

University of NORTH ALABAMA



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN **BUILDING SUCCESS THROUGH DISCOVERY**

Imagine • Investigate • Communicate

Academic Research Literacy at UNA



HISTORY IN THE MAKING

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

2011 - 2012



University of NORTH ALABAMA

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BUILDING SUCCESS THROUGH DISCOVERY

CRITICAL THINKING

ORAL COMMUNICATION

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

INFORMATION LITERACY

ACADEMIC READING

PROBLEM SOLVING

CREATIVITY



IMAGINE



INVESTIGATE



COMMUNICATE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research literature and faculty experience reveal that students' critical thinking, problem-solving, independence, and creativity are enhanced through participation in academic research. Surveys of University of North Alabama constituency groups - faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, employers, and community members - noted that these skills are needed to bolster University of North Alabama's (UNA) students' potential for success. At the heart of academic research is *discovery*; the sense of being curious, asking a question, exploring the possible answers, and explaining the results. UNA's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will encourage students to *discover* through the application of academic research, thus *building* for *success* in their future careers. UNA's QEP, entitled ***Building Success through Discovery: Imagine, Investigate, Communicate***, focuses on ***academic research literacy*** which comprises the specific reading, data and information collection, analysis, and presentation skills (written or oral) required to successfully participate in problem-solving within any given discipline and career.

Building Success through Discovery will build on the English 112/122 research foundation that is currently a part of the University's curriculum and infuse academic research skill development at three successive stages in students' academic programs. The goal of this strategy is to extend the ***academic research literacy*** process throughout each student's college career with little or no interruption in practice and application between the freshman year and graduation.

As a part of the QEP implementation process, students will acquire an understanding of the research process in their discipline, be expected to apply these skills, and consequently, increase their ability to analyze, think critically, and make informed decisions. A formal assessment process has been developed to determine overall effectiveness of the program. Student success will be determined by assessing four learning outcomes that are associated with the overall research process from the questioning phase through reporting results. As a result of this program, the University anticipates that students will be able to:

1. Formulate a clear research question, thesis statement, research problem, or hypothesis;
2. Collect information or data relevant to the research problem;
3. Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem; and
4. Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium.

Baseline assessment data will be acquired for all students in English 112/122. The QEP student learning outcomes will also be integrated into academic programs and courses in three levels: Level I – 100, 200 or 300 level classes; Level II – 200, 300 or 400 level classes; and Level III – 300 or 400 level classes. By systematically incorporating ***Building Success through Discovery*** into the existing academic programs, departments and faculty members will be able to more effectively instruct students in the academic research traditions of their discipline.

In summary, UNA's Quality Enhancement Plan will focus on developing an understanding of the structured academic research process through the 1) ability to clearly identify and state a problem, 2) identify, gather, evaluate, and use appropriate data and information sources, and 3) communicate the results of the investigations in a discipline-appropriate manner. Over the course of this multi-year project, the University seeks to ingrain ***academic research literacy*** into all academic programs and to encourage all undergraduates in ***Building Success through Discovery***.

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I. Overview

A. *Building Success through Discovery: Imagine, Investigate, Communicate*

The University of North Alabama's (UNA) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), entitled ***Building Success through Discovery: Imagine, Investigate, Communicate***, focuses on ***academic research literacy*** which comprises the specific reading, data and information collection, analysis, and presentation skills (written or oral) required to successfully participate in problem-solving within any given discipline. *Academic* as in learning and related activities; *research*, the systematic investigation into a topic or idea; and *literacy*, the mastery of specific conventions. UNA's QEP encourages students to ask questions, think creatively, and ***discover*** through research thereby enhancing their potential ***success*** in their careers and lives. Research has shown that participation in academic research enhances students' ability to ***imagine*** what they would like to learn and understand, ***investigate*** and find the answers, and then ***communicate*** their findings in a professional manner for others to understand.

UNA's interest in ***academic research literacy*** builds upon its tradition of excellence in teaching supported by disciplinary research. The University's Mission Statement supports the selection of ***academic research literacy*** as an appropriate QEP topic.

As a regional, state-assisted institution of higher education, the University of North Alabama pursues its mission of engaging in teaching, research, and service in order to provide educational opportunities for students, an environment for discovery and creative accomplishment, and a variety of outreach activities meeting the professional, civic, social, cultural, and economic development needs of our region in the context of a global community. (UNA, 2007, p. 3)

To become literate in academic research, an individual must develop a variety of skills that include, but are not limited to: critical thinking, problem-solving, self-direction, information and data analysis, academic reading, communication (written and oral), independence, and creativity. Allowing students to develop their academic research skills will enhance their

knowledge and experience as well as encourage them to *imagine, investigate, and communicate*.

B. The University of North Alabama

Over the course of its history, the University of North Alabama has developed into a thriving comprehensive regional university providing high quality educational opportunities to qualified students. Founded in 1830, UNA traces its roots to LaGrange College, becoming the first state-chartered institution to operate in Alabama. In 1872, UNA became the first state-supported teachers' college south of the Ohio River and one of the first co-ed colleges in the nation. UNA, located in the northwest corner of Alabama in the city of Florence, occupies a campus of over 200 acres and is surrounded by a two-county metropolitan region of over 144,000 residents.

The University offers 35 undergraduate and 16 graduate programs through its four colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Nursing and Allied Health (For a complete list of undergraduate academic programs go to <http://www.una.edu/academics/major-list.html>). The quality of academic programs is affirmed by 11 national accreditations, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Enrollment at UNA has increased steadily through the years with a fall 2011 enrollment of 7,182 students comprised of 6,185 undergraduate students and 997 graduate students (ORIPA, 2011). Female students represent the majority of the student population at over 57% while just under 28% of UNA students are self-declared minorities (Table 1). As the world has moved toward global interdependence, UNA has placed increasing emphasis on international programs by expanding study abroad opportunities for domestic students and faculty and by recruiting qualified

international students. UNA's international students currently represent 42 countries and comprise 5% of the student body.

Table 1. UNA Student Demographics Fall 2011

	Total	Females	Males
Caucasian	72.2%	42.1%	30.1%
African American	11.8%	7.1%	4.7%
Non-Resident Aliens	5.0%	2.1%	2.9%
Not Reported	3.2%	1.5%	1.7%
Asian	3.2%	1.5%	1.7%
Hispanic	1.8%	1.0%	0.8%
Multi-Racial	1.7%	1.1%	0.6%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	1.0%	0.6%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	.07%	.03%	.04%
		57.1%	42.9%

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA), 2011

The University has a 20:1 student to faculty full-time equivalent (FTE) ratio (Fall 2011) which enhances the learning environment (OIRPA, 2011). Over 45% of full-time faculty members are women, 16% of full-time faculty are self-declared minorities, and 68.4% of all full-time faculty have terminal degrees (OIRPA, 2010).

II: Identification of the Topic

The University of North Alabama has selected a QEP topic through an “*institutional process*” that has identified “*keys issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes*” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 19). To accomplish this, the QEP Development Team identified key student learning issues to be addressed by the University’s and analyzed constituency surveys. The survey results supported *academic research literacy* as a topic that is directly aligned with student academic needs, with the University’s Mission, and with the University’s Core Competencies.

A. Justification for *Academic Research Literacy*

UNA students are first introduced to academic research skills at the university level in First-Year Composition II (English 112 or English 122 Honors) typically taken during a student’s first year at the University. The next possible application of these skills is a writing emphasis course designed to expand the development of writing skills in a student’s academic program. These courses, designated as “W” courses, are offered at the junior and senior level. Since this program focuses on writing throughout the curriculum it does not ensure that students will receive instruction directly related to research literacy. Even if a program chooses to design activities that incorporate research skills there is often a disconnect between English 112/122 and the upper level writing intensive course. *Building Success through Discovery* proposes to provide focused instruction and academic application of research knowledge and skills at three levels within a student’s coursework starting at the freshman/sophomore level and advancing through the senior level. UNA students will gain knowledge, skills, and capabilities that will enhance their academic experience and future careers through consistent involvement in and practice conducting and reporting research at various stages in their academic programs.

B. The University and *Academic Research Literacy*

In addition to supporting the University's Mission, *Building Success through Discovery* ties the QEP student learning outcomes to each of the University's Core Competencies (Table 2).

Table 2: The Relationship Between UNA's Core Competencies and the QEP Student Learning Outcomes

Core Competency	QEP Student Learning Outcomes
Effective Communication: The ability to communicate orally, and/or in writing in a variety of contexts	Student Learning Outcome 1: Formulate a clear research question, thesis statement, research problem, or hypothesis Student Learning Outcome 4: Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium
Critical Thinking: The ability to state, understand, and evaluate arguments and evidence	Student Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem Student Learning Outcome 4: Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium
Use of Existing and New Technologies: The ability to incorporate and use information technologies	Student Learning Outcome 2: Collect information or data relevant to the research problem
Analysis and Reasoning: The ability to understand and evaluate complex data, information, or arguments	Student Learning Outcomes 3: Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem Student Learning Outcome 4: Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium
Seeking out and Acquiring Knowledge: The ability to understand and employ various methodologies for the purpose of seeking out and acquiring knowledge	Student Learning Outcome 2: Collect information or data relevant to the research problem Student Learning Outcome 4: Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium

Source: UNA, 2007

Efforts to improve **academic research literacy** also directly support three of the five university goals noted in the *University of North Alabama Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012* (UNA, 2007). The three university goals and supporting strategies related to UNA's QEP are as follows:

- **Offer high quality programs**
 - Graduate students who are competitive in the global workplace and who demonstrate mastery of their subject area.
 - Provide library/informational technologies and other support functions which include the technologies, materials, facilities, and services needed for quality teaching, research, and public service.
 - Provide an intellectual climate which promotes critical and independent thinking, innovative programs, and a free and open exchange of ideas.
- **Build and maintain a student-centered university**
 - Provide an overall co-curricular experience that gives students an opportunity to develop as productive citizens outside the classroom while providing support for academic success.
- **Foster a strong university community**
 - Support the attainment of institutional goals through effective management; maintain administrative systems that support instruction, academic advisement, student retention, student and faculty research, accreditation, reaccreditation, global awareness, university advancement, and professional service.

C. Constituency Support for *Academic Research Literacy*

The QEP topic survey was administered to students, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and administrators in September 2009 to determine the learning and experiential opportunities this broad-based group deemed important. Over 925 respondents completed the survey (Table 3).

Through a series of 13 questions (Appendix A), participants were asked to provide their thoughts and advice relative to skills, knowledge, and experiences that UNA students need in the workplace and daily life. Participants were also asked questions related to student engagement, student preparation for the job market, and ways to improve student learning.

Overall, the survey revealed that a majority of the respondents believed the following skills to be the most important to the future success of UNA students:

- Critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making,
- Written communication,
- Reading with understanding,
- Ability to locate and evaluate information,
- Application of technology, and
- Oral communication, public speaking, presentation skills.

Table 3: Respondent Listing by Constituency Group

Constituency Group	Percent of Total Responses	Total Responses
Undergraduate Students	49.8%	462
Graduate Students	9.5%	88
Faculty	14.3%	133
Staff	8.2%	76
Administrators	1.8%	17
Alumni	9.9%	92
Employers	2.6%	24
Other*	3.9%	36
Total	100%	928

*The Other category includes Early Scholars, K-12 teachers and administrators, and individuals that considered themselves to be in more than one category.

Three of the survey questions provide examples of concrete linkages between the needs of UNA students and the knowledge and skills gained through instruction and practice in academic research (Table 4). The fact that the respondents deemed these skills the most difficult to grasp but also the most important, makes increased attention to the development of this knowledge and skill set important. Critical thinking, analysis and decision-making skills are developed through research experiences. As a part of ***Building Success through Discovery***, students will develop and hone their critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making skills through

practice, review, implementation, and repetition. These skills relate directly to the **academic research literacy** student learning outcomes (Table 5).

Similarly, when asked “Which type of experience could most enhance student learning at UNA?” all respondents noted that “innovative teaching methods” are extremely important. Using active learning, participatory learning, and problem-based instructional methods that support the development of **academic research literacy** skills is essential to accomplishing the goals of the program. For additional information and a detailed breakdown of representative survey question with responses, see Appendix B.

