



Western Carolina University's QEP

Synthesis: A pathway to intentional learning

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Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at WCU is committed to enhancing student learning especially as it relates to students synthesizing their university experiences. The plan will guide undergraduates as they develop personal learning and career goals and help shape students' experiences throughout their time at WCU as they engage in their academic and co-curricular experiences. The plan will also prompt students to reflect on how those experiences contribute to their goals after graduation.

Departments that have impact on students, such as academic programs, Residential Living, Orientation, Advising, Student Support Services, as well as programs that directly impact the academic life of faculty or students, for example, the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, Career Services and the Center for Service Learning, will become increasingly involved in the implementation of the QEP. These units, in conjunction with the academic programs, will develop specific goals that align with the plan and foster synthesis in our students, as well as initiate more engaged teaching pedagogies in our faculty.

Advisors and faculty will enter the mentoring process using an Education Briefcase. This electronic portal will facilitate student interactions with faculty, advisors, and career counselors and will serve as a repository for sharing learning plans, resumes, academic and co-curricular transcripts, templates, questions and prompts from the advisor, student reflections/essays on university activities, and other synthesis-related documentation. Students will use the Education Briefcase to chart their educational progress, professional and social activities, experiential learning, and future educational/career plans. Advisors and faculty will use the additional information available in the Education Briefcase to understand more fully the student's total education to better advise and guide a student through her decision-making processes.

Over time, the intent of the QEP is to develop students who are more intentional about the choices they make in their academic work, their co-curricular experiences and civic responsibilities, their internships and co-ops, research engagements, and their long range education or career goals. By focusing on synthesis, students will develop a context for their learning and their experiences, leading to a deeper mastery of their discipline and a more comprehensive world view. Students who develop a set of goals early in their college career and who are guided to reflect on what they are experiencing are more inclined to persist to graduation and achieve greater academic and personal success.

Please visit the WCU SACS Web site at www.wcu.edu/sacs to see our QEP.