

Title of QEP: The AGORA
Institution: Florida College
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Executive Summary of QEP

The Florida College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – the AGORA – is focused on the enhancement of student learning through student engagement in experiential learning. The QEP will complement a traditional and rigorous liberal-arts curriculum by providing experiential learning opportunities that will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to lead personally and professionally fulfilling lives of service.

The acronym AGORA was selected as a theme for this initiative: *Academically Grounded Opportunities for Real-world Accomplishments*. This theme is consistent with Florida College’s mission as an independent, residential, liberal-arts institution. The Mission Statement of this institution declares the following: *Florida College, as a private, independent liberal arts college, provides a comprehensive undergraduate experience designed to develop students spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially; to integrate into the students’ lives the Bible as the revealed will of God; and to prepare students for lives of service to their Creator and to humanity.*

Developed over the course of two years (2014-16) with broad-based input from faculty, students, staff, alumni, and board members, the AGORA is a systematic, institutionally-supported plan to develop, support, and assess experiential learning at Florida College. Student initiatives, faculty development, and community partnerships are intrinsic elements of the QEP. Experiential learning at Florida College will take many forms, including – but not limited to – internships, service learning, assorted types of field experiences, student research, civic engagement, creative projects, and other experiences infused across the curriculum that will enhance student learning.

The theme of the QEP draws upon the imagery of the classical city-states of ancient Greece. The AGORA was the marketplace located in the very heart of the city. Here, commerce, business, politics, recreation, and other assorted communications took place in ancient society. Although the philosophers and teachers would instruct their students in the *stoa* or portico areas of their school buildings, the pragmatic concerns of trade and commerce took place in the *agora*. Similarly, The Florida College QEP will help students connect academic theory with the practical concerns of real-world problems, contexts and situations.