Innovation, Discovery, Exploration, and Analysis (IDEA)

Texas State University

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Executive Summary

Innovation, Discovery, Exploration, and Analysis (IDEA) is the theme of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Texas State University. The plan includes three goals, each with two student learning outcomes. These outcomes are supported with discussion of actions and a corresponding description of the organizational structure and resources necessary to achieve the outcomes, as well as an assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of the QEP. In addition, the plan includes six main initiatives which are designed to organize and implement the actions denoted in the plan.

The three interrelated goals of the QEP are (I) to assist undergraduates in gaining awareness of research and ethical research practices, (II) to help students to synthesize research, and (III) to enable students to produce a research or creative project. The goals are accomplished through achieving the following six student learning outcomes in which students will (1) recognize the utility of research, inquiry, or creative expression; (2) identify and describe ethical aspects of research, inquiry, or creative expression; (3) analyze a body of research, inquiry, or creative expression that they have collected; (4) develop a research question or problem derived from the body of research, inquiry, or creative expression that they have analyzed; (5) implement a research/creative experience appropriate to their discipline either by contributing to a faculty member's research experience or engaging in an independent research experience with a faculty mentor outside of the classroom; and (6) communicate the results from their mentored research/creative experience.

Initiatives designed to achieve the goals include (1) an IDEA Center to coordinate, promote, and evaluate online tutorials and workshops on the ethics and utility of research, research classes, an informational event and showcase on undergraduate research as well as training, outreach, and collaborations; (2) two courses: RES 3399: Research and Creative Expression, an interdisciplinary overview of research, inquiry, and creative expression; and RES 4399: Mentored Research and Creative Expression, a directed research experience in which students either contribute to a faculty member's research experience or engage in an independent research experience with a faculty member; (3) an Undergraduate Research Forum that brings together students and faculty as well as potential donors and employers actively involved in research experiences across Texas State's two campuses; (4) a Research, Inquiry, and Creative Expression (RICE) Showcase that provides students enrolled in RES 4399 as well as others across both campuses the opportunity to present and receive awards for their faculty-mentored research/creative activity in performance, oral platform, or poster format; and both (5) Student Ambassadors and (6) Faculty Liaisons: respectively comprised of students with requisite research experience and faculty experienced in working with undergraduates on research projects. Both student ambassadors and faculty liaisons serve as Undergraduate Research Forum presenters, and as promoters of the IDEA Center's other initiatives and efforts.

The foundation of the plan is the result of a multi-staged topic selection process resulting in broad-based support from students, faculty, and staff across the university. Selection of the topic of undergraduate research is further supported by empirical evidence, research on best practices, and initiatives at peer institutions. Additionally, Texas State's leadership has allocated physical space and sufficient funding for the plan to succeed. The impact of the plan including student learning, will be assessed through quantitative and qualitative methods using mainly direct measures by the IDEA Assessment Team under the direction of the assessment coordinator.