

Alabama State University

A Journey to Success in the First-Year Experience



QEP GOALS

- Improve the persistence of first-time students.
- Strengthen skills to support academic success.
- Increase satisfaction of first-year students regarding their experience at ASU in their first year.

QEP OUTCOMES

As part of their first-year experience, first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students will:

- **Outcome 1:** Become holistically engaged in their college experience by participating in curricular and co-curricular activities throughout the first year (student learning and student success)
- **Outcome 2:** Demonstrate enhanced reflective writing skills (student learning)
- **Outcome 3:** Utilize campus resources and support (student learning and student success)
- **Outcome 4:** Increase their connection to ASU by identifying a career pathway and selecting a major by the end of their freshman year (student success)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alabama State University's (ASU) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *A Journey to Success in the First-Year Experience*, is consistent with the University's mission. The plan focuses on student success and reflects the institution's commitment to continuous improvement. It was developed, designed and implemented to enhance the first-year experience for first-time, full-time students through engaging academic and social interactions.

The QEP's overall mission is to enhance the student success culture at ASU by fostering an environment of learning and engagement for first-year students, by actively engaging in the college experience through academic and non-academic experiences, and through nurturing professional relationships whereby students will develop academic knowledge, professional skills, and career knowledge that will propel them toward academic persistence and professional success.

The QEP is committed to ensuring that students have a successful transition from high school to college, and that it positively changes students' lives through effective campus resources and tools that promote and undergird skill development leading to student success beyond graduation. The QEP has a strong emphasis on curricular and co-curricular activities and is written to include research-based, high-impact practices that promote learning, persistence, and retention.

Institutional data revealed that various factors and skills are essential for a student's success: (a) ability to identify a major, (b) awareness and use of institutional resources, (c) use of common core reader, (d) engagement in co-curricular activities, (e) use of supplemental academic support, (f) reflection of experiences, (g) development, and (h) a sense of belonging. With a broad base of support from faculty, staff, students, administrators and alumni, the institution identified "student success" as a general concept that embraces all of these expectations specified for all first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen at ASU as described in the University's strategic plan, *FOCUS 2030*.

Quantitative and qualitative data collected during the pilot of the QEP (Fall 2019) were major factors in leading the conversations that led to the refinement of the QEP and the development of its final goals and outcomes. Subsequently, additional reflective writing exercises were incorporated in the plan due to the challenges students encountered with writing at the college level as delineated from the data.

Employing a strong collaborative, interdisciplinary team of faculty, staff and administrators (from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Institutional Effectiveness), the implementation of the plan was successfully executed amid the global pandemic (COVID-19).