Table 4: Overall Trends in Responses to Three Selected Survey Questions* (N = 928)

Survey Questions	Percent of all Respondents					
	Critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making	Written communication	Reading with understanding	Ability to locate and evaluate information	Application of technology	Oral communication, public speaking, presentation skills
Question 2: What area of knowledge and skills do you believe is most important to the future success of UNA students?	44.4%	5.9%	6.9%	7.5%	9.3%	8.0%
Question 3: What skills/concepts do you believe are the most difficult for UNA students to grasp?	26.6%	9.6%	5.6%	4.4%	1.5%	7.3%
Question 7: What skills do you rely on most often in the demands of your daily life (school, work, etc.)?	30.9%	8.0%	11.6%	6.4%	10.2%	17.2%

*Because of variable selection, rows and columns will not equal 100%
 Source: OIRPA, 2009

Table 5: Relationship Between Survey Determined Student Needs and QEP Student Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Skills Needed	QEP Student Learning Outcome
Critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making	#1: Formulate a clear research question, thesis statement, research problem, or hypothesis #3: Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem #4: Present findings or results them using a discipline-specific medium
Written communication	#4: Present findings or results them using a discipline-specific medium
Reading with understanding	#2: Collect information or data relevant to the research problem #3: Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem
Ability to locate and evaluate information	#2: Collect information or data relevant to the research problem
Application of technology	#2: Collect information or data relevant to the research problem
Oral Communication, Public Speaking, Presentation Skills	#4: Present findings or results them using a discipline-specific medium

D. Employer Satisfaction Survey and *Academic Research Literacy*

Every three years the University of North Alabama's Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (OIRPA) conducts a satisfaction survey of organizations that employ UNA graduates (Appendix C). Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with UNA graduates as employees on a scale from 1-4 on 20 different attributes. Of the 20 attributes that are measured in terms of skills and knowledge, seven directly relate to the student learning outcomes associated with UNA's *academic research literacy* QEP (Table 6).

Table 6: UNA Employer Survey Knowledge and Skills related to Academic Research Literacy Student Learning Outcomes. (Numbers in parenthesis are the mean importance score on a 4.0 scale from 2009.)

Knowledge or Skill	Student Learning Outcomes
Diligence in completing tasks (3.91)	Overall research process; Student Learning Outcomes 1 through 4
Written communication (3.62)	Student Learning Outcomes 1 and 4
Problem analysis skills (3.38)	Student Learning Outcomes 1 through 3
Planning management (3.21)	Overall research process, Student Learning Outcomes 1 through 4
Decision-making skills (3.64)	Overall research process; Student Learning Outcomes 1 through 4
Understanding of information technology (3.03)	Student Learning Outcome 2
Understanding of applied computer skills (3.11)	Student Learning Outcomes 2 and 4
Source: OIRPA, 2009	

E. Alumni Satisfaction Survey and Academic Research Literacy

UNA's Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA) conducts a similar survey asking alumni to relate their thoughts on "How effectively do you believe UNA prepared you?" based on the same 20 satisfaction attributes used for the employer survey (Appendix D). The alumni surveyed notes the same seven characteristics (Table 6) as extremely important but as areas in which they believed they were underprepared.

For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, make decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why is vital. Research and inquiry is not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. It is central to professional life in the twenty-first century (Brew, 2007, p. 7).

Strengthening the skills associated with ***academic research literacy*** leads to advanced critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving, and decision-making thus increasing the quality and skills of UNA graduates.

III. Process Used to Develop the QEP Topic

UNA's QEP development process included "***broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies***" (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25). This in-depth process, occurring between April 2009 and December 2011, involved:

- Soliciting ideas from constituency groups across the university community,
- Conducting a proposal process that yielded 10 initial proposals,
- Narrowing the 10 proposals to three for more detailed explanations,
- Selecting a final topic based on:
 - Analysis of institutional assessment data,
 - Relevance to clearly identified student needs,
 - Ability to sustain the concept, and
 - Relationship of the topic to the University's Mission and Core Competencies;
- Introducing the QEP topic to the faculty, staff, and students, and
- Hiring a QEP Director to guide the implementation and assessment of the plan.

A. Pre-Proposal Phase

In April 2009 UNA's SACSCOC Leadership Team held a faculty and staff "kick-off" luncheon and information session to introduce the requirements for reaffirmation of SACSCOC accreditation. During the presentation, the UNA SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison presented the concept of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and requested initial topic ideas. An informal survey conducted at that meeting asked attendees to respond to the question, "If UNA could focus on just one thing to improve student learning, what should it be?" The general topics suggested were:

- Experiential Learning
- Reading Skills
- Writing Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Math Skills
- Global Awareness
- Student Research
- Use of Technology
- Information Financial Management

In May 2009, UNA President William G. Cale, Jr. appointed a QEP Planning Team to formally explore QEP topics. The team included members from the student body, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni (Table 7).

Name	Department/Role
Dr. Lynn Aquadro	Associate Professor, Online MS in Nursing College of Nursing and Allied Health Representative
Mr. Caleb Banks	Student Representative
Mr. Bart Black	Alumni / Employer
Dr. Phil Bridgmon	Professor, Department of Criminal Justice Chair, QEP Planning Team
Dr. Vagn Hansen	Dean, College of Arts and Sciences Administration Representative
Ms. Jennifer Holt Smith	Coordinator of Academic Advising Staff Representative
Dr. Linda Lewis	Professor, Department of Secondary Education College of Education Representative
Dr. Chris Maynard	Associate Professor, Department of History and Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences Representative
Dr. Lisa Minor	Professor, Department of English College of Arts and Sciences Representative
Dr. Joan Parris	Professor, Department of Computer Information Systems College of Business Representative
Ms. Celia Reynolds	Professor, Collier Library Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation
Ms. Leigh Thompson	Assistant Professor, Collier Library Library Services Representative

The QEP Planning Team's charge was to:

- Educate constituency groups regarding the QEP process,
- Engage the constituency groups in relevant discussions regarding the QEP topic and process,
- Lead the constituency groups through the QEP proposal phase, and
- Recommend a final topic to the SACSCOC Leadership Team.

The QEP Planning Team facilitated the QEP topic discussion on campus through face-to-face meetings, the internet, and regular communication updates. QEP Planning Team members met with the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and department chairs during the early part of fall 2009. Central to communication was the development of a QEP website (www.una.edu/gep). The website contains meeting notes and a link to the *Handbook for Reaffirmation* along with links to successful QEP documents from other institutions accredited by the SACSCOC. All QEP-related announcements and invitations were shared with constituency groups by email and also posted on the University's portal system. In addition, the SACSCOC Liaison sent a monthly newsletter to all consistency groups that included news and updates regarding the QEP process. Finally, the QEP Planning Team Chair, as a member of the SACSCOC Leadership Team, provided monthly QEP status updates during the Leadership Team meetings.

The QEP Planning Team used topics identified in the original informal survey, as well as other topics indicated by institutional research data, to develop a more formal survey that was open to students, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and administrators from September 9 through September 29, 2009. Survey responses were solicited through the University's QEP website, email notification, and UNA Portal announcements. Over 925 respondents completed the survey with the primary resulting topics categorized as:

- Oral and Written Communication
- Science Understanding
- Global Studies
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Service Learning / Experiential Learning
- Information Fluency / Literacy
- Critical Thinking, Analysis, Decision Making

The survey results corroborated institutional research data (Section II) that indicated a university need for support in writing, math, information skills, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

B. Proposal Phase

Using the seven general topics identified from the information survey as a guide (noted above), the QEP Planning Team requested preliminary proposals (two to three pages) from all constituency groups. Ten preliminary QEP proposals were submitted by October 15, 2009 (Table 8).

The QEP Planning Team evaluated the proposals using the criteria included with the announcement (Appendix E) and invited more detailed proposals for the following three topics: global awareness, research and writing in the disciplines, and service learning. These topics encompassed multiple preliminary proposal ideas so proposal authors were encouraged to partner with other submitters to prepare a 10-15 page final proposal. Professional development stipends were awarded to the individuals who submitted detailed proposals for consideration.

The final proposals submitted to the QEP Planning Team were:

- **Academic Research Literacy in the Disciplines: A Bridge to a Four-year Sequence** (Dr. Rob Koch, Dr. Kelly Latchaw, and Dr. Nick Mauriello)
- **Developing and Implementing Service-Learning at the University of North Alabama through Co-Curricular Activities and Curriculum Design** (Ms. Jennifer Culler Brown and Ms. Jennifer Smith)
- **Global Awareness 101: An Application of Inquiry and Critical Thinking toward an Enhanced Worldview for UNA Students** (Dr. Lisa Keys Mathews).

Table 8: Preliminary QEP Proposals

Academic Inquiry through Research and Writing in the Disciplines: A Four-Year Sequence

Dr. Rob Koch (Assistant Professor, Department of English / Director, Center for Writing Excellence) and Dr. Nick Mauriello (Associate Professor, Department of English)

COM 205: Media in a Global Age

Dr. Janet McMullen (Associate Professor, Department of Communications)

Develop a Service-Learning Program Through Co-Curricular Activities and Curriculum Design

Ms. Jennifer Brown (Assistant Director of Student Engagement for Leadership and Volunteerism), Dr. Tom Coates (Professor and Chair, Health, Physical Education and Recreation) and Ms. Kelly Ford (Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs / Alumna)

Developing Financial Literacy to Achieve Life Goals

Ms. Heather Brown (Alumna, Listerhill Credit Union UNA Campus Branch Manager) and Ms. Amber Morgan James (Alumna, Listerhill Credit Union)

The Development of Creative Thinkers: Enhancing the UNA Educational Experience

Dr. Jerry Ferry (Professor, Department of Accounting)

Diversify Oral Communication Skills of UNA Students and Improve Student Oral Fluencies in a Variety of Contexts

Dr. Bill Huddleston (Professor, Department of Communication)

Global Awareness 101: An Application of Critical Thinking Skills to Enhance Understanding

Dr. Lisa Keys-Mathews (Associate Professor, Department of Geography / Alumna)

Preparing Students to Understand Science (or Other Disciplines) through Inquiry-based Active Learning: A Cultural Change in the University Classroom

Dr. Brenda Webb (Assistant Professor / Chair, Department of Physics and Earth Sciences / Alumna)

Promoting Global Awareness through Global Media Consumption

Dr. Gregory Pitts (Professor and Chair, Department of Communications)

Service-Learning Across the Curriculum

Ms. Jennifer Smith (Career Development Coordinator / Alumna)

After submission, the final proposals were uploaded to the UNA QEP website and constituency groups were encouraged to provide feedback to the QEP Planning Team Chair. Proposals were then evaluated by the QEP Planning Team as they related to costs, potential impact,

importance to the University, proposed assessments, and constituency support (Appendix F). Following QEP Planning Team evaluation, the proposals were forwarded to the UNA SACSCOC Leadership Team with the QEP Planning Team's endorsement for the **academic research literacy** proposal. The authors of all three proposals made presentations to the SACSCOC Leadership Team on December 10, 2009. Upon review and discussion the Leadership Team formally accepted **academic research literacy** as the core topic for the University's Quality Enhancement Plan.

C. Building Success through Discovery: UNA's Academic Research Literacy Quality Enhancement Plan

First-Year Composition II (English 112 or 122 Honors) is the course that provides UNA students an introduction to academic research skills during their first year at the University while 300-400 level writing-intensive courses required in each academic program are used to reinforce writing skills acquired during the freshman year. These writing-intensive courses may, or may not, include the acquisition of research skills within their disciplines. Since the departmental writing-intensive courses are at the 300 or 400 level, often there is a three or more semester time lapse after First-Year Composition II leading to a loss of academic research knowledge and skills because of lack of practice and application. UNA's QEP seeks to eliminate this void by organizing three levels of coursework within each academic program where research skills will be taught and applied. UNA's QEP implementation will provide students a sequence of courses requiring the application of academic research skills consistently from the freshman through the senior year.

D. Introducing Campus to the QEP Concept of Academic Research Literacy

Following selection of the QEP topic **academic research literacy** in December 2009, the QEP Planning Team became the QEP Development Team. The original committee members

continued (Table 7, p. 13) and the following new members were added to represent areas pertinent to the QEP:

- Ms. Libby Watts Jordan, UNA Board of Trustees;
- Dr. Robert Koch, lead author of the selected QEP proposal; and
- Ms. Molly Vaughn, Coordinator for Analytical Services with the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA).

The Development Team was charged with the following responsibilities:

- Support the development of a focused, multi-year plan with well-defined goals;
- Submit the completed plan for Leadership Team comment and approval ;
- Recommend potential outside QEP evaluators; and
- Support the QEP Director in completing the plan and submitting the final design to faculty, staff, and students.

The Development Team created a working group as the primary vehicle for introducing the QEP to faculty members and for supporting academic departments as they created plans to implement the QEP within their individual programs (Table 9).

The 2010 spring semester focused on educating faculty members about the QEP requirements and its anticipated impact on departments. With assistance from the QEP Development Team, the QEP Implementation Working Group hosted two informational meetings with department chairs and disciplinary writing course instructors during the 2010 fall semester. The first workshop held October 18, 2010 included a presentation (Appendix G) to faculty regarding the definition of **academic research literacy** and *proposed* QEP student learning outcomes.

