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Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Executive Summary

Title: Writing for Wisdom

Institution: Houston Baptist University

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The QEP is a 5-year project to improve student writing across the campus; beginning in the fall of 2011 and concluding in the spring of 2016. The QEP is called “Writing for Wisdom” because it emphasizes critical thinking and clear expression of one’s thoughts and beliefs. The QEP consists of three courses in the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum:

- ENGL 1320 – Writing for Wisdom I (composition & literature)
- PHIL 1313 – Introduction to Philosophy
- HIST 2311 – Western Civilization I

These special courses are called “W-courses.” Among its many writing assignments, each W-course has one writing assignment that is treated in a standard manner by all instructors. In this course, each student must submit two versions of the W-assignment. The first version gets detailed feedback from the instructor and is then rewritten by the student. The feedback is based on a standard rubric that assigns a numerical score to the writing level demonstrated on the paper. The QEP draws a clear distinction between assessment and grading. It deals only with assessment and leaves grading issues up to the individual instructors.

All results are kept in a data warehouse, which includes papers (both versions), writing scores, and student demographics. As a result, students will have an on-line portfolio of their W-assignments. In addition, the data warehouse allows HBU to analyze student writing scores by zip code, by high school, by year, by other test scores, by ethnicity, and many other factors, all of which will greatly help the University “close the loop” each year.