

## **Transylvania University: Embedded Learning Forums**

In an effort to better support our students and set them up for success, the focus of our Quality Enhancement Plan is a supplemental instruction program called Embedded Learning Forums (ELF) that will incorporate both peer leaders and faculty members.

The QEP topic emerged after months of research, literature review, evaluation, and discussion by an appointed Steering Committee. A review of the proposed strategic plan and proposed capital campaign also helped to direct discussion. It became clear that retention was a priority. Of the students who withdrew from Transylvania, a majority did so because of poor grades during their first and second year leading us to focus on courses that produced a greater number of students who withdrew from the course or received a D or F in the course. After examining our courses with high D/F/W rates and consulting with faculty in the programs offering these courses, we decided to focus our efforts on three foundational STEM classes: Foundations (MATH 1214), Principles of Chemistry I (CHEM 1055), and Integrated Concepts of Biology: Molecules and Cells (BIO 1204). Among the 2015 and 2016 entering classes who graduated from Transylvania, a total of 155 students entered Transy planning to major in STEM-related fields, but only 91 students graduated with STEM degrees (40% STEM attrition). Many entering STEM students are co-enrolled in at least two of these courses in their first year. Therefore, we believe there is a potential for an additive impact on students enrolled in ELF courses and feel that intervention in this small number of classes and sections should have an outsized impact on students served. While we will start with a small number of courses, we anticipate expanding supplemental instruction to additional courses with high D/F/W rates. The primary goal of our QEP is to improve student success by reducing the number of students earning D/F grades or withdrawing from foundational STEM courses.

Student Success and Learning Outcomes include: (1) Increase exams scores of students who participate in ELF sessions compared to those who do not participate. (2) Reduce D/F/W rates by approximately 15% compared to rates during 2015-2018. (3) Increase retention of students who participate in ELF sessions. (4) Increase transferable skills for success in future courses.

Assessment is essential in determining the success of our students and the QEP and a detailed plan has been developed for each student learning outcome. Data will be collected each term and an annual report will be prepared by the Associate Dean. The ELF program will be adequately supported by a budget that includes compensation for faculty, peer leaders, and the program coordinator as well as funds for annual training.

Throughout the QEP selection process, we have focused on creating and developing a relevant, compelling, effective, and assessable initiative that will improve student success and learning outcomes. Through input and support from faculty, staff, students and administration, we believe that Embedded Learning Forums will improve student outcomes in a significant way.

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