



Focus on QEP

October 2014

Introduction to the Special Issue

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Melody is currently serving as Director of UCF's SACSCOC reaffirmation process. She is also Executive Director of UCF's Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and is a Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. She has been a faculty member at UCF since 1999.

This is a special issue of the Faculty Focus dedicated to the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Faculty members, staff members, students, and community members are invited to provide input that will shape the topic selection process by taking a survey and/or participating in listening groups. This publication includes an overview of accreditation, a refresher/update on the previous QEP initiative, and detailed information about the six topics that are currently under consideration, as well as highlights of upcoming faculty development programming.

Accreditation is a process used in higher education to evaluate colleges and universities for quality and to assess efforts to promote continuous improvement. It is a professional peer-review process by which educational institutions are evaluated against predetermined academic and administrative standards. The goal is to assure institutions' local communities as well as the higher education community at large that an institution has clearly defined objectives and operates in a manner that allows the objectives to be met.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting institutions in the southern United States. SACSCOC originally accredited UCF in 1970. UCF's accreditation status is reviewed every fifth (interim report) and tenth (decennial report) year. Efforts are now underway for the 2016 reaffirmation of accreditation, and many faculty members will play key roles in the process.

One aspect of the reaffirmation process that especially involves faculty members is the selection and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which is a required part of the decennial reaffirmation. Core Requirement 2.12, in *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, states that the institution must develop an "acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an

institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution" (2012, p. 21).

During the spring and summer of 2014, the QEP Planning and Development Committee, which included representatives from all colleges and many other units, worked to collect potential topics for UCF's 2016 QEP. The process included asking for suggestions from the various constituencies at UCF, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers of UCF students and graduates, and community members. After reviewing the suggested topics submitted on the QEP website, the committee selected six topics to be developed into concept papers. The first drafts of the concept papers associated with these six finalists are included in the pages that follow.

These concept papers are still works in progress, and your feedback will be invaluable as they continue to be developed. The committee therefore asks that you please review these preliminary concept papers and then, by November 7, complete the survey you will find at <http://undergrad.ucf.edu/qep/development/qualtrics-survey>. We would also like to invite you to participate in faculty listening groups that will be held Friday, October 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., in the John C. Hitt Library, Room 157; and on Thursday, October 30, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., in Classroom Building I, Room 205. There will also be a listening group conducted electronically via Adobe Connect on Monday, October 27, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Information about how to participate in this electronic meeting can be found at <http://undergrad.ucf.edu/qep/development/listening-groups>.

Once data from the listening groups and the community survey have been collected and analyzed, the information will be presented to President Hitt and the President's Leadership Team. They will consider the concept papers and the data and make a final selection of the 2016 QEP topic. Faculty members will have a wide variety of opportunities to shape and participate in related activities beginning in Spring 2015.

For more information about UCF's QEP selection process, go to <http://undergrad.ucf.edu/qep>.

The following concept papers are first drafts written by members of the QEP Planning and Development Committee. As these documents are still works in progress, we invite your feedback by any of the means listed above as they continue to be developed.

Recap of Previous Topic: What if? A Foundation for Information Fluency

Hank Lewis and Martha Marinara



Hank Lewis is the Coordinator for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and SACSCOC Reaffirmation at UCF. He holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Business Administration from Georgia College and State University.



Martha Marinara, Associate Professor of English, is the past Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan/Information Fluency Initiative at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Marinara earned an M.A. in Creative Writing from Southern Connecticut State University and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from Lehigh University.

As mentioned in the previous article, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a requirement for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The SACSCOC website describes the QEP as follows: "The concept of quality enhancement is at the heart of the Commission's philosophy of accreditation. Each institution seeking reaffirmation of Accreditation is required to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Engaging the wider academic community and addressing one or more issues that contribute to institutional improvement, the plan should be focused, succinct, and limited in length. The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning" (<http://www.sacscoc.org/genacproc.asp>). Student learning should be at the heart of the QEP.

UCF was first required to develop a QEP as part of its reaffirmation of accreditation in 2006. After reviewing numerous suggested topics from the UCF community, the university selected *What if? A Foundation for Information Fluency*. *What if?* was created to infuse information fluency into curricular and cocurricular programs to meet two strategic goals: (1) to create a campuswide climate of inquiry and (2) to develop students' information fluency (IF) skills. The QEP supported UCF's mission to provide "high-quality, broad-based education and experience-based learning" as well as its goal to offer the best undergraduate education in Florida by enabling students to navigate an information-saturated, technology-rich environment and by providing them with the ability to make credible choices. In addition, the QEP was rooted in UCF's strategic plan, which stresses innovation and builds on the university's strengths in technology, distance learning, faculty development, and assessment.

The QEP was successful in making changes to the culture at UCF and bringing awareness of information fluency and the need for IF skills to students, faculty, and staff. The QEP had an initial impact on 48,000 students (see table below) and will have a continued impact based on changes in curriculum and on implementation of IF learning outcomes in individual courses, in programs of study, and in many large and small research projects. Some of the IF initiatives have been institutionalized on campus in academic courses and professional development programs as part of the sustainability of the QEP.

In building a foundation for information fluency, the university supported projects on three funding levels. Faculty, staff, students, and administrators applied for funding through a peer-reviewed proposal process. Each proposal included assessment of student and/or faculty learning and possible benefits to the campus community. The task and assessment plan for the QEP provided significant details on the planned projects that constituted the QEP. These included 96 projects and events over the duration of the QEP.

The three funding levels were environment, engagement, and enhancement. Each level had associated projects and a specific mission.

- **Environment Initiatives** included all of the projects that increased the awareness of information fluency and provided academic support to student classroom learning on a program- or university-level scale. In these projects, students progressively acquired IF skills as they built on the information and technology skills introduced in their lower-division courses. Projects included supporting faculty development through summer and winter conferences, extending University Writing Center services to students at regional campuses and those learning online, and supporting the development and implementation of the Information Literacy Modules. This area also included working with departments to include IF skills in their Academic Learning Compacts.
- **Engagement Initiatives** broadened or intensified the delivery of IF capabilities among students and faculty members with curriculum and program design and innovations that focused on information fluency. Major projects were conducted in collaboration with SLS 1501, the Philosophy Department, the College of Nursing, the Burnett Honors College, regional campuses, and the former Digital Media Department.
- **Enhancement Initiatives** primarily facilitated the direct learning of IF skills in both curricular and cocurricular areas and typically included direct instruction methods and support systems. This area was supported by grants of between \$1,000 and \$3,000 to add instruction in IF skills to an individual class or program. Over the course of the QEP, 61 grants were awarded to 89 faculty, staff, and students representing 39 departments.

The chart below shows the initiatives in each of the three levels of support and the numbers of participants.

Environment Initiatives 14,782	Engagement Initiatives 12,499	Enhancement Initiatives 21,000
Information Literacy Modules: 12,248 University Writing Center: 2,158 Faculty development: 376	Nursing: 1,284 Digital Media: 36 Philosophy: 2,774 Freshman Seminar: 4,590 Burnett Honors College: 2,460 Regional Campuses: 1,355	Grants awarded: 61 Faculty, staff & students receiving awards: 89 Departments involved: 39 Impact on students: 21,000

The involvement of academic and library faculty, staff, and students, along with the support of the administration, made the IF QEP a success. As the first QEP came to an end, many of its associated projects had been institutionalized across campus. The Information Literacy (Infolit) Modules, sponsored by the QEP and developed and maintained by the UCF Libraries and the Center for Distributed Learning, are a part of the culture at UCF and will continue in the future. The project began with eight modules, adding four more over the course of the QEP. By Spring 2011, the modules had been utilized by 184 faculty members in 176 unique courses or programs. Over the three-year period, 12,064 students completed 47,203 assessments with an average score of 88.04 percent.

And the impact of these modules has only continued to grow. For example, in September 2014, 6,957 students completed an assigned module with an average score of 83.33 percent. The Infolit Modules have been a great example of what can be accomplished when colleges and administrative support units work together for the betterment of our students.

The changes supported by the QEP in the University Writing Center have continued and are an important part of their outreach efforts to off-campus sites, regional campuses, and online students. Changes to curriculum, individual courses, and Academic Learning Compacts continue to impact students. The 2006 QEP was successful in these and many other ways and will continue to have impact beyond the five years of the program.

As the QEP drew to a close, the Office of Information Fluency staff (Martha Marinara, Director, and Hank Lewis, Coordinator), along with Chuck Dziuban and Patsy Moskal with the Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness, compiled data collected from the numerous projects, analyzed the data, and wrote the QEP section of the Fifth-Year Interim Report required by SACSCOC. The SACSCOC committee that reviewed the report made the following statements:

The institution adequately addressed all required elements of the QEP Impact Report. The institution documented widespread implementation of its QEP, "*What IF? A Foundation for Information Fluency*," including at its regional campuses. Good use was made of existing research and guidelines such as the Association of College and Research Libraries' information literacy competency standards. Assessment was used

to improve outcomes and to eliminate/alter underperforming initiatives. Assessment processes and instruments were also evaluated and adjusted accordingly.

What if? was successful based on the active participation of many on-campus and community partners. We are grateful for the support given to the IF initiative and look forward to supporting those who lead the 2016 QEP.

~ *Announcement* ~

Spring 2015 Course Innovation Project

*Improving Student Learning by Design:
A Course Innovation Project*

Meeting Times: January 21, February 18, March 18,
and April 15 2015, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: CB1 207G

Grant: \$300 for completion of workshops and deliverables

Proposals Due: January 15, 2015

A systematic, learning-centered approach to course design offers the only chance we have to ensure that the majority of students have a significant learning experience. —L. Dee Fink

When course-level learning objectives or outcomes are clearly integrated with learning activities and assessments, students can better (1) differentiate among types of knowledge, (2) engage in sustained, goal-directed practice, (3) take greater responsibility for their learning, (4) transfer learning to new contexts, and (5) develop metacognitive skills associated with deep learning. During these workshops, participants will discuss recent findings from cognitive research on learning and create a detailed course map of new or revised course-level and sequence-level learning objectives aligned with goal-oriented learning activities and targeted feedback. Please send questions to Eric.Main@ucf.edu.

