overall evaluation of the QEP.**
At the end of each year a formative evaluation will be compiled as outlined in the Timeline. This will include a review of individual projects underway and completed as well as a review of the overall administration of the QEP activities. Modifications may be made to the implementation of the QEP based on results of these formative evaluations. Any such modifications and the rationale for them should be documented in the annual evaluation report. At the end of five years, a comprehensive review and summative evaluation should be undertaken and recommendations made for further implementation, data collection, and/or institutionalization.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, baseline data have been collected including Chairs’ descriptions of assessment practices at the level of academic programs and faculty descriptions of instructional strategies and assessment practices at the course level. The National Survey of Student Engagement has also been administered to students. These surveys are relevant to some of the goals of the QEP and will be re-administered on an annual basis as part of the process of its overall formative evaluation.
Progress in reaching the overall goals of the QEP will be assessed by examining a variety of information:

Goal 1: Improve Student Learning
- Accumulation of student learning outcome data from individual projects
- Reports of Academic Learning Compacts from academic departments
- Reports of Student Affairs Learning Outcomes from student affairs units
- Results of annual surveys conducted by Office of University Planning
- Improvement on Items 11a-o on the NSSE (5-year goal: increase by 0.5 standard deviation on ratings) (Note. These items can be “tracked” into the six domains of the UWF Assessment Plan.)
- Improvement on NSSE Item 13 (trend upward over time with 0.5 standard deviation increase over 5 years)

Goal 2: Refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments.
- By the end of 5 years, General Education, B.A. programs, M.A. programs, Ed.S. programs, and the Ed.D. program will have in place a set of program-level student learning outcomes and related assessments that align with the University strategic plan. Each year there will be improvement toward reaching this goal.
- Academic Learning Compacts, required for the bachelor’s degree programs, will include program learning outcomes by the end of 1 year.
- Improvements will be seen in reports of program assessments in Chairs’ Survey.
- The external reviewers participating in the University’s 5-year program review process will be asked to review and comment upon the program-level student learning outcomes.
- Within one year, all course proposals and modifications completing the Curriculum Change Request (CCR) process will have appropriate course student learning outcomes and related assessments. Within 5 years, all course syllabi will include student learning outcome statements and related assessments.

Goal 3: Increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies.
- Accumulation of data on active learning and student engagement strategies from individual projects.
- Annual Faculty Survey will show increases in use of these instructional strategies.
- Improvements will be seen on NSSE Active and Collaborative Learning items, reaching the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 80th percentile for seniors within a 5-year period.
- Improvements will be seen on NSSE Items 7a, b, d, and h (trend upward over time with 0.5 standard deviation increase over 5 years)
Improvements will be seen on NSSE Items 1a-e., g-v (trend upward over time with 0.5 standard deviation increase over 5 years)

Goal 4: Build communities of learners.
- Improvements will be seen on NSSE benchmark Supportive Campus Environment, reaching the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 90th percentile for seniors within a 5-year period.
- Scores on NSSE item 1H. will improve, increasing by 0.5 standard deviation over a 5-year period.
- Improvement will be noted on NSSE benchmark Enriching Educational Experiences, with scores reaching the 70th percentile for first-year students and the 80th percentile for seniors within a 5-year period.

Goal 5: Provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development.
- Records will be kept of external consultants who provide developmental opportunities for faculty and staff.
- Logs will be maintained of faculty travel to professional meetings and workshops related to the purposes of the QEP.
- Documentation will be maintained of individual projects that include a faculty or staff development component.
- Data will be maintained on developmental activities provided by the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment that are relevant to the purposes of the QEP.
- Data will be maintained on the number of “hits” to QEP-related components of the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment’s Web site.
- Records will be kept of the QEP-related manuscripts submitted and published.
E. Resources

1. Finances

Administrative Personnel

Co-direction for implementation of the QEP will be assigned to the Director, Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. (See Section IV.D.1 below.)

Coordination of QEP activities within the Colleges will be assigned to a member of the college administration. (See Section IV.D.2 below.)

Coordination of activities funded through the RFP process will be the responsibility of the unit administrators and individual(s) identified in the proposal. Proposal budget requests may include funding for release time for project coordination.

Project Activities

Academic Year 2004-2005:
Funding in the amount of $50,000 was made available during academic year 2004-2005 for initial development and implementation of the QEP. These funds were earmarked as follows:

- Academic unit assessment development principally associated with the development of Academic Learning Compacts--$20,000.
- Faculty and staff development activities related to development of student learning outcomes and related assessments--$10,000.
- Exploratory projects—four at up to $5,000 each for a total of $20,000.

Academic Years 2005-2006 through 2009-2010:
It is expected that funding in an amount not less that $50,000 will be earmarked for implementation of the QEP with such funding to be used for the following:

- Implementation and refinement of academic unit assessment related to student learning outcomes.
- Faculty and staff development activities related to student engagement/active learning instructional strategies and outcomes assessment procedures.
• Individual and multi-unit projects submitted for funding through the QEP Request for Proposals process.
• Continued participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement and administration of institution-developed surveys of faculty, staff, and students to determine levels of use and effectiveness of student engagement/active learning instructional strategies and student learning outcome assessment practices.

Units will be encouraged to seek external funding for QEP-related activities from grant and contract agencies. Units will also be assisted by the Office of Development in soliciting funding for QEP-related activities through the University’s capital campaign the principal theme for which is “engagement of the University.” (Need to revisit the capital campaign brochure to pick up the exact wording.)

