

QEP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Thinking Critically About Leadership

Institution: Marion Military Institute

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“Thinking Critically about Leadership,” the Quality Enhancement Plan of Marion Military Institute (MMI), focuses on developing superior critical thinking skills around a specific topic: leadership. The reasons behind this choice are cultural and institutional. Culturally, the decline in public confidence of our national leaders, as well as the decreasing numbers of citizens who aspire to be leaders—recognized in their fields, signified by their talent, noteworthy for improving their community and the nation—underscores the need for increased attention to leadership as a significant part of the educational experience of young adults. Institutionally, the importance of the role of leadership in a military junior college cannot be overestimated; development of leadership skills is integral to the MMI experience, mandated by its mission and its values. Because of the close connection between the institution and this need, MMI is able to leverage many key existing components of the College to support a successful Quality Enhancement Plan emphasizing the development of leadership skills.

At the same time, one of the most important benefits that a college education affords students is the ability to think critically. While many instructors and mentors claim to use critical thinking in their pedagogies, many also seem unable to make students realize how to use it effectively in their classrooms and in their lives. “Thinking Critically about Leadership” intends to clarify that important process by providing exciting learning opportunities for examining the concept of leadership through a co-curricular variety of academic and non-academic pathways, including seminars and applied enrichment activities. These activities are designed to leverage the resources of the College—human and institutional—to prepare first-year participants for a meaningful experience as they adjust to life at a military junior college, while also giving them the “soft” skills to prepare them for success in their subsequent years of higher education, career achievement, and life-long learning.

The administration, faculty and staff of MMI are confident that “Thinking Critically about Leadership” will achieve these goals and enhance the College’s two-year academic program by implementing best practices that increase student participation in communities of inquiry and in rationales for good leadership. As a result of their participation in the QEP, students will improve their ability to think critically, improve their capacity for and understanding of superior leadership, while growing as responsible students and citizens.