Potential Topic #1: Bridging the Gaps to Student Success: Fostering Workforce Readiness

Executive Summary

Workforce readiness is a critical component of UCF's focus and student preparation to meet workforce demands is a significant part of our charge. Unfortunately, students typically wait until a few weeks before graduation to prepare for post-graduation plans. Bridging gaps across academic content, disciplinary knowledge and career demands beginning in introductory courses will encourage student planning throughout their UCF careers. Such preparation will positively impact the employability and readiness of our graduates and meet student, institutional and employer needs. Success in integrating academic and career or graduate school readiness will also produce positive results related to retention, graduation and excess hours.

Moreover, student career readiness is a primary goal of all programs at UCF, regardless of discipline. Faculty and administrators across campus recognize that graduating students should reflect the content they have learned in classrooms through communication of their knowledge and skills to employers and others throughout the Orlando, regional, national, and international communities. Consequently, all stakeholders at UCF should support additional efforts to prepare our students not only to demonstrate the theories and practical application of their disciplinary specializations but also to adapt their educational skills to a variety of workplace scenarios and environments.

Undergraduates will benefit from focused attention on both scholarship and career preparation throughout their UCF careers. Our efforts to integrate these endeavors will enhance UCF's growing international reputation for undergraduate education excellence while providing additional opportunities for diversifying our student body and including new populations and partnerships in the overall undergraduate experience at UCF. Consistent, coherent messaging and programming according to this model will serve the University's mission and result in undergraduates who are better prepared to succeed as graduate students, excel as capable and adaptable workers, and enrich society as engaged, productive citizens.

A variety of data resources support the goals of the "Bridging the Gaps to Student Success" proposal. In addition to various local, state, national, and institutional data resources, information justifying this proposal can be obtained from campus entities such as the offices of Operational Excellence and Assessment Support (OEAS) and Institutional Knowledge Management. Moreover, an array of existing student outcome assessment and final destination surveys can provide valuable information in these regards, as will innovative tools featuring e-portfolios, OBOJOB modules, the "Teach Live" program and the "Pegasus Path" initiative. In conjunction, these resources provide a multitude of venues for defining the issues being examined and assessing the impact of the project.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

There is an immediate and long-term need for workforce readiness skills development. Self-management skills allow students to more effectively participate in their learning experience at UCF. Student success and engagement can be enhanced through support that gives them clear, coherent pathways toward their goals and helps them integrate their academic learning and professional objectives. (McClenney and Dare 2013; Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough 2009). With a positive attitude for learning, understanding the value of leadership, and the ability to effectively communicate, students are more likely to become engaged learners demonstrating involvement and higher levels of academic achievement. In addition, students will be better prepared to address the needs of employers or graduate school admissions committees. National and regional surveys conducted by educational and business organizations continually identify these soft skills as attributes associated with competitive applicants (Berrett 2013; "The Role" 2012; "Raising" 2010).

This QEP proposal would help students to:

1. Identify and understand a variety of soft skills and recognize their value as part of the undergraduate education and career preparation processes.
2. Work with advisors and faculty to determine clear and coherent pathways toward their career goals, including experiential learning and co-curricular learning opportunities.
3. Integrate the learning they do across curricular and co-curricular experiences, and gain strategies for applying this learning in professional contexts and endeavors.
4. Participate in coordinated soft skills building activities across disciplines from the GEP to the capstone levels.
5. Demonstrate their ability to apply soft skills in conjunction with disciplinary expertise in both academic and professional environments.

The CareerEDGE model (Experience-Degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills-Generic skills-Emotional intelligence) from Pool and Sewell (2007) suggests that fulfilling the lower level criteria (EDGE) leads to self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem which are crucial elements of employability. As students are exposed to a degree specific curriculum, the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise stresses that they focus on becoming "intentional learners" looking to achieve essential learning outcomes. However, 22% of employers do support education specific to the student's chosen field. This may be contradictory since 63% of employers do not believe new graduates have the necessary skills for a global community (National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise 2009). Providing students with a compass

to navigate the education and extra-curricular options may therefore expand students' vision and improve employability opportunities. In a study published last year, Denise Jackson (2013) asked students directly about their perceptions of the importance of employability skills in undergraduate (business) programs. The students indicated that skill development in the areas of communication and team work are important for employability. These more generic skills are transferrable across industries including business, engineering and education. Pool and Qualter (2012) used teaching modules to include video clips, case studies, discussions and role playing in an emotional intelligence course. Evaluation was done with reflective papers, journal entries and case study write ups and results indicate that emotional intelligence can be learned. Using a simulated environment in a business environment or TeachLive can also be useful (Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough 2009).

Student progress in filling the gaps for workforce preparation will be assessed in a number of ways. These include:

1. The Pegasus Path Initiative: Pegasus Path is a digital interactive tool for students that encourages academic and post-graduation preparation and integrates the two throughout a student's career at UCF. The Pegasus constellation is the visual centerpiece for this tool that holistically tracks academic progress, career preparation, encourages planning, and collects data that can be returned as suggestions that are major-specific and relevant for future students. Pegasus Path student users will be able to centrally track and plan for academic and career or graduate school preparation, recognize the integration of the two, and be informed about activities, organizations and resource offices that support their intended academic/career/graduate school goals.
2. Student Outcomes Assessment: Measure of knowledge or content areas (pre/post-test).
3. E-Portfolios: Demonstration or evidence of learning experiences relative to professional development.
4. Final destination Survey: Completed by students at or after graduation to determine success with professional employment or graduate school admission.
5. Survey Student Learning Outcomes in soft skills as well as employer evaluations of student performance related to those soft skills in structured experience-based learning.
6. "Teach Live" as an evaluation measure (pre- and post-tests).
7. Additional workplace-related modules (OBOJOB0) to aid students in preparing for experience-based learning.

Implementation and Scope

Student workforce readiness would be facilitated in a variety of ways both inside and outside of the classroom. Sample learning experience include:

1. Guest Lecturer Series: Vicarious experiences provided by social models occur when students are able to see others who have achieved success. The closer the others are in similarity to themselves, the more effective the experiences are. Examples of this are when successful recent graduates return to the university to give talks to current students about how they achieved their goals (Pool and Sewell, 2007). In order to incorporate this concept into UCF's QEP, each college would create an elective course that is a "Guest Lecturer Series." The class would meet once per week and employers/alumni would be scheduled to speak each week and share their experiences with current students.
2. Promote/Measure Existing Employability Development Opportunities: Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough (2009) pose the argument that the quality of employability in an institution is most effectively measured by the quality of the employability development opportunities offered to students. There are several areas within the university that are already offering employability development programs and services. Therefore, increased marketing and measuring quality of existing career related events could be another method of implementation. Partnering with the Office of Student Involvement (OSI) and other university partners to increase marketing of these events would also be required. Ehiyazaryan and Barraclough (2009) emphasize the idea that students must perceive employability programs to be connected to their core activities in higher education. A more integrated approach would allow students to see the value in attending employability opportunities. A Professional Development Certificate could be earned for attending a certain number of opportunities. The certificate process would need to be centralized.
3. Pegasus Path to Emphasize Student Advising and Planning: Pegasus Path would serve as a tool to help students plan for and take advantage of coursework, co-curricular activities, and extra-curricular activities that would help develop their soft skills with specific career target(s) in mind. Further, Pegasus Path would collect data on current students that would suggest involvement and career preparation activities for future students in the same major. The system would be available to all students, native and transfer, through the myUCF portal and could integrate data from the PS degree audit, mapping and tracking benchmarks, CRM communications, student organizations and campus activities. Academic advisors would use Pegasus Path tool to assist undergraduates with course selection and to provide resources that support career readiness. OSI offers an involvement-related transcript and student tracking system. Faculty will be asked to integrate academic knowledge with career relevance and will also be asked to identify the critical skills required in their respective disciplines to assist in recommending clubs,

organizations, trainings, events, etc. Community partners will be asked to inform on industry standards, avenues for career preparation and sought after skills to inform the career and graduate school options that are suggested to students.

4. Program-Specific Pathways: Career Services, the Office of Experiential Learning, and the Office of Student Involvement could work with academic colleges and departments to develop program-specific pathways sheets that guide students in selecting electives, minors/certificates, co-curricular activities, and professional development experiences aligned with their majors. These could

be embedded in Pegasus Path.

5. Experiential Learning Emphasis: This proposal encourages students to bridge the gap between academic experiences and labor market realities through structured experiences such as Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) internships and co-ops, departmental internships, cornerstone, clinicals, practicums, etc. These will help the students connect the theory and practice and develop the soft-skills employers are looking for. Employers will serve an active role as co-educators of our students and directly influence and contribute to the development and adjustment of our students.

~ *Announcement* ~

UCF Winter Faculty Development Conference 2014

December 10–12, 2014, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Proposals due November 10, 2014, 5:00 p.m.

The Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning brings you the 2014 Winter Faculty Development Conference. This event will focus on community building, interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, and inviting new voices into conversations about campus and classroom challenges. Each participating faculty member will join a cohort of colleagues from across campus, make a prepared presentation about some aspect of professional practice, attend workshops, and engage in think-tank sessions about issues of importance to the institution and the surrounding community. The event will feature some elements of a typical academic conference and other elements similar to a working retreat. All UCF faculty and staff are welcome to attend all or part of the event. A full conference schedule will be available on the Faculty Center website by early December. Funded faculty participants are expected to attend all sessions on each of the three days. The theme of the conference will be *Improving Undergraduate Education*.

Proposal Criteria

Each applicant for funding will propose an *individual* eight- to ten-minute informal, discussion-based presentation about some aspects of teaching, research, or service work that fits within the event themes to be delivered at the conference. New faculty members are especially invited to attend and may choose to frame their presentations in terms of a challenge that they are facing in the classroom. Applications will be reviewed by members of the Faculty Center Advisory Board using the following criteria:

- Quality and clarity of the presentation description
- Relevance of the presentation to *Improving Undergraduate Education* and to an interdisciplinary audience

Deliverables

Deliverables from the conference will include (1) a brief write-up and other materials from the individual faculty presentation to be shared as a faculty resource and (2) a collaborative conference product to be composed by each interdisciplinary faculty cohort. Possibilities might include a poster or digital artifact to be shared at the event showcase or a draft of an article for the *Faculty Focus*.

