

## **Bethel University** **Write on, Wildcats!**

Bethel University, founded as a small seminary in 1842 by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, has grown into a comprehensive master's degree institution with approximately 6,000 students enrolled in the fall of 2016 (Bethel University (I.E.Office), 2017, p. 24-25). Among these, about 750 were dual enrollment high school students, 250 were seeking associate's degrees, nearly 4,000 were seeking bachelor's degrees in 39 programs, and more than 1,100 students were seeking master's degrees in 14 programs.

Initially, it was envisioned that Bethel's QEP would apply to all student groups. However, in summer 2017, the scope of the new QEP was narrowed to include bachelor's degree students only.

The QEP Planning Committee's decision to focus on the improvement of student writing through a writing enrichment intervention emerged as the result of a process that involved input from members of the various Bethel constituencies, institutional research, and a re- view of the literature on best practices in improving student writing. This intervention will be considered a success if it produces a materially significant increase in the proportion of Bethel seniors who demonstrate writing proficiency as defined by five Student Learning Outcomes. Specifically, the student will:

- create written works that are well-suited to the audience, purpose, and circumstances of each writing task.
- create written works centered on a thesis or main idea and supporting content.
- create well-structured and clearly written paragraphs.
- determine when information is needed and locate and incorporate credible information in written work.
- create written works that are grammatically correct; free of spelling errors; employ words in accordance with their dictionary definitions; and include consideration of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).

The faculty will develop and teach the new writing enrichment classes. To ensure the quality of these classes, it is expected that most faculty participating in this writing initiative will have attended workshops on the teaching and assessment of student writing. By the fall of the 2019-2020 academic year, the first sections of writing enrichment classes approved by the Writing Enrichment Review Committee will be offered by certified faculty. Additional classes will be introduced as the QEP matures so that, by the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, at least 80% of students entering as freshmen in the fall of 2018 or later will have successfully completed two writing enrichment classes before graduating. By the following year this figure will increase to at least 90%.

Student mastery of writing skills is to be directly assessed using Bethel's newly developed QEP writing rubric and the ETS HEIghten<sup>TM</sup> Written Communication exam. Surveys of student and faculty perceptions of student writing proficiency will serve as indirect assessments. Contact Phyllis Campbell, Ph.D., Chief Academic and Compliance Officer, [campbellp@bethelu.edu](mailto:campbellp@bethelu.edu).