

Converse College

Quality Enhancement Plan: Communication Fluency Executive Summary

The Converse College QEP focuses on the concept of “Communication Fluency” for students in the four-year bachelor’s level curricula of the institution. Because we believe that effective writing and speaking are essential goals of a liberal arts education, we determined those places within the general education program, major programs, and co-curricular activities where those skills could be clearly integrated in order to enhance student learning. We believe such learning outcomes are totally consistent with the mission of the college and would help us produce graduates who are better able to exhibit the skills of writing and speaking—whether in the world of work, academia, or everyday living.

More specifically, we developed two primary goals, each with relevant learning objectives:

Goal 1: Articulate well-developed and informed thoughts in organized and clear writing

Goal 2: Demonstrate effective oral communication through reasoned dialogue and presentation

The college is committed to developing both curricular and non-curricular means for achieving these goals and for tracking progress by way of effective assessments.

The QEP Committee is an on-going institutional mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the QEP in as many academic and student life activities as possible. This will include specific writing and speaking activities in general education courses, such as the required Ideas and Culture six-credit course for freshmen, as well as in specific upper-division courses and in the culminating capstone course. Clarity of expression through writing and speaking will be a fundamental component of every course and rests on the rationale that such a focus on these skills moves students toward improvement in their learning. Technology skills are also required as one means of improving communication outcomes. In addition to the academic area, such student life activities as community service projects, internships, interaction with guest lecturers, travel study, student government projects, student publications, and leadership activities provide additional areas where communication fluency is reinforced and applied.

As students progress through their four-year curriculum, their learning will be assessed by a variety of standard rubrics and other assessment instruments. We are using a student portfolio approach by way of LiveText, an electronic software system already used by some departments in the college. This QEP portfolio will permit the collection of communication fluency artifacts over the entire four-year undergraduate experience. These strategies will allow us to align assessment measures with each of the objectives of the QEP so that we can determine with confidence how effective our QEP strategies have been, over time, in promoting communication fluency across the curriculum.

Assessment data will be evaluated by our Institutional Research Director in cooperation with various college offices, committees, and individual faculty and staff involved in this process. The college has developed an extensive budget of \$141,000 to support the full implementation of the QEP over a five-year period.

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