Please Note:

- Nine-month faculty members who are selected to participate, who attend all sessions during the three days, and who submit the required deliverables will receive a \$500 grant subject to normal withholding tax.
- Proposals are due at 5:00 p.m. on **November 10, 2014**.
- Final decisions on acceptance will be provided to all applicants by **November 21, 2014**.

Please confirm availability 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., December 10–12 before applying.

Apply online at http://ucf.qualtrics.com//SE/?SID=SV_cVkB712hWqk8u0d

Potential Topic #2: Connect, Reflect, Project: Communication for Career Preparation

Executive Summary

Students' career preparation, whether their first destination is the workforce or continued education, is a crucial part of students' education. Rather than added-on training that students access only upon approaching graduation, career preparation should be integrated across their learning experiences and span throughout their time in college.

Students' career preparation in college can increase their engagement and success on the job. A recent Gallup-Purdue (Great, 2014) national study of college graduates found that career preparation in college made them nearly three times as likely to be engaged at work, but that less than a third "strongly agree" that their education prepared them for life outside of college. A number of employer surveys have found that respondents view communication and other "soft" skills to be the most important for workplace success, including the ability to learn on the job (Berrett, 2013; NACE 2012; College Board 2004). At the same time, employers have found graduates to be under-prepared in communication skills, recommending that colleges teach these skills through an integration of traditional and experiential learning (*Chronicle* 2012; AACU, 2010).

UCF students need additional opportunities and support for learning to communicate effectively; for using writing and communication to synthesize and apply the learning they do across the GEP, degree programs, and co- and extra-curricular activities; for adapting their communication skills to professional contexts; and for effectively conveying their communication and other skills to employers and other audiences.

This proposed QEP would focus on communication (writing, speech, and multimodal) as both a set of competencies that are valuable in every discipline and field *and* as a means of fostering and integrating students' learning across curricular, student involvement, and other contexts (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1983). Working toward the strategic goals of offering Florida's best undergraduate education and strengthening the quality of community and business preparation, the vision of this QEP is for UCF to produce Florida's best-prepared graduates for the workforce and to become Florida's premiere communication and writing university.

QEP initiatives would encompass and connect three major dimensions of undergraduates' education: 1) synthesis of learning across the GEP with the aid of an e-portfolio; 2) more specialized disciplinary and professional training, including experiential learning; 3) additional support structures for career exploration and preparation. In addition to emphasizing communication as a set of competencies and a mode of learning, QEP initiatives would leverage several of UCF's acclaimed programs and capabilities; these include Writing across the Curriculum, experiential learning, and simulation technologies such as TeachLive simulations. Key partners in implementing this QEP include academic programs, support offices such as Career Services and the Office of Distributed Learning, and co-curricular programs such as those sponsored by the Office of Student Involvement.

This QEP topic would address a clear workforce preparation need, integrate and extend existing initiatives and infrastructure, build on the previous QEP's emphasis on information fluency, and enable focused yet broadly applicable learning and assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this QEP aligns with one of the key recommendations from a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2012) survey of employers: to support students' career exploration and preparation across their education through integrated foundational, disciplinary, and real-world learning opportunities (15). In this same survey, as in a number of others, employers have emphasized the importance of communication (oral and written) as essential for learning, problem solving, collaboration, and workplace success (Berrett, 2013; NACE, 2012; AACU, 2010; Jerald 2009; Humphreys, 2006; College Board, 2004); indeed, we might view communication as a meta-competency, enabling the development and enactment of other skills.

Mirroring national surveys, surveys of UCF students suggest that many want their education to be more focused on career preparation, do not receive adequate career advising, and do not engage in complex communication tasks. In the 2011 NSEE survey of seniors for example, a majority of UCF respondents reported having sometimes or never (as opposed to often and very often) made a class presentation, developed multiple drafts of a paper, written papers longer than five pages, and talked to a faculty member or advisor about career plans. In the last UCF Baccalaureate Alumni survey, over 40% of respondents found career advising in their majors to be inadequate.

The more robust approach to career preparation proposed here would focus on helping students build stronger foundational and specialized communication (oral, written, multimodal) skills across learning contexts and over time. Starting in their GEP coursework, students would use a new e-portfolio platform with embedded communication modules (including Obojobo and Materia learning objects) to connect, reflect, and project: connect their learning across coursework and co-curricular activities, reflect on *how* they use specific strategies to learn, and project how they might adapt their learning to new disciplinary and professional contexts.

Second, this QEP would extend and create communication-centered initiatives designed to enhance students' disciplinary learning in their degree programs. Expanding the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) program to include other forms of communication (e.g., public speaking, negotiating conflict) and to reach more academic programs would enable faculty to further embed communication-based outcomes, assignments, and assessment measures into curricula (particularly core and capstone requirements) across campus. Programs not currently utilizing e-portfolios could adapt the GEP e-portfolio into a discipline-specific one, also encouraging students to relate

their curricular learning to their learning in student organizations and activities, in internships and co-ops, and at work. Program advisors and faculty could be trained by Career Services to help students explore career options and to identify learning pathways relevant to their career goals.

Third, the proposed QEP topic would extend support services focusing on communication and career preparation. Students could develop course projects in college-based communication studios, write reports and other deliverables as part of internships and co-ops, participate in expanded networking events with professional mentors and area employers, and hone interviewing and other communication skills through TeachLivE simulations and Career Services practice sessions.

Examples of Student Learning Outcomes

This QEP topic would help students to

1. strengthen their foundational and specialized communication competencies, including the communication processes, strategies, and conventions valued by their disciplines and targeted professions;
2. use communication-based tools and activities to make connections across their learning in the GEP, degree programs, experiential learning, co-curricular activities, and other experiences;
3. reflect on their communication-based learning in order to develop practical strategies for transferring and adapting their knowledge and skills to various career contexts;
4. persuasively convey their knowledge and demonstrate their communication skills and other relevant abilities to employers and other audiences.

Outcomes and Measures

This QEP's focus on communication-based learning would enable concrete, focused assessment using a number of university-wide and program specific assessment mechanisms.

We already have benchmark data about students' experiences with and perceptions about communication competencies and career readiness through the Graduating Senior and NSSE surveys. This could be supplemented with perception data from the First Destination, Baccalaureate Alumni, and Office of Student Involvement (OSI) surveys. Ideally, UCF could develop another destination survey of students five years out from graduation to enable more longitudinal assessment. The OSI and NSSE surveys ask students about their co-curricular and involvement activities. Because research has established a connection between students' confidence or self-efficacy in communicating and their communication competency (Pajares, 2003), students could also be given the Daly-Miller writing apprehension test and NCA's (Morreale, 2007) "motivation to communicate" test.

Although we have employer perception data from national surveys, we would need to gather such data locally through an updated Employer Evaluation survey (the last version was conducted in 2000). This could be supplemented by additional questions on the Alumni Survey for respondents who have hired UCF graduates as well as focus groups of area employers who coordinate recruiting through Career Services. We could also ask internship and co-op providers to provide

formative feedback about students' communication skills and career readiness through evaluation rubrics.

Direct assessment of student work in GEP composition and speech courses could be used to establish a baseline level of their communication competencies. Students' competencies and career preparation could also be assessed through additional activities they complete or materials they develop. For GEP assessment, student e-portfolios could be rated using rubrics adapted from the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio research. Student performance in Matera and Obojobo learning objects and in TeachLivE simulations, embedded in e-portfolios or other program requirements, could be quantitatively tracked and assessed. Aided by external advisory boards, Career Services, and communication across the curriculum mentors, academic programs could embed more sophisticated communication and career readiness outcomes in their Academic Learning Compacts and curricula, particularly in core courses and capstone requirements; assessment of such outcomes could involve discipline-based e-portfolios and case assignments involving real-world scenarios. The fields of Writing Studies and Communication Studies have developed a number of assessment tools for measuring students' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) through projects and other artifacts they produce; see, for example, the resources collected at the WAC Clearinghouse, CWPA website, and National Communication Association website, the latter featuring NCA's (Morreale & Backlund, 2007) *Large Scale Assessment in Oral Communication* (including tools for assessing interpersonal communication, public speaking, conflict resolution, listening, and group communication). Students' skills in negotiating conflict through communication could also be measured through the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI).

Yet another way to assess students' career preparation is by evaluating how strategically and effectively students pursue learning experiences (e.g., coursework, co-curricular, involvement activities) relevant to their career goals. This could involve advising-based assessment at the program and university levels, including through the Pathways project and the Involvement Portfolio being developed by OSI.

Implementation and Scope

Development of E-Portfolio and Accompanying Faculty Training and Support

The Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) could team with Undergraduate Studies and other partners to develop an e-portfolio system for use across GEP courses; the system could be adapted by degree programs into a more discipline-based e-portfolio, and it could be integrated with OSI's Involvement Portfolio. Ideally, any university-wide e-portfolio would be co-developed and used by other Direct Connect institutions, particularly Valencia, so that transfer students would be familiar with it; Transfer and Transition Services could (re)introduce the e-portfolio during Transfer Orientations and Transfer Success workshops.

Students would use the e-portfolio to synthesize and reflect on the learning they were doing across courses and co-

curricular activities (including experiential learning and involvement in student organizations), and to explore how they might use their communication-based knowledge and learning strategies in their disciplines and targeted professions. The CDL could partner with GEP faculty and with writing and communication faculty mentors to develop and incorporate communication-based e-portfolio modules into courses. Some of these modules could involve game-based Materia and Obojobo learning objects and TeachLive simulation scenarios. The CDL could work with Undergraduate Studies and OEAS to develop e-portfolio assessment measures.

Expansion of WAC to Include Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) Efforts

The Nicholson School could partner with the existing Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) program to include speech-related competencies within and to expand the successful Faculty Fellows and GTA training initiatives. These initiatives, which have already involved every academic college except for the College of Medicine, involve writing specialists working with groups of faculty in specific disciplines to develop communication-based outcomes, curricula, resources, and assessment plans for academic programs; these initiatives have included strategies for incorporating writing into large and Web courses, in part through low-stakes writing assignments. Viewed as a national model, the WAC program is already planning a second phase of its Faculty Fellows program, which could involve developing additional resources for training students to communicate in their disciplines and fields, such as scenario-based case assignments, discipline-based e-portfolios, and disciplinary style guides. The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) could continue to support WAC and CxC efforts through curriculum mapping workshops and the Summer and Winter Faculty Development Conferences.