Table 9: QEP Implementation Working Group

Dr. Jana Beaver	Assistant Professor, Department of Management and Marketing, College of Business
Dr. Brian Huffman	Instructor, Department of Chemistry and Industrial Hygiene, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Katie Kinney	Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, College of Education
Dr. Rob Koch	Assistant Professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the Center for Writing Excellence, QEP Proposal Author
Dr. Kelly Latchaw	Assistant Professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, QEP Proposal Author
Dr. Nicholas Mauriello	Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences, QEP Proposal Author
Dr. Chris Maynard	Associate Professor, Department of History and Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences Representative Implementation Working Group Chair
Ms. Leigh Thompson	Assistant Professor, Collier Library Library Services Representative
Ms. Laura Williams	Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing (Traditional), College of Nursing and Allied Health

The proposed student learning outcomes were created by the QEP Development Team and supported by the QEP Working Group. As a part of the vetting process, the student learning outcomes were discussed, edited, and eventually accepted by the SACSCOC Leadership Team, the QEP Development Team, and the QEP Working Group (Section IV). The QEP student learning outcomes will be assessed and reinforced in the discipline-specific courses throughout the college career of students within each academic department. The levels will be designed to correspond as closely as possible to students' sophomore through senior years

within their academic programs. The sequencing of courses will facilitate the development of research skills through practice and repetition.

The second QEP workshop held November 17, 2010 included a presentation on pedagogy and a discussion of assessment strategies. The College of Nursing and Allied Health, the Department of History, and the Department of Social Work demonstrated three approaches to sequential research focused instruction and learning outcomes assessment (Appendix H). Following the information luncheons members of the QEP Implementation Working Group contacted academic departments to assist in developing departmental implementation plans.

The QEP Development Committee offered an additional professional development opportunity by hosting faculty and student workshop sessions on April 27, 2010 with Dr. Mark Taylor, an educational consultant noted for his research on students' learning styles. The goal of this presentation was to lay the groundwork for pedagogy innovation in teaching undergraduate research within the curriculum from the freshman through senior year. Dr. Taylor noted that today's graduates are failing at higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, complex reasoning, and problem-solving. Pedagogy such as active learning and problem-based teaching play an important role in teaching students these higher-order skills. Additional professional development opportunities on pedagogical strategies will be a part of the implementation of UNA's QEP.

Information continued to be shared with the academic community through announcements and presentations at university-wide events such as the annual Freshman Convocation. Handouts were provided to students and attendees highlighting the QEP Plan. Working toward the final submission of the QEP to the SACSCOC on-site review team, the SACSCOC Leadership Team organized three final information and discussion sessions. On November 16 and 17, 2011, the

QEP Director, Dr. Lisa Keys Mathews, presented the ***Building Success through Discovery*** concept to students. Over 170 students attended the two sessions where they were given a QEP handout (Appendix I), a QEP t-shirt, and the chance to ask questions and discuss the QEP topic. Approximately 275 faculty and staff members attended a similar information session on November 16 (Appendix J). Discussion revolved around implementation procedures, assessment, staff involvement, participation, and timing.

E. Selecting a QEP Director

In July, 2011, the Office of Academic Affairs conducted a search for a QEP Director, selecting Dr. Lisa Keys Mathews for the position. The search committee included members of the QEP Development Team and Dr. Thomas Calhoun, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Keys Mathews has twenty years of experience in higher education teaching and research and has mentored over 70 undergraduate researchers, most of whom have presented their research and findings at national meetings. Dr. Keys Mathews has received two teaching awards, presented at 23 conferences, and published research in both national and international journals. She has directed, or been a part of, applied research projects equal to over \$1.2 million (Appendix K).

IV. Student Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes are based on the goals of the original QEP proposal and input from the QEP Development Team, QEP Working Group, the SACSCOC Leadership Team, the QEP Director, and current research literature. After discussion, editing, and vetting with constituency groups, as well as examination of undergraduate research in various disciplines, the University “*identified goals*” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25) including the student learning outcomes (Table 10). The student learning outcomes (SLOs) that UNA will assess within the QEP process relate to steps that constitute the research process.

Table 10: Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Formulate a clear research question, thesis statement, research problem, or hypothesis
2. Collect information or data relevant to the research problem
3. Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem
4. Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium

These student learning outcomes (SLO) reflect the research process in a general manner which enables the liberal and fine arts, sciences, education, and business programs to apply them but they are specific enough to allow all academic programs to use the assessment results in the continuous quality improvement process.

V. Literature Review and Best Practices

Recent scholarship has documented the lack of rigor associated with the college experience and the need for more engagement of students during that college experience (e.g., Arum and Roksa, 2010; Boyer Commission, 1998; Bok, 2006). Too often, students earn degrees but are unable to critically assess an issue, write effectively, structure inquiry, or evaluate knowledge. *Academically Adrift* notes this deficiency among students and has sparked debate about what colleges and universities should require of their graduates (Arum and Roksa, 2010). The University of North Alabama views the Quality Enhancement Plan as “***an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness***” (SACSCOC, 2011, p. 40). ***Building Success through Discovery*** is designed to:

- Engage students in academic research to increase their content knowledge,
- Increase their ability to determine when an issue exists,
- Enable them to succinctly state a problem,
- Improve their skills for accessing credible information to address the problem,
- Develop skills for solving a problem and critically assessing a situation, and
- Enhance skills in communicating findings in writing or through a discipline appropriate medium.

A. Research Support for the Overall Concept of ***Academic Research Literacy***

Developing academic research skills and knowledge increases students’ ability to succeed in the workplace (Bok, 2005; Brew, 2007). David Lopatto (2003) surveyed faculty members experienced in working with undergraduate students in research to determine the knowledge and skills that they believe students gain through this experience. The Council for Undergraduate Research whose mission is “to promote high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship” (CUR, 2009) notes similar benefits (Table 11).

Table 11: List of Student Skills and Experiences Increased by Involvement in Academic Research at the Undergraduate Level

Apply knowledge to a real situation	Clarify career path
Develop a continuing relationship with a faculty member	Develop critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and intellectual independence
Enhance professional or academic credentials	Enhance student learning through mentoring relationships with faculty
Foster independence	Increase retention
Improve written communication skills	Learn to analyze data
Learn to design solutions to problems	Learn to use scientific literature
Learn to work and think independently	Make connections to what was learned in courses
Promote an innovation-oriented culture	Understand how professionals work on real problems

Source: CUR, 2009; Lopatto, 2003

Lopatto (2003) also surveyed students asking what they believe they learned from participating in undergraduate research (Table 12). Among the positive outcomes identified are clarification of a career path and developing a mentor relationship with faculty.

Table 12: Student Survey of Experiences Gained through Participation in Academic Research

Clarify career path	Develop a continuing relationship with a faculty member
Enhance professional or academic credentials	Learn a topic in depth
Learn laboratory techniques	Learn to work independently
Practice tolerance for obstacles	Understand how professionals work on real problems
Understand how scientists think	Understand the research process in their field

Source: Lopatto, 2003

The Summer Undergraduate Research Experience survey (SURE) found that “most research experiences enhance intellectual skills such as inquiry and analysis, reading and understanding primary literature, communication, and teamwork” (Lopatto, 2007, p. 27). The support for undergraduate academic research has also been found across a range of disciplines including the natural sciences and mathematics (Brown & Yurekli, 2007; Caccavo, 2009; Henderson, Busing, & Wall, 2008; Karukstis, 2006; Karukstis, 2008; Kinkel and Henke, 2006; Lopatto, 2007; Mabrouk, McIntyre, Virrankoski, & Jeliffe, 2007; Quitadamo, Faiola, & Johnson, 2008), English composition (Grobman, 2009), psychology (Wayment and Dickson, 2008), political science (Marfleet & Dille, 2005), geography (Walkington et al., 2011), and social work (Moore & Avant, 2008). UNA’s ***Building Success through Discovery*** QEP honors the research traditions and expectations of every discipline as it seeks to build critical thinking, problem-solving ability, independence, and other important career skills.

B. Research Support for Components of *Academic Research Literacy* and the UNA QEP Student Learning Outcomes

1. Information Literacy (Student Learning Outcomes #2 and #3)

When confronted with questions they do not readily know, students tend to depend on Wikipedia or rely too heavily on Internet search engines. These students have little ability to differentiate between reputable, scholarly sources of information and those sources of information that are added to the web from a less than credible source. These technologically savvy students should be able to critically evaluate the quality of the information they receive, but this is not always the case (A. November, 2011). Information literacy or the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (ALA, 1989, p. 1) is an important part of ***Building Success***

through Discovery. Of the six literacy skills noted by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the following are skills directly related to UNA's QEP (ACRL, 2000):

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose

The literacy skills espoused by the ACRL form the foundation for collecting and evaluating information as required during the academic research process and UNA's student learning outcomes #2 and #3.

2. Writing in the Disciplines and Writing Across the Curriculum (Student Learning Outcomes #1 and #4)

Writing in the Disciplines and *Writing Across the Curriculum* are pedagogical strands that support the foundation for UNA's QEP, specifically as they apply to student learning outcomes #1 and #4. *Writing Across the Curriculum* attends closely to Emig's (1977) argument that writing is a mode of learning, in that it seeks to integrate the sound practices of writing process as strategy for developing content knowledge in any discipline. Monroe (2003) offers a concise contrast between the two, noting that while *Writing Across the Curriculum* emphasizes process and practice, the emphasis of *Writing in the Disciplines* is placed on the context of writing, including its discipline-specific characteristics and requirements. UNA's QEP emphasizes the strengths of both concepts: *Writing Across the Curriculum's* process and practice merged with *Writing in the Disciplines'* clear links between disciplinary knowledge, course requirements, career goals, and employer needs in the workplace.

3. Overall Program Design

Incorporating an **academic research literacy** sequence following UNA's EN 112 solves Larson's (1982) concern with the research paper required in most freshman composition

courses. Larson (1982) posits that, although the freshman research paper may be used to teach basic, generic fundamentals, it often does not prepare students for research activities within their disciplines. Kinneavy (1983) argues for a specific sequence of *Writing Across the Curriculum* and *Writing in the Disciplines* courses spanning the undergraduate career, while Haynes (1996) draws on *Writing Across the Curriculum*, social writing process theory, and earlier theories of composition to support a sequenced set of interdisciplinary writing courses. A benefit of integrating writing pedagogy with undergraduate research is that it assists in the development of:

- Problem-solving and collaborative skills (Falconer & Holcomb, 2009; Waite & Davis, 2006a; Waite & Davis, 2006b);
- Writing skills (Fulwiler, 1984);
- Critical thinking (Lampert, 2007; Wayment & Dickson, 2008); and
- Research skills (Willison & O'Regan, 2007).

When students invest time in research pertinent to them, or are involved in assignments that have a clear goal toward professional development and future opportunity, they will learn more deeply and be less likely to plagiarize (Shaughnessy, 1994); Nuss, 1984). Within this process faculty members have the opportunity to inculcate the development of content knowledge and **academic research literacy**, as well as encourage the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and independence all of which students need in their careers and the workplace. *Writing in the Disciplines*, *Writing Across the Curriculum*, and undergraduate research are not the ends, but instead the means, to help students achieve these benefits as determined and designed by faculty in each discipline.

C. Pedagogy and *Academic Research Literacy*

Teaching students in a manner that supports the development of research literacy skills is essential to accomplishing ***Building Success through Discovery***. Levy (2009), Willison & O'Regan (2007), and Healey and Jenkins (2009) demonstrate that inquiry-based teaching and learning is key to the development of student researchers. Magnussen et al. (2000) establish that teaching with inquiry-based methods supports the development of critical thinking skills. Undergraduate research is an integral component in many educational theories, including constructivist, experiential, problem-based, and inquiry based learning (Hu, Scheuch, Schwartz, Gayles, & Li, 2008). Therefore, an important part of the implementation of ***Building Success through Discovery*** is supporting faculty in their efforts to become better educators and better guides in the undergraduate research process. Toward this end, professional development opportunities will be offered to UNA faculty members that include pedagogy related to inquiry-based, problem-based, and other teaching methods.

