

## **Advanced Immersion and Mentoring**

Washington and Lee University

Quality Enhancement Plan

Advanced Immersion and Mentoring (AIM) Contacts:

Megan Hobbs, Associate Dean of Students and Dean of Sophomores and Juniors, (QEP Co-Chair), [mhobbs@wlu.edu](mailto:mhobbs@wlu.edu), OR

Helen I'Anson; Perry Professor of Biology and Research Science, (QEP Co-Chair), [iansonh@wlu.edu](mailto:iansonh@wlu.edu),

The Advanced Immersion and Mentoring (AIM) program will engage the campus in three initiatives to foster cultural competency in support of a welcoming community for all students, regardless of backgrounds. This program will increase students' sense of belonging on W&L's campus and enhance the efficacy and impact of the advising, coaching, and mentoring roles of W&L faculty and staff. The AIM initiative will engage students, faculty, and staff on the undergraduate campus in a three-tiered approach that focuses on the experience of first-year students. The AIM Summer Scholars program seeks to empower a broad group of incoming first years (AIM Scholars) from varied backgrounds, allowing them to enter their first year of college with an increased sense of belonging and confidence.

This pre-first-year experience leads into our second major AIM goal as AIM Scholars have opportunities to emerge as campus leaders beyond the summer. This part of the program partners with our current first-year orientation and extended orientation, and newly developing first-year initiatives. During their first semester on campus, AIM Scholars will be placed across a number of first-year seminar groups to share their knowledge and skills gained from their summer experience with other first-year students. In their second year at W&L, AIM Scholars will be encouraged to engage in leadership roles that will allow them to have an impact on their peers.

Faculty and staff mentors participating in the AIM Scholars Summer program, who will continue to mentor AIM scholars during their first and second years at W&L, will form the catalyst for the third AIM initiative. Our goal for this part of the program is to better educate and prepare faculty and student life professionals to support a more diverse student body through collaborative mentoring strategies. Programming will engage faculty and professional staff members in explorations of the role of advising, coaching, and counseling, as related to intentionally mentoring the whole student, and will be focused on a student's first two years at W&L.

In sum, a successful AIM Summer Program experience will allow participants to return in the fall with an increased sense of belonging and confidence as they begin their first year of college. The initiative will also engage AIM participants beyond the initial summer experience, focusing especially on their role within the first- and second-year experience, and through this approach, reaching all first-year students. Finally, the AIM initiative will orchestrate a more collaborative approach by faculty and student life professionals to mentor first- and second-year students intentionally to guide development of the whole student. Ongoing assessment of each part of the plan will enable us to analyze assessment findings, discuss interpretations, and develop any necessary modifications to the plan based on lessons learned.