



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

QEP TITLE: *Advance: Student Research Experience*

INSTITUTION: University of Louisiana at Lafayette

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Quality Enhancement Plan for UL Lafayette, *Advance: Student Research Experience*, supports the strategic mission of the University to increase student productivity and success through engagement in mentored research, innovative projects, and creative endeavors. *Advance* creates the undergraduate research initiative described in the UL Lafayette 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, and creates a plan to move the University towards increasing “student productivity and success through engagement in mentored research, innovative projects, and creative endeavors.”

Through a lengthy process that garnered broad-base support from faculty, students, staff, and alumni, UL Lafayette selected Student Research as the University’s QEP topic. A QEP development committee narrowed the topic to undergraduate research and focused on enhancing course-based student research as a means to provide more students with research experiences and prepare more students for mentored research opportunities. The topic of Student Research aligns with the UL Lafayette 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, impacting three of the university’s strategic imperatives and key performance indicators related to students. Performance indicators call for improving students’ success through high-impact practices, developing a model for defined and structured co-curricular activities, and developing an undergraduate research initiative providing opportunities for students regardless of major. *Advance* adopts a coordinated undergraduate research program as an institution-wide high-impact practice that formalizes students’ ability to earn a research distinction (certificate) by undertaking a co-curricular research activity that is appropriately disseminated.

The vision of *Advance* is that UL Lafayette undergraduates will have an opportunity to participate in a student research experience (SRE) that will foster competencies in critical thinking, information literacy, ethics, creativity, and communication. UL Lafayette defines an SRE as a sustained effort to apply subject knowledge, skills, and abilities to a project that is valued by the discipline. An SRE should culminate with a presentation, publication, performance, or other form of dissemination appropriate to the discipline.

In order to achieve this vision, *Advance* prioritizes three student-learning outcomes (SLOs):

- **SLO 1:** Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities to complete an SRE.
- **SLO 2:** Students will recognize the value of research, scholarship, and creativity in developing and improving knowledge, and facilitating learning.
- **SLO 3:** Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to articulate the results of an SRE in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes.

The significance of the research experiences students participate in extends beyond students earning of an undergraduate research distinction. These experiences underscore the University’s belief that students will recognize the value of research, scholarship, and creativity in developing and improving knowledge and facilitating learning. The expectation is that students will leverage the research experience to discover more about their discipline and themselves as scholars.