

Louisiana Tech University Quality Enhancement Plan

BLUE FIRE: Igniting Communication Experiences

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The Quality Enhancement Plan for Louisiana Tech University, BLUE FIRE, both complements and fosters the vision and mission to the University to be recognized as a top public research university with an unparalleled integrated educational experience. The QEP evolved from broad-based input from diverse and numerous Tech constituencies, reviews of student data, identification of issues and concerns of faculty and staff, and expectations of alumni and employers for developing 21st century outcomes for program completers. BLUE FIRE components are designed to ignite student passion for learning, exploring, discovering, developing, and engaging in effective communication that enriches student learning and development. BLUE FIRE initiatives will improve student communication and interpersonal skills through a robust first-year interdisciplinary experience focused on three goals and seven specific learning outcomes. BLUE FIRE goals focus on student improvement in interpersonal skills and enhanced personal decision-making; increased recognition of various forms of cultural diversity through teambuilding experiences; and improved critical thinking related to media literacy and associated ethical considerations. Attainment of these goals is enabled by student achievement in 7 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Goals and SLOs will be achieved through 4 QEP components supported by research and best-practice linking learning and development as related parts of the same process. **#1.** Two, robust and interdisciplinary courses were designed by teams of communication, student development, and assessment specialists to promote attainment of the 7 SLOs. These required companion courses, [FYE 100 (3-1-1): The Experience and COMM 101: Introduction to Communication Studies (0-3-3)], feature integrated, interdisciplinary curricula of communication content and student development initiatives supporting student success in college and workplace careers and highly engaging strategies for teaching/learning/assessment aligned with the expected SLOs. **#2.** QEP courses will be taught in technology-rich environments facilitating large and small group engagement and providing clustered faculty-team office spaces. **#3.** A communication lab with centralized facilities, services, faculty, and student mentors provides additional academic support, coaching, and other assistance to students enrolled in the companion courses. This technology-rich teaching and learning COMMONS facility further enables student success in attainment of the SLOs, and will be available to other Tech students for support. **#4.** Professional development opportunities to promote innovative research-based and best practice teaching/learning/assessment strategies will be provided for BLUE FIRE faculty, staff, and mentors, as well as other interested Tech personnel.

A series of direct and indirect assessment measures are interwoven into a comprehensive assessment plan measuring quarterly student attainment of the 7 SLOs, effective implementation of BLUE FIRE components, and continuous feedback from assessments to refine and improve all BLUE FIRE components. Assessment results will be reported to the QEP Advisory Board, faculty and administrative groups and will form the basis for continuous refinements in QEP components.