

Undergraduate Writing in the Core Curriculum

Quality Enhancement Plan

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA



UNIVERSITY of 
West Georgia®



Undergraduate Writing in the Core Curriculum

Quality Enhancement Plan
University of West Georgia

February, 2014

Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... 3

- 1) History of the Institution..... 4
- 2) Mission and Comprehensive University Status 5
- 3) Review of SACS Principles Related to the QEP 9
- 4) Identifying Key Issues Emerging from Institutional Assessment 10
- 5) Focus on Student Learning Outcomes 21
- 6) Accomplishing the Mission of the Institution 24
- 7) The Context for the Quality Enhancement Plan 25
- 8) Institutional Capability to Initiate, Implement, and Complete the QEP 27
- 9) Identification of Goals, Assessments, and Implementation Plans 29
- 10) Works Cited..... 60

Appendices..... 61

- a) SACS Liaison Job Description 62
- b) QEP Director Job Description..... 64
- c) Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Job Description 65
- d) QEP Implementation Committee 67
- e) Assessment Tools..... 69

Executive Summary

The University of West Georgia's Quality Enhancement Plan focuses on improving undergraduate student writing in the core curriculum. This topic was selected following a search and selection process that included many topics that emerged from institutional assessment. Student exam scores, faculty survey responses, and comparisons to other institutions were all employed in defining and refining the topic for this plan. This selection process was an engaging and inclusive institutional effort.

As a result of this selection process, the student learning outcome for this QEP is: to improve students' ability to write in standard academic English.

The student population that will be impacted by this plan consists of University of West Georgia students enrolled in UWG core courses, defined as core areas A-E.

This learning outcome will be accomplished through four goals:

- 1) Integrate writing throughout the core curriculum;
- 2) Implement a system supporting academic units' efforts to increase online students' ability to write in standard academic English;
- 3) Increase faculty development in pedagogies of writing instruction; and
- 4) Improve support services to enhance student writing competence.

Ten specific action steps and modifications to support areas are outlined to achieve these goals. A timeline and budget are included. This document outlines the support that will be needed to implement this plan. In total the plan will cost \$2,087,000 over the five-year implementation timeframe. Ongoing costs after implementation are included as well.

This plan will require the focus and support of all areas of campus. This bold initiative and the associated action steps and assessments will require continual efforts by administrators, faculty and staff. The University has implemented similar initiatives before and has a track record of evidence to support institutional capacity to implement, assess, and improve student learning.

One point of strength is a specific plan to assess each action step in terms of administrative assessment, and performance assessment (including student learning assessment wherever possible). This document provides clear evidence that the university's QEP has goals, action steps, and a plan to assess their achievement and that the institution has the capacity to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

1) History of the Institution

The University of West Georgia, a four-year institution of the University System of Georgia, is a co-educational, residential, liberal arts institution located in Carrollton, Georgia. Carrollton, the seat of Carroll County, is about an hour drive from Atlanta. According to the 2007 Census estimate, Carrollton has a regional population of 111,954 with retail shopping, medical, educational, entertainment, financial, and recreational services, making it one of Georgia's fastest growing industrial areas.

The University of West Georgia was established in 1906 as the Fourth District Agricultural and Mechanical School, one of twelve such institutions by the State of Georgia between 1906 and 1917. Twenty five years later, an Act by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia changed Carrollton A&M School to West Georgia College, a junior college. Dr. Irvine S. Ingram, who had been principal of the A&M School, was named the institution's first president. In 1939, the College was authorized by the Board of Regents to add a three year program in elementary education. In 1957, the institution was authorized to confer the B.S. degree in education, making it a four-year college within the University System of Georgia. Two years later, West Georgia College added the Bachelor of Arts degree in English, history, and mathematics.

During the following years, West Georgia College became one of the fastest growing institutions of higher learning in the South. From an enrollment of 576 in 1957, the institution's student body is approaching 12,000 as of the Fall 2013. In 1967, the Board of Regents authorized the establishment of a graduate program at the master's level. The University now offers degrees at the Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral programs in four areas. The University of West Georgia is a level VI SACSCOC institution.

In June 1996, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia officially changed the name of West Georgia College to the State University of West Georgia and to the University of West Georgia in 2005.

2) Mission and Comprehensive University Status

Mission of the University of West Georgia

The University of West Georgia seeks to achieve preeminence in providing educational excellence in a personal environment through an intellectually stimulating and supportive community for its students, faculty, and staff.

Purpose

The University, a charter member of the University System of Georgia, is a comprehensive, residential institution providing selectively focused undergraduate and graduate public higher education primarily to the people of West Georgia. The University is also committed to regional outreach through a collaborative network of external degree centers, course offerings at off-campus sites, and an extensive program of continuing education for personal and professional development. Opportunities for intellectual and personal development are provided through quality teaching, scholarly inquiry, creative endeavor, and service for the public good.

Essential Activities

West Georgia educates students in a range of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and professional programs at the baccalaureate level. It also offers a significant number of graduate programs at the master's and educational specialist's levels. The University has a commitment to education at the doctoral level in the field of education as well as other selected areas. In addition to being accredited as an institute of higher education, the University maintains national accreditation or recognition in most undergraduate and graduate fields of specialization.

The University of West Georgia pursues its purpose through the following activities:

- Instruction in general education and the promotion of life-long learning that together lay the foundations of what is essential to being an educated person.
- Faculty-directed student research and professional activities that complement classroom learning through learning by doing and reflection on doing.
- Faculty research, scholarship, and creative endeavors that promote knowledge, enhance professional development, contribute to quality instruction, and provide for significant student involvement and field-based experience.

- Educational opportunities such as the Honors College and, for extraordinary high school-aged students, the Advanced Academy of Georgia that serve the needs of exceptionally prepared students.
- Systematic investigation of teaching and student learning that fosters innovation in teacher, professional, and pre-professional preparation.
- The use and exploration of existing and emerging technologies that improve opportunities for faculty and student learning.
- A broad range of public service activities and proactive partnerships that: promote more effective utilization of human and natural resources; contribute to economic, social, and technical development; and enhance the quality of life within the University's scope of influence.
- Student services, including outstanding first-year experiences, which increase opportunities for academic success and personal development and
- Enhance the climate of campus life.

Values

The University of West Georgia values the following:

- High-quality general education, undergraduate and graduate programs, that:
 - Are grounded in a strong liberal arts curriculum;
 - Impart broad knowledge and foster critical understanding needed for intellectual growth, personal and social responsibility, cultural and global literacy and lifelong learning;
 - Emphasize disciplinary rigor;
 - Foster the development of effectiveness in communication, critical and independent thinking, problem solving, and the use of information resources and technology; and
 - Create a learning community dedicated to instructional excellence where close student/faculty interaction enhances both teaching and learning for a diverse and academically well-prepared student body.
- Cultivate a personal environment.
- Affirmation of the equal dignity of each person by valuing cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender diversity in students, faculty, and staff.
- Practices that embody the ideals of an open democratic society and that cultivate an environment of collegiality.

These commitments culminate in educational experiences that foster the development of thoughtful and productive leaders and citizens who make a positive impact throughout an increasingly global society.

Comprehensive University Status

Effective Fall Of 2014, the University System of Georgia reclassified its institutions. The University of West Georgia was added to a new category called a Comprehensive University. The mission statement for these institutions is outlined below and available here: http://www.usg.edu/inst/mission/category/comprehensive_universities.

The University of West Georgia is currently drafting new mission and vision statements to guide the institution as it fills this new role in the University System of Georgia. While the institution will modify practices and scope to fit this new direction, this QEP is consistent with the comprehensive university mission statement as outlined below.

Core Mission Statement for Comprehensive Universities:

Within the context of the University System's mission and vision, Georgia Southern University, Kennesaw State University, Valdosta State University and the University of West Georgia share core characteristics as comprehensive universities. While these universities embody the common characteristics presented below, variations in their purposes, histories, traditions, and settings allow each also to focus on its own distinctiveness and accomplishments.

The core characteristics include:

- a commitment to excellence and responsiveness within a scope of influence defined by the needs of a specific region of the state, and by particularly outstanding programs or distinctive characteristics that have a magnet effect even beyond the region;
- a commitment to a teaching/learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom, that sustains instructional excellence, serves a diverse and well-prepared student body, promotes high levels of student achievement, offers academic assistance, and provides developmental studies programs for a limited student cohort;
- a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic programming at the baccalaureate and masters levels, as well as a range of professional programs at the baccalaureate and post baccalaureate levels, including a limited number of professionally-oriented doctoral level programs;

- a commitment to public service, continuing education, technical assistance, and economic development activities that address the needs, improve the quality of life, and raise the educational level within the university's scope of influence;
- a commitment to scholarly and creative work to enhance instructional effectiveness and to encourage faculty scholarly pursuits, and a commitment to research in selected areas of institutional strength and focused on regional need.

3) Review of SACS Principles Related to the QEP

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools requires institutions to comply with two principles related to the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan. The first principle states:

“SACS Principle: 2.12: The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. (Quality Enhancement Plan)”

The second principle states:

“The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)”

The remainder of this document addresses the University of West Georgia's compliance with these two principles. Each of the statements in the principles is addressed in order, with the exception of broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies. Compliance with this requirement is demonstrated throughout the entire narrative. Faculty, Staff, Students, and Community Representatives were involved in nearly every phase of this process and proposed implementation. Their involvement is outlined in each section.

The University's narrative on compliance with these principles is found in this document as outlined in the Table of Contents. The University of West Georgia states that it is in compliance with both principles.

4) Identifying Key Issues Emerging from Institutional Assessment

The University of West Georgia (UWG) has a vibrant campus culture that welcomes and is accustomed to rigorous and open academic debate. This culture is coupled with a faculty membership that takes student learning and student achievement seriously. As stated in the motto that guided UWG for many years, the institution is serious about “Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment.” As such, assessing student learning and improving instruction is embedded in the culture of the institution and the acumen of members of the faculty. Efforts (and requirements) by SACS, specialized accrediting bodies, and other movements toward accountability and measurement in the higher education sector at large have encouraged more systematic collection and analysis of assessment data. These sources have also encouraged instructional improvement based on the analysis of the results. At UWG, the process of collecting and analyzing data simply formalized the institutional emphasis on instructional quality and student learning for many years.

As UWG began the process of identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, the institution had a rich history to evaluate. The individuals and committees involved in this selection process relied on several sources of assessment data to identify key institutional issues related to student learning. The primary sources of data include: the institutional assessment system for academic programs; the results of standardized surveys and exams including the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Collegiate Learning Assessment, and results from faculty surveys focused on identifying areas in which students need to improve performance. Each of these data sources and their role in the topic selection are reviewed below.

The intent of the quality enhancement plan topic selection process was to identify an area for improvement that will be addressed by the institution. Details about each step, presentations and documents are found on the institution’s QEP web site at: <http://www.westga.edu/qep>. A brief summary is provided here.

UWG began the QEP topic selection in the Spring 2010 faculty meeting. Following an introduction and endorsement from the UWG President, Dr. Beheruz Sethna and the Provost Dr. Tim Hynes, the SACS Liaison, Dr. Jon Anderson, introduced the concept of a QEP and reviewed the SACS reaffirmation process.

At the beginning of the Fall 2010 semester, the SACS Liaison, sent a call to all faculty and staff to engage in the topic selection process. The email sent with the call is shown below:

“Sent: August 24, 2010

Members of the UWG Staff, (a similar email was sent to faculty)

In faculty meetings last spring and this fall, I addressed the faculty about the process of developing a Quality Enhancement Plan for UWG. You may have heard about this topic or process from those presentations. The development of a QEP is a SACS requirement, but, it is also a great opportunity to focus on increasing student learning in one area on campus. Please find attached a call for Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topics. This document outlines what a QEP is and its long term role in the University.

This email is an invitation for you to participate in the selection of the topic for this Quality Enhancement Plan. As part of this process, I invite and encourage you to engage in meaningful discussion about student learning at UWG and how we (collectively) can enhance the student learning experience and the environment that surrounds it. This plan will be part of the University's operations for the next 7-10 years. Participating in this topic selection is a great opportunity to help shape the future of this institution.

Please take time to thoughtfully develop and submit topics either alone or with colleagues across campus. Topic submissions are due by October 1st and should be emailed to qep@westga.edu. Questions or recommendations may also be sent to qep@westga.edu, or sent directly to me. Thank you for consideration of this invitation. I appreciate the opportunity it is to work with you on improving student learning, and the environment that supports it, at UWG.”