Development of a University Communication Lab and College-Specific Communication Studios

The Nicholson School of Communication could work with the Center for Writing Excellence and Career Services (which offers some career-related communication training) to develop a new Communication Lab that parallels the student support offered by UCF's successful University Writing Center (for Clemson's example, see <http://tinyurl.com/ondfnvr>). Featuring free consultations with faculty coordinators and trained student tutors, this lab could begin by assisting students in GEP speech courses and then expand to offer an array of workshops, practice sessions, and services around interpersonal communication, group communication, and public speaking and presentations. UCF could also follow the lead of CxC programs at Clemson University and LSU in developing smaller communication studios in which students (see <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/cxc/studios/>) get assistance with communication skills, projects, and e-portfolios. In addition to student tutors, these studios could involve professional coaches that include alumni from the college.

Development of Communication-Based Experiential Learning and Involvement Activities

The Office of Experiential Learning could team with faculty to develop service-learning, internship, and co-op modules and writing assignments (e.g., reports, journals) that help students reflect on their learning experiences, better understand the roles of communication at their sites, and connect their experiences to coursework and the professions they plan to enter.

The Office of Student Involvement could team with Career Services to develop additional opportunities for students to learn about professional communication in specific disciplines and fields. For example, student organizations could sponsor speakers as part of an expanded COMM Week and could develop online profiles of professionals as communicators.

Additional Student Support

Career Services could train advisors in academic colleges/programs about career advising and development opportunities, including those focused on communicating with employers and in the professions. The Nicholson School is developing a Communication Career Bridge Initiative (CCBI) that other colleges and programs could use as a model.

Undergraduate Research could sponsor workshops on research-based writing. Graduate Studies could offer additional Pathways workshops focused on academic and research writing. Undergraduate and Graduate Studies could work with the University Writing Center to sponsor writing clubs for students working on theses, dissertations, and research studies.

~Announcement~

Spring 2015 Course Innovation Project

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Meeting Times: January 22, February 19, March 19, and April 16 2015, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: CB1 207G

Grant: \$300 for completion of workshops and deliverables

Proposals Due: January 15, 2015

The smartphones, tablets, and laptops ubiquitous across campus have created new opportunities for digitally enhanced activities. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) activities require students to bring such devices to class, helping to increase student engagement and enhance lessons with online resources. Faculty will participate in a series of four workshops emphasizing BYOD design, collaboration, and assessment. Current examples of BYOD will be integrated into each workshop. Faculty will also have the opportunity to attend (in person or virtually) additional presentations that showcase various BYOD technologies. Please send questions to Anna.Turner@ucf.edu.

Potential Topic #3: Enhanced Student Engagement

Executive Summary

When students are provided opportunities to engage in their communities, the end result is a well-rounded citizen who has the necessary soft skills and academic knowledge to succeed in life. Engagement opportunities provide students with life-changing experiences that improve their socialization, communication skills, cultural competencies, and as a result, their career preparedness. Providing students with engagement opportunities will also help to create citizens who continue to be engaged and active in their communities long after graduation. As an institution, we can succeed in both academic and civic pursuits that will enhance our students' overall university and academic experience.

UCF has established itself as America's Leading Partnership University™ and is an integral part of Central Florida, the Sunshine State, and the world beyond. Part of UCF's mission is in "broad-based and experience-based learning, [...] enriched student development and leadership growth, [and] public service initiatives that address pressing local, state, national, and international issues in support of the global community" (<http://www.ucf.edu/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-key-elements/>). Further, UCF's vision statement notes that our institution is "to become a new kind of university that provides leadership and service to the Central Florida city-state," and our values statement includes both "scholarship" and "community" among other things (<http://www.ucf.edu/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-key-elements/>). As such, the university should be committed to ensuring that each UCF graduate participates in significant engagement opportunities. It is this committee's suggestion that an engagement component for all undergraduate students be required in order to graduate.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

A report from the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement titled *A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy's Future*, confirms

that civic learning and learning in traditional academic disciplines are complementary, rather than competitive. The report points to research findings that suggest that students who participate in civic learning opportunities are more likely to persist in college and complete their degrees, obtain skills prized by employers, and develop habits of social responsibility and civic participation (Kanter & Ochoa 2012).

The report also notes current tensions between "labor market needs, [...] an increase in 'degree outputs'" (9), research efforts, and civic education. Through enhanced student engagement all of these efforts can positively affect students,

faculty members, and our local, national, and global community partners.

Labor market needs would be addressed by enhancing soft skills that employers report as lacking for recent graduates. A survey developed, fielded, and analyzed by Maguire Associates, Inc., a higher-education consulting firm, on behalf of The Chronicle of Higher Education and Public Media's Marketplace invited 50,000 employers to participate in the study (<https://chronicle.com/items/biz/pdf/Employers%20Survey.pdf>). Key findings in the study discovered that "employers place more weight on experience, particularly internships and employment during school vs. academic credentials including GPA and college major when evaluating a recent graduate for employment" (11). Also, employers identified the following skills as areas in need of improvement:

- Written and oral communication skills
- Adaptability
- Managing multiple priorities
- Making decisions and problem solving

As noted previously, degree outputs would be addressed because civic learning enhances student retention and graduation; research efforts would be enhanced through projects that require problem solving in a real-world environment, and research findings could possibly improve the overall effectiveness of the organization or issue being addressed; also, civic education would benefit students by "preparing [them to become] socially responsible citizens as graduates" (Saltmarsh & Hartley 2011).

In terms of assessment, UCF already has several methods in place. These include 1) Graduating Student Survey, 2) First Destination Survey, 3) Fraternity & Sorority Life Survey, and 4) Office of Experiential Learning Surveys for co-op, internship, and service-learning. All of these surveys contain questions that are specific to community engagement efforts made by the student. In addition, the NSSE Survey is a tremendous indicator of engagement practices on campuses across the nation by which we can gauge how UCF is doing in comparison to other higher educational institutions every few years. We also can generate and retrieve data with the assistance of Operational Excellence and Assessment Support as well as with Institutional Knowledge Management.

Foundation Based on Data

Engaged learning practices with community partners can help to improve student skill sets identified in the previous section. A few curricular examples include, the Office of Experiential Learning Employer Evaluations of student intern and co-operative learning experiences for 2013-2014 reveal that over 90% of UCF students have very good to outstanding

communication skills upon completion of their experiential learning opportunity. In addition, over 93% of employers surveyed reported very good to outstanding adaptability skills in students completing their internship or co-op experience. The National Association of Colleges and Employers' current benchmarks observe that 96% of responding employers plan to hire interns and/or co-op students in 2014" (2014 Internship & Co-op Survey).

Co-curricular examples include, all UCF Fraternity & Sorority Life organizations are currently required to perform service with the community. These students are surveyed annually. In 2013-2014, 95% of student respondents believed that their involvement in Fraternity & Sorority Life led to an improvement of their personal leadership skills and/or abilities. Management of priorities, decision making, and problem solving are all components of leadership skills that employers view as currently lacking in employees.

Implementation and Scope

The following programs, activities, and projects could satisfy the engagement requirement:

1. Internship (one semester paid or unpaid work experience that is tied directly to students' major discipline)
2. Co-op (multi-semester paid work experience that is tied directly to students' major discipline)
3. Service-Learning (teaching pedagogy that extends the classroom experience into the nonprofit sector to enhance both the learning objectives of the course and benefit the community partner)
4. International Study Abroad (students engage with various cultures)
5. Practicums (designed to give students practical experience in their field of study)
6. Senior Design (students work with industry and community partners to apply academic skills to real-world situations)
7. Capstone (in some cases-e.g., Interdisciplinary Studies-students apply course content to real-world service projects)
8. Cornerstone (in some cases-e.g., College of Business Administration-the required course involves interacting with community partners to further their ability to serve clients)
9. Clinical Rotations (both observational and hands-on experiences with care giving facilities in the health care industry)
10. Field Experience (gives students experience in their field of study in observational or assistant positions; tends to be in social sciences and teacher preparation)
11. Volunteering (students engage in service activities that benefit nonprofit and/or federal agencies)
12. Community-based Research (research projects that

enhance both the students' understanding of academic concepts and the community partner providing the subject matter)

13. Guest Speakers or other sanctioned campus engagement opportunities (students would be required to attend at least four events to fulfill the engagement requirement; these would be approved venues that focus on cultural, civic, and/or democratic engagement)

In addition, a university-wide Reader could focus on texts (brief articles and the like) that investigate civic minded issues. The Reader would be relevant to each college by incorporating texts that address civic minded issues specific to their missions.

This QEP would

1. Help students to improve soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership, teamwork, cultural competencies) through engaging in real-world experiences.
2. Help students to identify possible career opportunities.
3. Help students to strengthen their workforce competency skills.
4. Help students to become civically minded and engaged citizens upon graduation.

~ *Announcement* ~

Spring 2015 Course Innovation Project

*STEM Peer Observation
and Course Innovation Project*

Meeting Times: January 26, February 9, February 23,
and April 6 2015, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: CB1 205

Grant: \$300 for completion of workshops and deliverables

Proposals Due: January 21, 2015

Please consider participating if you are:

- A faculty member in a STEM department or program
- Teaching at least one undergraduate course during the Spring 2015 semester
- Interested in talking about innovative teaching methods and theories with other STEM faculty
- Willing to observe two of your peers' classes
- Open to having others observe you teach

Discussions will focus on strategies and learning, specifically the challenges, realities, and successes of innovative approaches. Peer observation of teaching will be used for the reciprocal benefit of participants, enabling them to exchange ideas and receive feedback in a supportive environment. Please send questions to Erin.Saitta@ucf.edu.

Potential Topic #4: Foundations for Success: Financial Literacy as a Means to Success

Executive Summary

Description: Federal and state funding for higher education has declined in the last ten years, leading institutions of higher education to raise tuition and fees (Starobin, Hagedorn, Purnamasari, & Chen, 2013). These reductions, as well as a assortment of other variables, have created challenges for many students, even for some who have substantial financial support. This proposed QEP topic provides the structure for graduating a generation of students with financial knowledge that goes far beyond their student loans or accumulated debt: it is a comprehensive examination and enhancement of financial competencies for a lifetime.

