

## **iREAD**

### Increasing Reading and Engagement for Academic Development

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The Quality Enhancement Plan, **iREAD**, “Increasing Reading and Engagement for Academic Development,” supports the institutional mission to provide “programs and services designed to respond to the needs and aspirations of individuals, families, organizations and communities.” Further, the mission commits the University to “serving a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population.” Raising expectations and educating first generation college students for meaningful societal participation require dedication to student success. A reconditioning of the environment that leads to measurable increases in Academic Development is the overarching goal for the University. Academic Development is the maturation of skills, habits and academic self-concept that forms the foundation for success in college learning and preparation for a career and for lifelong learning.

The **iREAD** program will ground theme-based readings in the living learning communities utilizing academic coaching teams. Two Principles of Effective Learning Courses (PELC’s) that will be structured as lecture/lab courses, utilizing best practices in applying technology to building skills, habits and the academic self-concept. The Principles of Effective Learning Courses (PELC’s) are specifically designed to introduce students to high impact skills and diverse learning styles and behaviors.

Academic coaches selected from among faculty, librarians, academic advisors, student affairs professionals, and student peer leaders will undergo extensive training and function in communities of practice. They will be responsible for formulating and indentifying activities in academic and academic support areas with potential to enhance the theme-based common reading experiences. Technology will be infused into the program to support this process.

Analyses of assessment data from both direct and indirect measures used over the past decade reveals that the changes and improvements have yielded positive gains in retention of first-year students, licensure rates for first-time takers of examinations in various areas such as nursing and educator preparation, undergraduate participation in service learning, undergraduate participation in research, and active participation in leadership on and off campus. Even so, retention rates, academic probation and suspension rates, delays in academic major commitment, and six-year graduation rates are in need of improvement. In the ongoing strategic planning process, all stakeholders have reaffirmed their commitment to a greater focus on programs and processes supporting greater student learning.

The goal of **iREAD** is to increase reading and engagement for academic development. Undergirding **iREAD** is the hypothesis that academic success has the potency to build students’ immunity to derailment from persistence to graduation even in the face of personal barriers such as family issues, financial problems, relationship issues, et cetera. Specifically, student learning outcomes are as follow: (1) to increase academically related skills; (2) to increase academically related habits; and (3) to increase academic self concept.

A variety of nationally recognized assessment instruments will be used to assess student learning outcomes. Additionally course embedded and locally designed assessment instruments will be used to monitor achievement of the participating students. The data collected from these assessments will be used to inform changes in program implementation and in student learning. The senior administration fully supports the **iREAD** plan and has allocated the financial resources needed to employ leadership and assessment personnel; train the necessary faculty and staff; and purchase the reading, assessment and equipment needed.