VI: Implementation Plan

The University of North Alabama has developed an Implementation Plan that “**demonstrates institutional capacity for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP**” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25). A strength of UNA’s QEP Implementation Plan is the phased implementation process beginning in 2012-2013. At this time a limited number of academic programs in each college will incorporate the QEP into their curriculum. Additional programs will continue with this process until all academic programs have implemented **academic research literacy** concepts into their programs by 2014-2015. Another key to successful implementation of UNA’s QEP is the integration of student learning outcome assessment into existing courses and established academic program structures. To support the successful implementation of **Building Success through Discovery** and the integration of academic research skills and knowledge into academic programs, the University of North Alabama will provide:

- An eighteen-month pilot project to test and refine the framework and assessment process,
- An organizational structure that includes sufficient leadership, physical, and financial resources to ensure faculty and student success,
- Professional development opportunities for faculty and students,
- Research outlets for sharing student and faculty research,
- Encouragement for faculty to integrate research practices into the curriculum in a manner that is discipline-specific and sustainable through time, and
- An assessment process that is transparent and beneficial for the academic departments in their process for continuous program improvement.

A. **Building Success through Discovery Framework**

1. **The Problem to Address**

As indicated earlier, research skills are introduced to students at UNA in First-Year Composition II (English 112 or 122 Honors) through the requirement of a research essay or paper. Typically

UNA students do not specifically apply the academic research skills gained in English 112/122 until the 300- or 400-level when they take a course that requires a research paper or project, or until they take a course designated as the “writing intensive course” in each program. Since students are not regularly required to apply the knowledge and skills gained in English 112/122 for three semesters or more, their research foundation is weak from lack of application and experience. These circumstances inhibit their academic development related to the research process at the junior and senior level.

2. The UNA QEP Solution: *Building Success through Discovery*

Implementation of *Building Success through Discovery* will alleviate this weakness by building on the English 112/122 foundation and infusing academic research skill development at three successive stages in students’ academic careers (Figure 1).

The goal of this strategy is to extend the *academic research literacy* process throughout each student’s college career with little or no interruption in practice and application between the freshman year and graduation and with each course building on the previous course. All academic programs have a logical sequence through which students complete the degree/major. The QEP student learning outcomes will be integrated into the academic programs as follows:

- Level I – 100, 200 or 300 level classes
- Level II – 200, 300 or 400 level classes
- Level III – 300 or 400 level classes

Incorporating *Building Success through Discovery* into the existing academic programs allows academic departments and faculty members to instruct students in the academic research traditions of their discipline. Academic departments will designate QEP-specific

courses within each academic program and will determine the appropriate order for completion (Table 13).

Figure 1: QEP Implementation within Academic Programs

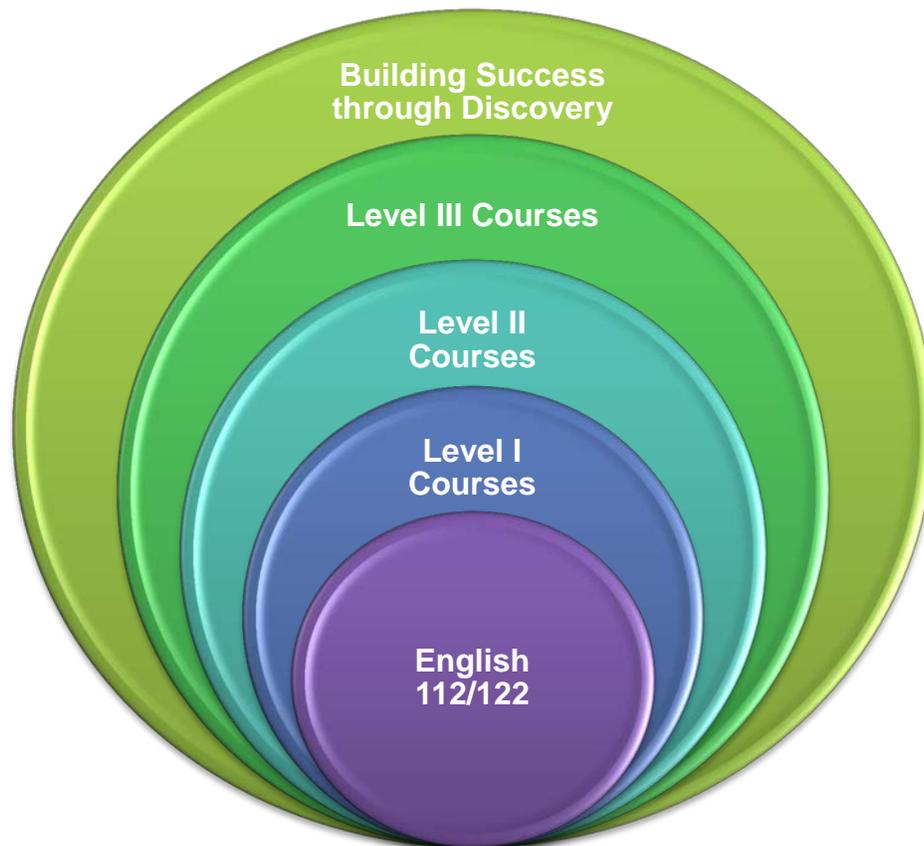


Table 13: Example Implementation Plans from Departments in the Four Colleges

		Level I		Level II		Level III		
		Course	Assessment	Course	Assessment	Course	Assessment	
College of Arts and Sciences	Biology	Course	BI 111, Principles of Biology	BI 200W, Biological Literature	BI 305, Cell Biology; BI 306, Genetics; BI 498, Senior Assessment Seminar	Laboratory Exercise	Homework assignments and research paper	Laboratory exercises, Major Field Test
		Assessment	Laboratory Exercise	Homework assignments and research paper	Laboratory exercises, Major Field Test			
	History	Course	HI 301, History and Historical Research	400 level History Elective	Senior Thesis			
		Assessment	Assessment of primary document analysis and article review	Research project assessment	Portfolio assessment			
	Social Work	Course	SW 230, Introduction of Social Work; SW 305, Social Welfare Policies and Services	SW 360 – Methods of Social Work Practice I	SW 370, Methods of Social Work Research; SW 432/SW 433, Field Instruction I/II			
		Assessment	Journal article summaries, analysis paper, verbal debate, analysis of presentation	Assessment of verbal presentations and writing assignments	Assessment of article critique, research proposal, and portfolio			
	Sociology	Course	SO 222, Current Social Problems	SO 310W, Methods of Social Research	SO 428, Modern Sociological Theory			
		Assessment	Writing assignment and data collection/analysis project	Writing assignment and a research proposal	Writing assignment			

College of Business	Professional Management	Course	Level I	Level II	Level III
			CIS 236, Information Systems in Organization; MG 382W, Managerial Communications	MG 420, Operations Management	MG 494, Entrepreneurial Business Plan Writing; MG 498, Strategic Management
		Assessment	Project Assignments	Project Assignments	Project Assignments
College of Education	Secondary Education	Course	Level I	Level II	Level III
			ED 331, Historical and Philosophical Foundations of American Education	ED 382, Principles of High School Education	ED 482, High School Student Internship or ED 484, Multilevel Student Internship
		Assessment	Class exercises and lesson plans	Lesson plans	Project USA
College of Nursing and Allied Health	Nursing, Traditional	Course	Level I	Level II	Level III
			NU 200, Introduction to Professional Nursing; NU 301, Fundamentals in Nursing; NU 302, Community Health Nursing; NU 305, Health / Physical Assessment	NU 304, Adult Health Nursing 1; NU 306, Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing; NU 308/326R, Pharmacology in Nursing	NU 407 Adult Health Nursing II; NU 409 Maternity Nursing; NU 406 Research in Nursing
		Assessment	Presentations, papers, nursing forms, exams, and reflective journals	Patient assessment check sheet, nursing care plan, class exercises, and exams	Patient diagnosis research, narrative nursing notes, exams, nursing care plan, research report

The courses will be a part of the students' major program and will reflect an increasing level of research expectations associated with 200, 300 and 400-level coursework progression.

Realizing that academic programs are arranged differently and that not all students take a direct path to graduation, the QEP implementation is designed as levels rather than an attempt to directly correspond to a student's classification or number of hours completed. For most academic programs, the research literacy levels correspond to courses in students' first through last year in the academic program, typically the sophomore, junior and senior years. Faculty members and academic departments decide on QEP course placement and assignments within the program structure.

Each "QEP Course" will have one or more assignments that directly incorporate the QEP student learning outcomes and will be used for QEP assessment by the faculty member. Faculty who teach the "QEP Courses" will be responsible for assessing students' achievement of the student learning outcomes. To make overall QEP assessment of the student learning outcomes more comparable and consistent, faculty members will be required to include the student learning outcome rubric in their existing grading process. QEP student learning outcome assessments may overlap pre-existing assessment requirements in order to minimize the need for new assignments and assessments may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to tests, laboratory reports, essays, research papers, and projects. Assessments of ***Building Success through Discovery*** student learning outcome(s) will be compiled by departments and submitted in total through an on-line process no later than June 10.

B. QEP *Building Success through Discovery* Pilot Project

To help ensure a successful QEP implementation at the end of the five-year period, an eighteen-month pilot study will test the implementation strategy before moving forward. The

pilot study will involve the QEP Director and 11 faculty members, representing all four colleges and a diversity of disciplines (Table 14). In addition, a QEP Advisory Committee consisting of the pilot study faculty members and representatives from the staff, students, alumni, and administration will assist in QEP implementation.

Table 14: Proposed Discovery Leadership Team Members

College	Academic Program*
College of Arts and Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Biology • English • History • Psychology • Social Work
College of Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Management • Computer Information Systems
College of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, Physical Education and Recreation • Secondary Education
College of Nursing and Allied Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing (Traditional)

*Programs were selected based on their QEP implementation plan

During the spring of 2012 the President, in consultation with the QEP Director, will appoint a **Discovery Leadership Team** with members selected based on their experience in academic research and/or work with undergraduate students in research, interest in the QEP project, and ability to work with, and mentor, faculty from other disciplines. The team members must be recommended by their department chair and supported by their dean. The QEP Director will provide administrative oversight of the Discovery Leadership Team during the pilot program. Once full implementation is achieved individual departments will be responsible for the QEP within their respective areas. At this point the Director will focus on program oversight and

assessment of outcomes. The **Discovery Leadership Team** will meet monthly starting in spring 2012 through spring 2014 with each team member directly involved in the test and validation process. Membership on the committee requires a substantial investment of time, diligence, and involvement; thus because of the importance to the University and to the success of UNA's QEP process, **Discovery Leadership Team** members will be compensated for their involvement for four semesters. The **Discovery Leadership Team** will:

- Teach and collect data from Level I courses in the fall 2012, Level II courses in the spring 2013, and Level III courses in the fall 2013;
- Design a rubric to evaluate each of the student learning outcomes;
- Apply, edit, and validate rubrics (while teaching the Level I, II and III courses) that will be used by all faculty in all academic programs to assess the four student learning outcomes;
- Determine through testing and validation, a quantification of success and mastery of the student learning outcomes;
- Test and evaluate the process for application and assessment of student learning outcomes while teaching the Level I, II and III courses;
- Establish a step-by-step process for implementing the assessment process in a course;
- Test and refine the web-based interface for student learning outcome data collection;
- Demonstrate the data collection methods to faculty members within the departments assigned to them for mentoring;
- Serve as mentors to other faculty as they implement **Building Success through Discovery** in other disciplines;
- Support the QEP Director in designing and offering professional development opportunities for faculty members; and
- Continue in an advisory role through membership in the QEP Advisory Committee through the five year assessment period.

C. Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship

A significant feature of ***Building Success through Discovery*** is the formation of the Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship in year two (2013-2014). The Discovery Center, managed by the QEP Director, will:

- Support academic departments in continued QEP implementation,
- Provide administrative oversight and an on-going support structure for assessing and sustaining the QEP,
- Foster research experiences and professional dialog to enhance the academic research culture of the University,
- Orient new faculty and staff to the academic research culture of the University,
- Highlight faculty and student publications and presentations by hosting Research Day, organizing a regional undergraduate research conference, and publishing an undergraduate research journal,
- Organize and offer professional development opportunities for faculty including topics such as inquiry-based pedagogy, publishing undergraduate research, and QEP topics such as rubric application and student learning outcome assessment,
- Partner with the Center for Writing Excellence, Center for Academic Advising and Retention, the Academic Success Center, and Collier Library to deliver student professional development opportunities, and
- Partner with the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Advancement to secure financial support for academic research.

The Discovery Center will be housed in the planned and funded Academic Commons Building along with other academic support activities which will allow the University to create a central hub for professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

D. Showcasing Undergraduate Research

An important part of ***Building Success through Discovery*** is the process of showcasing research conducted by students and faculty. The University currently hosts an annual “Research Day,” which is a day-long event organized to exhibit research collaborations between faculty and students. Over its four-year history, this activity has grown from involvement by two colleges and 11 departments to most recently involving all four colleges, twenty-five departments, and two academic units. Building on this existing initiative, in year three (2014-2015) the University will host an undergraduate research conference for undergraduate researchers and faculty mentors from across the state. Ultimately, the conference will be expanded to become a regional event inviting participants from across the Southeast. The conference will include student presentations, keynote speakers, job fairs, vendors, and networking opportunities.

