



Executive Summary

READ! WRITE! *transform!* reflects Saint Leo University's (2020a) mission to offer a "practical, effective model for life and leadership in a challenging world" and the institution's commitment to graduate students with transferable writing skills in order to communicate effectively within their chosen discipline and in the workplace (para. 1). The development of these transferable writing skills will begin for all undergraduate students in English foundations courses, with the main focus on reading and writing strategies and critical thinking skills. Further development and application in specific disciplines will then be piloted in two academic programs: Computer Science and Social Work. A rolling implementation schedule will expand writing initiatives to all undergraduate academic programs. This progression is well supported by the core philosophy of WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum): writing is a continuous practice of learning, communication, and knowledge-making in every discipline (WAC Clearinghouse, 2020a). Writing as knowledge-making is important to every discipline and important twenty-first century skills sought by Saint Leo graduates.

The QEP topic stemmed from several regular planning and assessment processes at Saint Leo University, including assessment of critical thinking and written communication. In 2017, the Office of Academic Affairs convened a strategic planning committee to develop a five-year strategic plan for Academic Affairs. Research and our own experience clearly show that higher education must respond to employers' demands to hire graduates with well-developed "power skills", including critical thinking and written communication. In 2018, this plan was incorporated into Renaissance 2021, the 2018-2021 University Strategic Plan spearheaded by the president of the University.

Broad-based support of institutional constituencies was gained through the engagement of key stakeholders in developing and initiating the plan. The constituents involved in these institutional processes included faculty, staff, and leadership across Academic Affairs. The selection of the QEP focus began with the faculty during the introduction of Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) Faculty Development Day activities led by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). The sessions that generated the most favorable response from faculty were those where writing skills were linked to skills in research, supported by low stakes writing assignments, and to coaching in interdisciplinary topics. These were related to the skills necessary in the workplace and which employers are seeking in new employees.

Student Learning Outcomes

Saint Leo developed a comprehensive assessment plan that uses multiple measures to assess student learning. To provide a formal structure and process for evaluating the implementation and success of the QEP, evaluation of the QEP will be integrated into regular institutional planning and assessment processes. This will provide an ongoing vehicle to evaluate student learning, as well as overall progress and success of the QEP.

Students will be able to:

- 1) apply principles of effective writing;
- 2) write in various formal and informal contexts appropriate to their discipline and adhere to the conventions of effective writing in the discipline;
- 3) identify the benefits of writing as a transferable skill for the workplace.

In order to accomplish the QEP, Saint Leo University will invest in resources for initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP that provide professional staffing, faculty stipends, faculty training, information technology, and assessment.

QEP Contact: Dr. Chantelle MacPhee, QEP Director (chantelle.macphee@saintleo.edu)