

**“Project Curiosity!: A Quality Enhancement Plan”**  
**Judson College**  
**Marion, AL**  
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**Executive Summary**

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of Judson College, entitled Project Curiosity, concentrates on strengthening critical thinking in students seeking a bachelor’s degree by guiding them to become more self-regulated and self-motivated thinkers, catalyzed by their intellectual curiosity to seek more knowledge. Central to the QEP’s design is how intellectual curiosity can intrinsically motivate students to persist and engage in higher-order thinking for a greater amount of time and sustain concentration. The abilities to reason well and analyze and evaluate large amounts of disparate information are vital critical thinking skills that students need to possess in today’s technological and information-driven society.

The College identified the need in students to improve their critical thinking skills through analysis of student data from nationally standardized assessments and broad-based input from faculty, staff, students, and trustees over the past two years. Specifically, Judson College’s QEP goals concentrate on the following components of critical thinking: developing both students’ disposition toward intellectual curiosity that will drive them to ask pertinent questions, be open-minded, and be self-directed learners and students’ skills at gathering and evaluating pertinent information in route to developing and articulating well-reasoned and supported conclusions or actions about an issue, problem, or idea. The College will also provide faculty members the training and resources needed to help them improve the critical thinking abilities of their students.

The College has appointed a faculty member to serve as QEP Director who will oversee with the assistance of the QEP Advisory Committee the implementation of the QEP, assessment efforts, and professional development of faculty.

First-year students and transfer students, who are not exempted from the course, will be introduced to critical thinking in JUD 101, the College’s Foundations for Success course for new students. Each department has identified courses that will be re-designed as Critical Thinking (CT) courses. Students will have to take 3 CT courses as a graduation requirement. In the new course, CRT 325: Research Methods for Critical Thinking, juniors and seniors will write a research paper on a topic that engages their intellectual curiosity and will also individually or in a small group organize a Critical Thinking (CT) Event for the College community of their own design and implementation. Each semester, students will share their work from CRT 325 and/or a CT class with poster presentations at the Critical Thinking Day assemblies. Students may apply for QEP grants to help them realize their visions for the events. Students will be required to create a critical thinking e-portfolio that highlights their work from CT courses, CRT 325,

and the CT Event they designed and write in their last semester a comprehensive self-assessment of their growth as critical thinkers by evaluating all the work submitted to their e-portfolios.

Assessment of the QEP learning outcomes will include both national standardized tests and internally designed rubrics. Standardized assessments will include: the ETS Proficiency Profile, California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory, California Critical Thinking Skills Test, National Survey of Student Engagement, Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills, and Curiosity Exploration Inventory. Tests will be given as both pre- and post-tests, and changes in scores will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the QEP. In addition, internal rubrics and other course-embedded assessment instruments will be used to measure students' progress in improving in the areas of critical thinking identified in the QEP's student learning outcomes. All these measurements will inform continuous improvement of the QEP to maximize its impact.