

WRITE TO EXCELLENCE
McNeese State University

Executive Summary

McNeese State University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Write to Excellence*, is designed to ensure that all students who matriculate in the University receive the foundation for writing effectively and appropriately as required in the discipline. Students' entry-level writing skills will be enriched through the Freshman Foundations course (FFND 101) developed to enculturate students to the value of writing, and through writing-enriched courses that will comprise a substantial portion of students' general education curriculum.

The immediate goal of the QEP is to ensure that students making up the 2008 Freshman Cohort will demonstrate significant writing improvement over the first two years of their academic careers. The specific benefits of enhanced writing skills will be important to students as they continue in their educational processes through graduation, enter and perform in the work place, and take their places in leadership positions in civic and professional communities. The plan is derived from the University mission, its goals, and its core values. The QEP statement of intent is as follows:

After completing core curriculum and course requirements, students will have the foundation to write effectively and appropriately as required by their disciplines.

The *Write to Excellence* concept emerged as the consensus of a faculty focus group that considered feedback from students, faculty, and community leaders as to what educational initiative would improve student learning and improve McNeese as an institution. After careful and lengthy deliberation, focus group members determined that improving student writing would produce enhanced learning outcomes for students and support the mission of the University.

In its initial phase, *Write to Excellence* calls for the enculturation of the initiative in Freshman Foundations courses and increased writing in required general education courses. Throughout their freshman and sophomore courses, students will receive direct instruction and practice in content-based courses where writing may not have traditionally been incorporated. Selected faculty will work collaboratively across disciplines to develop assignments that reinforce writing skills developed in the freshman English composition courses. Courses in which writing is identified as a critical learning outcome will be identified as "writing-enriched" courses. In these courses, content-based writing assignments will constitute at least twenty percent of the final course grade.

An essential support component of the initiative is to establish a campus writing center to serve all disciplines. The center will help meet the increased need for assistance and writing support as students enroll in writing-enriched courses. Another important function of the center will be to assist faculty in developing writing-enriched courses and providing grading and writing assessment workshops and training for faculty. Both the Freshman Foundations 101 course and the Write to Excellence Center are critical components of the new culture of writing on the McNeese campus.

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