

A Quality Enhancement Plan of Experiential Learning Career, Culture, and Community

Centenary College of Louisiana
Shreveport, Louisiana

Centenary College of Louisiana's quality enhancement plan integrates into Centenary's required curriculum a distinctive, experience-based educational program focused on career and graduate school preparation (Career), intercultural engagement (Culture), and civic involvement (Community). At Centenary, a selective liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church, students, faculty and staff work together to strengthen the foundation for students' personal lives and career goals, encouraging students to become leaders in the workplace, the community and the world at large. In this quality enhancement plan, academic co-curricular professionals in the offices of career services, intercultural engagement, and community collaborate with faculty across all departments to create, facilitate, and evaluate this experiential educational program that furthers an overarching college purpose.

Moreover, this program encourages a distinct set of experiences for each student. As implemented, experiential learning for Career credit may include a comprehensive career skills course in which career tools and portfolios are developed, a research project with a faculty mentor which replicates the research of a professional within the field, and/or an internship in the workplace a student hopes to join after graduation. In the Culture component, opportunities to study other cultures for intercultural credit will expand to provide students with a broader selection of peoples, places, and experience types. For Community, true 21st century service learning opportunities will connect the act of serving one's community with newly learned skills and/or knowledge within the academic discipline(s).

Our learning outcomes, assessment, and timeframe for this program are as follows:

- We have three learning outcomes for this program: (1) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the connections between classroom learning and practical application, (2) Students will demonstrate enhanced self-knowledge, and (3) Students will demonstrate enhanced social awareness.
- Assessment of the program includes, but is not limited to the following: (a) completion of a questionnaire prior to beginning the first program component as well as after a student has fulfilled his or her second and third component of the program; (b) inclusion in our annual all-student satisfaction questionnaire, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory; (c) inclusion within our first-year and senior student questionnaire, the National Survey of Student Engagement; and (d) inclusion within our biannual alumni relations questionnaire.
- Because of the vast scope of our experiential learning program and the coordination of efforts among individuals, committees, and departments involved in more than one major component of the program, the three components of Career, Culture, and Community will roll out in phases: Career to launch in 2009 – 10, Culture in 2010 – 11, and Community in 2011 – 12.

Our Millennial students want seamless transitions from their past to their future; an experiential learning program focused on Career, Culture, and Community is poised to assist Centenary College in helping our students translate their academic trek into one of transparent relevance.

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