

Criswell College

Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Understanding the Times: Fostering Real-World Training within the Criswell Undergraduate Learning Experience

Current Focus: Real-World Communication Initiative

The current focus of Criswell College's QEP is the first five-year initiative of a fifteen year plan to connect student learning at Criswell College to the types of knowledge and skills students will require as they enter real-world ministry. Overall, this real-world emphasis includes three initiatives: 1) The Communication Initiative to enhance students' ability to produce, present, and defend quality written documents; 2) The Applied Leadership Initiative to prepare students for organizational management tasks; 3) The Discovery Initiative to familiarize students with service in real-world settings. The Communication Initiative was developed and selected as the current focus on the basis of opinion surveys, an analysis of ongoing self-study assessments, and feedback from all major Criswell College stakeholders.

The centerpiece of this initiative is the C.S. Lewis Writing Center, established in 2011 and housed on the third floor of the library building. The writing center offers students working space along with a select library of reference works and on-site writing assistance available during school hours to provide an informal and comfortable one-on-one mentoring environment. Through appointments and walk-in mentoring sessions, students develop the skills necessary to improve the quality of documents produced for the various disciplines of the college. Help includes tutoring in grammar and mechanics as well as in content, organization, and the analytical and critical components of writing assignments. Desired student learning outcomes include the demonstrated ability to produce well-reasoned, consistent, and convincing documents with minimal errors.

The C.S. Lewis Writing Center relies not only on its own internal assessment instruments to monitor progress and work toward improvement, but also on campus-wide assessment of improvement through the sampling of documents in student portfolios. Both internal and campus-wide assessments and supporting resources are currently (as of Spring 2012) in process of development in some cases and revision in others. The benchmark for success in the Communication Initiative is for greater than 80% of students' portfolios scored with the Portfolio Writing Rubric to be in the acceptable or exemplary range. Indirect assessments include statistical usage data for the writing center and data collected in the Graduate Candidate Survey.

In support of the Communication Initiative, the director of the writing center also plans to host seminars each year to focus attention on communication and publishing goals as well as to emphasize the need throughout the curriculum to require students to produce the type of document they will be expected to write in their areas of ministry. Overall, the Communication Initiative aims to increase students' ownership of and responsibility toward the educational process by associating it with practical applications in real-world situations.

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