Vision: Undergraduate students will be required to complete Financial Literacy Modules that explore both short-term and long-term fiscal planning. For example, the modules could cover financial planning, consumer purchasing, career planning, housing issues, budgeting/records/financial statements, insurance, tax planning, investments, real estate/alternative investments, financial services, and consumer credit, as well as retirement and estate planning and college savings (Gregg, 2014). Upon completing the modules, students will be more informed and better able to personally manage responsible short-term and long-term fiscal planning in their own lives.

Congruence with the university's mission and strategic plan: In congruence with UCF's strategic plan, the modules would help to produce "an Educated Citizenry that has knowledge, analytical and application abilities, and critical appreciation of [both] economical and mathematical" fluencies (UCF Strategic Plan, 2012). The endeavor would also serve UCF's primary goal to offer the best undergraduate education available in Florida—an education that helps to prepare our students not only academically but fiscally as well.

Foundation: In 2012, seven out of ten college seniors with loans had student loan debt approaching \$30,000. In Florida alone, 51 percent of 2012 graduates were in debt, with the average student owing \$22,873 (Reed & Conchrane, 2013). Politicians and institutions of higher education themselves receive a lot of criticism regarding the rising costs of attending college, yet many students are not financially well versed in how to navigate the complexities associated with financial aid applications, the process of taking out loans, and other ways to fund their education (Bidwell, 2013). We know that federal and state funding for higher education has declined in the last ten years, leading institutions of higher education to raise tuition and fees (Starobin, Hagedorn, Purnamasari, & Chen, 2013). But what is being done to equip our students with the knowledge that they need to succeed in these economic times?

Financial literacy can affect a student's academic and

social success in many ways. Students who do not properly grasp the complexities of credit cards or student loans can find themselves in serious debt, causing them to lose focus on academics in order to deal with financial problems. Financial problems alone can be a reason for a student to drop out of school completely (Starobin, Hagedorn, Purnamasari, & Chen, 2013). Nationally, student loan debt is more than \$1.1 trillion, and more than half of this debt is not being paid back. Many students default on their loans because they are not aware of the existence of flexible repayment plans (Bidwell, 2013).

Some colleges and universities are already acting on financial literacy needs for their students. In September 2012, Boston College implemented Successful Start, a financial literacy program relating to personal finance designed to prepare students through workshops led by Boston College employees, faculty members, and expert guest speakers.

Goals and Objectives

Given the preponderance of information and concern about financial literacy among college students and their parents, the University of Central Florida will provide students—and parents—with education and knowledge about debt management and the basics of financial investments.

These topics are intended to serve students not only during their preparation for college and while they are attending but also well beyond their college, as they earn, borrow, consume, and invest. Educational opportunities will be provided to allow students to manage their financial resources effectively throughout their lifetime.

Debt Management

The goal is to provide students with an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of debt commonly incurred by individuals (e.g., student loans, auto loans, credit cards, mortgages). Students will learn about what are considered to be appropriate levels of debt from a lender's perspective as well as how to properly use personal debt. The objective is to provide students with knowledge that will help them avoid inappropriate debt (e.g., credit cards, risky or excessive mortgage debt) and how to manage debt and savings as they progress through life.

A. Investment Basics

The goal is to expose students to major investment asset classes and their risks, including equity securities (stocks), fixed income securities (bonds), and real estate. Students will learn the characteristics of investment alternatives (i.e., individual securities versus mutual funds), the benefits of diversification, and basic allocation principles. The objective is to provide students with the skills

that they need to make intelligent investment choices in their retirement savings plans and to how to save and invest throughout their lifetime.

B. Fiscal Tax Policy

Students will learn about the structure of U.S. federal income and estate tax policy, including recent changes in federal tax policy; the impact of U.S. tax policy on the economy; the relationship between the federal deficit and interest rates; how fiscal policies impact individual citizens and their personal finances, and the link between fiscal and social policy initiatives (e.g., home ownership) and tax laws.

C. National Health Care Policies

The goal of this module is to help students better understand the structure of the U.S. healthcare system; issues surrounding the current system of healthcare in the United States, including Medicare and Medicaid; recent government and employer actions taken to address healthcare issues and their impact on personal finances (including the Affordable Care Act and proposals to reform Medicare).

D. National Retirement and Savings Initiative Policies

The structure and background of Social Security and issues surrounding the current system will be explored as well as recent trends in national retirement policies, including various programs initiated by the government to encourage citizens to save money for their retirement and the college education of their children.

E. National Monetary Policy and the U.S. Banking System

The structure of the Federal Reserve and the U.S. banking system and the impact of policy changes on individuals and their finances will be investigated. By examining the structure of federal bankruptcy laws and recent issues impacting individual bankruptcy and the components of interest rates, students will be better prepared for making financial decisions.

F. National Consumer and Investor Protection Policies

This module presents an overview of government agencies responsible for consumer protection and existing policies and laws protecting consumers in their dealings with the financial services industry. This overview of regulatory agencies protecting investors and recent initiatives to protect investors and improve securities market regulations will build student competencies in this area.

G. State Government Policies

The structure of insurance regulation, state probate, property title, and healthcare directive laws for various states, including issues surrounding state laws versus federal laws, will be investigated. Students will be well versed in domestic policy issues impacting their individual finances, and will be knowledgeable how future policy changes would impact them as individual citizens. Students will

be taught the financial skills necessary to manage their personal finances throughout their lifetime.

H. Financial Planning

Analyzing the process for making personal financial decisions is the goal of this module with emphasis on the following: develop personal financial goals in view of an individual's background and emotions related to money, debt, spending habits, risk taking, and so on; assess economic factors that influence financial planning; determine opportunity costs associated with personal financial decisions; identify strategies for achieving personal financial goals for different life situations; understand the financial aspects of marriage and divorce, including prenuptial agreements; understand basic time value of money (TVM) concepts used in personal finance, including present value and future value computations.

I. Consumer Purchasing

The expectation of completion of this module is that students will be able to assess the financial implications of consumer purchasing decisions; evaluate the alternatives in consumer purchasing decisions; implement strategies for effective purchasing and how to evaluate product pricing schemes; understand the economics of operating an automobile and how purchasing decisions (e.g., new versus used, buying versus leasing) impact the operating cost per mile; identify steps to take in resolving consumer problems; evaluate legal alternatives available to consumers; evaluate auto loan financing (e.g., 0 percent financing versus cash rebate) and the economics associated with prepaying for certain goods and services at a discount.

Career and Estate Planning

A. Career Planning

By describing the activities associated with career planning, students will learn to evaluate factors that influence employment opportunities; implement career search strategies; assess the financial and legal issues related to employment, including a financial assessment of benefits packages (i.e., insurance and retirement plans); analyze the techniques available for career growth and advancement; understand and evaluate pre-tax and after-tax employee benefits.

B. Housing

Evaluating housing and renting options is a serious decision affecting virtually all students and alumni. This module is meant to help them understand the process of buying and selling a house, including the credit approval process and costs associated with home ownership; evaluate mortgage options, interest rate differentials, and understand risks associated with various mortgage products; recognize when refinancing is appropriate and understand

the economics of refinancing.

C. Budgeting/Records/Financial Statements

The goal of this module is to facilitate students' development of personal financial statements and to understand how financial decisions impact net worth; create and implement a budget; calculate savings needed for achieving financial goals; understand the difference between fixed costs and variable costs and how they impact personal finances.

D. Insurance

By develop a risk-management plan using insurance, students better understand the implications of insurance coverage for homeowners and renters; identify important aspects of auto insurance and factors impacting premiums; understand various forms of health insurance, including coverage, exclusions, and procurement methods; explain the mechanics of disability and long-term care insurance and recommended levels of coverage; explain national issues surrounding healthcare and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid and how they impact individual decisions on healthcare; define life insurance and calculate life insurance requirements at various stages of the life cycle; distinguish among various insurance and annuity products and their costs and benefits.

E. Tax Planning

This module will help students to illuminate major aspects of individual income tax law, including recent fiscal policy changes as they impact the individual taxpayer; calculate taxable income and amounts due for federal taxes; identify tax planning opportunities and strategies, including tax rules related to investments; explain the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion and ethical issues surrounding taxes.

F. Investments

In order to establish an investment program and personal asset allocation model at various stages of the life cycle, students must understand historical returns on various investments and related risks associated with these investments (and investor protections provided by law, e.g., SEC regulations); distinguish among common stocks, preferred stocks, fixed-income securities, and more speculative investments, including features of each; calculate returns on various securities; understand the mechanics and the pros and cons of investing in mutual funds and ETFs, including an assessment of a prospectus and mutual fund performance; develop a basic understanding of how to reduce risk through portfolio allocations and know the appropriate mix of securities (e.g., equity versus fixed income) based on the age and needs of the investor. As elements of this module, students will be able to:

- i. Identify types of real estate investments and the benefits and risks associated with real estate and how these investments fit into a well-diversified portfolio (e.g., REITs). Gain exposure to other asset classes (e.g., commodities, options) and understand the benefits and risks associated with alternative investments. (Real Estate/Alternative Investments)
- ii. Understand the banking system and various financial products available to individuals; identify sources of credit, including credit cards, and the pros and cons of various types of financing; calculate interest using various methods used by the industry; understand credit ratings and how to improve one's credit scores; discuss problems associated with debt and how to resolve excessive debt problems; demonstrate a knowledge of bankruptcy law and the related pros and cons of filing bankruptcy. Understand major aspects of consumer protection laws (e.g., Dodd Frank). (Financial Services and Consumer Credit)
- iii. Develop a savings plan to provide for retirement; discuss various forms of retirement savings options, including IRAs, social security, and employer-sponsored plans (e.g., 401(k) plans); assess issues surrounding social security; identify methods available to save for a child's college education, including Section 529 plans; understand how to allocate portfolio investments between taxable, tax-deferred, and tax-free accounts. (Retirement Planning and College Savings)
- iv. Demonstrate a knowledge of federal estate and gift tax law, and discuss national fiscal issues associated with estate taxes; understand the importance of wills, minor children guardian designations, trusts, and living wills and how they fit into a personal financial plan; identify estate planning techniques, including the use of trusts. (Estate Planning)

Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of the QEP's focus on financial literacy, students will be able to:

1. Understand how to manage debt;
2. Recognize the impact of national and state government policies on personal financial decisions;
3. Articulate a path for career planning that incorporates knowledge of financial practices; and
4. Develop competence in managing financial decisions.

