

Mars Hill University QEP Executive Summary

Title: Resolve to Solve

Contact: Dr. Jonathan Rose, Director, jrose@mhu.edu

The Mars Hill University Quality Enhancement Plan, Resolve to Solve, will implement problem solving, defined as project-based learning that emphasizes rigorous, active, and systematic application of the process of solving problems, into the student experience, with the overarching goal of enhancing student learning.

With a new administration in place, a substantial gift to the university to elevate work in the career development center, and a renewed determination among faculty and staff to enhance the student experience, Mars Hill University embarked upon identifying and developing a quality enhancement plan that would help reflect the institution's focus on connecting a Mars Hill education to the world of work, as well as provide students with a distinctive MHU learning experience.

As the plan developed, it was critical to align with institutional mission:

Mars Hill University, an academic community rooted in the Christian faith, challenges and equips students to pursue intellectual, spiritual, and personal growth through an education that is

- ▶ grounded in a rigorous study of the liberal arts;
- ▶ connected with the world of work; and
- ▶ committed to character development, service, and responsible citizenship in the community, region, and the world.

Additionally, an explicit goal incorporated into the current strategic plan is to “strengthen our commitment to liberal arts education and career development for the 21st century. Both the mission of the institution and the strategic plan emphasize the importance of a liberal arts education and connection to the world of work.

In order to remain connected to the above institutional guidance, university leaders determined that the quality enhancement plan should (a) create a unique, valuable MHU experience; (b) help students understand the meaning and value of a liberal arts education; (c) increase student engagement and learning; and (d) help students succeed and be prepared to make a life and a living.

Resolve to Solve will enhance student learning by helping them to develop, improve, and recognize the value of problem-solving skills. This encompasses three components: 1) learning experiences that are introduced and reinforced in first-year courses, 2) curricular and co-curricular experiences that focus on problem solving in the academic disciplines and related professions, and 3) upper-level capstone courses where problem solving skills are demonstrated.