This call included the following language:

“During the fall 2010 semester, the University of West Georgia is searching for and selecting a topic for its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). A QEP describes an institution’s commitment to enhance student learning. This plan must identify a specific area of student learning (the topic). It must also identify goals and measureable objectives regarding the improvement of student learning in this area. The QEP is a long term initiative for the institution (typically 7-10 years).

The timeline for this process is:

- The topic selection will be complete by December 2010.
- The completion of a plan (including broad institutional development) will be complete by December 2011.

- Initial implementation will be complete by May 2012.
- Baseline data for measurement of goals and objectives will be collected during the 2012/2013 academic year.
- Implementation of the plan and documentation of the results will be begin in fall 2013
- Plan will be complete between 2018-2020.

...This QEP must support UWG's strategic plan and play a key role in implementing the academic portion of that plan across the institution, with particular emphasis on student learning. Once the topic is selected, all entities across campus will develop plans regarding how to improve student learning relative to the QEP topic within their domain of responsibility.

Topic Selection Process: All members of the faculty and staff are invited (and encouraged) to submit ideas for QEP topics. These ideas may be submitted by members of the faculty and staff, departments, schools, colleges, or any group of faculty and/or staff (i.e. senate committee, cross disciplinary, etc...). All recommendations will be collected in the Provost's office. All submissions will be posted to the web site: www.westga.edu/qep. Submissions will then be forwarded to the Institutional Studies and Planning Committee of the Faculty Senate for narrowing and combining of proposals. The final topic selection will be an iterative process between the Faculty Senate and President's Advisory Committee."

In response to this call, faculty and/or staff submitted 13 full proposals and 7 ideas (suggestions rather than full proposals). All were posted to the QEP web site which contains the following introduction (http://www.westga.edu/qep/index_14462.php):

"Many high quality proposals for the QEP topic have been submitted. The next step in the topic selection process is a review of these submissions (including refining, combining, or adding of ideas) by the Institutional Studies and Planning Committee of the Senate. It is anticipated that this committee will engage faculty, staff and stakeholders through surveys (and other means) to narrow the list of topics. Once the list has been narrowed, the Undergraduate Academic Programs Committee and the Committee on Graduate Studies of the Senate will engage in the selection process. The final topic selection will be an iterative process between the Senate and the President's Advisory Council. Please provide any feedback on these proposals to your representative on the Senate Institutional Studies and Planning Committee. This process will culminate in a topic selection before the end of fall semester 2010. A number of

great suggestions were submitted in an abbreviated form. These are combined in one file.”

Using these proposals as a starting point, the Senate Institutional Studies and Planning Committee (which was later renamed the Senate Strategic Planning Committee) assumed the leadership role in the topic selection process. In addition to the topic proposals, the committee reviewed student assessment data from academic programs.

Institutional Assessment Data

UWG has a robust assessment system for academic programs and a culture of assessment and improvement continues to grow. The environment and cultural expectations are that faculty members continually review and revise teaching and learning techniques in an effort to improve student learning.

This institutional assessment process requires assessment of core curriculum (general education) and program specific learning outcomes. As such, the types of needs, assessments, and improvements vary widely. Within this process, one academic program may be improving communications skills, another quantitative skill, another discipline-specific knowledge, and another critical thinking. While this type of organically grown improvement is intentional, healthy, and impressive, it does not focus institutional improvement efforts on one key area of student learning as required by the SACS principles for the QEP. However, the learning outcome data for the core curriculum and academic program encourage the individuals and committees involved in the topic selection process to identify areas of student performance that span the core curriculum (rather than being embedded in a specific area) and span academic programs. In senate committee discussions, topics such as intellectual inquiry, applied math skills, information fluency, reading and interpretation of literature, and writing quickly came to the forefront.

Faculty Surveys

The committee conducted two surveys of the general faculty. The first survey queried faculty on categories of perceived areas of deficiency in UWG student learning. These categories were based on combinations of the submitted QEP topics. The second survey narrowed the topics by ranking 9 possible areas of focus. The senate agenda from the

December 3, 2010 meeting included the following:

“Faculty Senate Meeting, 3rd December 2010

Information Item: The Senate Institutional Studies and Planning (ISP) committee is engaged in the topic selection for UWG’s quality enhancement plan.

So far, the committee has completed the following steps:

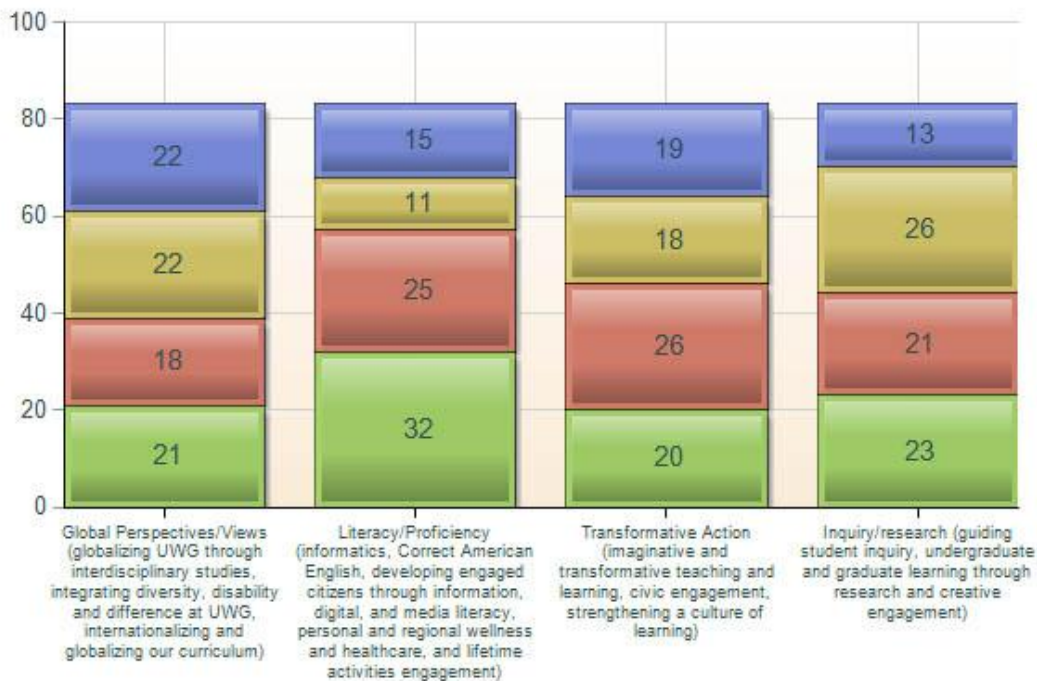
- A call for topics from all faculty and staff
- A categorical survey based upon review of topics
- A survey of learning outcomes associated with the topics
- The committee is in the process of reviewing the results of these and has formulated a conceptual framework.”

The agenda reviews elements of the conceptual framework and presents the results of the two faculty surveys which are shown below:

“Two Surveys conducted in October and November: Survey 1. Categorical survey based upon review of topics. This was sent out to all faculty in October. Results identified Reading and Writing/ Literacy proficiencies highest.

In narrowing the ideas of the QEP topic, please rate the following categories from the most preferred (1) to the least preferred (4). Please also add any comments about your rankings.

1 2 3 4



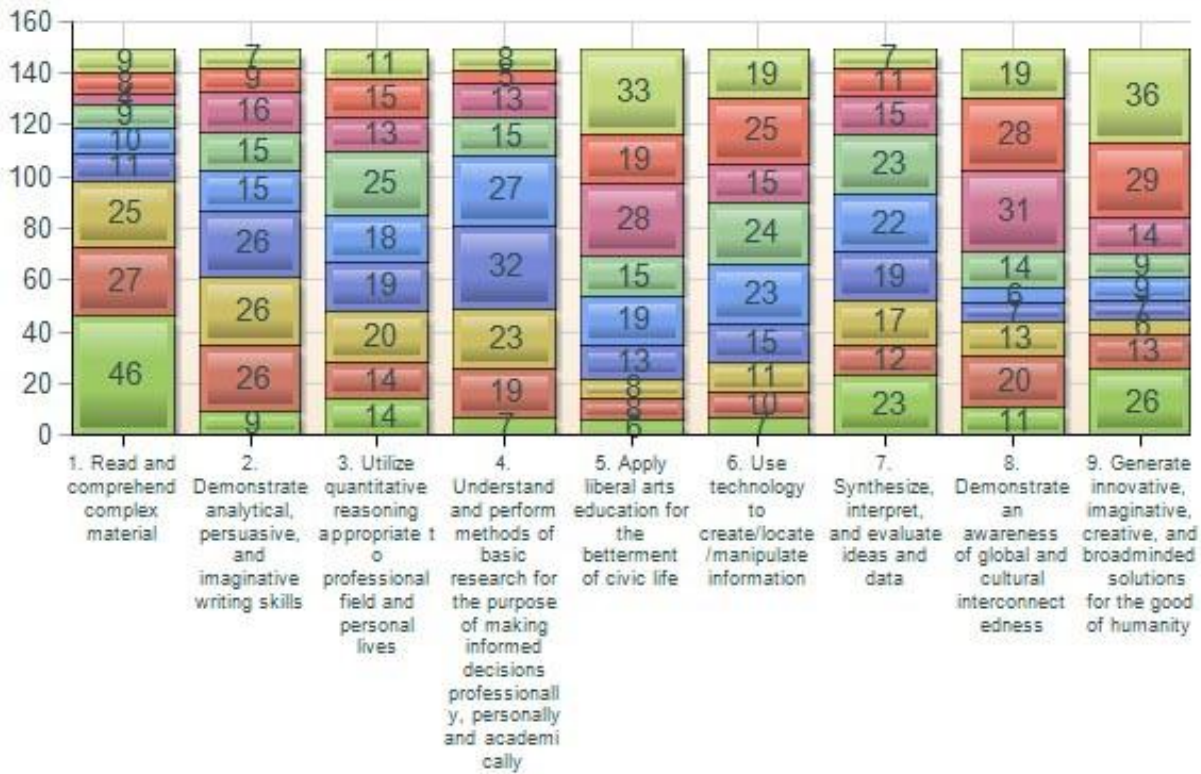
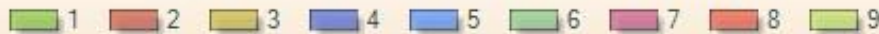
Survey 2. QEP: Learning Outcomes: Ranking a list of nine skills, and/or abilities, according to importance. This was sent out to All-Faculty, All-Staff, and All-Students in November.

The mean factor analysis of the results of this survey indicate:

1. The factor of most importance is Reading and Writing (1 and 2 on the survey).
2. The second most important factor was a combination of 9 and 5 on the survey.
3. The third most important factor was 7 and 8 on the survey.

The committee also noted that the outcomes from the National Survey and Student Engagement for UWG.”

From the following list of skills and/or abilities, please rank each item based on its importance for UWG undergraduate students (from the most important (1) to the least important (9)): All University of West Georgia undergraduate students should be known for their ability to:



The perceptions of faculty, staff and students show that improving writing and reading (items 1 and 2 on the survey) should be a high priority at the institution.

The NSSE and CLA

The third set of data were most helpful in refining the focus for the QEP. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), both were reviewed by the committee and used in identifying areas UWG could improve student learning. These data align with the faculty survey in support of student’s need to improve reading and writing skills.

“The CLA presents realistic problems that require students to analyze complex materials. Several different types of materials are used that vary in relevance to the task, credibility, and other characteristics. Students’ written responses to the task are graded to assess their abilities

to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems, and communicate clearly and cogently” (2009-2010 UWG CLA report). In the 2009-2010 academic year, UWG offered the CLA to a group freshman (99 useable responses) and seniors (79 useable responses). The UWG CLA performance data are shown in the tables below:

CLA 2009-2010 Results					
Value-Added and Precision Estimates					
	Performance Level	Value-Added Score	Value-Added percentile Rank	Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Total CLA Score	Below	-1.47	7	-2.16	-0.78
Performance Task	Below	-1.68	6	-2.48	-0.88
Analytic Writing Task	Below	-1.06	12	-1.8	-0.32
Make-an-Argument	Below	-1.11	12	-1.91	-0.31
Critique-an-Argument	Near	-0.98	17	-1.79	-0.17

Seniors: Unadjusted Performance						
	Number of Seniors	Mean Score	Mean Score Percentile Rank	25th Percentile Score	75th Percentile Score	Standard Deviation
Total CLA Score	79	1073	8	976	1197	150
Performance Task	38	1015	8	891	1114	142
Analytic Writing Task	41	1127	15	1022	1211	138
Make-an-Argument	42	1111	12	992	1244	167
Critique-an-Argument	41	1134	15	1004	1266	184
EAA	80	994	25	910	1070	135

Freshmen: Unadjusted Performance						
	Number of Freshmen	Mean Score	Mean Score Percentile Rank	25th Percentile Score	75th Percentile Score	Standard Deviation
Total CLA Score	99	1032	24	946	1112	134
Performance Task	50	1002	21	907	1077	137
Analytic Writing Task	49	1063	32	998	1136	125

Make-an-Argument	50	1071	34	975	1167	158
Critique-an-Argument	49	1055	32	972	1174	161
EAA	100	979	25	910	1030	93

Although this is a cross-sectional sample, it provides limited support that the sample of seniors was able to complete a performance task, an analytical writing task, make-an-argument, and critique-an-argument. However, the value-added scores were either ‘near’ or ‘below’ the expected level according to the CLA benchmark. These scores provided evidence to the committee that critical thinking, analysis, and writing were areas in which UWG students could improve relative to the CLA benchmark data. The CLA results also show the value-added score is negative. This provides evidence that this sample of UWG seniors did not progress in writing as well as other samples of seniors in the CLA benchmark data.

