

**WRITING MATTERS**  
Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary  
Alcorn State University  
Dr. M. Christopher Brown, President

Our QEP, *Writing Matters*, is an effort by Alcorn State University to improve the writing proficiency of undergraduate students. Based in best practices in writing pedagogy, *Writing Matters* will increase the amount of writing in selected courses by requiring both “process writing” assignments and “writing to learn” assignments. “Process writing” produces a written document using techniques such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. It is a recursive process which includes interaction between students and their peers as well between students and their instructor. “Writing to learn” pedagogy employs writing assignments as a method of study and retention of course content. *Writing Matters* student learning outcomes have been developed to support our General Education Core Curriculum Competencies. Improving the writing proficiency of our students supports our mission of “intellectual development and lifelong learning” as well as preparing “graduates who will be well-rounded future leaders [ . . . ]” and “[ . . . ] who will be competitive in the global marketplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Process writing was formally adopted in freshman level English composition courses by the Department of English in 2006. Currently in its first year of implementation, Alcorn’s QEP is building upon these efforts by changing English 213, Introduction to Literature, to a “writing enhanced” (WE) course which will reinforce writing skills for sophomore students. In all sections of this course, instructors have paired process writing with writing to learn methods. Beginning in the QEP’s second year, disciplines at the junior and senior levels will begin incorporating these techniques into existing upper level courses. Each year three departments will each identify at least two courses at the 300 and 400 levels which can become writing enhanced. Faculty teaching these courses will be trained in these methods of writing instruction for improving student writing in content heavy courses.

Alcorn State University is committed to enacting its QEP by devoting sufficient resources to it, among which are financial resources exceeding \$1 million in funds over the QEP’s five years. A QEP director versed in rhetoric and composition, and in administration of interdisciplinary programs, will be hired to administer the program and will report to the Provost. A QEP Oversight Committee has also been reformulated from the original QEP Planning Committee. Composed of a cross-section of Alcorn faculty and administration, the QEP Oversight Committee advises the Provost and the QEP Director in the administration of the QEP. The Alcorn Writing Center has also been expanded and centrally located in the main library to serve as a center for improvement of student writing.

The project will be assessed through the use of standardized testing using the CAAP (a division of ACT), the use of a common rubric (Writing Matters Rubric) for assessing writing assignments, the maintenance of student writing portfolios, and the formation of an assessment team. We expect that as students move through WE courses, scores on the Writing Matters Rubric will increase and we will see higher levels of proficiency as well as higher levels of complexity. The QEP Director with the QEP Oversight Committee will monitor the implementation of the QEP and evaluate whether it is meeting the goals and whether activities are being carried out as articulated. In addition, the QEP Director will produce a report at the end of each academic year which includes recommended changes for improvement of student learning outcomes.

Institutional Contact: Dr. Donzell Lee, Accreditation Liaison  
dlee@alcorn.edu