B. Information

The Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, designed as a central location for faculty development activities for all University units, will develop a Web site as part of its ongoing online service emphasizing the QEP. Among the components of this online information resource will be the following:

• Student Learning Outcomes Resources – These resources will include suggestions on writing student learning outcomes at the program and course levels and also will include an inventory of student learning outcomes for all courses in the University.
• Assessment Resources – These resources will provide a variety of alternatives for assessing student learning outcomes from embedded assessments to capstone courses to external evaluations.
• Academic Learning Compacts – All of the Academic Learning Compacts for each degree program will be accessible through this link.
• Best Practices – Case studies and successful practices in active student learning will be available on the website.
• Resource Library – Links to other websites and resources will be available through active links and archived materials.
• Threaded Discussions – Opportunity for faculty to converse with each other on QEP items of interest will be available.
• Electronic Newsletter – This newsletter will allow the University to have current, cogent information on the progress of the QEP.
A subcommittee of the QEP Steering Committee and liaisons in each department will serve as a workgroup to provide Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment with continuous evaluation of the Web site.

F. Leadership

1. Administrative

Administrative responsibility for implementation of the QEP will be assigned to the Director of the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CUTLA) and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (AVPSA).

The University is in the process of hiring a new Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAcA) to whom the Director of CUTLA will report. Among the responsibilities of the AVPAcA are the following:

- Representing the University in responding to regional accreditation matters, including planning, coordination, and reporting mechanisms.
- Collaborating with the Student Affairs division on planning that will result in joint and complementary initiatives.
- Supervising and evaluating the director of the Center for University Teaching and Learning.
- Promoting the effective assessment of programs in the Center for University Teaching and Learning.

The Center, currently known as the Center for University, Teaching, and Learning (CUTL), in addition to assuming responsibilities associated with the QEP, will also be assuming responsibilities for coordinating assessment activities for units within academic affairs. Accordingly, the name of the Center will be changed to the Center for University, Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. The Center Director will work closely with the Deans and the Associate Vice Presidents in Academic Affairs on activities related to the QEP.

The AVPAcA reports to the Provost. The AVPSA reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs report to the President.
2. Advisory

It is proposed that advise and counsel related to the implementation of the QEP be provided to the QEP co-directors through two related advisory bodies—QEP Leadership Team and QEP Steering Committee—and communication with units within the Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs continue to be facilitated through the QEP/Assessment Liaisons identified in the Fall Semester 2004.

QEP Leadership Team

Membership:
- Co-chaired by the QEP Co-Directors
- Provost
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Faculty Senate representative
- Student Government representative
- Faculty representative from each college
- Student Affairs representative

Responsibilities:
- Resource to the QEP Co-Directors on matters related to plans of operation, budget, assessment, and modifications to the QEP
- Review annual plans of operation for implementing the QEP
- Review annual QEP-related budget requests
- Review annual assessments of project effectiveness
- Review recommendations for any modifications to the QEP

Frequency of Meetings:
- At least once per semester
QEP Steering Committee

Membership:
- Co-chaired by the QEP Co-Directors
- Other members of the QEP Leadership Team
- Other members as presently constituted *(will need to add detail; didn’t have this at home)*

Responsibilities
- Resource to the Co-Directors and QEP Leadership Team on all matters related to the QEP
- Establish a subcommittee to review annually proposals submitted for QEP funding
- Establish a subcommittee to review annually evaluations of individual QEP projects and overall evaluation of effectiveness of QEP implementation
- Submit recommendations to the QEP Leadership Team for modifications to the QEP based on annual evaluations
- Provide other advise and counsel as requested by the QEP Leadership Team

Frequency of Meetings:
- At least once per semester

QEP/Assessment Liaisons

Each college has identified a member of the college administrative team to serve as a college liaison for matters related to the QEP and academic assessment. *(See Appendix XXX.)*

Each academic department has identified two departmental QEP/Assessment Liaisons—the department chair and one faculty member. *(See Appendix XXX.)*

Units within the Division of Student Affairs have identified QEP Liaisons. *(See Appendix XXX.)*

The QEP/Assessment Liaisons serve as the principal points of communication within academic and student affairs units for matters related to the QEP.
Summary

The University of West Florida is committed to maximizing student learning and attaining learning goals in general education, undergraduate education, and graduate education. To accomplish this commitment, five primary goals have been established for this Quality Enhancement Plan:

- Improve student learning.
- Refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments.
- Increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies.
- Build communities of learners.
- Provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development.

Student learning has been defined to include changes in students’ knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributed to the students’ experiences at the University of West Florida. At UWF this definition has been operationalized as six domains of student learning: Content, Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Project Management, Values and Ethics, and Discipline Specific Outcomes. These six domains also form the basis for the University’s Academic Learning Compacts as required by the State of Florida Board of Governors.

The QEP as recommended includes opportunities for collaboration between and within units within the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. This focus on collaboration is intended to reinforce the essential paradigm shift from instructor-centered education to learner-centered education. The proposed leadership and administrative structure also supports collaboration.

This Quality Enhancement Plan is one project among several that relate to achieving the University of West Florida’s strategic plan. As such, it is anticipated that there will be a degree of synergy among the various activities and projects that enhance all related efforts.

This Quality Enhancement Plan embraces three primary strategies for achieving the goals and objectives described above. Academic Learning Compacts will address the refinement and alignment of program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments. An infrastructure is proposed to provide for Quality Enhancement Plan projects that will demonstrate and document improvements in student learning through the use of student engagement and active learning instructional strategies. Supporting both the Academic Learning Compacts and Quality Enhancement Plan Projects initiatives, faculty and staff development activities will be facilitated by the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and by the Division of Student
Affairs. Cooperation and collaboration between the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs will help foster an educational environment that may be characterized as a community of learners.