In addition to the CLA, UWG regularly participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This survey asks students the amount of writing they are required to complete as part of their academic program. The 2008 NSSE Survey results show that first-year students reported writing less than other freshman at participating USG institutions, selected Peer/Aspirational Institutions, and the NSSE 2008 average. This provides support for UWG emphasizing the quantity of writing students are required to complete as part of UWG academic programs.

Students also reported higher self-confidence in their knowledge, skill, and personal development in the area of writing clearly and effectively. This self-confidence trends opposite of the CLA results that shows a lower value added score when compared with CLA benchmarks. This trend was also shown in seniors. The tables below include the NSSE data for first-year students and seniors from the 2008 survey administration.

First-Year Students									
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?</i>									
		UWG		Georgia System		Peer/ Aspirational		NSSE 2008	
Variable	Response	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
3c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more									
	None	349	87%	5,978	83%	5,142	85%	137,544	81%
	1 to 4	27	7%	756	12%	604	11%	21,164	13%
	5 to 10	11	3%	239	4%	167	3%	4,407	3%

	11 to 20	7	2%	87	1%	54	1%	2,019	1%
	More than 20	2	1%	55	1%	48	1%	1,605	1%
	Total	396	100%	7,115	100%	6,015	100%	166,739	100%

3D. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages*

	None	96	24%	1,243	18%	938	16%	20,355	14%
	1 to 4	219	55%	4,035	56%	3,456	57%	87,940	53%
	5 to 10	71	18%	1,433	20%	1,258	21%	44,659	25%
	11 to 20	10	2%	323	5%	303	5%	11,310	6%
	More than 20	1	0%	75	1%	69	1%	2,558	2%
	Total	397	100%	7,109	100%	6,024	100%	166,822	100%

3E. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages*

	None	16	4%	298	4%	159	3%	4,314	3%
	1 to 4	159	40%	2,591	37%	2,055	34%	48,514	31%
	5 to 10	149	37%	2,462	34%	2,122	35%	57,904	34%
	11 to 20	61	15%	1,255	17%	1,172	19%	36,920	21%
	More than 20	13	4%	507	7%	519	9%	19,307	11%
	Total	398	100%	7,113	100%	6,027	100%	166,959	100%

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

11c. Writing clearly and effectively*

	Very Little	10	3%	371	5%	208	4%	6,653	5%
	Some	55	15%	1,376	20%	1,212	22%	32,379	22%
	Quite a bit	130	38%	2,588	40%	2,448	43%	64,058	41%
	Very much	158	44%	2,241	35%	1,705	32%	53,007	33%
	Total	353	100%	6,576	100%	5,573	100%	156,097	100%

Seniors

During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?

		UWG		Georgia System		Peer/ Aspirational		NSSE 2008	
Variable	Response	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%

3c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more

	None	159	53%	4,199	52%	4,059	52%	87,726	50%
	1 to 4	112	40%	3,167	38%	2,999	40%	78,749	41%
	5 to 10	16	6%	565	7%	412	5%	11,215	6%
	11 to 20	2	1%	151	2%	99	1%	2,889	2%
	More than 20	1	0%	101	1%	85	1%	2,408	1%

	Total	290	100%	8,183	100%	7,654	100%	182,987	100%
<i>3D. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages</i>									
	None	29	9%	926	12%	717	10%	14,782	9%
	1 to 4	143	49%	3,996	49%	3,616	47%	77,416	44%
	5 to 10	79	28%	2,212	27%	2,322	30%	59,728	31%
	11 to 20	25	8%	741	9%	729	9%	22,560	11%
	More than 20	17	5%	311	4%	273	4%	8,540	4%
	Total	293	100%	8,186	100%	7,657	100%	183,026	100%
<i>3E. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages</i>									
	None	22	8%	699	9%	422	6%	10,556	6%
	1 to 4	105	35%	3,260	40%	2,640	35%	59,123	34%
	5 to 10	80	28%	2,149	26%	2,075	27%	51,560	28%
	11 to 20	46	15%	1,173	14%	1,362	17%	34,144	18%
	More than 20	40	13%	903	11%	1,157	15%	27,662	14%
	Total	293	100%	8,184	100%	7,656	100%	183,045	100%
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?</i>									
<i>11c. Writing clearly and effectively*</i>									
	Very Little	7	3%	333	4%	282	4%	6,443	4%
	Some	39	15%	1,520	19%	1,449	20%	31,601	19%
	Quite a bit	98	37%	2,880	37%	2,804	38%	65,447	38%
	Very much	121	45%	3,059	39%	2,738	38%	71,439	39%
	Total	265	100%	7,792	100%	7,273	100%	174,930	100%

*Statistically Significant Difference across all comparison groups (p<.05)

With these data as benchmarks, the senate strategic planning committee focused its efforts on identifying one key area on which the institution could improve student learning through the development of a QEP. Although the topic selection process was intended to be complete by December of 2010, the process continued through the spring semester of 2011 and culminated with the topic being selected by the committee and approved by the faculty senate on March 25, 2011. The President accepted the recommendation as approved by the Senate.

5) Focus on Student Learning Outcomes

This iterative process resulted in the committee selecting the topic of undergraduate student writing with the two learning outcomes, one focusing on undergraduate students' writing skills and a second focusing on discipline specific writing. As the planning phase continued, these were removed and replaced with the college/school specific plans.

Following this topic selection, the UWG student government association (SGA) was invited to select the name of the QEP. The SACS Liaison created a moderated blog that allowed for all faculty, staff, and students to submit recommendations. The senate strategic planning committee narrowed the list and submitted five finalists to the SGA. At the March 15, 2012 meeting of the UWG Student Government Association, the QEP Project titles were read for consideration, and then voted upon by the members. SGA selected the QEP title: *Write in a Whole New Direction*. However, at this point, the development of the plan and finalizing the outcomes was still a work in progress.

In fall 2011, members of Strategic Planning Committee QEP sub-committee initiated planning sessions with members of the First Year Writing (FYW) faculty, University Writing Center (UWC) and Library personnel, and the Chairs of English and the Strategic Planning Committee. As proposals were integrated into a plan to address undergraduate student writing, members of the Strategic Planning Committee and the SACS Liaison provided feedback at regular meetings. The first iteration of the QEP included a Summer Bridge Program for students identified at risk for failure in ENGL 1101; an increase of units required in ENGL 1101 and 1102 from 6 to 8; a revision of Core Area B, Institutional Priorities, to reflect the QEP focus on undergraduate writing; a requirement that students would be required to take one "writing intensive" course in Core Areas C (Arts, Humanities, and Ethics), D (Science, Mathematics and Technology) or E (Social Sciences); the inclusion or modification of a course in discipline-specific research methodologies and writing in area F, major-specific core requirements; and plans from each of the university's colleges to address discipline-specific writing in upper division major courses.

At that point, college committees were invited to draft responses to their intentions to improve student performance in discipline specific writing. Committees were formed in the colleges, school of Nursing, and support areas (Extended Learning and Honors College and Transdisciplinary programs). These committees developed goals for implementation and methods to assess them. These plans were then combined into a master document for review by the strategic planning committee.

The strategic planning committee reviewed the document and found that the scope was too large and the goals for implementation too unconnected for one quality enhancement plan. The committee then proposed to the faculty senate that the institution retract the scope of the plan and focus on undergraduate writing in the core curriculum. The committee felt that students would be better served if the institution focused on one area and served that area well.

As such the committee proposed to the senate the elimination of the learning outcome related to discipline specific writing and focus on a modified learning outcome: increase students' ability to write in standard academic English. Accomplishing this student learning outcome is the goal of this QEP. The student population impacted will be UWG students enrolled in UWG core courses. Plans to accomplish this learning outcome and the assessment of each objective are throughout this document.

On March 8, 2013, the senate adopted the modified scope of the QEP. Several revisions and updates to goals were included in the process as this final document was prepared.

In April 2013, a QEP Implementation Committee was constituted from the university's various constituents, including UWG alum and a member of the local community (**See Appendix D**). So that a fully revised QEP document could be presented for approval to the UWG Faculty Senate by November 2013, the Implementation Committee was charged with the following tasks to be completed:

- 1) Complete the QEP document, assuring that it meets the principles outlined by SACS, and present it to the Faculty Senate Strategic Planning Committee and Faculty Senate;
- 2) Establish a budget by year of implementation;
- 3) Review, revise, and strengthen assessments for the student learning outcome and goals;
- 4) Work with University Communications and Marketing and students and faculty from various disciplines to develop and implement a branding and marketing campaign to introduce the QEP to the campus community.

In November, 2013, the revised QEP plan was presented to the Faculty Senate and approved. This final version focused on the learning outcome and goals noted at the beginning of the document and repeated below. These goals will support the learning outcome for this QEP.

Student Learning Outcome: increase students' ability to write in standard academic English.

The student population that will be impacted by this plan consists of University of West Georgia students enrolled in UWG core courses, defined as core areas A-E

This learning outcome will be achieved through four goals:

- 1) Integrate writing throughout the core curriculum;
- 2) Implement a system supporting academic units' efforts to increase online students' ability to write in standard academic English;
- 3) Increase faculty development in pedagogies of writing instruction; and
- 4) Improve support services to enhance student writing competence.

QEP Focus:

Learning Outcome:
increase students' ability to write in standard academic English.

Student Population: *UWG students enrolled in UWG core courses.*

6) Accomplishing the Mission of the Institution

According to its mission, “The University of West Georgia seeks to achieve preeminence in providing educational excellence in a personal environment through an intellectually stimulating and supportive community for its students, faculty, and staff.”

This quality enhancement plan, focused on improving undergraduate student writing in the core curriculum, fundamentally supports the mission of the institution. As noted in section (2) of this document, the University of West Georgia is guided by several Essential Activities and Values associated with its mission. Improving students’ ability to write effectively and clearly promotes the University’s intention to provide “Instruction in general education,” one of the Institution’s Essential Activities. It is embedded within the Institutional Value for providing “high-quality general education,” and it specifically supports the Value to “Foster the development of effectiveness in communication, critical and independent thinking, problem solving, and the use of information resources and technology.”

7) The Context for the Quality Enhancement Plan

The College Board created the National Commission on Writing (NCW) in 2005, in part to accommodate the writing assessment component of the new SAT, but also to address “the growing concern within education, business, and policy-making communities that the level of writing in the United States is not what it should be” (*Writing: A Powerful Message*). Among the many features the NCW identified as denoting inadequate writing were lack of clarity and weak grammar and mechanics, features considered “extremely important” or “important” by more than 95% of employers surveyed about the value placed on workplace writing tasks (“Writing: A Ticket to Work” 28). Indeed, poor workplace writing skills were considered “a barrier to promotion” in a survey taken of Human Resource Directors of 120 major American corporations. Ironically, when college students in a National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report were asked to rank their writing abilities—including the ability to “use correct grammar and syntax” and to “employ correct mechanics (e.g., spelling),” abilities associated with producing standard written English—they consistently rated their skills far higher than college faculty: on a 1-5 scale, the mean college faculty rating ranged from a low of 2.63 to a high of 2.97 while Junior and Senior students rated themselves from 4.00 to 4.29 in the same categories (*Promoting Engagement*). Thus, not only are writing skills considered valuable in both academic and professional settings declining, students seem unaware of their inadequacies; UWG students are no different in this regard.

Insufficient writing skills among college freshmen result from insufficient writing opportunities: “students are simply not writing enough to prepare them for the demands of post-secondary education” (Addison and McGee 163). Research by Appleby and Langer published in 2009 found that “some 40% of twelfth-grade students . . . report never or hardly ever being asked to write a paper of three pages or more” (26). Since writing is a skill that is developed by means of consistent practice and feedback over time, and since it is also a skill dependent on critical reading skills, it is small wonder many freshmen students are underprepared for college work.

