

Jackson State University

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Executive Summary

Global Education through Analytical Reasoning (GEAR), the Quality Enhancement Plan of Jackson State University, seeks to enhance the analytical reasoning skills of first and second year undergraduate students through a learning community, structured within a global inquiry framework. Through a multi-year examination of the general education core, students are guided through an enhanced curriculum designed to actively engage today's learners. The **GEAR** learning community is focused on two student learning outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate competency in English and communication skills (writing, reading, speaking and listening skills).
2. Students will demonstrate critical multidisciplinary analytical and original thinking through core competencies of global inquiry.

Commencing in the first semester, the **GEAR** curriculum pairs Global Inquiry Faculty Teaching Seminar (GIFTSeminar) trained interdisciplinary faculty with first semester college students in the foundation of the **GEAR** curriculum, University Success (UNIV 100/101/105). This course establishes a standard of college-level rigor and brings foundational understanding of the analytical exercises by means of readings, discussions, debates, blogging, group research, lectures and presentations. Students participate in a curriculum designed to guide their inquiry through original teaching materials (Foundations in Global Inquiry) developed in the GIFTSeminar. **GEAR** students join a learning community with concentration on correct inferences, specious arguments, grammar, hypothesis formation, data collection, analysis, written and oral scientific presentations, information technology, research methods, comparative analysis, content analysis, and literary criticism.

At the second level of the **GEAR** learning community, the areas of inquiry expand into discipline specific courses: English 104/105, Biology 101-111/112, Math 111 and History 101-102/111-112. GIFTSeminar trained faculty, who have developed curricula guided by the areas of analytical inquiry, guide the second level of inquiry. These curricula focus on student demonstration of analytical and original thinking, effective communication in English (writing, reading, speaking and listening skills) and competency as investigators as shown by their ability to formulate and test appropriate hypotheses and apply new knowledge.

Level 3 courses focus on high-level analytical reasoning in English 205, Science 201, Music 205, Art 206, Psychology 201 and Social Science 201. **GEAR** learning communities enrich and extend the traditional lecture discussion course format in substantive and pedagogical ways. Students engage in experiential learning communities where they substantially interact with the analytical exercises. Specific attention is drawn to student skill acquisition in information technology, research methods, comparative analysis, content analysis and literary criticism.

Assessment of **GEAR** learning outcomes is achieved through coordinated, imbedded, course level measures and comparative analysis of **GEAR** curriculum versus traditional curriculum performance on university-wide assessments and standardized testing.

Contact Persons:

Dr. Nicole Edwards Evans, Associate Vice President and Director of SACS
nicole.e.evans@jsums.edu

Dr. Robert Blaine, Director of GEAR
robert.blaine@jsums.edu