

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In conjunction with *The Furman Advantage*, the university's new strategic vision that in the words of President Elizabeth Davis "guarantees every student an unparalleled education that combines classroom learning with real-world experiences and self-discovery," Furman's Quality Enhancement Plan will increase the quantity and quality of university-sponsored undergraduate research, study away, and internships.

Study away, internships, and undergraduate research entail types of experiences that have been called *high-impact* by George Kuh and others. Our own research shows that Furman seniors and graduates describe these three experiences as particularly impactful. In the research on high-impact practices, longitudinal studies associate these experiences with significant learning gains for participating students. Furman's QEP aims to similarly boost student integrative learning as demonstrated through student reflections on these engaged learning experiences.

Of the 2016 graduates who provide the benchmark for the QEP, 74% had at least one such experience through university-sponsored programs. To reach the goals of *The Furman Advantage* strategic vision, Furman plans to increase this rate to 90% by 2022 as a student success measure. This increase in engaged learning experiences should link to another student success goal - to decrease the number of students who are still seeking jobs at graduation. Currently, 23% of seniors report at graduation that they are still seeking employment or further education. The goal is to reduce that percentage to 10% through the delivery of more and higher quality engaged learning experiences. Finally, we plan to ensure the increase of the quality of study away, internships, and undergraduate research in two ways. First, we focus on the AAC&U LEAP learning outcome of integrative learning, which is naturally associated with engaged learning, and if the quality of experiences increase over time, so should student demonstrations of integrative learning. Second, we inventory and audit experiences to ensure that they have the qualities of high-impact engaged learning experiences.

To achieve these goals, the university has formed the Center for Engaged Learning, led by the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning, a newly created position. This office provides leadership for campus-wide efforts to reduce barriers to participation and provide programming before and after experiences to increase their impact. Budgets for each of these experiences have been enlarged to create more engaged learning opportunities, and the Center coordinates the administration of these in order to optimize the funds available. The Associate Provost for Engaged Learning works with advisors and supervisors of engaged learning experiences, as well as special populations of students, such as student-athletes, to increase awareness about engaged learning opportunities and their benefits.

QEP Title: Engaged Learning at Furman: Ensuring Access, Quality, and Impact
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