

Executive Summary
Quality Enhancement Plan
Trevecca Nazarene University

Topic: Undergraduate Research

The goal of Trevecca Nazarene University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to improve student learning by engaging students in undergraduate research; the desire is to create and maintain an academic culture that promotes, supports, and celebrates undergraduate research. The university defines "undergraduate research" broadly to include creative works in the arts and scholarly work in the humanities, as well as more traditional empirical research. The Undergraduate Research Program also emphasizes the role of faculty members as mentors to student researchers. One of the most distinctive qualities about the university's undergraduate programs is the sense of community that exists between students and faculty. The Undergraduate Research Program provides additional opportunities for students and faculty members to collaborate. Finally, the university seeks to emphasize the process of acquiring research skills, not just the outcome or result of the research.

Trevecca Nazarene University's undergraduate program addresses three research-related learning outcomes students will be able to accomplish: (1) demonstrate understanding of scholarship topics in their discipline; (2) demonstrate skills related to conducting scholarship in their discipline; and (3) communicate their research findings through written, performance, and/or oral presentations. Willison and O'Rourke's Research Skills Development (RDS) Framework identifies six attributes common to all types of research. The RSD Framework guides the development of rubrics and other assessments of the student learning outcomes.

The university has identified five process outcomes that will contribute to the creation of an academic culture that emphasizes undergraduate research: (1) the development of a curriculum that introduces students to research skills early in their university education and becomes a foundation for future research experiences; (2) creation of additional opportunities for participation in undergraduate research; (3) increasing the visibility of undergraduate research; (4) increasing institutional support for undergraduate research; and (5) improvement of student perceptions about the university's academic culture. The implementation of the QEP consists of three strategies: (1) the modification of existing curricula (ENG 1020 English Composition, ENG 1080 Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking, and INT 1100 Life Calling and Purpose) to introduce freshman students to basic research skills; (2) the development of new curricula (Faculty-Led Academic Research Experiences [FLARE]); and (3) 499 courses (upper-level individualized research projects with a faculty-mentor) to give sophomores, juniors, and seniors more opportunities to participate in research and creative scholarship.

The QEP provides a detailed assessment plan that assesses student learning outcomes and process outcomes. Each outcome is linked to the university mission and/or educational goals, and each student learning outcome correlates to levels and attributes in the RDS Framework. Means of assessment and criteria for success are also identified.

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