



The University of Georgia
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
January 2011

The University of Georgia Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is designed to transform student learning by providing all first-year students an academically challenging seminar during their first year of residence at the University of Georgia. These new “First-Year Odyssey Seminars” (FYOS) will engage all first-year students in the University’s academic culture.

Designing a QEP to transform student learning at a large research university presented a myriad of significant challenges. To meet these challenges, the University’s QEP Team of almost three dozen faculty, administrators, staff, students, and alumni took advantage of deep campus interest and engagement in proposing possible topics for our QEP. Through an inclusive, grass-roots process spanning three years, the Team examined the history of student learning at the University, reviewed literature and best practices, listened carefully to input from students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and debated the resulting ideas.

The resulting FYOS program has three overarching goals:

- Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics to engage them in the academic culture of the University
- Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions
- Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom to increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University

The program provides faculty with significant flexibility with respect to seminar content while ensuring that each seminar will:

- Be taught by faculty members
- Have a small enrollment, ideally a maximum of fifteen students
- Be one credit hour
- Have an academic focus, tied to a faculty member’s own scholarship
- Expose students to the University’s mission, including research, public service, and varied forms of instruction
- Require attendance at three campus events
- Include writing to document the intellectual dialogue and the student’s learning
- Be graded on an A-F scale

In addition, the plan encourages mentoring relationships and provides students with a gateway to critical intellectual programs and resources at the University, including undergraduate research, service-learning, study abroad, and the libraries.

The University is committed to funding the plan as outlined in the plan’s budget, continually assessing the plan, and revising it when needed to accomplish its goals.

The University decided that a faculty-taught, mandatory, academically challenging seminar directed at incoming first-year students during their first semester will improve student learning on campus. These new first-year seminars will promote meaningful academic dialogue between our first-year students and tenured and tenure-track faculty in a small class setting.

For more information, please contact
SACSCOC Liaison Jerome S. Legge at
706-425-3340 or jlegge@uga.edu, or access
the website at fyo.uga.edu.



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