Incoming UWG students would seem to reflect this trend. Freshmen are required to complete ENGL 1101 and 1102 (Composition I and II) in Area A1, Communication Skills, of the Core, but in fall 2012, 436 (of 1896, or 22%) students who *completed* ENGL 1101 received a D or F for the course (C is the passing grade from ENGL 1101). 90 (4%) additional students withdrew from the course, many of whom knew by mid-term that their skills were insufficient to pass the course. DFW rates in the fall semester of previous years provide like evidence of this dismal performance.

The QEP initiative at UWG aims to produce graduates who write in standard academic English. *When placed in the university context, standard academic English includes not only grammatical and mechanical but also rhetorical considerations such as purpose, audience, genre [i.e., type of writing task(s) required], syntactic options appropriate to genre, logical coherence, and vocabulary.* This contextualized definition of standard academic English comes from a series of meetings held by members of the Strategic Planning sub-committee on the QEP with members of FYW faculty, University Writing Center and Library personnel. A questionnaire submitted to all FYW faculty further shaped this definition and led to discussions about how ENGL 1101 and 1102 might be revised to incorporate more substantive instruction in standard English writing practices. Demonstrating the ability to “effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse” is the learning outcome that reflects this contextualized definition and may be added to the core’s general learning outcomes.

An important element in the QEP is its recursive approach to teaching rhetorical, grammatical and mechanical skills. As effective use of “English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse” becomes an explicit learning outcome across core areas, students will return to and employ composition skills acquired in English 1101 and 1102. As with the rhetorical aspects of writing, research demonstrates that grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary lessons taught in isolation from concrete and specific writing tasks fail to promote adequate understanding of pertinent language concepts and their application. Indeed, Constance Weaver points to multiple studies that demonstrate such decontextualized grammar and mechanics drills actually do students “a gross disservice” (16). While components of what we’ve defined as standard written English in an academic context are best taught as part of reading and writing instruction, Weaver also notes that “teaching grammar in the context of writing will not automatically mean that once taught, the concepts will be learned and applied forever after. On the contrary, grammatical concepts must often be taught and retaught, to individuals as well as groups or classes, and students may long afterwards continue to need guidance in actually applying what they have, in some sense or to some degree, already learned” (17).

A vital principle in planning and implementing the QEP on undergraduate student writing at UWG is that this is a University initiative; the faculty’s unified commitment to shared writing goals projects--to students as well as to the larger community--the significance it places on effective communication, and the institution’s sustained focus on the development of language competencies reflects best practices. This initiative thus also responds to a national call to “re-establish the importance of English studies broadly conceived at all levels and within all disciplines” (Addison and McGee 170).

8) Institutional Capability to Initiate, Implement, and Complete the QEP

The University of West Georgia has demonstrated the capability to identify areas for improvement and initiate, implement, and complete initiatives that lead to better results. To demonstrate this Institutional capacity, specific examples are cited here.

Example 1: As part of its complete college Georgia initiative, the University of West Georgia identified the need to increase the number of students who dual-enroll while in high school. The most recent update on this initiative states the following:

Baseline data for dually enrolled students (CCG Campus Plan) indicated that 30 students participated in dual enrollment in 2011-2012 (excluding the Advanced Academy that serves academically gifted, residential high-school juniors and seniors). As of August 14, 2013, dual enrollment figures increased to 68 students, with an average enrollment of 6.8 credit hours per student.

The significant growth is associated with our new admission standards for the dual enrollment program. The changes were the outcome of meetings with our PK-12 partners, who requested increased opportunities for their high school students to accelerate their college education. Superintendents specifically asked that we reconsider our dual enrollment admission standards, which were more stringent than BOR requirements or our peer institutions' requirements. We agreed to study their request. We then surveyed high school counselors in nine local school systems, requesting feedback about UWG's dual enrollment admission standards. The counselors' survey data and eCore® student success data for eCore® dual enrolled students (i.e., 91% success rate aggregated across all eCore® institutions) led to the decision to revise our standards. This is because eCore® students were admitted to affiliate institutions under policies that align with the USG policy, which supported the notion that future students admitted under the proposed revised standards for dual admission would do well. With data to support the rationale for the change, the UWG Faculty Senate approved the new Dual Enrollment Admission Standards in April, 2013.

Example 2: Also as part of its Complete College Georgia initiative, the University of West Georgia identified a need to intervene with students struggling in gateway courses (MATH 1001, 1111, 1113, 1634 and ENGL 1101, 1102). Identifying this need led to the following changes as noted in the 2012-2013 Complete College update.

MATH: Mathematics faculty recently began conversations about student performance in the introductory math courses. At that time, the dean of the College of Science and Mathematics charged the faculty with piloting new instructional approaches (new for the faculty) for three sections of MATH 1001 Quantitative Reasoning (math for non-majors) in Spring 2013. The Spring 2013 DFW rate for these three pilot sections combined was 10.1%, far better than the 27.9% rate for the non-pilot sections. Although these rates are encouraging, the design of the pilot project did not permit comparisons of student achievement based on common assessments; therefore, revisions will be made in the Fall 2013 sections to provide this information. This “lesson learned” underscores one reason why we enthusiastically anticipate the opening of our new Center for Teaching and Learning, funded through the FY14 budget allocation. To further support the completion agenda, seven sections of MATH 1111 and two sections of MATH 1113 being taught in Fall 2013 will have three hours of supplemental instruction for students. (See the Appendix for Gateway MATH student performance data).

Example 3: In an effort to formalize the quality assessment and improvement efforts in the core curriculum, the University System of Georgia requested each institution (of which UWG is one) revise their learning outcomes and develop a clear plan for assessing the core curriculum. Through a process that lasted more than two years, the university community engaged in developing clear and measureable outcomes for each core area. This effort was led by a subcommittee of the faculty senate undergraduate programs committee. Once the outcomes were identified, they were approved by the senate, president, and system-wide core curriculum committee. Following their approval, the University implemented the new core outcomes with a course-based assessment system. Working with the University’s IT staff, a database was created to house the assessment data. As of August, 2013, nearly 200 assessments have been completed in core curriculum courses leading to more than 70 instructional improvements in core courses.

These examples provide evidence that the institution has the capacity to initiate, implement, and complete initiatives similar to this QEP. The specific capabilities needed to initiate, implement, and complete each goal and action step in this quality enhancement plan are discussed in the next section.

9) Identification of Goals and a Plan to Assess their Achievement

The QEP initiatives will be implemented to address the goal of improving writing competency in the all areas of the core curriculum. All of these efforts are focused on one learning outcome: improving students' ability to write in standard academic English. These efforts are focused on one segment of the student population: students enrolled in the University of West Georgia Core Curriculum. There are four goals. Each has associated action steps and assessments which are detailed below.

The goals and action steps are:

- 1) Integrate writing throughout the core curriculum**
 - a) Revise Area B, Institutional Priorities, of the core curriculum and assure core areas A-E reflect an emphasis on writing competence
 - b) Revise English 1101 and 1102
 - c) Develop and implement a writing MOOC for new freshman
 - d) Expand the University Writing Center
- 2) Implement a system supporting academic units' efforts to increase online students' ability to write in standard academic English**
 - a) Better leverage the Online Faculty Development (FDC) to support academic units in their efforts to improve writing competence for students in UWG online core courses
- 3) Increase faculty development in pedagogies of writing instruction**
 - a) Implement a UWG Center for Teaching and Learning with one emphasis being improving student writing
 - b) Expand University Writing Center to support Faculty Writing Instruction
- 4) Improve Support Services to enhance student writing competence**
 - a) Library
 - b) Honors College and Transdisciplinary Programs
 - c) Extended Learning

Goal 1) Integrate Writing Throughout the Core Curriculum

Action Step 1a: Revise Area B, Institutional Priorities, of the core curriculum and assure core areas A-E reflect an emphasis on writing competence

Because language and writing skills develop from recursive learning experiences, the QEP seeks to integrate writing more thoroughly and more explicitly into UWG's Core Curriculum. **[See table on the following page]** One change in the curriculum increases contact hours between student and instructor in ENGL 1101 (Core Area A1): while taking ENGL 1101, students would be simultaneously be enrolled in ENGL 1101-L, Applied Writing, a one unit lab to provide intensive practice in revising and editing their own writing. This one-unit lab is part of the proposed overhaul of Area B, Institutional Priorities, which includes two other areas in support of the central QEP goal to improve undergraduate student writing in the core. Area B2 would require a 3 hour course in Critical Thinking and Writing which can come from any discipline. Area B3, Professional Communication, would require 2 units and includes both written and oral communication in its requirements; it, too, may come from any of the disciplines. Further, the QEP proposes that a common Learning Outcome, that students "employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse," be added to the General Learning Outcomes in Core Areas A-E.

Comparison of Targeted Areas to Modify the Core Curriculum

University of West Georgia Core Curriculum

Core Area A: Basic Skills

Core Area A1: Communication Skills 6 hours

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize and identify appropriate topics for presentation in writing.
- Synthesize and logically arrange written presentations.
- Adapt written communication to specific purposes and audiences.

ENGL 1101 and 1102 required

Core Area B: Institutional Priorities 4-5 hours

Category 1 (Oral Communication)

Category 2 (Other Institutional Options)

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify, evaluate, and use information, language, or technology appropriate to a specific purpose.
- Prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation on an appropriate written and meaningful topic.

Core Area C: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics

Core Area D: Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology

Core Area E: Social Sciences

Proposed University of West Georgia Core Curriculum

Core Area A: Basic Skills

Core Area A1: Communication Skills 6 hours

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize and identify appropriate topics for presentation in writing.
- Synthesize and logically arrange written presentations.
- Adapt written communication to specific purposes and audiences.
- Employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse

ENGL 1101 and 1102 required

Core Area B: Institutional Priorities 5-6 hours

Core Area B1: **Applied Writing (Lab)** 1 hour

Core Area B2: **Critical Thinking and Writing** 3 hours

Core Area B3: **Professional Communication** 2 hours

Learning Outcomes:

- Employ critical thinking skills.
- Synthesize and logically arrange material for oral presentations and/or assignments.
- Adapt written and oral communication to specific rhetorical purposes.
- Use diverse information sources effectively.
- Employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse

Core Areas C, D, and E

Add to existing Learning Outcomes in all three areas:

- Employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse.

The proposed revisions to UWG's Core will emphasize the centrality of effective writing for college success. Too often students mistakenly believe that they need not concern themselves with effective, correct academic writing once ENGL 1101 and 1102 have been completed and, indeed, for many students there can be a significant gap between completion of Core Area A1 and the writing that is expected in upper division courses. The revisions to UWG's Core close that gap by requiring more courses in which effective writing is among the learning outcomes. Writing thus becomes an *explicit* activity throughout the core.

Revise core area A: Add to the existing General Learning Outcomes "Effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse."

Reconfigure Core Area B: The new area B may include 5-6 hours distributed between B-1, ENGL 1101 Lab, Applied Writing (1 hour); B-2, Critical Thinking and Writing (3 hours); and B-2, Professional Communication (2 hours). Courses in B-2 and B-3 will include both "writing to learn" and "writing to communicate" assignments. B-2 and B-3 courses can come from any discipline. As area B is identified by the University System of Georgia as the institutional priority, this modification will place the QEP at the forefront of the University's improvement efforts. This would also allow Area B to maintain focus on writing as an essential academic skill, closing the gap between the completion of ENGL 1102 and upper division courses requiring writing.

Revise General Learning Outcomes for Area B: Options for new learning outcomes include: Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Employ critical thinking skills
2. Synthesize and logically organize material for oral presentations and/or written assignments
3. Adapt written and oral communication to specific rhetorical purposes
4. Use diverse information sources effectively
5. Effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse

Revise or develop Specific Learning Outcomes for B-1, ENGL 1101 Lab, B-2, Critical Thinking and Writing, and B-2, Professional Communication: Possible learning outcomes include:

B-1 ENGL: Applied Writing, 1101 Lab

Students will:

1. Employ effective revision strategies at different drafting stages of their writing
2. Effectively edit their work for grammar and mechanics as well as format conventions

B-2 Critical Thinking and Writing

Students will demonstrate the ability to

1. Distinguish fact and informed argument from mere opinion in a variety of contexts
2. Identify inductive and deductive reasoning, and incorporate specific rhetorical skills that reflect that understanding in written work
3. Organize evidence and compose persuasive written arguments
4. Effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse

B-3 Professional Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to

1. Adapt communication to specific purposes and audiences
2. Expand or narrow a topic by finding and using sources appropriate for presentations on academic topics
3. Synthesize and organize material for effective presentations
4. Effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse

Further, by incorporating outcomes that parallel those in ENGL 1101 and 1102, Area B meets the objective of recursive learning and practice central to the development of writing skills.

