

Undergraduate Research for the Common Good



Young Harris College's QEP, entitled "Undergraduate Research for Common Good", aligns with its *For the Common Good* strategic plan by meaningfully engaging students in their academic pursuits and with the college's commitment to a strong undergraduate education that prepares students to affect change locally, regionally, and globally. Engaging students in undergraduate research will inspire students to become world-changing alumni and connect authentic experiences to local, regional, and global problems.

Young Harris College will accomplish this QEP and its student learning outcomes (SLOs) through strategic modification of the academic curriculum and infrastructure to take advantage of its strength as a small, liberal arts college – effective teaching and strong faculty-student mentorship. Undergraduate research at YHC is defined broadly and inclusively as *“intellectual investigations by undergraduate students through faculty mentorship with the goal of generating new knowledge and/or original and creative contributions to a discipline through methods and skills consistent within the discipline.”*

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify and synthesize knowledge from sources to implement research.
- Identify and describe a question, problem, or objective for the purposes of research.
- Analyze observations relevant to the research project.
- Articulate findings and their value through written, performance, creative production, and/or oral presentation.

CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Information Literacy in the First-Year

Experience: Occurs in a first-year seminar required of all freshmen through a course module focused on information literacy that trains students with skills for approaching and defining a research problem or question.

Course-based Undergraduate Research

Experiences: Implemented across all disciplines and includes semester-long research that is authentic and relevant, entails collaboration among students, requires communication of results, and meets design criteria established by the Council for Undergraduate Research.

Mentored Research Experiences

(MREs): Occur through faculty-mentored research collaborations and implemented through independent studies and capstone experiences. Research focuses on relevant problems and issues.

Components of the QEP include (1) incorporating information literacy as a component of every student's first-year experience, (2) offering course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs), (3) providing mentored research experiences (MREs), and (4) developing research presentation and dissemination opportunities through an Undergraduate Research Day, an Undergraduate Research Journal, and financial support to attend professional conferences. These QEP activities will be leveraged to create a culture of research that permeates through all levels of the institution. An internal granting system will support CURE and MRE development and support faculty participating in the QEP.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS SUPPORTING THE QEP

Undergraduate Research Day: A campus-wide event to recognize and celebrate research and inquiry by students that focuses on communication of research.

Undergraduate Research Scholars: Recognition of students engaged in the QEP that demonstrated excellence in problem development, research quality, methodological skills, and communication.

Undergraduate Research Journal: An e-journal that disseminates the accomplishments of students and communicates QEP outcomes to faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

The core of assessment will occur through faculty evaluations of CUREs and MREs and pre- and post-research surveys. Success of this QEP will have broad impacts on the academic culture of YHC, where research, inquiry, and scholarship will be developed, celebrated, and recognized within the institution.

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