

Lander University Quality Enhancement Plan

LINK: Leadership, Involvement, Networking, and Knowledge

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Lander University's QEP centers on a first-year experience (FYE) designated as the Leadership, Involvement, Networking, and Knowledge (LINK) Program. The mission of the LINK program is to connect freshmen to the knowledge, resources, and experiences that will position them to graduate from Lander University. The LINK Program accomplishes this mission by the following: 1) representative administration of the program by a LINK Executive Committee, 2) development and delivery of a required freshman seminar course, LINK 101, 3) professional development of LINK 101 instructors through the LINK Academy, and 4) partnership with units across campus to deliver experiences for students known as LINK events.

LINK 101 is derived from an in-depth re-visioning of Lander's previous freshmen seminar course, UNI 101, that is intended to have a farther-reaching impact. Building on the foundation of the previous course, the University adopted a University Culture, Learning, and Development (UCLD) model to guide the redesign. The UCLD model is a combination of traditional extended orientation and academic types of first-year seminars. In addition, most LINK 101 class sections are taught from a discipline-specific perspective as majors are grouped together in class sections taught by instructors with a discipline-specific background. In short, the holistic approach to student development typical of extended orientation models was retained, the academic rigor of the course was increased, and the structure was modified to facilitate students forming deeper and more meaningful connections with their majors at the beginning of their college careers.

The learning outcomes and course objectives for LINK 101 are:

- 1. Leadership: Students will develop the skills of effective leaders by**
 - a. Identifying the qualities of great leadership and how they will enhance employability.
 - b. Participating in leadership opportunities in diverse contexts.
- 2. Involvement: Students will become active citizens in the university community and beyond by**
 - a. Describing the principles of responsible citizenship and civic engagement.
 - b. Practicing responsible citizenship through active involvement in opportunities within and beyond the campus community.
- 3. Networking: Students will build strong, positive networks within the university community by**
 - a. Connecting with individuals of diverse perspectives and backgrounds through respectful discourse.
 - b. Interacting collaboratively with peers, staff, and faculty to gain knowledge of areas of academic and career interest.
- 4. Knowledge: Students will learn how to be successful in college and life by**
 - a. Identifying their interests, strengths, and opportunities in order to make informed decisions about a career path.
 - b. Developing and applying metacognitive skills and strategies that support personal and academic success.

Developed over several years of intensive institutional review, planning, and close collaboration with key stakeholders, the program design is deeply rooted in research on human development and educational best practice, has measurable student learning outcomes, explicitly supports Lander University's Mission and is designed to be fiscally responsible.