Revise Learning Outcomes in areas C, D, and E to include and/or emphasize effective written communication.

As part of the QEP process, writing will become an area of competence in each of the core areas. Core areas have identified student learning outcomes and a process to assess them. In addition to these established processes, core area departments with courses in core areas C, D, and E will develop methods to improve writing in standard English. While plans will vary by virtue of content, department, and course, all plans will share the characteristics of a method of instruction that addresses the learning outcome, an implemented plan to assess the effects of those methods of instruction on student learning, and implemented improvements based on the results.

While this may seem to be a daunting task, the University has a history of successfully completing a similar task in the recent past. In an effort to better understand student learning relative to core learning outcomes and be compliant with Board of Regents and SACS guidelines, each core area created specific learning outcomes for the core area. These learning outcomes were approved by the faculty senate, President, and a system wide core curriculum committee. Faculty members in each core area then developed assessments for core courses,

implemented those assessments and have provided evidence of improvements based on analysis of the results. This process was arduous, but incredibly beneficial for the institution.

This QEP calls for a second pass through that process, this time with the development, implementation, assessments, and improvements focusing improving students' ability to write in standard English. The basic skill of writing in standard academic English is a critical developmental and operational tool in the application of any discipline. This skill will improve student learning relative to core learning outcomes and engage faculty in many disciplines in the QEP process.

Possible learning outcome modifications include:

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Synthesize information and logically arrange written assignments
2. Effectively employ English language conventions appropriate to academic discourse in addition to outcomes already noted in the respective core areas.

Assessment

This action step has both administrative and student performance assessments. Administratively, we will measure if the steps outlined above were implemented.

The methods and assessments will also directly measure student learning relative to their ability to write in standard English within the context of the content of each core area

1. A standard assessment will be employed throughout area B courses to measure students' ability to write in standard academic English. Assessment would yield a numerical score in rhetorical, grammatical and mechanical categories based on a rubric developed for 2000-level courses.
2. Scores will be compared to post-ENGL 1102 scores to see if area B modifications have affected student writing competence. [See step 1b for description of ENGL 1102 assessments and appendix for Learning Outcome assessment rubric].
3. The standard assessment rubric will also be employed in courses in areas C, D, and E for which writing competence is an outcome of the core area. Scores will be compared to ENGL 1102 scores to measure the effect of core revisions. Further, by adding an assessment of writing competence to the instruments already employed each semester in assessing core courses, baseline data can be collected in fall 2014-spring 2015; this

data will then be compared to the post-implementation writing assessment to determine the effect of the QEP on undergraduate students' writing/language skills.

Using NSSE to Assess Undergraduate Writing at UWG

Targeted freshman (first-time, full-time freshmen) and graduating seniors at UWG take the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE contains several items that serve as indirect measures of writing done by first time in college students and graduating seniors. Although the NSSE questionnaire was substantially changed in 2013, there are two items that directly reflect a student's experiences with writing that remained consistent and are amenable to trend analysis since UWG participated in NSSE in 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014. The first asks how often a student prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in. The second asks how much this institution has contributed to the student's ability to write clearly and effectively. In addition to those two items, the new version of NSSE contains several items that ask students to report the length and volume of papers written while at UWG.

These questions tap into how many writing assignments 11 pages or more, 6-10 pages, and 5 or fewer pages in length that have been assigned, even if the assignments have not yet been completed. The responses to these questions for first year students can be correlated to their verbal and written SAT score, as well as student perceptions of improvement in their writing. In the new version of NSSE perceptions of writing improvement can also be correlated with self-reports of how frequently the student used learning support services such as the writing center. All of these analyses can be broken down by College/School. Writing specific items can potentially be correlated with instructional/pedagogical practices and critical thinking, which are indirectly assessed by the questionnaire. Furthermore, there is an optional module containing 13 questions that taps into students' experiences with writing. This module is also available in the faculty component to NSSE, which allows for comparisons of faculty perceptions of students' writing ability to those of the student. Student responses can be appended to their demographic data and BANNER data such as GPA, major, credit hours, etc.

Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) will collect NSSE data to assess how the QEP has affected graduating seniors reported engagement, comparing the results of the 2013 administration to subsequent administrations beginning with 2015.

Action Step 1b) Revise English 1101 and 1102

Modify ENGL 1101 (Composition I) ENGL 1101 helps students develop the skills they need to become successful in college-level courses where critical thinking and writing are required. This course does not presume that students already possess these skills; instead, it will help students develop these skills so that by the end of ENGL 1101 students will be better equipped to succeed in college classes where writing is required. ENGL 1101 is not the only course in the core in which students receive writing instruction; however, it is an important course in the development of college-level writing skills since—in contrast to other classes where a specific disciplinary content comes first and writing is secondary—its focus is on the sequential development or scaffolding of the discrete writing and analytical skills that, together, lead to stronger, more successful writing.

Since the QEP objective was announced in 2010, English and First Year Writing Faculty have been refocusing content and methodologies to ensure that English 1101 fulfills its role in producing effective student writers. These efforts in advance of QEP approval and official implementation were deemed appropriate given the desire to enfranchise First Year Writing instructors as well as tenured and tenure-eligible faculty in the process. Changes to ENGL 1101 instruction and assessment were implemented in fall 2013 in order to gauge the effectiveness of these refocusing efforts in advance of the full implementation. The steps undertaken in advance of the official QEP implementation in fall 2015 include:

Current and Previous Action Steps:

Rhetorical Strategies: Adjusted focus to foreground specific rhetorical strategies to enhance reading comprehension and writing effectiveness. Understanding how and why certain rhetorical modes are employed provides students with opportunities to engage more extensively matters of audience, purpose, genre as well as sentence structure, sentence variation, vocabulary and punctuation.

Interdisciplinary Thesis-Driven Arguments: Increased focus on reading interdisciplinary thesis-driven argument, reportage, and other extra-literary texts that students may expect to encounter in the university outside literature courses. Reading level-appropriate writing allows students to develop their ability to summarize, identify main arguments, and recognize how different rhetorical strategies operate in service of authorial purpose. Further, such writing provides models of effective writing appropriate to the academic setting.

Scaffolding of Skills: Adopted sequential scaffolding of skills in teaching critical reading and argumentative writing. Teaching (and allowing students to practice) discrete skills (e.g., summary, analysis, etc.) allows students to develop individual competencies that, when combined, lead to more effective college writing.

Updated Grading Rubrics: Called for the development of a series of grading rubrics to reflect objectives for each formal writing assignment rather than rely upon a single grading rubric that reflects the skill level of students at the end of ENGL 1102. Sequenced evaluation assesses skills as they are taught, practiced and acquired and provides students with a clear statement of competencies expected with each assignment.

Update Grammar Instruction: Recommended that grammar instruction be keyed to issues as they emerge in student writing. Contextualized instruction in grammar is more effective and helps students recognize and correct chronic errors.

Future Action Steps:

Learning Outcomes: Revise ENGL 1101 Learning Outcomes to reflect accurately the changes to ENGL 1101 already initiated.

Integrate Lab: Link all sections of ENGL 1101 to a one hour lab (Area B-1 requirement). This lab will provide students with an additional hour of instruction for focused, supervised revision and editing of their ENGL 1101 writing assignments.

New Grammar Assessment Tool: Implement use of interactive online grammar and mechanics diagnostic and tutorial program that students could access throughout their UWG career. Students' individual competencies in grammar and mechanics can be assessed and interactive instruction provided. Since skills in grammar and mechanics need to be "taught and retaught" (Weaver 17), an online tutorial can supplement classroom instruction. Provides a resource for students during and after completion of ENGL 1101 and 1102, and such programs can provide assessment data.

Assessment

The action steps listed above are administrative in nature and will be assessed as to whether or not they were implemented.

English 1102 (Composition II)

English 1102 serves as a continuation of English 1101 and as an introduction to more sophisticated study of textual analysis and argument. The course primarily uses literary and filmic texts as the basis of reading and writing assignments, thus introducing discipline-specific—but nevertheless transferrable—considerations about the nature of evidence, analysis, and drawing conclusions.

The refocusing of content and methodologies made in English 1101 in light of QEP implementation calls for corresponding action in English 1102. Such refocusing needs to affirm that the course is primarily a writing course rather than an introduction to literature course, and a course that hones skills learned in English 1101 even as it develops increasingly sophisticated reading and writing skills.

Modify Learning Outcomes: Revise the general and specific Course Learning Outcomes to reflect the focus on composition in ENGL 1102.

Sequence Material: Adopt the sequential model of teaching advanced rhetorical skills. Adopt sequential model in teaching research skills and the use of secondary sources.

Update Grading Rubrics: Adopt grading rubrics that reflect the incremental development of specific skills for each formal writing assignment. The rubric for the first graded assignment should explicitly note the skill set assumed by completion of ENGL 1101 as well as add newly developing skills for assessment.

Assessment

An essay exam administered upon completion of ENGL 1102 would assess competency in standard academic English. Assessment would yield a numerical score in rhetorical, grammatical and mechanical categories that should approximate the final grades in ENGL 1102. Online grammar program would track competencies by providing before and after profiles.

Additionally, the action steps listed above have administrative components which will be assessed as to whether they were implemented or not.

Action Step 1c) Develop and Implement a writing MOOC for new freshman

Incoming freshmen will receive a letter highlighting the importance of effective writing skills in their college courses and detailing the significant challenges of ENGL 1101, including the DFW rates and the implications these have for timely progress toward graduation. The letter will also explain the purpose of and the plan for UWG's QEP in writing.

Invite entering freshman to complete a free noncredit bearing MOOC focused on writing:

Entering freshman will be invited to participate in an online MOOC focused on preparing them for success in writing through the core curriculum. The MOOC will be self-paced and open to all students who enter UWG.

Assessment

Administrative assessment: was a MOOC created and deployed?

Students who complete the MOOC will be tracked to see if it influences their performance in ENGL 1101 and 1102. If it does, the MOOC will become an integral part of orientation or a requirement of university attendance.

Action Step 1d) Expand the University Writing Center to support more students

The University Writing Center (UWC) is designed to support and supplement instruction in all disciplines. The staff works with students referred by faculty as well as students who come on their own. Staffed by full-time instructors from the Department of English, assisted by graduate students in their disciplines, the Writing Center seeks to help all writers feel more confident about each element of the writing process from drafting through revision to the final product. To promote the success of the QEP, the UWC will:

Expand writing tutorials to accommodate students in Core Areas B, C, D and E writing courses.

Each semester, the UWC will send announcements of UWC hours and writing workshop schedules to faculty teaching in the Core so that they might inform their students. Further, faculty teaching in the Core Areas B-E will be asked to submit samples of sound academic writing in their disciplines and grading rubrics typical for freshman and sophomore level assignments in their disciplines so that UWC staff will be prepared to address discipline specific as well academic English writing issues. Faculty will also be invited to place specific writing assignments on file each semester and any comments they have on assignment outcomes that would aid UWC staff in assisting students.

Because the QEP of UWG seeks to expand the services of the University Writing Center, the selection and training of tutors in the center will also expand. Tutors from across disciplines will be asked to apply for a tutoring position and will be interviewed by both the UWC Director and the UWC Manager. During the interview process, specific questions will be asked and information gathered so as to determine the level of content ability and tutoring ability of the applicants. Once a determination is made, the UWC Director and the UWC Manager will determine whether or not the applicant is suitable to serve as a tutor in the center. Once this selection occurs, training will be scheduled for each individual tutor selected. That training will not necessarily be content focused, as it is assumed, at that point, each tutor will be expert in his/her field; however, the training, employing nationally recognized tutoring training program(s), will focus on ways in which the tutor can best assist students who will visit the center to utilize its services.

Add staff, including graduate students from various disciplines represented in Core Areas A-E, capable of addressing discipline-specific writing conventions.

As is the practice in English, faculty teaching in Core Areas B-E will be invited to spend some of their weekly office hours in the UWC assisting in writing instruction and/or writing workshops.

Graduate students from disciplines represented by Core Areas B-E will be added to UWC staff to assist in addressing discipline specific writing.

Create UWC “satellites” in the Library.

Since the Library’s recent renovation has attracted so many first-floor users, and because the UWC’s space is limited, some writing assistance in Core Areas A-E will be available in designated areas each week. These appointments will be scheduled through the main UWC office, and staff informed in advance of their tutorials; “walk-in” assistance will be available if appointment times are not filled.

Assessment

Every tutorial appointment will be recorded, including student name, ID, course for which tutoring is requested, and tutorial location so that student use is tracked and can be linked to student performance on writing assessments.

