

**Samford University**  
Birmingham, Alabama 35229

**The Scholars Initiative**  
Executive Summary

Samford University's Quality Enhancement Plan [QEP] was developed through an intensive discovery process that included an environmental scan, focus groups, call for proposals and feedback from students. The environmental scan and focus groups' discussions identified critical thinking, cultural awareness and personal calling as learning deficiencies to be addressed. Student comments compelled the SACS Leadership Team to acknowledge the weakness of the current Honors Program, and the lack of support for the university's most academically accomplished and engaged students. The leadership team determined that Samford's QEP will be known as "The Scholars Initiative," one that will address identified learning and programmatic deficiencies in the university.

Specifically, the Scholars Initiative will be devoted to the creation, implementation and assessment of three highly selective academic programs that will emphasize critical thinking, cultural awareness and personal calling:

- The Freshman Scholars Program
- The Howard Scholars Program
- The Professional Scholars Program

The objectives of the Scholars Initiative are:

- To enhance current academic programs
- To encourage students to think more critically and with more sensitivity about their culture and personal calling
- To provide students with the opportunity to engage in discipline-based research
- To identify, nurture and prepare students for prestigious scholarships and premier graduate programs

Rigorous teaching methods used to promote learning will include close reading, intensive writing, challenging cultural experiences and personal reflection. Teaching will be reinforced by faculty-supervised scholarly and research activities outside the classroom. Academic rigor will be balanced by faculty mentoring, ensuring that students will have the appropriate amount of challenge and support to mature intellectually.

The Scholars Initiative is based on sound theoretical underpinnings, and will encompass the cultivation of the mind and the cultivation of virtues. We posit that a learned person must combine complex thinking and cultural awareness with the diligence, patience, kindness and humility that go into the development of personal calling.

The program will be thoroughly assessed using standardized instrumentation as well as tools developed by Samford faculty and staff. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Assessment will play central roles in ensuring that assessments are completed and used to modify the Initiative each year.

For more information regarding the development or implementation of this QEP, contact:

Dr. Mark Bateman  
Associate Provost  
e-mail: [jmbatema@samford.edu](mailto:jmbatema@samford.edu)

Samford  
University



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800 Lakeshore Drive · Birmingham, Alabama U.S.A. 35229

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Telephone: (205) 726-2718

Fax: (205) 726-4053

[www.samford.edu](http://www.samford.edu)

January 24, 2008

Dr. Michael S. Johnson  
Associate Executive Director  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Johnson:

Re: Reaffirmation letter dated January 9, 2008

As requested in the above referenced letter from Dr. Wheelan, enclosed is a one-page executive summary of Samford University's Quality Enhancement Plan. This summary is due in the COC office on February 15, 2008.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

J. Bradley Creed  
Provost and Executive Vice President

Enclosure

