

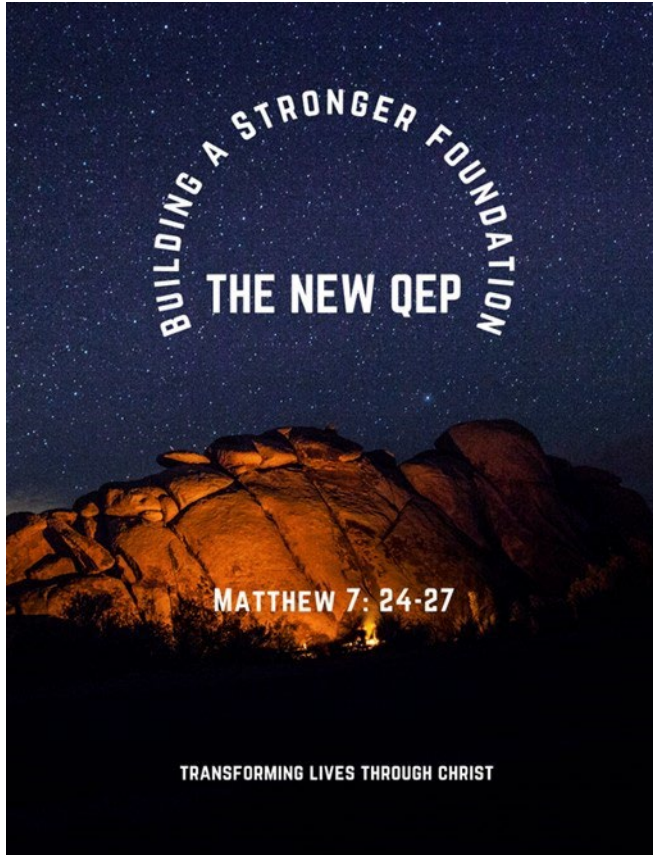
Building a Stronger Foundation

Shorter University

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Executive Summary

One question drives Shorter University's Quality Enhancement Plan process: How can Shorter put long-term, systemic changes in place to best support student learning, persistence, and success? SU's definition of academic success includes academic achievement, acquisition of skills and competencies, attainment of learning outcomes, satisfaction, persistence, and career success.



SU has identified first-year student retention as a key priority in improving student success. "Building a Stronger Foundation: First-Year Engagement and Retention," Shorter's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), aims to improve first-year student retention and completion rates while creating an environment that supports student learning, growth, and development through enhanced support services.

The overarching goal of Building a Stronger Foundation is to improve student persistence and retention by equipping students to learn and apply college-level success strategies; to recognize the connection between academic skills and long-term goals; and to identify then confront obstacles to success by communicating with advisors and other institutional support networks. By equipping first-year students with these tools, the QEP will help retain more students to the second year, where the prospect of academic success is greater.

The target population for "Building a Stronger Foundation: First-Year Engagement and Retention" will be first-year students; however, second, third-year students will also benefit from the plan, thus ensuring the QEP will directly influence a sizeable

portion of the student body.

The QEP will be assessed through a newly designed General Education/Foundations course, FCS 1010 College Life & Christian Worldview, and an enhanced advising system, using various metrics. Direct measures, including the number of advising sessions, student reflection assignments, and advising inventories, will be evaluated along with indirect metrics, such as student satisfaction with support services and programs, to determine which aspects of the plan are successful and in what ways the plan can be improved or enhanced. In addition, performance indicators, such as persistence, retention, graduation, and transfer rates, will be used to review progress toward the achievement of the overarching QEP goal of enhanced student success, in keeping with Shorter's mission of "Advancing God's Kingdom through a commitment to academic excellence, spiritual growth, Christian leadership, and global service within the context of a Biblical worldview."