

## **Bridge to St. Ben's: Enhancing the First Year Experience at Saint Joseph Seminary College**

St. Joseph Seminary College

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### Executive Summary

St. Joseph Seminary College engaged all of its constituencies in identifying the focus of the Seminary College's QEP, Bridge to St. Ben's. Through the assessment of institutional data, including surveys of faculty, administration, students, and the Seminary College's Board of Trustees, a development committee proposed four possible topics for the QEP. In the fall of 2020, all constituencies chose the "Freshman Experience" as the QEP topic. By the fall of 2021 the QEP Committee decided to instantiate the Freshman Experience into a course, RES 0091-01 Bridge to St. Ben's, taken by all incoming first time, full time freshman. After examination of the identified need to onboard incoming students into the study of philosophy and the liberal arts in a seminary setting and review of analogous institutions' programs that sought to acclimate new students into the unique ethos of their respective schools, three objectives were established: (I) Promote an understanding in new students of the value of studying philosophy and the liberal arts for their own sakes, (II) Enable students to articulate why the study of philosophy and the liberal arts is crucially important for priestly formation, and (III) Promote the disciplines of research, study, and logical argumentation that are necessary for navigating the seminary curriculum with excellence. The instructional design of the QEP is inspired by a collaborative model wherein instructors from Philosophy and Theology, Language, Literature and Fine Arts, Counseling, and the Library will utilize their respective expertise in a series of learning modules that will constitute the course Bridge to St. Ben's.