Implementation and Scope/Assessment Methods

Suggested activities with attendant assessment methods might include:

- A. Online financial literacy modules that can be delivered

with current online orientation activities. Success of these modules can be measured via pre- and post-testing immediately before and after delivery.

- B. A module specific to financial aid that would be required before students could confirm acceptance of financial aid. Students could then be asked whether and how this module impacted their decisions regarding financial aid.
- C. A module focusing on financial aid designed for parents of college students. A separate assessment could be done regarding the impact of this module on parents' choices and their influence on their children's choices.
- D. Workshops and information booths with information about private loans and credit cards. The information

booths would be held in conjunction with information fairs and would include vendors from credit card companies, banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions. Workshops could be held throughout the year.

- E. Faculty engagement in increasing financial literacy concepts in their classes. For example, Dr. Pavel Zemilansky is currently working with faculty members in the College of Engineering and Computer Science to integrate financial literacy concepts into a computer course. Possible other courses could include freshman English classes with the inclusion financial literacy topics or algebra classes with the incorporation concepts related to the time value of money.

~ *Reminder* ~

Faculty Textbook Orders

Spring 2015 Textbook Ordering Deadlines

- October 24, 2014: Bookstore incentive date (\$100 café credit for catering)
- November 7, 2014: Bookstore incentive date (\$50 café credit for catering)
- November 26, 2014: Final deadline
- April 29–May 5, 2015: Buy-back dates

Summer 2015 Textbook Ordering Deadlines

- N/A: Bookstore incentive date
- April 3, 2015: Final deadline
- August 3–7, 2015: Buy-back dates

Fall 2016 Textbook Ordering Deadlines

- April 17, 2015: Bookstore incentive date
- July 10, 2015: Final deadline
- December 9–15, 2015: Buy-back dates

Online Textbook Ordering

Online textbook ordering allows you to:

- Submit textbook orders 24/7
- Copy department or office managers on orders
- Find information on textbooks previously used for a course
- Search a textbook database for available books

For instructions on how to order textbooks online, visit https://secure.bncollege.com/docs/Textbook%20Request%20Info_2011.pdf.

Prevent Textbook Order Delays

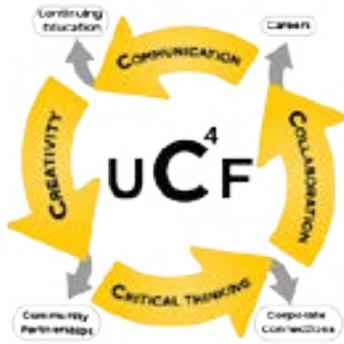
A number of recurring issues impede completion of textbook orders and the mandated posting of textbook requirements on the UCF Bookstore website. Things you can do to increase chances that textbooks will be ordered, posted, and available for students by the appropriate deadline include:

- Avoiding changes to textbook orders after initial adoption
- Notifying the UCF Bookstore when no textbook purchase is required
- Ordering custom books and bundles several weeks before the adoption deadline
- Selecting books for adjuncts who will be hired late
- Including complete contact information on order forms

Potential Topic #5: *uC⁴*: Creativity + Critical thinking + Communication + Collaboration → future Career

I. Background

uC⁴ will broaden and enhance current initiatives to ensure UCF's place as a leading institution for undergraduate education and community partnerships by increasing creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration through-



out the curriculum. These four Cs will be integrated into the curriculum through increased hands-on research, scholarship, and creative projects. This Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *uC⁴* will offer more meaningful, mentored classroom experiences led by our

outstanding faculty to better prepare the kinds of citizens and employees that will be needed to face 21st century challenges.

Recently, hiring managers were asked their perception of college graduate skills as they relate to the workforce (Bridge that Gap, 2013). This survey reported that graduates were very or completely prepared to: (1) incorporate information to develop strategic insights 46% of the time; (2) write to communicate ideas 49% of the time; and (3) give a presentation 43% of the time (Bridge that Gap, 2013). A similar survey found that employers want workers who can contribute to innovation in the workplace, with 93% of respondents agreeing that a candidate's ability to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve problems is more important than their major (AACU LEAP, 2013).

Additionally, the spring 2014 UCF Graduating Student Survey (GSS) reported that many undergraduates feel they lack excellent undergraduate experiences to prepare them for the critical thinking, communication, and problem solving skills that employers seek (see Table 1; UCF GSS, 2014). Overall, only about one-third of graduating seniors felt they had received excellent academic preparation on three of the four C's (creativity was not documented). While 84.7% of the spring 2014 GSS respondents are entering the workforce or continuing to work upon graduation, 79.1% also plan to continue their education beyond their bachelor's, confirming the importance of C⁴ skills for entrance into graduate programs as well as the workforce (UCF GSS, 2014).

The success of graduates is increasingly being tied to the funding model for Florida's public universities, and strategic emphasis on C⁴ will improve student success (Florida Board of Governors, 2014). An integrated undergraduate curriculum

infused with opportunities to think creatively and critically, collaborate with others, and communicate ideas will move our graduates beyond an outdated discipline-specific skills-based workforce model into becoming members of the new professional 'Creative Class' ready for graduate education and the workforce (Florida, 2002).

Not only does this *uC⁴* proposal strongly support President Hitt's strategic goal of offering the best undergraduate education available in Florida, it directly relates to the goal of increasing retention, as noted in his 2014 "Welcome back to UCF" address (UCF Office of the President, 2014). A burgeoning body of research indicates that one way to accomplish increased retention is by engaging students in *uC⁴* related activities early in their academic careers (Nagda et al., 1998; Bauer & Bennett, 2003; Foertsch et al, 2000; Craney et al, 2011). The literature also supports this proposal's premise that students involved with research and inquiry leads to gains in C⁴ skills (e.g., Lopatto, 2007; Kardash, 2000; Bauer & Bennett, 2003; Hunter et al., 2006; Seymour et al, 2003). In sum, research suggests that *uC⁴* will make our students more likely to graduate in a timely manner and become effective contributors to our communities and industries.

UCF enjoys a history of sustained initiatives that promote and support co-curricular research and creative projects with faculty mentors. Examples include our 25-year old Honors in the Major program, as well as our 12-year old Research and Mentoring Program and Showcase for Undergraduate Research Excellence. Currently, between 1600 and 2000 students are documented as being involved each year in out-of-class research and creative work with UCF faculty, through structured programming, research credits, and paid positions. These existing faculty-mentored research and creative experiences promote the C⁴ skills and increase student success. *uC⁴* proposes increasing student involvement in research and creative experiences by providing faculty with resources to enrich student's classroom experiences. Our proposal promotes scaffolding research and creative experiences, focused on the C⁴ skills, into undergraduate courses through faculty incentives and formal student development. *uC⁴* is a university-wide program that would increase undergraduate participation in research and creative activity by at least 100%.

An important and exiting by-product of the proposal would be the increase of student interface with *external* industry and *community* partners. And, with the development of our new downtown campus, meaningful classroom research and creative activity will be more easily cultivated through community-based activity. Therefore, *uC⁴* students and faculty will be encouraged to bring *external* challenges into the classroom, involving not just local industry, but also community agencies and government leaders.

Students who participate in *uC⁴f* will become more involved in hands-on research and creative projects in the classroom which will enable them to:

- Tackle problems creatively, finding multiple possible solutions, imagine novel solutions, or create new products or experiences.
- Think critically by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating existing disciplinary or area knowledge.
- Collaborate effectively with peers, faculty, and external partners to produce projects or products.
- Communicate knowledge to peers and the community orally and in writing.

II. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

Goals and Objectives

Through this QEP, students will learn content knowledge through research and creative experiences while increasing their ability to solve problems, synthesize information, draw appropriate conclusions, work as a team, and communicate ideas effectively. This QEP will support faculty to leverage content knowledge into transferable and marketable skills. The specific objectives and goals of *uC⁴f*:

1. *Students*. UCF Students will participate in research and creative projects through *uC⁴f* to develop marketable skills for graduate success.
 - a. *Involvement*. Students will see increased opportunities to participate in mentored research and creative experiences in their **classrooms** and within the community.
 - i. Increase student participation in curricular and co-curricular research and creative learning activities.
 - ii. Increase student participation in university-wide and external professional development, public presentations of projects, and documented involvement with **community** partners.
 - b. *Student Learning*. Increased involvement will lead to documented student learning in C⁴ areas of emphasis. Specifically, students will be stronger in:
 - i. **Creativity** by exploring alternatives and proposing multiple solutions to disciplinary research questions and community problems.
 - ii. **Critical Thinking** by reviewing existing disciplinary knowledge, approaches, or methods; posing appropriate questions that explore gaps in existing knowledge; and synthesizing disparate concepts, approaches, or methods to create new knowledge or products.
 - iii. **Collaboration** by working together in teams, within and between disciplines, communities, or industries, to create new knowledge or products.

iv. **Communication** by presenting digital, oral, or written results of their problem solving, knowledge creation, or product development activities to diverse audiences.

2. *Faculty and institutional change*. UCF faculty will be provided resources, “peer coaches,” training, and collaboration opportunities to enhance current courses or create new courses to strengthen C⁴ areas. UCF as a whole will become more integrated in working to strengthen curricula and co-curricular student opportunities.
3. *Partners*. Employers, community partners, and graduate program directors will be invited to work with faculty in teams to target C⁴ areas through their course curriculum design. Additionally, community partners will mentor students and provide experiences for hands-on projects. Community partners will be especially relevant for courses hosted at the new downtown campus.

Outcomes and Measures

A mixed-mode approach of qualitative and quantitative assessment strategies will be used in collaboration with Operational Excellence and Assessment Support (OEAS) and Institutional Knowledge Management (IKM).

1. Measures of STUDENT Improvement

a. Involvement

- i. Courses with hands-on experiences will be designated as *uC⁴f* through this QEP and the number of students participating in these courses will be tracked through IKM. This work should increase the number of students involved in hands-on research and creative experiences by over 100%.
- ii. The number of students participating in on-campus research and creative presentations and showcases will be tracked in collaboration with OEAS. Students in *uC⁴f* courses are predicted to have more professional experiences than non-*uC⁴f* course students.
- iii. Student involvement in *uC⁴f* activities and perceived learning gains (see below) will be tracked through current and additional questions on the Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in collaboration with OEAS. For example, *uC⁴f* will look for student perception gains of reporting ‘excellent’ in the GSS C⁴ questions (see above).

b. Student Learning

- i. **Creativity** will be measured on a statistically significant selection of students using the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking or other appropriate standardized measure of creative thinking given as a pre- & post-test in *uC⁴f* courses.