Faculty will be notified which of their students have received UWC assistance with their writing and will be surveyed as to the effectiveness of the guidance provided by the UWC.

Goal 2) Implement a system supporting academic units' efforts to increase online students' ability to write in standard academic English

While strategies used to improve writing competence may be different when delivered in an online environment, the concept and definition of effective writing in standard academic English for undergraduate students should not vary by instructional setting or delivery medium. Therefore, writing competence in an online environment is defined in the same way as writing competence in a traditional face-to-face educational setting.

Academic department chairs, deans and other line managers lead efforts to assure the quality of instruction in all learning environments, including online. Specific responsibilities of these managers in the online environment include:

- 1) ensuring high quality instruction in the online environment (and thereby a positive impact on undergraduate student writing);
- 2) meeting required federal, state, university, and accrediting body guidelines and requirements for online courses, programs, and faculty credentials; and
- 3) evaluating all online instruction and faculty performance to ensure quality and compliance.

Line managers are supported in their efforts by the Online Faculty Development Center (FDC) which provides assistance and training for all courses and faculty using the CourseDen LMS system. The FDC provides guidance to analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate technology-enhanced learning environments at UWG. Priority is given to those courses, programs, or instructors employing fully or partially online instructional delivery methods.

Evaluating undergraduate student improvement in writing competence in online core courses is a multistage process that involves more traditional and in place unit-level assessments of student and faculty performance combined with available data from the LMS. The data analytics potential of the LMS allows for greater affordances than traditional face-to-face classes when it comes to systematically collecting, recording, analyzing, and reacting to large amounts of student-generated data. This data can be evaluated and used to guide instruction and focus improvements on student writing where warranted.

Action Step 2a Better leverage the Faculty Development Center (FDC) to support academic units in their efforts to improve writing competence for students in UWG core courses taught online

Under this action step, the FDC will support the line managers as they work to develop methods and systems for improving undergraduate writing in an online environment for core courses by:

- a) incorporating action steps from the QEP into established faculty training and workshops for online and hybrid courses;
- b) assisting in the development of the MOOC for incoming freshmen;
- c) assisting with the integration of writing assignments into online core courses
- d) improving access to the University Writing Center for online students.

Assessment

This action step will be assessed in two ways. First, administrative assessment will include evaluating whether or not a systematic process was developed to improve delivery of writing instruction in UWG courses taught online. Second, student writing will be evaluated in online core courses with the same assessment tools used in traditional classroom environments, but rendered in online formats (see sections 1a and 1 b). Online students' use of the University Writing Center will be tracked in the same way students in traditional learning environments are tracked (see section 1d).

3) Increase faculty development in pedagogies of writing instruction

As part of a larger effort to enhance teaching and learning at the University of West Georgia, funds were secured in a budget request to establish a UWG Center for Teaching and Learning.

Action Step 3a) Implement a UWG Center for Teaching and Learning with one emphasis being improving student writing

In late 2013, a search was then conducted to hire a director. As part of the job advertisement, the director will “Design, develop, and implement programs to enhance faculty members’ teaching effectiveness using research-based pedagogies that lead to student success, with additional attention to undergraduate student writing, which is the focus of UWG’s Quality Enhancement Plan for SACSCOC.”

This new Center and its director will play a key role in assuring that faculty receive instruction on writing pedagogies and have the tools necessary to assure students acquire competence in writing. The job description for the Director of this center is included at the end of this document to show evidence of the priority for this work within the broader work of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Assessment

The Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning will be responsible for developing, implementing and assessing the quality of programming. Specific assessment tool and methods will be developed as the implementation of the Center continues.

Action Step 3b) Expand University Writing Center to support Faculty Writing Instruction

As noted in action step 1d, the writing center will play a key role in the supporting the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan. In addition to supporting students, the writing center will be expanded to serve faculty who are teaching students in core courses. This expansion will allow faculty to see how their instruction is influencing student writing and help increase the quantity and quality of writing instruction. Specific plans for implementation will be developed by the writing center. This initiative is scheduled for implementation toward the end of the QEP and details about how this will complement the efforts of the Center for Teaching and Learning will be implemented after we have data from the efforts of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Assessment

This initiative will be assessed by documenting the number of faculty engaging in the University Writing Center as well as the student engagement in and performance on writing assignments in courses taught by those faculty members.

4) Improve Support Services to Enhance Student Writing Competence

A key element of implementing this QEP is the notion that writing in the core curriculum is not completed in isolation. It is not solely the responsibility of the Department of English, nor the required courses in English that students must complete. If this QEP is successful, it will be because of a combined effort by faculty and staff in academic and nonacademic areas. As such each of the following academic and student support areas have key roles to play in the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Action Step 4a) The Library

According to the latest Association of College & Research Libraries Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (2011), “libraries must demonstrate their value and document their contributions to overall institutional effectiveness and be prepared to address changes in higher education.” Current concerns in higher education include “[the] expectation for outcomes-based assessment of learning and programs [and] efforts to increase graduation rates...and the importance of pedagogical practices such as research and inquiry-based learning.” (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011)

Ingram Library’s Mission has always included support of institutional goals, and therefore it goes without saying that we enthusiastically endorse the University of West Georgia’s Quality Enhancement goals: to improve students’ ability to write in academic English. The Library is deeply committed to this effort because proficiency in use of academic English is a foundational skill without which UWG students cannot effectively and efficiently utilize library resources. First, most of the resources the Library owns are written in standard English, including books, periodicals and online databases, and second, a student’s ability to compose an effective search strategy which will extract from our databases the kinds of document citations needed in order to complete academic projects, is rooted in his/her knowledge of vocabulary appropriate to scholarly research. Furthermore, many studies have demonstrated that the act of reading itself--because it exposes the reader to work written in standard English--helps the reader improve his/her vocabulary and grammar knowledge; throughout our history, we have provided recreational reading in addition to curriculum-appropriate materials.

The ability to use academic English is already a key factor in all of library services.

The major effort of the Library in support of the QEP will be to focus and refine support initiatives in the following areas:

Reference Services: develop, display and publicize a new and prominent collection of excellent examples of good student writing to which students can refer (both in print and online) and use interactions at the reference desk to promote use of academic English. This collection will also include collections of essays written by professionals, books on the craft of writing and writing style guides such as “Elements of Style.” Librarians have many opportunities to encourage appropriate use of language while teaching students how to search for library materials. Student workers who help library users locate basic materials can receive training to emphasize the importance of using academic English to find sources, which benefits the student employees as well as the students they are helping. Student workers could be trained to refer students to the Writing Center for help with papers, and the reference area could also be a location for Writing Center handouts.

Library Space: privilege the use of collaborative spaces on the renovated 1st floor by students working with tutors and faculty members or other services, such as the Writing Center, and commit ourselves to modeling good writing by ensuring that all signage, memos, publications and communications from Library are written in standard English. The library’s recent renovation was designed to create space for the way students learn. In addition to the collaborative spaces on the first and second floor, the third floor provides quiet space where students can work individually, providing a place for them to think, reflect, and write. As Ingram’s new spaces evolve, possible projects include having students from the English and Art departments select quotes about writing to place creatively and strategically on walls and in display areas throughout the building.

Outreach: continue to offer and market, including using appropriate social media, an increased number of library programs and speakers, providing students with more opportunities to hear academic English and engage in scholarly discourse (e.g. the Social Sciences lecture series, Melson Society events such as the Civil War reading series, the recent George Washington exhibit). We will also continue to schedule and actively promote activities related to writing, such as National Novel Writing Month (<http://www.nanowrimo.org/>), which we sponsored with the Writing Center.

Special Collections: focus on correct use of language in finding aids. While some primary sources are not written or recorded in standard English, all finding aids are, so appropriate use of language will continue to be emphasized here, as well as in Reference Services, when students and researchers search for and use Special Collections materials.

Instructional Services (IS): in all classes, credit and non-credit, continue to emphasize the necessity of using academic English and scholarly vocabulary to be successful in finding

appropriate materials. The library's Academic Research and the Library course (LIBR1101) addresses use of scholarly sources and typically includes a great deal of writing and reflection as part of the research process, providing plenty of opportunity for emphasis on using appropriate language. IS is currently reviewing and updating the content of this course, so there is opportunity for creating a specific learning outcome related to writing in our course objectives. In addition, IS provides research workshops in other classes. Our freshman and sophomore-level workshops depend on students' use of academic English in order to successfully search and find materials and resources, and junior and senior level classes benefit from students' understanding and ability to use academic English. The QEP's focus on use of language across campus will naturally enhance these workshops and their learning outcomes, and librarians will emphasize the importance of using academic English.

While all areas and services of the library provide specific opportunities for contributing to QEP goals, there are also many opportunities for collaborative projects within and outside of the library to further enhance the QEP. Some possible ways to do this include:

Highlight student success: recognize outstanding student research and writing projects including (as other libraries have successfully done) creating a Library-sponsored award for the best researched paper or project in events such as Research Day, Big Night, and Honors Convocation. This work could be highlighted in the library and on the library's website and added to our collection of samples of good student writing.

Bring "Readers Advisory" activities into our array of services: encourage recreational and general interest reading, and the habit of lifelong learning, by reviving the "Recommended by Faculty & Staff" book displays; pointing out excellent recent articles on timely topics using the library's social media channels; and spotlighting faculty publications. These will serve as models for good writing as well as help students generate ideas for their own writing assignments.

The goals of the QEP provide many opportunities for Ingram Library to contribute to the success of our students, to cultivate the beneficial effects of reading in their lives, and facilitate our own long-term goal of working more collaboratively with other campus units. Clearly, many of the library's normal activities and programming will be enhanced by focusing on the QEP, and we will almost certainly think of even more ways to support it as the implementation of the Plan unfolds.

Assessment

Specific improvements in each area will be measured to assure they were implemented. Additionally, their impact on student learning and student engagement will be measured by the Library through assessments used in LIBR1101 and library instruction in other classes.

References

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2011). Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>

Action Step 4b) Honors College and Transdisciplinary Programs

All of the areas in our college are fully committed to the University's Quality Enhancement goal to improve students' ability to write in standard academic English.

For the Honors College, which includes the Advanced Academy of Georgia, proficiency in standard academic English is necessary for all Honors students, as a student's writing ability is directly related to many of the core philosophies of Honors education in general and, more specifically, is also essential to several of the Learning Outcomes that we have for all Honors courses. The National Collegiate Honors Council identifies fourteen core philosophies of Honors education: Academic Excellence, Challenge, Rigor, Risk, Creativity, Innovation, Interdisciplinarity, Community, Leadership, Reflection, Motivation, Curiosity, Integrity, and Service (nchchonors.org). Proficient writing is integral to successful integration and achievement of many of these core philosophies in an Honors learning experience. Additionally, the Honors College has five learning outcomes that are incorporated into our Honors courses:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to examine topics and issues from diverse perspectives.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in higher order abstract, creative and critical thinking.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to explore, and if feasible, experiment with possible applications of their learning toward the solution of "real world" problems.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to explore and conduct discipline-specific independent research and creative activities using a variety of resources.
5. Students will demonstrate superior oral and written communication skills.

Again, proficient writing is fundamental to the effective execution of these learning objectives in our courses. This is because proficient writing must be achieved before students can be successfully engaged in learning experiences of a higher order. This definition was created by the subcommittee on the Honors College and Transdisciplinary Programs' support services based on the foundations of Honors education both nationally and at UWG, and the basic tenants of interdisciplinary studies. The work of the subcommittee was conducted by Dr. Michael Hester (Dean), Ms. Melanie Hildebrandt (Director of Undergraduate Research), Ms. Christie Williams (Interim Director of the AAG), Ms. Laura Lamb (Associate Director of the AAG), Dr. Aran MacKinnon (Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies), and Ms. Sylvia Shortt (Associate Director of International Programs). As this definition was developed by the

subcommittee, each member shared the definition and our unit's direction with other faculty and staff in our academic area.

Current Practices

Most Honors courses are core classes and so are typically completed by freshmen and sophomore Honors students. Based on the expected Learning Outcomes for Honors courses, written communication is an integral component to every Honors course. However, the current teaching practices will vary among Honors courses, as we offer Honors courses in all of the other colleges at UWG, and many of the departments. Thus, the specific practices will depend on the college and department that are offering a particular Honors course.

Additionally, when students and faculty agree on an Honors contract for a regular course, the additional required work is typically a research paper, an extension of a paper, or some type of written critique or analysis of previous work in that discipline. These Honors contract assignments provide the students with one-to-one mentoring relationships with their professors where they are actively engaged in improving their research and writing abilities.

