

“Who Is My Neighbor?”
Developing Intercultural Competence through Divergent Learning Events
Covenant College
Lookout Mountain, GA

The Covenant College QEP proposes to develop intercultural competence among students through the inclusion of divergent learning events in several core courses. Intercultural competence reflects a form of student learning that integrates the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. For the purposes of the Covenant College QEP, intercultural competence occurs when students grow from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelative perspective (Bennett & Hammer, 2005). Growth in intercultural competence is facilitated through the acquisition of knowledge, and demonstration of attitudes and skills necessary to facilitate growth. Such growth will permit students to interact competently with individuals from different racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. Divergent learning events are pedagogical interventions based on experiential learning models that contain three discrete steps: the experience, reflection and evaluation, and application. In order to assess progress and success, students will be evaluated in three domains: (1) knowledge of key concepts related to ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism, and intercultural competence; (2) attitudes necessary to facilitate genuine growth from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism; and (3) the skills necessary to function competently in an intercultural context. Specific assessment indicators include formative and summative exams, student portfolios, and standardized measures of ethnocultural empathy and cross-cultural adaptability.

Select faculty will participate in professional development activities during the first year of the QEP to equip them to develop and implement divergent learning events in select core courses in the curriculum. These core courses include The Christian Mind, a first-year freshman experience course, Global Trends for the 21st Century, Intercultural Experience, an experiential course involving direct intercultural experience, and Christ and Culture, a course designed to integrate a Christian world view with issues of contemporary culture.

Contact:

Kevin J. Eames, Ph.D.

Director of Institutional Research

eames@covenant.edu