

Write to the Top: Enhancing Student Writing through a Writing Intensive Program

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to enhance the ability of students to write effectively and appropriately in the disciplines. The QEP will improve undergraduate student skills in both general writing and professional writing in their disciplines. The choice of writing as the topic of the QEP grew out of a lengthy and deliberative process, in which all faculty, as well as other key stakeholders, were given the opportunity to offer input.

Many studies demonstrate the importance of writing in academic success as well as the need for improvement in student writing. Employers and government officials also highlight the need for improved student writing. Data show that students at UNCP also reflect the national trends in the need to improve student writing.

The goal of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to enhance the ability of students to write effectively and appropriately in the discipline. The Quality Enhancement Plan will improve undergraduate student skills in both general writing and professional writing in their disciplines. General writing demonstrates critical thinking, style, and fluency appropriate to the audience and task; consistency in focus and reasoning; structural integrity; and mastery of standard edited English. Professional writing should also exhibit style and vocabulary appropriate to the discipline and task; synthesize research in writing appropriate to the discipline; and exhibit the ability to access, evaluate, and utilize information from a variety of sources and media.

Students who complete Writing Enriched and Writing in the Discipline courses will improve their ability to employ program-specific writing as a mode of critical thinking and communication and will demonstrate better writing as compared to both internal control groups and students at similar institutions. Student learning outcomes for improving general writing skills and improving professional writing skills in academic disciplines encompass skills in four areas: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and writing; processes; and knowledge of conventions.

Four initiatives are planned to achieve the goals of the QEP. These include a Writing Intensive Program that continues and expands the Plus-One Program in the six-hour Freshman Composition Sequence and will require students to complete nine additional hours of Writing Enriched and Writing in the Discipline courses. A Faculty Development Plan will provide faculty with training in the best practices for assigning and responding to student writing. Strengthening the University Writing Center and providing for the improvement of student writing through the use technology are the third and fourth initiatives.

The University has committed sufficient resources in its financial plan to implement the initiatives outlined in the QEP over the next five academic years. A chart illustrates the timeline for the implementation of the QEP. Supported by QEP Advisory Committee, the QEP Director will administer all aspects of the QEP. An assessment plan, containing relevant direct and indirect measures of student learning, details the processes for evaluating the student learning outcomes outlined in the QEP.