In order to enhance the quality of students' writing ability we plan to implement the following:

1. Encourage all Honors faculty to include rigorous writing assignments and set high expectations for those assignments.
2. Create more specific assessment rubric for writing to be included in all course syllabi for Honors classes in the core.

Assessment

We will compare the course syllabi to those previously used to determine if faculty are incorporating more rigorous writing assignments in their Honors courses and adhering to the newly established rubric for Honors courses. We will also analyze the student course evaluations for those courses that have included these types of assignments and new rubric. These data will be collected by staff of the Honors College. The course syllabi will be collected at the beginning of each semester and the student evaluations will be collected at the end of each semester.

Action Step 4c) Extended Learning

Overview of Current Practices

The Distance and Distributed Education (DDEC) is a centralized unit that provides administrative support to technology-enhanced, hybrid, online, and off-campus instruction across the disciplines at UWG. The UWG Newnan Center staff is specifically dedicated to the success of those attending at the campus' only off-campus center, while UWG eCore students and faculty also receive additional support services on top of those provided by each affiliate campus.

Extended Learning teams work together with units across campus to provide stakeholders a wealth of technology tools, professional development opportunities, support services, and assessments that work to enhance writing across the curriculum. In addition to the multitude of traditional face-to-face campus-based services such as those provided by the UWG Writing Center and the EXCEL Center for Academic Success, the UWG Online Student Guide provides a comprehensive look at student services for online students.

Current Practices

1. A campus learning management system that includes a robust online discussion board tool, as well as email, announcement, online grading, chat tools, a whiteboard, assessments, and other tools (currently powered by Desire2Learn). Specifically, the online Discussion Board allows for asynchronous written exchange in an online threaded format, journaling, peer-review, or a blog format whereby students may comment on one another's work. The Assignments tool allows for students to submit their essays or papers, with multiple drafts and peer review, if the instructor allows (<http://westga.view.usg.edu>).
2. A campus-wide wiki tool (powered by Wikispaces). The wiki allows students and instructors to easily collaborate virtually on singular written documents or a comprehensive website. The tool can also be used for journaling and student portfolios (<http://www.wiki.westga.edu/>).
3. Campus-wide tools to make synchronous virtual consultations, troubleshooting, and tutoring possible. For example, Blackboard Collaborative and Blackboard IM allow participants to see one-another's computer screen, review presentations or papers in real-time, have discussions via audio over IP or phone-bridges, alternate presenters on-the-fly, share video, all with the capability to use whiteboard and virtual mark-up tools.

In addition to individual instructors who often use the tools for virtual office hours and synchronous instruction, multiple units on campus use these tools for tutoring. These users range from academic support departments like the EXCEL Center for Academic Success (http://www.westga.edu/excel/index_7316.php) to individual programs like the Computer Science Department (<http://www.cs.westga.edu/csx/>).

4. For fully online students, including those enrolled in eCore courses, 24/7 virtual tutoring and a writing center option are provided via Smarthinking's hosted services. Smarthinking provides tutoring in a host of subjects, including but not limited to Bilingual Math, Reading, and Writing. Writing support is available through Smarthinking's Online Writing Lab and through live tutoring. The Online Writing Lab provides asynchronous support for students to receive a detailed, personalized critique of any written assignment, such as an essay, paragraph, report, personal statement, cover letter, resume, or creative work. Live writing tutors are also available on-demand, for pre-scheduled sessions, or for asynchronous question submission. Essays or questions that are submitted are returned within 24 hours. Live tutors are available to assist students with specific writing questions such as pre-writing techniques, research strategies, documentation, and grammar and mechanics. For both options, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL) writing specialists are also available. Smarthinking's academic resources include a comprehensive Writer's Guide and ESL Writer's Guide, as well. Smarthinking part-time tutors include active college faculty, retired faculty, and adjuncts of which 90% have a Master's or Ph.D. in the discipline they tutor. The remaining 10% are graduate assistants with teaching experience (<http://www.smarthinking.com>).
5. For online students enrolled in eCore, Turnitin provides multiple helpful products. Turnitin's originality checker is an online plagiarism-detection service that can be used in a formative assessment to help students learn how to avoid plagiarism and improve their writing. Turnitin's GradeMark can save time and improve an instructor's feedback through online grading where standard and customized marks appear directly on the student's paper. The new eRater product (now in Beta) works in conjunction with GradeMark, auto-marking grammatical errors. PeerMark can engage students in the writing process by providing structured, anonymous feedback of other student's written work (<http://www.turnitin.com>).
6. Because UWG is not only an eCore affiliate but also the state-wide administrator for the program, the Extended Learning team has influence over administration of the eCore curriculum that it does not have over other non-eCore curriculum. For online eCore

courses, the Extended Learning teams assist in learning outcome assessment and in-depth data analysis directly and indirectly tied the UWG QEP goals. For example, see the eCore Outcomes Assessment Matrix http://ecore.usg.edu/2013_factbook/page77.pdf.

7. Extensive professional development and support is offered via multiple modalities, to help instructors most effectively use all tools and resources provided. Instructor support is offered online, by phone, via instant-messaging/virtual helpdesk and desktop sharing tools, face-to-face, and by webinar. Both local helpdesk and out-sourced 24/hr support is available. Assistance is provided synchronously, either by scheduled events or just-in-time, in group workshops or individual consultations. Asynchronous options include home-grown online tutorials, in addition to hosted professional training materials on a variety of writing and writing assessment tools via Atomic Learning (<http://www.atomiclearning.com/highed/browse?page=tutorials>).
8. The various UWG Online and eCore student orientation options, and the UWG Newnan website, introduce students to the various support services at their disposal (http://uwgonline.westga.edu/assetsDept/distance/student_services.pdf and <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php>). In addition, the Extended Learning teams communicate services and support tips throughout the year through email listservs, website announcements, various social media outlets, webinars, and face-to-face consultations when possible.

Assessments of Current Practices

There is ample evidence that shows current practices to be effective:

- Usage reports, user satisfaction surveys, anecdotal discussions with faculty and students, focus groups, random phone surveys, etc.:
- Data demonstrating that a high percentage of our online eCore students meet or exceed performance on learning objectives related to QEP goals:
- Grade distributions that are comparable to their face-to-face counterparts
- High Regents Exam pass rates

Measures used to assess current practices include learning outcome assessments in eCore courses, anonymous online surveys, focus groups, random phone surveys, and informal discussions with users.

Student development activities will be enhanced to assist students in understanding UWG's definition of standard English and expectations about writing at in the core. This will include self-paced tutorials, information on plagiarism, and writing across the core curriculum, to be included in online student orientation resources and online courses.

Extended Learning will work with others across campus to implement online curriculum changes or assessments, as deemed desirable by the respective units.

Assessment

Usage rates and Satisfaction surveys including comparison studies looking at student's performance on key indicators, as defined by the general QEP plan. For example, for the Smarthinking and Turnitin pilots, one could have specific outcomes-based learning assignments on which to go back and review success rates for students in the classes pre-usage and post-usage. How, when, and by whom will these data be collected? Each term, for a period of 5 years, by the Extended Learning teams and collaborators.

Rubrics or Measurements

Include the rubric or measurement used to assess the effectiveness of new or replacement practices.

To measure: Faculty will have an increased awareness of how to integrate and assess writing in the online classroom environment. We will conduct end of offering surveys and check back with instructors within 6 weeks of completion, to assess whether they effectively implemented anything that they learned.

To measure: Students will have an increased awareness of how UWG defines students' ability to write standard English. Within our LMS, we will ask willing instructors to post our online tutorial and a quiz to assess students' understanding afterwards.

Summary

The evidence contained in this document demonstrates the institution's ability to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP. One point of strength in the plan is a specific plan to assess each action step in terms of administrative assessment and performance assessment (student learning assessment wherever possible). The assessments (summarized in Table 1 below and described in the sections above), provide clear evidence that the university has taken the

development and implementation processes of the Quality Enhancement Plan seriously and is making it an integral part of its future budget requests and operations.

The operational plan for the University of West Georgia's Quality Enhancement Plan is outlined in Table 1 on the following pages. It includes a year by year outline of the implementation of the action steps. A QEP impact report will be prepared annually based on the outline below.

Table 1: UWG QEP Operational Plan
Goals, Action Steps, Budget, Timeline, and Assessments

Goals/ Action Steps	Anticipated Budget and Purpose	Implementation Year <i>Budget Amount (in thousands)</i>					Administrative Assessment	Student Performance Assessment
		14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19		
Goal 1) Integrate writing throughout the core curriculum								
1a) Revise Area B, Institutional Priorities, of the core curriculum and assure core areas A-E reflect an emphasis on writing competence	Anticipated New Faculty lines (\$300,000 over 5 years)	100	200	300	300	300	Was the core revised as outlined?	Course-level assessments in areas A-E
1b) Revise English 1101 and 1102	None	X	X				Were the courses revised?	1101, 1102, exit assessment and p/f rate
1c) Develop and implement a writing MOOC for new freshman	MOOC Development and Student Communications (\$30,000 first year, \$5,000 each year after)	30	5	5	5	5	Was the MOOC developed and Implemented?	Student performance in ENGL 1101 and 1102. Did student MOOC completers outperform noncompleters? (controlling for other variables)
1d) Expand the University Writing Center to support more students	Additional staff (\$150,000)	50	75	75	100	150	Were staff members hired?	Tutorial Appointments numbers and links to writing assessment scores.
Goal 2) Implement a system supporting academic units' efforts to increase online students' ability to write in standard academic English								
2a) Better leverage the Online Faculty Development (FDC) to support academic units in their efforts to improve	\$30,000 to support module development and implementation	30	X	X			Was a systematic process developed to improve delivery of writing instruction in	Student writing will be evaluated in online core courses with the same assessment tools used in traditional classroom

Table 1: UWG QEP Operational Plan
Goals, Action Steps, Budget, Timeline, and Assessments

Goals/ Action Steps	Anticipated Budget and Purpose	Implementation Year					Administrative Assessment	Student Performance Assessment
		Budget Amount (in thousands)						
		14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19		
writing competence for students in UWG online core courses							UWG courses taught online?.	environments, but rendered in online formats (See 1 A-E above).
Goal 3) Increase faculty development in pedagogies of writing instruction								
3a) Implement a UWG Center for Teaching and Learning with one emphasis being improving student writing.	Center was funded in 2013	X	X				Has the Teaching and Learning Center implemented a plan to improve writing instruction?	Usage statistics, faculty engagement, Student learning outcomes performance of faculty who participate in development. Specific assessment tools will be developed by the Center Director to track the improvement of writing instruction for faculty teaching in the core curriculum.
3b) Expand University Writing Center to support Faculty Writing Instruction	Included in 1D above			x	X	X	Were strategies implemented?	Number of faculty engaged, satisfaction surveys, usage statistics and measures of effectiveness of instructional strategies implemented.
Goal 4) Improve support services to enhance student writing competence								
4a) The Library	No Additional Funding Needed	X	X	X	X	X	Were the improvements implemented?	Student engagement will be measured in each of the support activities that will be enhanced.
4b) Honors College and Transdisciplinary Programs	No Additional Funding Needed	X	X	X	X	X	Were the improvements implemented?	Student writing assignment scores and requirements, rubrics, and students meeting new

Table 1: UWG QEP Operational Plan
Goals, Action Steps, Budget, Timeline, and Assessments

Goals/ Action Steps	Anticipated Budget and Purpose	Implementation Year					Administrative Assessment	Student Performance Assessment
		Budget Amount (in thousands)						
		14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19		
								honors guidelines.
4c) Extended Learning	Purchase of software and implementation (\$57,000 for the first year \$75,000 following years)	57	75	75	75	75	Were the improvements implemented?	Use of SmartThinking (and similar software) following implementation.
Macro QEP Assessments		X	X	X	X	X		NSSE, FSSE
Incremental Recurring Funding Needed by Year		267	355	455	480	530	Total annual funding following Implementation: \$530,000	
Accumulated Funding Allocated to QEP		267	622	1,077	1,557	2,087	Total funding over five years: \$2,087,000	

Works Cited

- Addison, Joanne and Sharon James McGee. "Writing in High School/Writing in College: Research Trends and Future Directions." *CCC* 62.1 (September 2010): 147-179.
- Appleby, Arthur N. and Judith A. Langer. "What is Happening in the Teaching of Writing?" *English Journal* 98.5 (2009): 18-28.
- National Commission on Writing. *Writing: A Powerful Message from State Government*. College Board, 2009.
- . *Writing: A Ticket to Work . . . or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders*. College Board, 2004.
- National Survey Student Engagement. *Promoting Engagement for All Students: The Imperative to Look Within, 2008 Results*. Bloomington: Indiana U Center for Postsecondary Research. 2009.
- Weaver, Constance. "Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing." *English Journal* 85.7 (November 1996): 15-24.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

