

**The College of Saint Thomas More**  
**QEP Executive Summary**  
**Communicating the Values of Civility and Responsibility to Improve the**  
**Learning Culture of the Classroom**

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The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of the College of Saint Thomas More (CSTM) focuses on two virtues central to successful learning: civility and responsibility. Unlike many such plans, ours intends to affect the entire student body, an intention made possible by the small size of CSTM. The overall aim of the QEP is to instill in the students of CSTM an increased appreciation of these two virtues; and it is expected that this appreciation will be exhibited by changes in knowledge, behavior, and values. When the project is brought to completion, students should demonstrate an increase in the value placed on civility and responsibility, growth in responsible and civil behavior, and an increased knowledge of the ideas of the Western intellectual tradition about civility and responsibility, as well as an increased knowledge of the importance of these virtues to a healthy learning culture.

The principal means by which the goals of the QEP will be achieved is the College Seminar, a bi-weekly symposium of the whole college devoted to conversation about a particular text. We have chosen to devote most of the seminars for the next 8 semesters to texts and topics related to civility and responsibility. These texts and topics have been carefully chosen and designed to foster school-wide discussion and reflection on civility and responsibility. The knowledge and values gained in the seminar are expected to affect the learning that takes place in the classroom by helping students become better, more responsible students.

Our immediate reason for undertaking this project is that there is in our time generally, but especially among young people, a singular lack of civility and responsibility. And we at the College are no exception. It has been an abiding concern among students and faculty that this lack can impair the learning culture of an academic community. Thus this plan was devised. We see this plan as an essential part of our effort to build a flourishing academic community. The flourishing of any community, but perhaps especially an academic one, requires that members of the community possess both of these virtues, since civility can be construed as the public behavior appropriate, perhaps even necessary, to the flourishing of any community; and responsibility, as the private decision to fulfill the moral duties that belong to being a member of a community.

Our ultimate reason for choosing this plan, however, is that CSTM is an institution dedicated to furthering classical liberal learning in the Western tradition, at the heart of which are the virtues of civility and responsibility; and hence we see this plan as especially fitting, even integral, to our mission, character and practice. We hope that in the end this plan will improve not only the learning culture of the College, but also the lives of its students after they are graduated.