In year four (2015-2016), the University will publish an undergraduate research journal which will be a faculty and student peer-reviewed journal that publishes an average of five to eight undergraduate research articles annually. An editorial team of faculty and students will guide the journal development including soliciting articles from all four colleges, selecting peer-reviewers, implementing the peer-reviewed journal process, and publishing the final selections.

Research Day, the undergraduate research conference, and the undergraduate research journal are ideal for the expression of the learning and research synergy created by ***Building Success through Discovery***. The inclusion of these three opportunities will build and sustain ***academic research literacy*** as a part of the University’s continuing quality improvement and excellence in teaching and research.

E. Sustainability of *Building Success through Discovery*

In broadest terms, *Building Success through Discovery* will facilitate integration of **academic research literacy** into UNA's traditional emphasis on quality teaching. In this way, the University will underscore the idea that research is an important part of quality teaching and a professional commitment made by all faculty members. This implementation plan will lead to efficient and effective sustainability, as well as the success of **the academic research literacy** program by:

- Supporting faculty members in their efforts to teach academic research traditions based on individual disciplines,
- Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation within the University by offering opportunities for faculty to mentor faculty in other disciplines,
- Increasing students' understanding of academic research through a structured approach organized within their academic programs,
- Providing faculty members with professional development opportunities to enhance their ability to direct undergraduate research and incorporate undergraduates into their existing research agendas,
- Allowing departments to assess the progress of their students in a structured manner, determine the strengths and weaknesses of their methods, and to implement changes that increase student achievement, and
- Providing publication and presentation outlets for students and faculty.

VII: Assessment

The University of North Alabama understands that assessment, and learning from those results, is an extremely valuable part of the *Building Success through Discovery*. The University has identified “*goals and a plan to assess their achievement*” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25) in order to increase the success of the QEP. The intention of UNA’s QEP is for students to develop an understanding of the academic research process and gain experience applying it through structured learning activities beginning at the freshman level and continuing throughout their academic careers. Students will be research literate and more adept in problem-solving, critical thinking, self-direction, and written and/or oral communication. The assessment plan for *Building Success through Discovery* is designed to:

- Determine the extent to which students are achieving the learning outcomes in First-Year Composition II (English 112 and 122 Honors) and in the three successive levels within each academic program,
- Encourage faculty to make program and course changes as necessary to enhance the academic development of UNA students based on the information gathered from the student learning outcome assessment, and
- Monitoring the program to insure acceptable progress and sustainability, making changes or enhancements as needed and demonstrated in the data.

The overall success of the QEP will be measured by the following assessments:

- Student improvement related to the four *academic research literacy* student learning outcomes,
- Satisfaction of graduating seniors, alumni, and employers with the skills acquired as a result of the QEP implementation, and
- Programmatic assessment based on completion of the implementation plan and timeline.

A. Student Achievement Assessment

1. Collection of Baseline Data in English 112/122

First-Year Composition II (EN 112 or Honors EN 122), usually taken the first year a student attends UNA, is the introductory freshman English course that requires students to complete a research paper. Successful completion of this course is required for graduation from the University. The Department of English uses a rigorous portfolio assessment process to examine the achievements made by students at completion of the class. Changes are made to EN 112 /122 as needed based on the student strengths and weaknesses identified through the assessment. The First-Year Composition Committee that oversees this assessment consists of eight Department of English faculty members who assess the portfolios of a random selection of student portfolios each semester. The total number of portfolios selected is dependent on the total number of students for that semester. Each student portfolio includes a diagnostic essay from the beginning of the semester, two additional essays from designated times within the semester, the research paper, and the final exam essay. For purposes of the QEP baseline data collection, the First-Year Composition Committee will use the established QEP rubric to assess the research essay within each portfolio. The findings will be reported to the Department of English, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, and the QEP Director.

2. Collection of Academic Department Research Literacy Data

Responsibility for the assessment of student learning outcomes at Levels I, II, and III lies with the individual academic departments. Individual academic departments are currently designing QEP program implementation and assessment plans. The framework first requires academic departments to identify courses for each level and how the student learning outcomes will be

assessed within those designated courses. QEP student learning outcome assessments will be embedded in the relevant courses identified for each program. Each academic department will determine the assessment methods it will employ for each student learning outcome. Direct assessments at the departmental level are encouraged to include, but are not limited to, laboratory exercises and exams, data collection projects, project evaluations, research papers, and appropriate major field test subsections. Faculty members will include the designated QEP rubrics in their assessments for program analysis and reporting purposes.

The QEP Director and the Discovery Leadership Team will design and test a “beginning to end” process for assessment data collection that includes:

- Applying the QEP rubric, designed and tested by the Discovery Leadership Team, to English 112/122 and all designated QEP courses in Levels I, II, and III;
- Collecting and aggregating the rubric results;
- Analyzing the results for student learning issues, if they exist;
- Modifying or enhancing courses as suggested through interpretation of the data; and
- Entering the data on a QEP website for use in annual reports

B. Constituency Satisfaction Assessment

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA) currently conducts three satisfaction surveys: Employer, Alumni, and Graduating Senior. All three surveys are scheduled to be administered in fall 2012. The Graduating Senior survey will be administered in fall 2012 and then every fall and spring thereafter. Data for the Employer Satisfaction Survey will be collected in 2012, and then again in 2015, 2016, and 2017 to allow enough time for those students who participated in QEP courses to obtain employment. After fall 2012, the Alumni Satisfaction survey will be administered annually to determine if attitudinal changes related to

the QEP are occurring. The OIRPA and the QEP Director will determine questions to add to the surveys that are relevant to QEP assessment. Adding questions specifically related to the QEP satisfaction will allow OIRPA to establish baseline satisfaction findings and continue the original satisfaction analysis used to support selection of the QEP topic. The OIRPA is responsible for administering these surveys, as well as for data collection and analysis. The QEP Director will be involved in the analysis relative to the QEP and will have access to the raw data as well as to all reports submitted by OIRPA related to the QEP.

C. Programmatic Assessment

The goal of programmatic assessment is to insure that *Building Success through Discovery* is sustained in the structure of academic departments and the University. In support of this, the QEP Director will assess the progress of the QEP by monitoring the findings of the academic assessments on an annual basis. The QEP will also evaluate the program by determining adherence to the established timeline (Table 15) and implementation plan (Section VI). The programmatic assessment process will include a feedback loop so that milestones or action items may be added or removed as necessary and determined by the assessment results. In addition to milestones, progress will be judged through structured assessment, including, but not limited to, analysis of budget expenditures, faculty and student participation, identification and monitoring of challenges, and implementation of changes as suggested by assessment findings.

D. Responsibility and Dissemination

The purpose of the quality enhancement process at UNA is to help the University improve student learning specifically related to *academic research literacy*. In support of this goal, the QEP Director is responsible for the assessment program which includes working with

departments as they assess QEP student learning outcomes, merging department level data, analyzing results, conducting programmatic assessment, and working with OIRPA with satisfaction data collection. The Director will also verify that assessment results are being used to make changes both in pedagogy, course alignment, and/or the assessment procedure itself, as warranted by the data. The QEP Advisory Committee will be involved in the analysis and dissemination of assessment results. Findings will be used by individual departments, the University, and regional and professional accrediting agencies to show progress in student learning. The QEP Director will create an Annual Report that will include student learning outcome assessment data and findings, programmatic findings, timeline analysis, and satisfaction survey results. The Annual Report will also include goals and milestones for the upcoming year.

E. Assessment Cycle

Baseline data (English 112/122) will be collected every semester starting in the fall 2011. Academic program data will be collected every semester starting in the fall 2012 with the pilot study. Aggregated results over the academic year for baseline and departmental assessments will be due by June 10 of each year. This schedule corresponds with existing reporting timelines for general education competencies and student learning outcomes assessments within the major. Each department will use an online assessment tool to report outcome data. In addition, the web tool will ask for the results of evaluation and interpretation of the assessment data, expected changes, and reflections on changes made in the past. The QEP Director will receive the baseline and departmental results and develop an annual QEP report and action plan based on the assessment results and input by the departments. The QEP Director will share the assessment report with the QEP Discovery Leadership Team by October of each year. This

information will be disseminated by the Discovery Leadership Team and the QEP Director through town hall meetings to present the overall findings and solicit input regarding possible actions. In addition, the reports will be available on-line through the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA) and will be presented to the appropriate administrators.

VIII. Building Success through Discovery Timeline

The timeline presented in Table 15 represents a logical progression of events from proposal submission and implementation of the pilot study in fall 2012 through the QEP Impact Report to be completed in 2017. The development and management of the UNA QEP timeline

“demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25).

Table 15: UNA's *Building Success through Discovery* QEP Timeline

Action	2011- 2012 (Pre-QEP)	2012- 2013 (Year 1)	2013- 2014 (Year 2)	2014- 2015 (Year 3)	2015- 2016 (Year 4)	2016- 2017 (Year 5)
QEP Working Group "Lunch and Learn" Introduction of <i>Building Success through Discovery</i> to campus	X					
University hires <i>Building Success through Discovery</i> QEP Director	X					
Departments develop and submit implementation plans	X					
QEP Director works with QEP Communication Committee for QEP advertising and meetings	X					
President appoints Discovery Leadership Team	X					
QEP Director meets with each academic department regarding QEP implementation plans	X	X	X			
QEP Director converts to full-time		X				
QEP Discovery Leadership Team Implements Level I QEP courses (Fall 2012) and Level II QEP courses (Spring 2013)		X				
First-Year Composition Committee works with QEP Director on baseline assessment data collection	X	X	X	X	X	X
University offers professional development seminars for faculty, staff and/or students	X	X	X	X	X	X
University joins the Council on Undergraduate Research International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and maintain annual membership	X	X	X	X	X	X

Action	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
QEP Director will collect and evaluate findings from the pilot study (Summer)		X	X	X	X	X
OIRPA conducts graduating senior satisfaction surveys		X	X	X	X	X
OIRPA conducts employer and alumni satisfaction surveys		X	X	X	X	X
QEP Advisory Committee releases <i>Building Success through Discovery</i> findings to campus (Fall)			X	X	X	X
Departments discuss and implement actions and changes as a result of findings			X	X	X	X
Discovery Leadership Team implements Levels I, II, III			X	X	X	X
Departments implement Level I courses and Level II courses under mentorship with Discovery Leadership Team			X			
UNA opens Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship			X			
All departments implement all levels of QEP courses				X	X	X
UNA hosts Undergraduate Research Conference				X	X	X
QEP Director evaluates research conference				X	X	X
UNA publishes Undergraduate Research Journal					X	X
QEP Director evaluates research journal					X	X
QEP Director creates impact report to SACSCOC						X

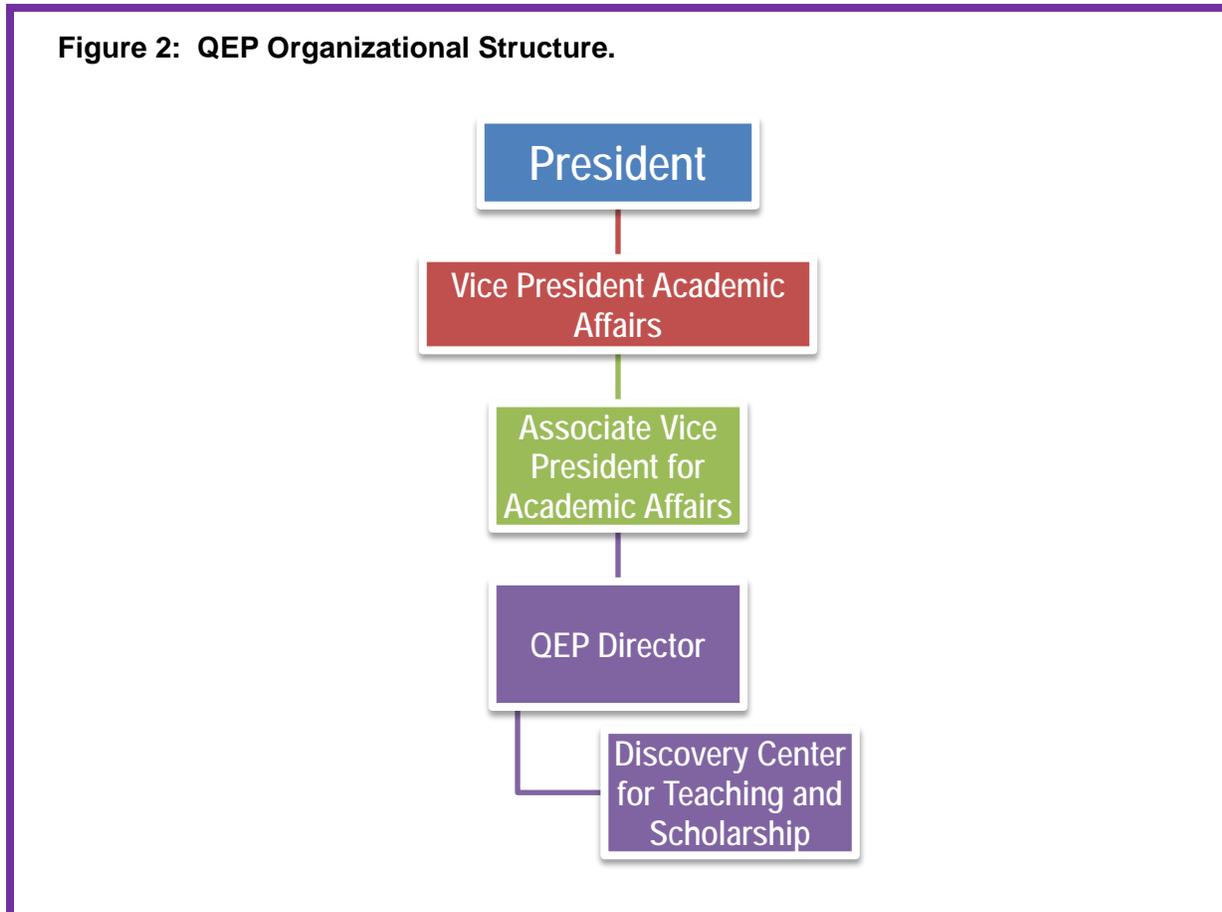
IX. Responsibility and Organizational Structure

