

2014 QEP: Keeping it Real: Classroom to Career
South University's Quality Enhancement Plan
Condensed Summary

South University has selected the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic, *Keeping it Real: Classroom to Career*, for its reaffirmation of accreditation in 2014. The topic was selected and developed through a broad-based university-wide effort involving key stakeholders. The QEP will help more students persist through their first year of college while strengthening the professional focus of our programs. This QEP reinforces the institutional commitment to provide a proven pathway to career readiness through South University degrees.

The QEP is based on current scholarship and national trends in the best practices related to success of first-year students. This approach supports the overarching goals of (1) improved Classroom Success and (2) early Career Engagement. To further define these goals five Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) were chosen. By virtue of participation in *Keeping It Real: Classroom to Career*, first-year undergraduate students will have:

- Outcome 1: Improved retention rates
- Outcome 2: Improved academic success in selected undergraduate first-year courses
- Outcome 3: Improved Information Literacy skills
- Outcome 4: Improved Critical Thinking skills
- Outcome 5: Increased Student-Professional engagement

To achieve and sustain these outcomes the QEP contains three student-facing and two faculty/staff-facing components. The student-facing components are: (1) revision of selected undergraduate courses to increase the career-focused academic content, (2) hosting co-curricular events online and on campus wherein professionals and students interact, and (3) first-year student career planning provided through the Academic Success Centers and Career Services. These three components are packaged together in a Career Readiness ePortfolio to enable students, faculty and staff to document and report progress. The faculty/staff-facing components are: (1) 20 professional development courses to prepare for QEP implementation and (2) scholarship programs focused on developing career focused academic content.

To inform this plan, the University engaged in a pre-pilot program during the Fall 2013 quarter. The pre-pilot, offered on four campuses, involved modifying a single assignment in each of the selected courses and a small number of co-curricular activities. Feedback from the pilot was gathered from participating faculty, staff and students and has been incorporated into the present plan. Additionally, comments taken from the university-wide open comment period of the draft QEP and feedback from SACSCOC have been used to improve the approach.

The pre-pilot also provided an opportunity to refine the assessment processes for the SLOs. A robust collection of internal, external, direct and indirect metrics provide a clear measure of progress. These metrics are updated quarterly and reviewed as campus and university-wide scorecards. The campuses, the University, and supporting committees use the scorecards to direct continuous improvement of the plan.

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