



Brescia University Quality Enhancement Plan Enhancing Student Learning by Enhancing Student Engagement Through a First Year Experience Program

Brescia University's heritage, mission, and educational vision for its students all support an education that embraces individual differences and promotes the development of the whole person, with the expectation that the student body and campus community will be fully engaged, both academically and socially, within the broader community. After collecting data that indicated low levels of engagement and persistence, Brescia University developed a Quality Enhancement Plan aimed at "Enhancing Student Learning by Enhancing Student Engagement Through a First Year Experience."

The data indicated a need to focus on expanding and strengthening systems to engage and support Brescia students both academically and within the social or co-curricular context. Elements which predict success and which are included in and help drive the Brescia QEP are:

- Early involvement
- Collaborative efforts among academic and student life personnel
- Opportunities for academic and social interactions with faculty, peer educators, and the larger campus community
- Provision of academic support and direction
- Expanded co-curricular or extracurricular offerings and involvement.

These five components are interwoven throughout the First Year Experience (FYE) Program. The primary goals of the QEP are that:

- Students will experience greater academic engagement and enhanced performance;
- Students will experience greater engagement in University life, including opportunities to build skills and knowledge in leadership, service and ethical development;
- Students will develop a connection, pride, and identification with the University mission, traditions, and culture.

The Brescia QEP emerges from and is ultimately wedded to the University mission, its Ursuline tradition, and the articulated "Brescia Difference." Within the FYE program are multiple opportunities for participants to explore the four core elements of the Brescia mission – Catholic, liberal arts, career development, and service.

The FYE has as its foundation a freshman seminar structure involving Faculty/Staff instructors and selected Peer Educators who lead two 10-week courses, one in the fall and one in the spring semester. Course sections are comprised of 12-15 first time full time freshmen who are strategically assigned to their respective section. While great freedom exists among instructors in the implementation of the course, the basic structure of covered material is consistent. Assessment is ongoing.

For information about the development and implementation of the QEP at Brescia University, contact Keith Hudson, FYE Co-Director and Associate Academic Dean, keith.hudson@brescia.edu or Lucas Langdon, FYE Co-Director and Director of Student Activities and Leadership Development, lucas.langdon@brescia.edu.