Final authority for the QEP ultimately rests with President while the operational authority rests with the QEP Director. UNA has an organizational structure that is committed to success of the *Building Success through Discovery* and “*demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP*” (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25) (Table 16).

Table 16: QEP Organizational Structure

Position	Responsibility
President	Report, as required, to SACSCOC regarding QEP progress; support <i>Building Success through Discovery</i> through the budgetary and strategic planning process
Vice President for Academic Affairs / Provost	Prioritize QEP budget requests, coordination with the Council of Academic Deans to address implementation, encourage faculty support for the QEP, report successes in various outlets and in official reports
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	Coordinate activities among QEP Director and Coordinators/Directors of Academic Support areas such as the Writing Center, Academic Success Center, and Center for Academic Advising, evaluates QEP Director (Figure 2).
QEP Director	Implementation of the QEP including planning, assessment, and dissemination; budget management and daily operations; promoting visibility of QEP, developing undergraduate journal, organizing research conferences, supervising staff, creating annual report, preparation of the fifth-year report
Discovery Leadership Team	Complete requirements for the pilot project and Advisory Committee, act as a liaison and mentor to the faculty, and insure proper documentation of the assessment process, other duties as noted in implementation plan
QEP Advisory Committee	Work with QEP Director to analyze and distribute assessment findings, support the pilot project and professional development, offer advice and direction related to QEP implementation
Faculty Members	Determine courses and learning activities for QEP student learning outcomes, apply established rubrics, report outcome findings, foster a culture of inquiry on campus, commit to professional development
Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs	Advise for budget needs, prioritize QEP budget requests as appropriate, work with the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee to support appropriate budget requests, other duties as needed for budgeting and finances
Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness	Conduct surveys, collect survey data, support web data collection form development, synthesize survey data as needed, provide personnel to support data collection and analysis, other duties as needed for appropriate assessment

Figure 2: QEP Organizational Structure.



Many campus offices and organizations play important roles in supporting, implementing, and sustaining *Building Success through Discovery* (Figure 3).

Figure 3: University Organizations Supporting the QEP Process



X. Budget and Narrative

The University of North Alabama proposes a budget that supports the development, implementation, and sustainability of ***Building Success through Discovery*** as is required by SACSCOC in Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2 (SACSCOC, 2010, p. 25). The QEP budget includes both new and existing funds, as well as in-kind funds related to facilities.

New funding includes (Table 17):

- QEP personnel
- Professional development; and
- Operation and Administration.

Existing funding includes (Table 18):

- Personnel and
- Computer Equipment.

In-kind funding support includes:

- Facilities in the proposed Student and Academic Commons,
- Office furniture,
- Web presence and management, and
- Instructional librarian support.

The value of the new and existing funding combined is \$1,140,125 over six years with an annual budget of over \$220,000 per year starting in 2012-2013.

Table 17: QEP Budget – New Funding

Category	2011- 2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015- 2016	2016-2017
QEP Personnel						
QEP Director Stipend	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
QEP Director Stipend Benefits	\$ 1,078	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Discovery Leadership Team Stipend (11)		\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Stipend Benefits		\$ 2,965	\$ 2,965	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
First-Year Composition Committee (8)	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
First-Year Composition Committee Benefits	\$ 359	\$ 359	\$ 359	\$ 359	\$ 359	\$ 359
Graduate Student Assistant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
Graduate Student Assistant Tuition	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,296	\$ 5,296	\$ 5,296	\$ 5,296
Director, QEP and Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship	\$ -	\$ 99,066	\$ 99,066	\$ 99,066	\$ 99,066	\$ 99,066
Director, QEP and Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship Benefits	\$ -	\$ 23,558	\$ 23,558	\$ 23,558	\$ 23,558	\$ 23,558
Administrative Assistant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,840	\$ 26,840	\$ 26,840
Administrative Assistant Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,320	\$ 10,320	\$ 10,320

Category	2011- 2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015- 2016	2016-2017
Professional Development						
Memberships - CUR/SoTL/Other	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 3,750	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250
Travel - Conferences	\$ 1,250	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Professional Development Programs	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Research Day	\$ 500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Regional Research Conference	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Journal - Publication	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
Operations and Administrative Costs						
Office Supplies	\$ 250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250
Marketing / Advertisement	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Annual Total	\$ 13,437	\$ 177,198	\$ 193,744	\$215,439	\$222,939	\$ 222,939
Cumulative Total		\$ 190,635	\$ 384,379	\$599,818	\$822,757	\$1,045,696

Table 18: QEP Budget – Existing Funding

Category	2011-2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016-2017
QEP Personnel						
QEP Director (Year 1 50%)	\$ 32,030	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
QEP Director Benefits	\$ 11,271	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OIRPA Assessment Support (6.25%)	\$ 3,050	\$ 3,050	\$ 3,050	\$ 3,050	\$ 3,050	\$ 3,050
OIRPA Assessment Support Benefits	\$ 548	\$ 548	\$ 548	\$ 548	\$ 548	\$ 548
Administrative Assistant (25%)	\$ -	\$ 6,229	\$ 6,229	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Administrative Assistant Benefits	\$ -	\$ 6,541	\$ 6,541	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operations and Administrative Costs						
Computer Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Annual Total	\$ 46,899	\$ 16,368	\$ 18,368	\$ 3,598	\$ 3,598	\$ 5,598
Cumulative Total	\$ -	\$ 63,267	\$ 81,635	\$ 85,233	\$ 88,831	\$ 94,429

XI. Conclusion

The University of North Alabama is committed to successfully implementing and sustaining ***Building Success through Discovery: Imagine, Investigate, Communicate*** for the benefit of current and future students.

A. An Institutional Process (Section III)

The QEP Development Team and the SACSCOC Leadership Team analyzed institutional effectiveness survey data to define, support, and validate the topic of ***academic research literacy*** for the University's QEP. Surveys consulted include employer satisfaction, alumni satisfaction, and constituency group surveys. All surveys noted that UNA students need additional knowledge and skills in:

- Critical thinking, analysis, and decision-making,
- Written communication,
- Reading with understanding,
- Ability to locate and evaluate information,
- Application of technology, and
- Oral communication, public speaking, presentation skills.

Research literature provides data and findings to demonstrate that students who participate in academic research augment and improve the skills noted above. ***Building Success through Discovery: Imagine, Investigate, Communication***, as an ***academic research literacy*** topic, will enhance the educational advancement of UNA undergraduate students.

B. Focus of the Plan (Section I and II)

The University's focus on ***academic research literacy*** addresses a significant issue for students today as noted in academic literature, periodicals, and the media, as well as in the

University's institutional effectiveness findings. Students lack critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and these skills are enhanced and advanced through involvement in academic research. The University will assess student attainment of research competencies through four student learning outcomes:

- Formulate a clear research question, thesis statement, research problem, or hypothesis,
- Collect information or data relevant to the research problem,
- Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem, and
- Present findings or results using a discipline-specific medium.

Involving students in academic research fits within the University's mission because students will be *engaged in research*, faculty will be engaged in *teaching* and guiding students through the knowledge and skill development process in an *environment of discovery*.

C. Institutional Capacity for Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan (Sections IX and X)

The University of North Alabama has established a budget and proper organizational structure to ensure the success of the ***Building Success through Discovery***. The University has committed to the QEP by hiring a full-time QEP Director and providing the Director with access to top-level administrators. The University has committed to establishing the Discovery Center for Teaching and Scholarship as a formal structure for sustaining the program. The Discovery Center will provide support for faculty and staff members in research, scholarship, and professional development.

D. Broad-based Involvement of Institutional Constituencies (Section II)

The University of North Alabama conducted both formal and informal constituency group surveys to determine the appropriate QEP topic. Communication regarding the QEP was facilitated by face-to-face meetings, web announcements, and email. Members of the QEP Development Team met with the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and department chairs to discuss the QEP process. Over 925 students, faculty members, staff members, alumni, employers, and administrators responded to 13 question survey regarding student learning needs. Proposals were solicited from these groups as were comments regarding the three topic proposals. Faculty, staff, and students were a part of several workshops and presentations related to QEP goals and implementation. In addition, a QEP Advisory Committee will be established to support and advise the QEP Director related to the implementation and assessment. The QEP Advisory Committee will be comprised of faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers, and administrators.

E. Assessment of the Plan (Section VII)

UNA's QEP proposal outlines three types of assessment that will be used to judge the progress and success of *Building Success through Discovery*:

- Student learning outcome assessment in First-Year Composition II (English 112/122) and direct assessment at three levels within each undergraduate academic program;
- Graduating senior, employer, and alumni satisfaction surveys; and
- Programmatic assessment of the implementation plan, assessment process, and timeline.

Academic departments will use the assessment findings to target problem areas, if they exist, and make changes to enhance student learning. The QEP Director, supported by the QEP

Advisory Committee, will synthesize the assessment findings into an annual report submitted to campus and the university administration.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions



Survey Questions Issued to UNA Constituency populations in September, 2009

- Question 1: Identify your primary role at UNA
- Question 2: What area of knowledge and skills do you believe is most important for future success of UNA students?
- Question 3: What skills/concepts do you believe are the most difficult for UNA students to grasp?
- Question 4: Which type of experience could most enhance student learning at UNA?
- Question 5: How would you rate your own abilities in the following areas?
- Question 6: For the areas from Question 5 in which do you consider your own skills the weakest?
- Question 7: Which skills do you rely on most often in demands of your daily life (school, work, etc.)?
- Question 8: Has weakness in a skill or knowledge prevented you from pursuing a particular career (e.g., I was poor in chemistry and could not become a physician). If yes, what weakness prevented you from attaining your career goals?
- Question 9: Rate student engagement (regular class attendance, maintaining reading schedules, participating in discussions, making routine library visits, seeking help from professors, participating in student activities) at UNA.
- Question 10: Rate student preparedness (students enter UNA ready for college work) at UNA.
- Question 11: In what area is it most important that UNA improve student learning?
- Question 12: Describe how UNA could improve student learning.
- Question 13: What student learning/subject area must UNA improve for future success of students and the University?
- Question 14: Beyond this survey, you may always give input into the QEP process at www.una.edu/qep. Look for additional opportunities to participate this fall as we continually gather and refine input on QEP topics. If you are willing to provide additional information concerning your ideas please let your name, email address, and telephone number.

Appendix B: Tables of Survey Responses



Responses by category of respondents to the question: “What area of knowledge and skills do you believe is most important to future success of UNA students?”