- ii. **Critical Thinking** will be measured through the number of papers, presentations, showcases or knowledge products produced by students in *uC⁴f* courses. These will be tracked through a review of *uC⁴f* course syllabi for assignments that require critical thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and counting the number of students receiving an A or B grade in *uC⁴f* courses. Common rubrics will be embedded within courses. Specific courses will be offered the opportunity to use the Critical Thinking Assessment Test.
- iii. **Collaboration** will be measured through a review of *uC⁴f* course syllabi. Common rubrics will be embedded within courses.
- iv. **Communication** experiences will be measured through the number of papers, presentations, showcases or public presentations by students in *uC⁴f* courses. This will be tracked through syllabus review and common rubrics embedded within courses.
2. Measures of FACULTY Involvement and INSTITUTIONAL Change. Faculty will serve as a link between course material and student learning. Their involvement will be measured through participation in *uC⁴f* training programs, number of faculty offering *uC⁴f* courses, and number of conference, professional, or workshop presentations given by faculty at the UCF conference and off-campus. Degree programs will be more involved with C⁴ initiatives documented through Institutional Effectiveness plans, students involved in each program will be tracked through IKM, and courses designated as C⁴.
3. Measures of PARTNERSHIP. Partnerships with external community, professional, and graduate schools will be measured through *uC⁴f* course syllabi, faculty surveys, community surveys using standard rubrics to evaluate these artifacts. Integration will be reviewed through projects completed and presented at curricula showcases.

III. Projects, Implementation, and Scope

Scaffolded Coursework

uC⁴f will provide the curricular and experiential framework from which UCF students can respectively develop marketable skillsets for employment and/or graduate careers, cultivate more effective teaching strategies and forge lasting, collaborative relationships. Through *uC⁴f* a course integration model will be created to bring C⁴ into the curricula (modeled after UCF service-learning) through hands-on research, scholarship, and creative projects. Courses will be scaffolded to three levels (adapted from Chamely-Wiik et al. 2014): (1) *Exposure*, (2) *Skill-Building and Professional Development*, and (3) *Intensive and Experiential Inquiry*.

- (1) *Exposure*. Exposure courses will be designed to expose students to the process of research and scholarship early in their curricular sequence. These courses will lay the foundations of our proposed scaffolding method of integrating research and creative processes into UCF curricula. Examples of activities that could be embedded in lower-level courses include: using literature (e.g., literature review); profiling and interviewing researchers, professionals, or master artists; learning tenets of ethics; or attending seminars, performances, or exhibitions.
- (2) *Research Skill-Building and Professional Development*. Skill-building courses will be designed to put initial C⁴ skills into practice. Faculty will embed the following activities into these mid- to upper-level courses: developing research questions or community problems, writing a proposal, learning how to use equipment, collecting data, analyzing results, writing a business plan, and/or creating products. These specific topics will grant the students opportunities to apply *Exposure Course* information and activities in extended classroom experiences.
- (3) *Intensive and Experiential Inquiry*. Intensive and experiential courses will be designed so that students can demonstrate research and creative abilities for projects and course assignments learned in #1 and #2. Through capstone courses, students will develop a final project (e.g., poster, product including creative activity, document, presentation) and present their work. Collaboration with internal or external partners will be emphasized. These advanced-level intensive and experiential courses can be either disciplinary or inter-disciplinary, both in which the student will directly participate in knowledge and product creation.

Projects and Implementation: UCF Student, Faculty, and Community Development

Undergraduate Student Development. Student classroom experiences will shift from exam-focused to knowledge and product creation-focused. These courses will be designed to explore and synthesize current issues, theories, information gaps, and models to create knowledge while expanding students' abilities to critically think, analyze, apply information, create products, and disseminate results. Through this work students will build skills and, subsequently, their resumes and portfolios.

- **Research-Center Course Designation**. *uC⁴f* courses will be officially designated, noted on transcripts, and a **C⁴ Certificate** will be developed. Students may apply for a C⁴ certificate if they have taken 12 credits in *uC⁴f* designated courses, independent research credits, and/or Honors in the Major thesis credits (note: 60% of HIM students are transfer).

- Classroom Showcase. C⁴ courses will participate in a new university-wide, “Showcase of Classroom Scholarship: Celebrating Student Achievements.” Student research projects, creative projects, business plans, products, etc. will be invited to participate.
- Travel Funds. Funds will be available for professional development opportunities related to student C⁴ courses.
- Undergraduate Research Commons. UCF will subscribe to this open-access database that allows students to upload and archive multi-media, creative work, posters, written manuscripts, etc. for reference outside the university, during job interviews, scholarship opportunities, or graduate school applications (<http://undergraduatecommons.com>).
- Transfer Student Success. Through pre-research preparation (e.g., Research Academy) transfer students will be provided an easy transition and quick integration into the C⁴ track and UCF culture.
- Course Innovation Funds. Three levels of grant funding will be offered: faculty, departments, and colleges. These grants will be for current course improvement or new course development. Grant funds may include: (1) summer salary for faculty course development, (2) enhancement funds for the courses, including supplies, guest speakers, or field trip travel for hands-on experiences, or (3) incentive funds for graduate student “Peer Coaches” who would be volunteers in the courses to help with research projects, writing, statistics etc. Peer Coaches will receive professional development funding to work with instructors (adapted Pukilla et. al., 2013).
- FCTL Conference Tracks. Winter and summer conference for faculty working on uC⁴f courses.
- C⁴ Faculty Fellows. Projects related to uC⁴f including, expanding the *What IF?* Modules (i.e., elevator talks, poster presentations, teamwork), finding community partners and collaborators, or QEP assessment.
- Conference Travel Funds. Faculty funding to disseminate the curriculum developed through uC⁴f.
- Faculty Awards and Recognition. For exceptional work integrating C⁴ into their classroom.
- Southeastern Conference on Engaging Students in Research, Scholarship, and Creativity. Expansion of the current UCF sponsored *Florida Statewide Symposium: Engagement in Undergraduate Research*. The Symposium will expand to invite the entire southeast with a new specialized curricular track.

Graduate Student Development. Graduate students will be recognized for their experience and ability to connect with undergraduates. As such, they will serve as “Peer Coaches” within the uC⁴f courses. Peer Coaches will especially support large classes with C⁴ integration. Additionally, they will serve as judges of undergraduate student work for the Classroom Showcase.

Faculty Development. Faculty will be valued for providing these experiences for students, bringing their expertise into the classroom. Work with the uC⁴f will enhance promotion files and opportunities for current and new awards.

Special Thanks to the QEP Planning & Development Committee

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Weston Bayes, Student Government Association

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Jeff Jones, Regional Campuses

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Kerry Welch, Student Development and Enrollment Services

Amy Zeh, Office of Experiential Learning

Potential Topic #6: UCF: (Y)our (E)ssential (S)kills to Career Readiness!

The University of Central Florida has the unique capability to serve as a national model for career-readiness. We will harness our power in leadership training, simulation, avatar-based learning, and partnerships to increase the career-readiness of our students. This QEP will capitalize on these rich and diverse resources to build career success within the curriculum and in co-curricular community activities.

Data from numerous national sources clearly indicate that graduating students lack specific job, life, and career skills. In a poll taken by Northeastern University (2013), the public expressed concern about graduates' preparedness for the workforce. Business leaders indicate the need for graduates to be broadly educated beyond learned content to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, and work well in teams (Berrett, 2013; Supiano, 2013; Tugend, 2013). In a recent student survey, Zogby Analytics report that students no longer want to complete majors that are not tied directly to job-related skills (2014). Our QEP will directly address these issues and needs.

Four pillars identified as essential to the success and career readiness of all UCF graduates are: 1) communication, 2) self-management, 3) critical thinking, and 4) teamwork (see Figure 1). These skills may not necessarily be secured from traditional coursework. The UCF YES! QEP will provide a university-wide framework that will enable students to gain professional, social, and life skills essential for career readiness beyond graduation. To ensure the success of this framework, the QEP will also incorporate an assessment plan reflective of the student's discipline.



Vision

The framework within the proposed UCF YES! QEP uses experienced-based methods to provide students with a set of essential skills that are not typically acquired through traditional teaching methods. The students will access an individual activity portal for tracking progress towards the achievement of goals. UCF students will be provided opportunities within the classroom and through co-curricular activities to develop the

set of YES! skills. Our vision is to outfit students with core skills that will ensure their employability, career readiness, and success in post-UCF endeavors.

Congruence with the university's mission and plan

Our objectives are aligned with the university's mission of providing the best undergraduate education in the state of Florida and becoming America's leading partnership university™.

Student learning outcomes and assessment methods

Goals and objectives

Through the UCF undergraduate experience, growth in or mastery of skills will occur through a variety of courses and/or in capstone experiences that capitalize on existing UCF resources (volunteer experiences, externships, club activities, internships, team projects and simulations, situational judgment tests, written and oral examinations, self-reporting). UCF resources and activities will be supplemented by the provision of new training and development materials as needed to meet students' career readiness skills. Specific products will include: 1. pre-course modules, 2. self-management modules, 3. capstone activities and projects, and 4. simulations (see Appendix A). Baseline assessments will be taken and repeated over the course of the UCF program to show improvement and sustainment over time.

To measure and assess learning outcomes, we propose the use of milestone exercises during a student's academic career to demonstrate mastery of the four essential pillars (communication, self-management, critical thinking, and teamwork). We will leverage curricular and co-curricular opportunities to reach the milestones that are discussed in more detail below.

Examples of student learning outcomes

Communication – Communication skills are rooted in identifying and using interpersonal skills that serve to achieve individual goals (Wiemann, 1977; Salas et al., 2008). This skill set entails listening and then clearly and effectively delivering messages to ensure that messages are correctly interpreted (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). Written communication requires yet another set of sub-skills (e.g., active voice; clear, concise writing) that we will elucidate, develop, and assess. Essentially, students should be able to formulate clear thoughts, convey those thoughts to others, clearly process responses, and make decisions about how to proceed based on those interactions.

