

Engaging Ethics

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Salem College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Engaging Ethics*, has created a new focus on students' ethical reasoning across the curriculum and campus life and is moving forward as outlined in Salem's decennial review and reaffirmation of 2022. The *Engaging Ethics* program supports and enhances Salem College's mission and strategic directions, including its developing focus on health leadership, as it cultivates the kinds of ethical discernment and critical thinking vital for leaders who will advance the health of persons and communities.

Through the QEP's curricular elements, students will encounter ethical inquiry within their "Salem Impact" general education program. Students who enter as traditional first-year students will engage in ethical inquiry in at least three courses: their first-year seminar; a second course from across the disciplines designated as an ethical inquiry course; and an interdisciplinary senior seminar. The QEP's co-curricular experiences are strongly linked to Salem College's honor code and support students' orientation to college life, strengthen their commitment to Salem's honor tradition, and link ethical inquiry with academic integrity.

Recognizing that the Association of American Colleges and Universities has called "ethical reasoning and action" an "essential learning outcome" for this century, the *Engaging Ethics* program has developed two conceptual tools to foster coherence across student experiences. First, in courses, students receive instruction in four communicable, deliberate steps for ethical reasoning: (i) Recognize ethical issues; (ii) Evaluate relevant ethical principles or concepts; (iii) Apply ethical principles or concepts; and (iv) Decide among ethical positions, actions, or outcomes (a process captured by the acronym READ). Secondly, Salem's program offers five touchstones for ethical inquiry: Courage, Integrity, Justice, Care, and Respect. These widely shared values at Salem College are also key concepts for ethical thinkers across a range of disciplines, eras, and traditions.

The QEP's student learning outcomes focus on the ethical reasoning process along with the attitudinal development that contributes to critical moral inquiry. Students will be able to:

- Effectively implement Salem's shared ethical reasoning process Recognize, Evaluate, Analyze, Decide (READ) when engaging with ethical issues.
- Express confidence in applying Salem's ethical touchstones to familiar and novel ethical scenarios.
- Articulate their ethical reasoning process in relation to Salem's touchstones.

These outcomes are assessed directly through use of an Ethical Reasoning Rubric and indirectly through both formative and summative self-reports.

The *Engaging Ethics* program received broad-based support of key institutional constituencies. The College has committed resources to its implementation and success. A range of capacity-building opportunities will enable faculty and staff to integrate and assess ethical inquiry in courses and programs. During the first five years, the program will be overseen by a designated QEP Director or Codirectors who will receive guidance from an advisory board of faculty, staff, and students.