



Get between the covers!

Developing a culture of reading

METHODIST UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

METHODIST UNIVERSITY, FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
QEP Director: Arleen Fields, Archives Librarian (afields@methodist.edu)

The selection of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Methodist University involved a lengthy, campus-wide dialogue about academic direction and change. It began as a disparate list of desired improvements solicited from and championed by individual faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Although initially an ambitiously inclusive but vague and incompletely articulated proposal, it finally emerged as a focused, widely-supported, well-researched, well-funded, and accessible initiative to improve the reading skills of students by developing a campus-wide culture of reading.

Our plan to create a culture of reading utilizes the existing freshman seminar course, IDS110: The Methodist University Experience, which has recently been revised to include a common freshman reading assignment. This assignment is a recently published book chosen from popular literature, selected for its thought-provoking potential. Our QEP will build on this course in several ways. Students will be required to enroll in a genre-based Reading Circle in the freshman or sophomore year. The object of these circles is to encourage students to read self-selected material outside of their assigned coursework. To support this goal, the Davis Memorial Library is creating a collection of fiction and other popular works. To support the development of a culture of reading, we will continue to set up "Reading Nooks" around campus to create reading-friendly environments in academic and recreational settings.

The project, which has the slogan "Get Between the Covers," will be assessed both formally and informally at many levels, including the individual Reading Circles and student reading improvement and attitudinal changes. Instruments will include NSSE, Nelson-Denny, and the College Base, rubrics for assignments in IDS 110 and the Reading Circles, as well as internally generated attitudinal questionnaires and surveys.