Self-management – Self-management refers to the ability to manage personal abilities, values, and weaknesses and relationships, time, financials, and life goals. Frayne and Geringer (1994) developed a framework for self-management that

includes self-assessment, goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, written contracts, and maintenance or relapse prevention. Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between employability and a well-developed concept of goals based on one's own skill set and the ability to self-manage (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood et al., 2003). Furthermore, self-management has been associated with higher career success (Bridgstock, 2009; De Vos & Soens, 2008). Monitoring one's behaviors to present one's self in the most positive light possible is important in professional contexts (e.g., professionalism, appropriate behaviors in sensitive professional contexts).

Critical thinking – Critical thinking is the use of logic to engage in effective problem solving and decision making and to foster adaptability, thus enabling students to overcome obstacles and make sound decisions (Halpern, 1996). Professional environments are often riddled with choices that require critical thinking (hire/fire decisions; decisions regarding public perception of a company, product, or service; conflict resolution strategies). As such, critical thinking is a basic, but crucial, component for success.

Teamwork – Teamwork is a set of interrelated actions, thoughts, and feelings required for a group to function effectively as a collective unit (Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005). Individuals displaying high teamwork capabilities will exhibit adaptability, awareness, leadership capabilities, interpersonal skills, coordination, effective communication, and high-quality decision-making abilities (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995; Salas, Burke, & Cannon-Bowers, 2000). Given the increased prevalence of teams in organizations, this competency is generally required for effective performance on the job (LePine, Hanson, Borman, & Motowidlo, 2000).

Outcomes and measures (assessment tools and instruments, schedule to be followed)

The pillars will be assessed prior to students beginning their coursework at UCF, during their undergraduate tenure, and through tracking after graduation by the QEP office or other appropriate university units (see Appendix A). For each pillar we will provide a set of specifications that includes principles, guidelines, and advice for developing and evaluating the essential skill. To ensure that skill attainment is tracked over time, we will follow a before-during-after framework for assessment. The programmatic aspects of the QEP can be assessed through existing processes and expansion of UCF-developed tools. This QEP can easily be incorporated within UCF's three components of the Academic Learning Compacts: communication, critical thinking, and discipline-specific knowledge and skills. By providing tools and rubrics, faculty members will be able to incorporate the QEP into the fabric of each academic program. While ambitious, we believe that UCF is well equipped to achieve these goals.

In order to evaluate long-term career success and employability, several measures can be used. Many UCF students engage in internships and experiential learning opportunities during their undergraduate careers. Such experiences may include volunteer activity, externships, undergraduate research, club activities, and working with different organizations. The extent to which students are involved in these various areas may constitute an additional measure of success. We have the opportunity to catalog and document activities through our KnightConnect system that is managed by the Office of Student Involvement. We have courses in leadership that provide credit, supervision, and learning assessment for appropriate experiential activities. Students can provide self-report perceptions on an employability scale (Rothwell, Herbert, & Rothwell, 2008). They can also indicate success in entering and/or completing graduate programs. The percentage of students employed or entering graduate school should increase following full implementation of the program.

This existing infrastructure can be leveraged to obtain performance ratings and assessments of essential pillars of career readiness from supervisors during these various learning opportunities, including a host of experiences such as volunteer activity, internship involvement, club activity, and others. As many of these opportunities are provided by local organizations that employ UCF graduates, their feedback and assessments are also a valuable resource for gauging the success of the QEP's aims. Finally, in cases where students are not continuing with further education, relevant data on career success can be collected, such as salary and time-on-market for new alumni.

In addition to the overarching assessments, each individual pillar will be individually assessed. These assessments will occur in a number of ways depending upon a variety of variables within each discipline. For example:

- To capture improvement in communication, simulation activities will be available to embed within the curricular programs to establish student progress.
- To assess improvement in self-management skills students will be asked (though not required) to complete a self-managed project (e.g., volunteer effort) that requires the enactment of the essential sub-skills that characterize this pillar.
- To measure critical thinking skills any number of instruments can be used, including the California Critical Thinking Inventory (Facione, Facione, & Giancarlo, 2001), the Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (Watson, 1980), and the Minnesota Test of Critical Thinking (Edman, Bart, Robey, & Silverman, 2000).
- To evaluate teamwork skills a combination of peer review, professor reviews, self-report, and simulation technology can be used.

Implementation and Scope

Possible activities/projects

The QEP will capitalize on rich and diverse resources at UCF to build career success within the curriculum and in co-curricular community activities. Specifically, we aim to leverage existing course infrastructure to develop these skills, supplementing this base with appropriate training modules. UCF resources that will be leveraged for this QEP include the following in leadership training (Career Services, LEAD Scholars, Eli2), simulation (CATME Teamwork Training), avatar-based learning (TeachLivE), and partnerships (the Office of Student Involvement, the Writing Center, Experiential Learning) to increase the career-readiness of UCF undergraduates. Most students will also participate in a cornerstone or capstone course that will synthesize all of the pillars.

Faculty development will be provided through existing venues of summer and winter workshops. Several rubrics (e.g., AACU: Value Development Rubric Project) are available to serve as a starting point for the development of a framework that focuses on employability skills. We will develop a standardized rubric of skills for the targeted areas of communication (oral, written, listening), self-management, critical thinking, and teamwork that students and faculty members can customize to their academic experiences. Furthermore, recent research conducted by OSI suggests that students who are involved in student organizations have much higher self-efficacy when it comes to developing and demonstrating the four pillars of career readiness. OSI already has infrastructure in place (KnightQuest) to provide involvement consultation that assists students in setting goals and choosing appropriate activities to advance their career plans. Moreover, the results of the university's annual employer survey can be leveraged to shape coursework within student activities.

Pre-course modules: At the beginning of their first year, students could complete a non-credit module introducing them to the four essential pillars that will be taught throughout their time at UCF. This module will be included in the standardized requirements for freshman and transfer students (e.g., AlcoholEdu). (See Appendix A for this and the following modules.)

Self-management modules: To ensure that students are learning and applying the four pillars across their undergraduate careers and to ensure that their academic and extracurricular experiences are aligned with long-term goals, we suggest the development of a self-management learning module for students to complete each year. In this module, students will be introduced to and revisit what self-management entails and update their progress toward goal achievements of all four pillars through a personalized activity update portal; this module will track progress in various domains, allowing students to record their involvement with appropriate UCF activities. In doing so, students would both learn and be reminded of the

importance of this skill set.

Capstone activities and projects: Appropriate synthesis and evaluation of the four essential pillars for career success can best be done through capstone projects or activities. These would be built on earlier foundational course activities that stress critical thinking skills and are developed individually by degree programs using vehicles such as presentations or papers. Projects (both written and oral) assigned on an individual level ensure that students are not only thinking critically, but also are able to convey ideas on their own.

Capstone activities and projects will be developed that use team projects in which students apply developed critical thinking and communication skills with others in collaborative assignments (at a professor's discretion). While some courses already require team exercises, others will have the opportunity to build on university guidance and incorporate teamwork into their curricula. Faculty members will be engaged in developing discipline-specific rubrics for grading to aid in performance assessment standardization across fields, as well as in common appraisal tools for providing feedback to students on their skill development.

Simulations: Finally, platforms such as TeachLivE™ will be available for integration into capstone courses and/or will be made available to students seeking further development of their employability skills. A student will have to demonstrate each of the four identified essential skills (self-monitoring, communication, teamwork, critical thinking) to perform well and succeed in the simulation.

~ Announcement ~

Spring 2015 Course Innovation Project

Inclusive Course Design and Teaching Strategies

Meeting Times: January 27, February 24, March 24, and April 21 2015, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Grant: \$300 for completion of workshops and deliverables

Proposals Due: January 21, 2015

This series of workshops is a collaboration among the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Student Disability Services, and the Center for Distributed Learning and is intended to further the conversation at UCF on accessible and inclusive course design and teaching strategies. Participants will identify components of their course structure and teaching that can be modified to improve accessibility and learning for all students. In addition to revising course elements, each participant will create a short video for other faculty members that encourages and promotes this kind of thinking in some way. Please send questions to Adam.Meyer@ucf.edu.

Timeline for 2016 Reaffirmation of Accreditation Process

Date	Activity
Summer 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCF representatives attend reaffirmation orientation in Atlanta • Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning and Development Committee is established and identifies potential QEP topics
Fall 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of the Compliance Certification Report (CCR) is completed • Final QEP topic is selected
Spring 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second draft of the CCR is completed • QEP Implementation Committee is established to refine the plan, including student learning outcomes, timeline for implementation, and assessment of impact
Summer 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCR is finalized • QEP is further developed and pilot projects begin
September 10, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCR is due to SACSCOC
November 3–6, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-site peer review of CCR is conducted
Late November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University receives results of off-site review
December 2015–February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University prepares optional Focused Report in response to any off-site review findings • Final edits made to QEP
March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused Report and QEP are due to SACSCOC for on-site peer review
April 26–28, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site peer review is conducted
December 2–6, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACSCOC Board of Trustees reviews reports and issues reaffirmation decision

QEP Listening Groups

We invite your participation in one of the following upcoming listening groups. Listening groups have been an integral part of the QEP selection process. In the groups, various UCF stakeholders provide feedback to the QEP Planning & Development Committee on the potential topics. Attendees are encouraged to read the concept papers and then participate in a facilitated discussion. In addition to the groups listed below, there have also been listening groups for employers of UCF graduates and for UCF alumni. We value the responses from our many constituencies and look forward to receiving additional information from the remaining listening groups.

Students			
Tuesday	October 14	10:00 am to 12:00 p.m.	STUN 220 (Sand Key)
Wednesday	October 15	1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	STUN 220
Monday	October 27	2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	STUN 220
Faculty & Staff			
Monday	October 20	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	CB1 205
Thursday	October 23	9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	CB1 205
Friday	October 24	10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	LIB 157
Thursday	October 30	9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	CB1 205
Electronic Town Hall			
Monday	October 27	10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Adobe Connect
Alumni			
Thursday	October 16	9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Fairwinds Alumni Center

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>>. Please send your submissions to fctl@ucf.edu.



Check us out online!
www.fctl.ucf.edu



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