

**ONE TRUTH, MANY DIMENSIONS:
A PLAN FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNING
FROM AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE**

GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

The QEP introduces two broad initiatives that were designed to transform the education of all of our students and improve the educational methods of as many of our faculty as possible. In both initiatives, we have kept in mind the central goal of broadening our students' awareness of the interconnectedness of all human experience.

Initiative I, Enhancing Student Learning through an Interdisciplinary Perspective, addresses the educational curriculum and proposes the implementation of four interdisciplinary courses for a designated cohort of Gardner-Webb students that will span their four years of study. It is important to point out, that because an interdisciplinary studies component has been added to the First Year Experience course, all incoming freshmen will be exposed to the program during their first semester. Students that participate in QEP courses beyond their freshmen year will do so as a matter of their choosing. It is for this reason we have chosen the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) component of the newly revised First Year Experience as our major impetus for assessing student learning and program performance in the QEP.

The First-Year Experience course, also known as University 101, is currently a one credit-hour course which is intended to orient students to campus life and encourage habits and lifestyle that will help them successfully maneuver through their undergraduate education. With the addition of the IDS component in the 2008-2009 academic year, the First-Year Experience (University 101) course will expand from a one credit-hour course to a three credit-hour course and convert to the title "Dimensions of University Life", also known as University 111. While the course will still have its original purpose, a five week, Interdisciplinary Studies component will be added to enrich the freshmen reading experience as well as engage all students in participating in service learning projects during their first year.

Initiative II is the faculty development component of our QEP, which is designed to make changes to our curriculum possible by training faculty in the best methods of teaching and assessing interdisciplinary work at the college level. It involves providing workshops to acquaint our professors with interdisciplinary education as well as bringing in speakers from successful integrative learning programs to both educate and inspire faculty regarding the value of an interdisciplinary education. We will also provide campus-wide faculty forums to enable all faculty to understand the goals of the interdisciplinary curriculum.

Through these two initiatives, Gardner-Webb seeks to create in our students an ability to begin to see ways in which all academic disciplines on our campus can be brought to bear in understanding particular issues. In addition, the IDS component will provide all students a service learning experience that may serve as a springboard into future service. Our students will thus be better prepared to meet the inherent interdisciplinary challenges of future course work, a future work force, and Christian service, as well as learn skills that transcend any one specific course curriculum.

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