

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN: WRITE WHERE YOU BELONG EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

East Carolina University's (ECU) Quality Enhancement Plan—"Write Where You Belong"—is a multi-faceted, multi-year project with the goals of integrating, aligning, and reinforcing writing instruction for undergraduate students from the day that they begin their first classes at ECU to the day that they complete their degrees and transition into the workplace or advanced study.

Broad-based Institutional Process to Identify Key Issues

Following a yearlong, university-wide process of selecting a QEP topic area, a diverse QEP Council was formed. Comprised of over 35 faculty, staff, and students, the QEP Council spent the 2011–2012 academic year reviewing institutional assessments of student writing, surveying faculty and students about the writing, researching best practices in college writing instruction, and gathering information from faculty, staff, alumni, and local professionals about the kinds of writing students need to do to succeed at ECU and beyond.

Focus

Based on their research, the QEP Council drafted five student learning outcomes and identified three areas for initiative action: Student Support, Faculty Support, and Curriculum Enhancement. Because the QEP Council's research revealed significant differences in writing expectations across disciplinary contexts, and because survey responses from both faculty and students indicated that few connections existed across the points at which students learn about and practice writing, the larger goal of providing carefully sequenced and fully supported writing instruction throughout students' undergraduate degree programs informs every aspect of "Write Where You Belong."

Broad-based, Cross-curricular Involvement in Development and Implementation

Central to our "Faculty Support" actions are school- or department-designated faculty "Writing Liaisons" who meet regularly to discuss writing instruction and who carry important information from QEP leadership to faculty in their programs. Cross-disciplinary work is also essential to our "Student Support" initiatives: undergraduate students from many disciplines have enrolled in a new seminar in tutoring writing that will prepare them to help writers from across the university in our expanded University Writing Center. Finally, English 2201, a new composition course that is part of our "Curriculum Enhancement" actions, will help students connect broader academic writing skills with writing conventions in different disciplines.

Capability

The university has provided substantial human, financial, and physical resources to support QEP activities throughout the five-year QEP period. Individuals in ECU's "Writing Leadership Hub," in collaboration with the QEP Steering Committee, will coordinate the various initiatives, monitoring progress, reviewing ongoing assessments, and making adjustments as needed.

Assessment

Implementation of a "University Writing Portfolio" will provide students with an electronic means to connect writing experiences across their degree programs while also providing ECU with a robust collection of student writing for assessment purposes. At the same time, existing and newly developed indirect assessments, including focus groups and nationally and locally based surveys, will allow ECU to measure the impact of QEP support services for students and faculty.

For further information about East Carolina University's Quality Enhancement Plan, please contact Dr. Wendy Sharer, Professor of English, at sharerw@ecu.edu.