QEP Job Description SACS Liaison

According to the SACS Commission on Colleges: “The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for the following:

- 1) Ensuring that compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.
- 2) Notifying the Commission in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of the Commission.
- 3) Familiarizing faculty, staff, and students with the Commission's accrediting policies and procedures, and with particular sections of the accrediting standards and Commission policies that have application to certain aspects of the campus (e.g., library, continuing education) especially when such documents are adopted or revised.
- 4) Serving as a contact person for Commission staff. This includes encouraging institutional staff to route routine inquiries about the *Principles of Accreditation* and accreditation policies and processes through the Accreditation Liaison, who will contact Commission staff, if necessary, and ensuring that email from the Commission office does not get trapped in the institution's spam filter.
- 5) Coordinating the preparation of the annual profiles and any other reports requested by the Commission.
- 6) Serving as a resource person during the decennial review process and helping prepare for and coordinating reaffirmation and other accrediting visits.
- 7) Ensuring that electronic institutional data collected by the Commission is accurate and timely.
- 8) Maintaining a file of all accreditation materials, such as, reports related to the decennial review; accreditation committee reports; accreditation manuals, standards, and policies; schedules of all visits; and correspondence from accrediting offices.”
<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf> – extracted 7/8/2013)

Specific responsibilities for the SACS Liaison related to the University of West Georgia QEP include:

Lead institutional efforts to:

- 1) Select a QEP topic
- 2) Analyze historical assessment data
- 3) Identify key issues that rise from the assessment data
- 4) Appoint and charge the QEP implementation committee
- 5) Select the QEP Director
- 6) Form the QEP Implementation committee until the QEP Director is appointed

- 7) Assure that action items and assessment plans are adequate for SACS compliance
- 8) Receive regular feedback from the implementation committee regarding the implementation of the QEP
- 9) Receive annual reports on the progress of the QEP
- 10) Serve as a member of the QEP implementation committee

APPENDIX B

QEP Job Description QEP Director

Position Summary

The QEP director at the University of West Georgia will lead implementation activities related to or associated with the QEP. The Director will also serve as the chair of the QEP Implementation Committee. In these roles the Director will fill the following responsibilities:

- 1) Serve as the chief spokesperson and advocate for the QEP during its implementation
- 2) Work with faculty and administrators across campus to assure QEP plans and actions are implemented and assessed
- 3) Speak with outside groups about the QEP and its impact on UWG student learning
- 4) Collect, analyze and summarize assessment data on QEP initiatives
- 5) Prepare an annual summary of QEP activities including but not limited to the assessment of administrative actions, budget allocations, and student learning outcomes
- 6) Advocate for the QEP in the institution's budget development process

Qualities required for the position:

The QEP Director will be a senior member of the faculty who has specific interest and competence in the QEP topic. This interest and competence may be manifest through academic credentials, research activities, scholarly engagement, or artistic work related to the QEP topic. The QEP Director will have the capacity to work with diverse populations (particularly diversity in philosophical approaches and instructional preferences). The QEP Director shall be comfortable leading individuals with divergent interests toward shared goals. The Director shall be comfortable working with the assessment of student learning and open to a variety of assessment approaches.

Time Requirements and Compensation

The workload for this position will vary from year to year depending on the initiatives planned for that year. It is anticipated that this work required for this position will be offset by lightened teaching responsibilities and a stipend for work on the summer months when the faculty member will not be on contract. The summer stipend and workload will be negotiated on a yearly basis.

APPENDIX C

Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning

The University of West Georgia (UWG) is accepting applications and nominations for a full-time, faculty-ranked or professional staff administrator for the position of Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Hiring the director is the first step in establishing the new center, which is expected to foster a sustainable culture of teaching and learning excellence, benefitting faculty and students alike. Building on Boyer's observation that "good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners," the director will facilitate faculty growth and development with research-based pedagogies (e.g., the flipped classroom, problem-based learning) that promote inclusive and interactive learning and help students to become critical and creative thinkers.

In collaboration with key stakeholders, the new director will assume the leadership role in planning, implementing, monitoring, and continuously improving the new Center for Teaching and Learning. The director will be responsible for building resources and programming for faculty that recognize developmental needs across the career continuum (e.g., new faculty orientation, first year programming, promotion and tenure support), as well as enhancing knowledge and skills with assessment, educational research, program evaluation, and discipline-specific instructional strategies. The new director is encouraged to facilitate faculty learning communities, such that faculty expertise is tapped, shared, and celebrated within and across academic units. Faculty mentoring faculty within the institution and through connections with the state and national CTL community is a highly desirable outcome of the capacity-building focus of the new director.

The CTL Director will report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Duties and responsibilities include:

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop the CTL's strategic plan and lead the establishment and growth of the new center.
- Oversee CTL day-to-day operations and budget.
- Collaborate with the Online Faculty Development Center and Office of Research and Sponsored Projects to enrich faculty professional development opportunities.
- Interface with university administrators (faculty-ranked and professional staff) and university faculty to identify interests and conceptualize faculty development programs.
- Design, develop, and implement programs to enhance faculty members' teaching effectiveness using research-based pedagogies that lead to student success, with additional attention to undergraduate student writing, which is the focus of UWG's Quality Enhancement Plan for SACSCOC.
- Consult with academic programs to strengthen assessment and program evaluation.

- Mentor faculty to pursue institutional, system-wide, and external teaching awards and programs (e.g., College/School teaching awards, Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards, Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellows Program).

Required Qualifications: The ideal candidate must have (1) a Ph.D. or equivalent in a relevant discipline, (2) significant and accomplished teaching in higher education, (3) excellent interpersonal and written communication skills, (4) track record of fostering collaboration and working successfully with faculty and administrators, and (5) administrative experience in an educational setting. The ideal candidate will have demonstrable knowledge of the following: (1) theories of learning, (2) research-based pedagogies that strengthen student success, (3) assessment and program evaluation, and (4) organizational development, program consultation, and group and team-building strategies.

Additional required qualifications for those applying for the position under the faculty-ranked administrator classification: Verified background and achievements in a discipline within the university that would qualify the candidate as a tenured faculty member.

Preferred Qualifications: Preferred candidates will (1) qualify for tenure upon appointment; see [Georgia Board of Regents Policy 8.3.7.4 Award of Tenure](#), (2) understand current issues in higher education, particularly those that influence the work of publicly engaged, regional comprehensive institutions, (3) recognize the role of online learning in achieving institutional goals, and (4) have experience procuring external funding for programming that supports the instructional mission of educational institutions.

APPENDIX D
University of West Georgia
Quality Enhancement Plan - Implementation Committee
Committee Charge - March, 2013

SACS requires that institutions develop, implement, and assess a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that improves the quality of student learning or the environment surrounding student learning. Over the last three years, UWG has been engaged in selecting and refining the topic for the QEP and the associated outcome and objectives. Many people across campus have been engaged in drafting documents, providing assessment data, responding to surveys, and sharing information and proposals. The Strategic Planning Committee of the University Senate and the SACS Liaison led this effort. As UWG prepares to submit its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for review by an on-site SACS reaffirmation committee, this committee is established and charged to complete the following:

To be completed by November, 2013:

3. Complete the QEP document, assuring that it meets the principles outlined by SACS, and present it to the Faculty Senate Strategic Planning Committee and Faculty Senate;
4. Establish a budget by year of implementation;
5. Review, revise, and strengthen assessments for the student learning outcome and goals;
6. Work with University Communications and Marketing and students and faculty from various disciplines to develop and implement a branding and marketing campaign to introduce the QEP to the campus community;

Following the adoption of the final document and continuing through 2019 (the duration of the QEP):

7. Work with faculty, the senate, administration, and staff to implement the operational objectives;
8. Coordinate the collection of assessment results related to the student learning outcome; and
9. Provide an annual written summary of students' progress toward accomplishing the student learning outcome and UWG's progress toward accomplishing the operational objectives of the QEP.

This is a standing administrative committee that will continue through the duration of the QEP. It is anticipated the committee will also play a key role in selecting the topic for UWG's next QEP.

Committee Membership	
Administrative Appointments	
QEP Director	To Be Named
Director of Institutional Research and Planning	Catherine Jenks
Student Services and Enrollment Management	Helen Diamond-Steele
SACS Liaison	Jon Anderson
Faculty Representatives	
College of Education	Lynn Steed
Richards College of Business	Heather Bono
College of Science and Mathematics	Scott Gordon
College of Social Sciences	Amber Smallwood
College of Arts and Humanities	Debra MacComb/Bonnie Adams
School of Nursing	Bonnie Bar
Ingram Library	Andrea Stanfield
Extended Learning	Jason Huett
Honors College and Transdisciplinary Studies	TBD
Student Representatives	
1 – Named Annually by SGA	
2 – Named Annually by SGA	
3 – Named Annually by SGA	
Representative from Outside the Institution	
Alum	Cindy Saxon
Community Member	Trent North

**Core Area A1 Learning Outcomes Assessment
ENGL 1101 Assessment Rubric**

SCORE	4 = Exemplary (Exceeds Expectations)	3 = Proficient (Meets Expectations)	2 = Developing (Does Not Meet Expectations)	1 = Unsatisfactory (Failing)
Grade Level	Grade Level A (100-90)	Grade Level B/C (89-70)	Grade Level D (69-60)	Grade Level F (59- Below)
Learning Outcomes	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria
I: Adapt written communication to specific purposes and audiences. Target: Writing in Standard Edited English	Exhibits nearly error free grammar and spelling with no major sentence level errors evident	Exhibits sufficient control of standard written English so that grammatical and spelling errors are only occasional and not evidence of patterned errors	Exhibits significant patterns of major grammatical errors throughout, along with extensive spelling error patterns	Exhibits insufficient control of standard written English, resulting in substantial errors that cause confusion or incoherence in the development of ideas
II. Synthesize and logically arrange written presentations.	Exhibits persuasive logical development and organization	Exhibits an understanding of logical	Exhibits limited understanding and execution	Exhibits no substantial evidence of logical

<p>Target: Writing well organized, logically arranged paragraphs</p>	<p>throughout; ideas are consistently synthesized and arranged</p>	<p>development and organization but lacks consistent synthesis and arrangement of ideas</p>	<p>of logical development and organization; marginal synthesis and arrangement of ideas.</p>	<p>development or organization; no coherent synthesis and arrangement of ideas</p>
<p>III. Recognize and identify appropriate topics for presentation in writing.</p> <p>Target: Writing with a thesis</p>	<p>Produces an argumentative thesis that demonstrates independent critical thinking</p>	<p>Produces a thesis but one that does not consistently reflect independent critical thinking</p>	<p>Produces descriptive writing in support of a specific topic, but does not develop an argumentative thesis</p>	<p>Fails to articulate or develop a thesis and fails to write consistently and descriptively in support of a specific topic</p>

**Core Area A1 Learning Outcomes Assessment
ENGL 1102 Assessment Rubric**

SCORE	4 = Exemplary (Exceeds Expectations)	3 = Proficient (Meets Expectations)	2 = Developing (Does Not Meet Expectations)	1 = Unsatisfactory (Failing)
Grade Level	Grade Level A (100-90)	Grade Level B/C (89-70)	Grade Level D (69-60)	Grade Level F (59- Below)
Learning Outcomes	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria
I: Adapt written communication to specific purposes and audiences. Target: Writing in Standard Edited English	Exhibits nearly error free grammar and spelling with no major sentence level errors evident	Exhibits sufficient control of standard written English so that grammatical and spelling errors are only occasional and not evidence of patterned errors	Exhibits significant patterns of major grammatical errors throughout, along with extensive spelling error patterns	Exhibits insufficient control of standard written English, resulting in substantial errors that cause confusion or incoherence in the development of ideas
II. Synthesize and logically arrange written presentations. Target: Writing well organized, logically arranged paragraphs	Exhibits persuasive logical development and organization throughout; ideas are consistently	Exhibits an understanding of logical development and organization but lacks consistent	Exhibits limited understanding and execution of logical development and	Exhibits no substantial evidence of logical development or organization; no coherent synthesis and

	synthesized and arranged	synthesis and arrangement of ideas	organization; marginal synthesis and arrangement of ideas.	arrangement of ideas
III. Recognize and identify appropriate topics for presentation in writing. Target: Writing with a thesis	Produces an argumentative thesis that demonstrates independent critical thinking	Produces a thesis but one that does not consistently reflect independent critical thinking	Produces descriptive writing in support of a specific topic, but does not develop an argumentative thesis	Fails to articulate or develop a thesis and fails to write consistently and descriptively in support of a specific topic