

The DISCOVER Program Marymount University, Arlington, Virginia

Marymount University's QEP – DISCOVER: Inquiry, Scholarship, Creativity, Research – was developed to enhance student learning by infusing inquiry-based learning and research throughout the undergraduate program. The mission of the DISCOVER program is to promote student engagement in the Marymount University learning community, as well as broader national and international communities of learners, through research, creative work, and inquiry learning.

The DISCOVER program is a series of interlocking initiatives designed to refocus the undergraduate curriculum to include inquiry learning and undergraduate research:

Freshman and Transfer Seminars

A new 3-credit freshman seminar and a new 1-credit transfer student seminar will provide students with a foundation in inquiry learning and integrate students into the university community. Four sections of the 3-credit freshman seminar (DSC 101) were piloted in fall 2008, eight sections will be piloted in fall 2009, and in fall 2010 all freshmen will be required to enroll in DSC 101. Implementation of the transfer seminar will begin in fall 2011.

Refocusing the Undergraduate Curriculum

Degree-granting programs have begun the process of curriculum review to identify courses in the major that should include inquiry learning, research, and creativity. At least one 200-level course and one 300-level course in each major will include inquiry outcomes and assignments, and each major will identify a capstone experience. Faculty development activities will focus on the use of student-centered, active, inquiry-based learning methods.

Undergraduate Research Center

The DISCOVER program has expanded undergraduate research opportunities for students.

- A summer research program for undergraduate students and faculty mentors who are working on research or creative endeavors has been funded, beginning in summer 2009. Both the student and faculty mentor receive a stipend, and students receive free room and board.
- A directory of faculty mentors is being built on the DISCOVER Web page to assist students in locating research opportunities at the University.
- Research internships and study abroad opportunities are being identified.
- Students who wish to present their work at local, regional, and national conferences may apply for travel funds, which will be increased in the 2009-10 academic year.

Enhanced Student Research Conference

The annual Student Research Conference has been expanded to allow for enhanced celebration of student work.

Support for Writing and Information Literacy

An Information Literacy library faculty member has been identified to work with DISCOVER, and a Writing Specialist position has been funded beginning in 2009-10.

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