Answer Options	Undergraduate Student	Graduate Student	Faculty	Alumni	Employer	Staff	Administrator	Other
Critical thinking / analysis / decision-making	36.96%	50.00%	51.13%	53.26%	50.00%	51.32%	52.94%	55.56%
Written communication	3.91%	2.27%	9.77%	6.52%	8.33%	13.16%	17.65%	2.78%
Reading with understanding	6.96%	7.95%	6.02%	9.78%	8.33%	3.95%	0.00%	8.33%
Mathematical reasoning	3.70%	0.00%	7.52%	1.09%	4.17%	0.00%	5.88%	0.00%
Ability to locate and evaluate information	7.39%	9.09%	8.27%	3.26%	8.33%	9.21%	0.00%	11.11%
Application of technology	10.87%	9.09%	1.50%	14.13%	8.33%	10.53%	0.00%	8.33%
Scientific knowledge and reasoning	5.43%	3.41%	4.51%	1.09%	0.00%	1.32%	5.88%	0.00%
Understanding of and communication in other languages	1.74%	0.00%	0.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Understanding of other cultures (Global awareness / Respect for diversity)	5.00%	4.55%	6.02%	1.09%	0.00%	1.32%	11.76%	5.56%
Oral communication/public speaking/presentation skills	11.74%	4.55%	4.51%	4.35%	0.00%	6.58%	0.00%	2.78%
Geographical concepts	1.30%	1.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Civic participation / community engagement	1.74%	3.41%	0.00%	1.09%	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	0.00%
Collaboration/group work	3.26%	4.55%	0.00%	4.35%	12.50%	2.63%	0.00%	5.56%
Total Responses (926)	460	88	133	92	24	76	17	36

Source: OIRPA, 2009

Appendix B: Tables of Survey Responses



Responses by category of respondents to the question: “What skills do you rely on most often in demands of your daily life (school, work, etc.)? [Mark only one]”

Answer Options	Undergraduate Student	Graduate Student	Faculty	Alumni	Employer	Staff	Administrator	Other
Critical thinking/analysis/decision-making	28.0%	37.0%	26.8%	29.4%	63.6%	31.0%	61.5%	40.0%
Written communication	6.9%	3.7%	10.2%	12.9%	4.5%	12.7%	7.7%	3.3%
Reading with understanding	16.6%	9.9%	9.4%	5.9%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	3.3%
Mathematical reasoning	3.1%	2.5%	3.9%	2.4%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Ability to locate and evaluate information	6.4%	2.5%	7.1%	8.2%	9.1%	7.0%	0.0%	6.7%
Application of technology	10.2%	7.4%	7.9%	15.3%	4.5%	18.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Scientific knowledge and reasoning	3.1%	2.5%	7.9%	2.4%	0.0%	2.8%	7.7%	0.0%
Understanding of and communication in other languages	1.9%	0.0%	1.6%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Understanding of other cultures (Global awareness)/Respect for diversity	0.7%	2.5%	1.6%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	6.7%
Oral communication/public speaking/presentation skills	16.9%	24.7%	18.9%	11.8%	9.1%	18.3%	0.0%	20.0%
Geographical concepts	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Civic participation/community engagement	1.7%	1.2%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Collaboration/group work	3.8%	6.2%	3.9%	5.9%	9.1%	2.8%	15.4%	10.0%
Total Responses (850)	421	81	127	85	22	71	13	30

Source: OIRPA, 2009

Appendix B: Tables of Survey Responses



Responses by category of respondents to the question: “Which type of experience could most enhance student learning at UNA?”

Answer Options	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Faculty	Alumni	Employer	Staff	Administrator	Other
Innovative teaching methods	26.3%	28.6%	19.3%	20.5%	9.1%	20.8%	33.3%	13.8%
Study abroad	10.0%	2.6%	10.9%	2.4%	0.0%	2.8%	13.3%	10.3%
Required internships	14.6%	19.5%	9.2%	27.7%	54.5%	25.0%	6.7%	10.3%
Service learning (course-based community service)	7.9%	6.5%	6.7%	16.9%	9.1%	4.2%	13.3%	13.8%
Small group work	6.0%	9.1%	6.7%	2.4%	4.5%	1.4%	6.7%	3.4%
Research with a professor and other students	7.4%	3.9%	16.8%	9.6%	4.5%	13.9%	6.7%	6.9%
Writing a thesis	1.2%	2.6%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased writing requirements in more classes	1.4%	6.5%	20.2%	2.4%	0.0%	15.3%	13.3%	17.2%
Intensive technology instruction	1.9%	9.1%	3.4%	4.8%	13.6%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Tutoring	8.8%	3.9%	2.5%	2.4%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	6.9%
Required language instruction	1.7%	3.9%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	3.4%
Expanded learning communities	6.2%	3.9%	1.7%	3.6%	4.5%	4.2%	6.7%	10.3%
On-campus opportunities for presentations	3.3%	0.0%	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	3.4%
On-campus academic competitions	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Responses (836)	419	77	119	83	22	72	15	29
Source: OIRPA, 2009								

Appendix B: Tables of Survey Responses



Responses by category of respondents to the question: “What skills/concepts do you believe are the most difficult for UNA students to grasp?”

Answer Options	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Faculty	Alumni	Employer	Staff	Administrator	Other
Critical thinking, analysis, decision-making	17.4%	29.1%	35.3%	38.6%	65.2%	38.7%	23.5%	30.3%
Written communication	6.1%	12.8%	16.5%	11.4%	4.3%	17.3%	11.8%	3.0%
Reading with understanding	5.4%	5.8%	9.0%	2.3%	4.3%	4.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Mathematical reasoning	22.8%	8.1%	18.0%	6.8%	8.7%	2.7%	29.4%	6.1%
Ability to locate and evaluate information (Information literacy)	5.2%	5.8%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%	5.9%	3.0%
Application of technology (computer skills)	1.5%	3.5%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	3.0%
Scientific knowledge and reasoning	7.8%	1.2%	6.0%	6.8%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Understanding of and communication in other languages	9.5%	9.3%	4.5%	9.1%	0.0%	9.3%	11.8%	12.1%
Understanding of other cultures (Global awareness)/Respect for diversity	6.3%	3.5%	4.5%	4.5%	4.3%	5.3%	11.8%	12.1%
Oral communication/public speaking/presentation skills	9.3%	7.0%	2.3%	9.1%	4.3%	5.3%	0.0%	6.1%
Geographical concepts	2.2%	2.3%	0.8%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Civic participation/community engagement	3.0%	1.2%	0.8%	5.7%	4.3%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%
Collaboration/group work	3.5%	10.5%	0.0%	3.4%	4.3%	1.3%	0.0%	3.0%
Total Responses (916)	461	86	133	88	23	75	17	33

Source: OIRPA, 2009

Appendix C: Employer Satisfaction Survey



UNA Employer Survey asking the question “To what degree (1-4) are you satisfied with the UNA graduates that you employ?” Mean data provided.

Knowledge or Skill	N	2009	2006	2003	2000	Importance*
Diligence in completing tasks	116	3.20	3.04	3.11	2.93	3.91
Written communication	117	2.86	2.78	2.78	2.78	3.62
Technical report writing	115	2.60	2.51	2.39	2.31	2.46
Problem analysis skills	117	2.78	2.78	2.65	2.60	3.38
Planning management	116	2.76	2.77	2.64	2.61	3.21
Decision-making skills	116	2.88	2.81	2.82	2.72	3.64
Understanding of information technology	115	2.87	2.87	2.59	2.53	3.03
Understanding of applied computer skills	116	2.98	2.87	2.68	2.53	3.11

*Importance indicates the importance that employers place on the particular skill or knowledge in 2009. Source: OIRPA, 2009

Appendix D: Alumni Satisfaction Survey



UNA Alumni Survey asking the respondents to address the statement “Please rate how effectively you believe UNA prepared you in the following areas” Mean data provided for the years 2000, 2001, and 2004.

Knowledge or Skill	N	2004	2001	2000	Importance*
Diligence in completing tasks	116	3.07	2.93	2.95	3.91
Written communication	117	2.99	2.80	2.81	3.62
Technical report writing	115	2.57	2.30	2.31	2.46
Problem analysis skills	117	2.84	2.67	2.65	3.38
Planning management	116	2.76	2.61	2.56	3.21
Decision-making skills	116	2.89	2.72	2.73	3.64
Understanding of information technology	115	2.70	2.18	2.20	3.03
Understanding of applied computer skills	116	2.70	2.16	2.15	3.11

*Importance indicates the importance that employers place on the particular skill or knowledge in 2009.

(Source: OIRPA, 2004)

Appendix E: Call for Proposals including Evaluation Criteria



**University of North Alabama
Quality Enhancement Plan
Call for Preliminary Proposals
October 1, 2009**

The UNA Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Team has identified the following areas as potential QEP topics: math, science, reading, global awareness, written communication, oral communication, service/experiential learning, and critical thinking.

These preliminary topics were derived from the QEP survey responses, analyses of institutional data, and priorities consistent with the Mission of the University and its Strategic Plan.

On behalf of the University of North Alabama, the QEP Planning Team invites feedback on these topics, and issues a call for preliminary proposals that address any one of them. Anyone can submit a preliminary proposal. Requirements for proposals are outlined below.

Resources Visit www.una.edu/gep for QEP requirements and examples of fully developed QEP.

Proposal Requirements (limit preliminary proposals to 2-3 pages, plus the cover page)

- Cover page:
- a. Name(s) of author(s)
 - b. Position or title
 - c. Email address and phone number
- Proposal:
- a. Identify topic (e.g., improving writing through research, strengthening general education, learning through service to others)
 - b. Describe the student learning outcomes to be improved by this proposal.
 - c. Justification for proposal (include significance and urgency)
 - d. Brief outline of actions required to carry out proposal (i.e. requirements of university, faculty, staff, students). Include brief description of possible ways to assess outcomes.
 - e. References/Bibliography (if appropriate)

Evaluation Criteria

- 1) Is the proposal broad enough, and relevant to the University?
- 2) How well does the proposal identify the student learning outcomes to be improved?
- 3) Can the University sustain and support the project over a five-year period within fiscal and space constraints?
- 4) Are the actions prescribed in the proposal adequate to accomplish the goals (student learning outcomes) of the proposal?
- 5) Does the proposal have clearly defined ideas for assessment?
- 6) What is the likelihood that the proposal can gain acceptance by the University?

Submission and Deadline

Please submit proposals electronically to Phil Bridgmon, QEP Chair, via gep@una.edu
Proposals should be submitted by October 15, 2009.

Appendix F: Evaluation Criteria for Final Round of Proposals



This QEP proposal...	Excellent (1)	Satisfactory (2)	Poorly/Not Addressed (3)	Comment	Strengths	Weakness
...is consistent with our institution's Mission Statement and Strategic Plan.						
...will have a significant impact on student learning.						
...includes <u>measurable</u> student learning outcomes.						
...has identified specific measures and tools to assess student learning.						
...has clearly defined ideas for a successful assessment plan.						
...highlights opportunities to build on current institutional initiatives and resources.						
...has a well-developed and realistic budget for what is proposed in Versions A and B of the white paper.						
...takes demonstrated "best practices" into account.						
...is of a scope that we will be able to implement effectively and obtain meaningful results (Version A).						
...is of a scope that we will be able to implement effectively and obtain meaningful results (Version B).						

Appendix G: First QEP Workshop Presentation

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN: RESEARCH LITERACY



QEP IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP:

CHRIS MAYNARD (QEP COMMITTEE)
ROB KOCH (CENTER FOR WRITING EXCELLENCE)
NICK MAURIELLO (COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES)
KELLY LATCHAW (COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES)
JANA BEAVER (COLLEGE OF BUSINESS)
KATIE KINNEY (COLLEGE OF EDUCATION)
LAURA WILLIAMS (COLLEGE OF NURSING)
LEIGH THOMPSON (COLLIER LIBRARY)

1

RESEARCH LITERACY



- WHAT IS RESEARCH LITERACY?
 - One-size-fits-all model does not exist!
- KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES OF A RESEARCH LITERATE STUDENT:
 - Knowledge of the philosophy of inquiry
 - Knowledge and usage of discipline-specific data collection techniques
 - The ability to evaluate, synthesize, and analyze information
 - The ability to use library resources and various information sources
 - The ability to write in accordance with a recognized style appropriate to the discipline

2

RESEARCH LITERACY



- KEY QUESTIONS:
 - What do we want students in our major to know?
 - What do we want our students to be able to do?
 - Which of these program outcomes relate to research literacy?
- FRAMEWORK:
 - Are there 3 benchmarks (levels) of research literacy that we can identify within our major?
 - Can we identify a common learning outcome and assessment for each level?

3

HISTORY MAJOR



- HI 101 AND 102 (WORLD CIV. SURVEYS)
- HI 201 AND 202 (U.S. SURVEYS)
- HI 301W (HISTORY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH)
- 21 HOURS OF HISTORY ELECTIVES (300-400 LEVEL)
- PROGRAM OUTCOMES:
 - Students completing the History program will:
 - Employ skills in reading, writing, analysis, and speaking.
 - Demonstrate a general knowledge of United States History and World History.
 - Identify the major schools of historical thought (historiography) and display a general understanding of historical causation.
 - Apply historical research methods to produce original, thesis-driven historical scholarship that is based on primary and secondary sources.

