

**Executive Summary**  
**Life After UMW: Preparing Students for Life and Career**

The 2023 Quality Enhancement Plan, *Life After UMW: Preparing Students for Life and Career*, is designed to accelerate and amplify the way the University community engages around career preparation across all aspects of the student experience. This plan emerges from the University’s comprehensive planning and assessment processes. Our strategic planning identified a need for an increased focus on career readiness and outcomes for our students earlier in and throughout their college journey. Assessment of students’ focus and understanding of career planning indicated an opportunity to provide a framework for knowledge acquisition with respect to core competencies which underpin career readiness. To build this framework, we adopted the eight career competencies established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). To address the specific needs, values, and interests of the UMW community, the planning team adapted the competencies to align with the institution’s strategic priorities, community values, and goals. This adaptation yielded ten essential competencies that should sustain students in their life and careers after graduation.

The topic for this plan emerged through an iterative process that involved a team of faculty, staff, and students who engaged in proposal writing, brainstorming, focus groups, and analysis of data to improve student outcomes in the area of career readiness and preparation. The existence of key departments such as the Center for Career and Professional Development, Student Activities and Engagement, and Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness and their involvement with core components of the plan forms a sustainable structure that will support the implementation and evolution of the plan as its components become part of the fabric and culture of the UMW experience.

This plan creates a framework for connecting existing academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities which includes a robust branding and communications plan, staff and faculty training and development, and resources to support the campus community. Students are supported with their life and career goals from the moment they accept admission. The QEP will be guided by the two learning outcomes, four goals, and ten competencies:

Student Learning Outcomes	Plan Goals	Ten Competencies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will connect their liberal arts and sciences education with the ten core competencies and understand how they relate to life and career after Mary Washington; and</li> <li>2. Students will communicate their experiences in a way that is relevant to their life and career after Mary Washington.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving our career outcome rate;</li> <li>2. Improving the “employed full-time” outcome rate;</li> <li>3. Meeting or exceeding key indicators of career and workforce preparation relative to peer institutions; and</li> <li>4. Improving student connectedness and self-confidence.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving;</li> <li>2. Teamwork and Collaboration;</li> <li>3. Communication;</li> <li>4. Digital Fluency;</li> <li>5. Global Awareness and Intercultural Competence;</li> <li>6. Career, Self-Development, and Professionalism;</li> <li>7. Well-Being and Mindfulness;</li> <li>8. Meaningful Connections;</li> <li>9. Civic Engagement and Community Service; and</li> <li>10. Leadership</li> </ol>

With the implementation of this QEP, we will intentionally amplify the impact of a liberal arts and sciences education on students’ lives after Mary Washington. Through ongoing and targeted communication, students will be supported by faculty and staff who are well-informed and prepared to engage in meaningful career conversations that are grounded in professional competencies.

**For more information, contact Co-chairs:**

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