



Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Collaborative Learning

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)'s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to foster greater use of Collaborative Learning (CL) across the undergraduate curriculum as a way to build connections among students, improve student success, enhance student learning, and prepare students for careers that increasingly require strong collaboration skills. Through a variety of new and ongoing activities and resources, the institution plans to support faculty as they incorporate intentionally designed CL activities in courses at all levels, building on existing instructional strengths while advancing teaching and learning across the University.

Through research into which students leave the institution and why, the QEP Committee identified commuting students and transfer students as a target population of "students who struggle." The committee identified a common sentiment expressed by UAH students across all demographics—"You can't do UAH alone"—and noted that successful students "made connections with other students" in classes "that encouraged or required students to work together and interact." From there, the committee selected Collaborative Learning as the method for "providing community through academics, enhancing both at the same time."

The institution plans to train and support faculty in increased and more effective use of CL activities through a new Collaborative Learning Center; faculty fellowships, grants, and awards; curricular change at the department and college levels; and other institutional investments. Initial efforts will focus on First-Year Experience courses and select courses with high failure rates. Later efforts will target upper-level courses, especially mandatory courses for majors, then senior "capstone" courses, and eventually general education courses. Additionally, workshops and consultation services will be offered to all faculty interested in expanding their use of CL. Through these efforts, the QEP seeks to ensure that all undergraduates experience multiple courses that feature CL activities.

Student learning outcomes identified in the QEP include improving UAH students' ability to learn collaboratively, their knowledge and value of Collaborative Learning, and their critical thinking skills. Learning environment outcomes identified in the QEP include increasing the number of faculty, staff, and peer tutors trained to implement CL and increasing the number of courses that feature CL activities. More generally, the institution seeks to engage students more fully in the academic community of the university and to improve student retention, lower DFW rates, and increase graduation rates, and it plans to do so by making Collaborative Learning a "central feature" of the UAH culture.

For more information, please contact:

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