4

LEVEL 1



- HI 301W, HISTORY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH
 - Learning Outcome:
 - The student will be acquainted with research methods employed by modern historians as well as develop an understanding of Chicago style.
 - Assessment:
 - The student will successfully complete a library workshop that acquaints the student with the research methodology of modern historians. They must also complete a primary document analysis and a 5-page book/journal/article review using Chicago style.

5

LEVEL 2



- 300-LEVEL ELECTIVE HISTORY COURSE
 - Learning Outcome:
 - The student will undertake historical research as well as display the analytical and writing skills required to create original, thesis-driven historical scholarship that is presented in relation to the work of other scholars.
 - Assessment:
 - The student will successfully complete a 10-page research paper that correctly uses Chicago style, is thesis-driven, and is based on the work of other scholars.

6

LEVEL 3

- 400-LEVEL ELECTIVE HISTORY COURSE

- Learning Outcome:

- The student will undertake advanced historical research as well as display the analytical and writing skills required to create original, thesis-driven historical scholarship that is based on primary sources and presented in relation to the work of other scholars.

- Assessment:

- The student will successfully complete a 15-page research paper that correctly uses Chicago style, is thesis-driven, is based on primary sources, and presented in relation to the work of other scholars.



7

RESEARCH LITERACY OPTIONS

OPTION 1

- LEVEL 1
 - HI 301W
- LEVEL 2
 - 300-LEVEL ELECTIVE
- LEVEL 3
 - 400-LEVEL ELECTIVE

OPTION 2

- LEVEL 1
 - HI 301W
- LEVEL 2
 - 300/400-LEVEL ELECTIVE
- LEVEL 3
 - CAPSTONE COURSE (PORTFOLIO)

KEY: COMMON LEARNING OUTCOME AND COMMON ASSESSMENT FOR EACH LEVEL



8

SOCIAL WORK

- PROFESSIONAL DEGREE

- Writing skills
- Research skills

- HIGHLY STRUCTURED COURSE SEQUENCE

- Clearly specified prerequisites

- REQUIRED FIELD EXPERIENCE

- 500 Hours in the field



9

LEVEL 1 OUTCOMES

- SW 230: INTRO TO SOCIAL WORK (LIMITED)

- SW 305: SOCIAL WORK POLICY

- Learning Outcomes:

- Learn APA Style
- Learn Patterns of Organization
- Learn to Summarize and Synthesize knowledge
- Learn to Conceptualize Problems
- Develop Critical Thinking Skills
- Develop Library Skills



10

LEVEL 1 ASSESSMENTS

- SW 230: INTRO TO SOCIAL WORK (LIMITED)

- SW 305: SOCIAL WORK POLICY

- Assignments / Products for Assessment:

- Article Summaries / Presentations
- Policy Analysis Papers / Literature Reviews
- Debate Activities
- Agency Visit Summary
- Service Learning Progress Notes



11

LEVEL 2

- SW 360: METHODS OF SW PRACTICE I

- Outcomes:

- Level 1 Outcomes
- Interview Skills
- Observation Skills

- Assignments / Assessments

- Descriptive Paper of a Social Work Area
- Verbal Report / Community Directory
- Progress Notes



12

LEVEL 3

- SW 370: METHODS OF SW RESEARCH

- Outcomes:

- Level 1 Outcomes
- Level 2 Outcomes
- Reading Quantitative and Qualitative Studies

- Assignments / Assessments

- Journal Article Critique
- Program or Agency Data Needs/Use Assignment (Written & Oral)



13

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- SW 432/433: FIELD EXPERIENCE
- PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

- Are there opportunities to use these culminating activities and products as additional assessment tools?

- Is it possible to use portfolios for dual purposes?



14

KEEP IN MIND...

- BUILD WHAT YOU NEED
- USE EXISTING STRUCTURES WHEN POSSIBLE
 - Outcomes
 - Assignments
 - Assessments
- REACH FROM SOPHOMORE TO SENIOR LEVELS WHEN POSSIBLE
- ASK QUESTIONS



15

Appendix H: Second QEP Workshop Presentation

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN: RESEARCH LITERACY

QEP IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP:
CHRIS MAYNARD (QEP COMMITTEE)
ROB KOCH (CENTER FOR WRITING EXCELLENCE)
NICK MAURIELLO (COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES)
KELLY LATCHAW (COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES)
BRIAN HUFFMAN (COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES)
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LAURA WILLIAMS (COLLEGE OF NURSING)
LEIGH THOMPSON (COLLIER LIBRARY)



1

RESEARCH LITERACY REVIEW

- RESEARCH
 - The process of collecting, synthesizing, interpreting, and presenting information
- LITERACY
 - The mastery of specific conventions for the processing of information



2

RESEARCH LITERACY REVIEW

- FRAMEWORK
 - Three levels of outcomes where the outcomes reflect the skills and knowledge needed for research literacy within the field
 - These outcomes then inform our pedagogy



3

PEDAGOGY

- Pedagogy can be thought of in terms of modes of instruction and modes of assessment



4

MODES OF INSTRUCTION

- MODES OF INSTRUCTION IN RESEARCH LITERACY ARE THE STRATEGIES WE USE TO TEACH STUDENTS:
 - What to look for
 - How to find it
 - What to do with it
 - How to present it



5

MODES OF ASSESSMENT

- May apply to any part or level of the research process
- Require students to demonstrate literacy, i.e., the mastery of field specific conventions



6

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – W COURSES

– Level 1 Outcome:

- Explore and implement basic discipline-specific research techniques

– Assessment: NU 200-Introduction to Professional Nursing

- Contemporary Issues in Nursing Collaborative Paper
 - Basic internet search techniques
 - APA format
 - Professional paper presentation to class



7

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – W COURSES

– Level 2 Outcome:

- Elaborate on and implement basic discipline-specific research techniques

– Assessment: NU 302-Community Health Nursing

- Community Health Needs of Underserved and Minority Populations in our community
 - APA format
 - Statement of problem for population
 - Basic Literature review of problem for population
 - Interview with one member of this population to compare and contrast literature with perceptions in this population



8

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – W COURSES

– Level 3 Outcome:

- Utilize discipline-specific research methods to design and implement a research proposal

– Assessment: NU 406-Research in Nursing

- Collaborative Design and Implementation of research proposal
 - APA format
 - Introduction, significance, review of literature, methodology, results and conclusion
 - IRB submission and approval
 - Professional presentation of research proposal with critique



9

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – CLINICAL DOCUMENTATION

– Level 1 Outcome:

- Generate and document basic nursing care utilizing NANDA taxonomy for nursing process

– Assessment: NU 301 and 302

- Progressive Care Plan
 - Assessment and Diagnosis – Weeks 1-3
 - Goals/Outcomes – Weeks 4-6 **
 - Implementation/Intervention – Weeks 7-9
 - Evaluation – Weeks 10-12 – Completed Nursing Process



10

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – CLINICAL DOCUMENTATION

– Level 2 Outcome:

- Generate and document basic nursing care utilizing NANDA taxonomy for nursing process, adding scientific rationale

– Assessment: NU 304 Adult Health Nursing 1

- Complete Nursing Care Plan
 - Assessment, Diagnosis, Goals/Outcomes, Implementation/Intervention, Evaluation
 - ADD scientific rationale/evidence for each nursing intervention with citations from text with APA reference style



11

EXAMPLES FROM NURSING

• RESEARCH LITERACY – CLINICAL DOCUMENTATION

– Level 3 Outcome:

- Generate and document basic nursing care utilizing NANDA taxonomy for nursing process for nursing care specialties

– Assessment: Nursing specialty courses

- Complete Nursing Care Plan
 - Assessment, Diagnosis, Goals/Outcomes, Implementation/Intervention, Scientific Rationale/Evidence, Evaluation



12

BEYOND THE “W” COURSES...

- RESEARCH LITERACY IS:
 - COLLABORATION
 - CLASS PRESENTATIONS
 - CASE STUDIES
 - CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES
 - ONLINE DISCUSSION
 - FIELD EXPERIENCE/APPLICATION OF SKILLS TO PRACTICE
 - SIMULATION
 - REFLECTIVE JOURNALS
 - REVIEWING LITERATURE
 - MENTORING
 - INTERNSHIPS



13

KEEP IN MIND...

- BUILD WHAT YOU NEED
- USE EXISTING STRUCTURES WHEN POSSIBLE
 - Outcomes
 - Assignments
 - Assessments
- REACH FROM SOPHOMORE TO SENIOR LEVELS WHEN POSSIBLE
- ASK QUESTIONS



14

Appendix I: Student Presentation Handout



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

Quality Enhancement Plan FAQs



Building Success Through Discovery

Imagine → Investigate → Communicate

Student Meetings: Wednesday, Nov 16 at 12pm and Thursday, Nov 17 at 2pm



What is SACSCOC?

SACSCOC stands for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, which is the accrediting body for educational institutions in the southern US and Latin America (www.sacscoc.org).

Why is accreditation important?

Accreditation serves to assure the public that an institution maintains high standards, operates with integrity, and consistently strives to improve the quality of all of its programs and services.

Among other benefits, SACSCOC accreditation enables the UNA to maintain eligibility for student financial aid through the U.S. Department of Education.

What is a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

The QEP is a five-year plan that is required for reaccreditation and is dedicated to improving an aspect of student learning or the environment for student success.

The QEP affords UNA the opportunity to thoroughly examine all aspects of student learning. This deep introspection serves as the basis for developing a plan that outlines actions to be taken to improve the quality of education at UNA.

How was the QEP topic at UNA selected?

The QEP Planning Committee solicited input from all UNA constituencies regarding an appropriate QEP topic. The final topic was chosen based upon this input and a thorough examination of data regarding student learning, engagement, employer surveys, and alumni surveys.

What is UNA's QEP Topic?

The UNA QEP focus is on undergraduate research with components of research literacy, information literacy, and writing in the discipline. The UNA QEP is named *Building Success through Discovery*.

Why is undergraduate research and literacy important to students?

Research is no longer the domain of academia but is important in business, industry, and public sectors. Through undergraduate research, students gain important career skills in:

- Problem solving, critical thinking, data and information collection, and organization
- Verbal and written communication, self-direction, creativity, and situational assessment.

How will the UNA QEP be implemented?

- Research is a process that includes:
 - Asking questions
 - Collecting information or data
 - Identifying findings
 - Presenting the results
- The development of research skills starts in English 112/122 followed by students involved in discipline-specific research as sophomores, juniors, and seniors.
- Students have the opportunity to present their research findings at UNA Research Day or a state, regional, or national meeting.

When will implementation begin?

Implementation of UNA's QEP will begin in Fall 2012.

When will SACSCOC visit UNA?

The SACSCOC Reaffirmation Team will visit UNA from February 28 through March 1, 2012.

Want more information? Friend us on Facebook (UNAqep) and follow us on Twitter (UNA-QEP)

Research Literacy and Undergraduate Research at UNA

Appendix J: Faculty Presentation Handout



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

Quality Enhancement Plan FAQs

Building Success Through Discovery



Imagine → Investigate → Communicate

Research Literacy and Undergraduate Research at UNA

For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, make decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why is vital. Research and inquiry is not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. It is central to professional life in the twenty-first century. (Dr. Angela Brew, 2007)

What is SACSCOC?

SACSCOC stands for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, which is the accrediting body for educational institutions in the southern US and Latin America (www.sacscoc.org).

What is a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

The QEP is a five-year plan, required for reaccreditation, that is dedicated to improving some aspect of student learning or the environment for student success. At the end of five years (AY 2016-2017), SACSCOC will evaluate the results of UNA's QEP.

The QEP affords UNA the opportunity to thoroughly examine all aspects of student learning. This deep introspection serves as the basis for developing a plan that outlines actions to be taken to improve the quality of education at UNA.

What is UNA's QEP Topic?

The UNA QEP focus is research literacy, including information literacy and writing in the discipline. The UNA QEP is named ***Building Success through Discovery***.

Building Success through Discovery is an undergraduate research model that supports the development of professional expertise required to succeed in an academic discipline and pursue a career in any given field.

Building Success through Discovery honors every discipline's research traditions, because the research skills are taught within the academic departments, building discipline specific research and thinking skills.

What is Research Literacy?

As defined by the QEP Development Team and the UNA SACS Leadership Team, ***Research literacy*** is the specific writing, research, and critical thinking skills required to pursue a career in any given discipline.

What are the Student Learning Outcomes? Students will be able to:

1. Formulate a clear thesis statement, research question, research problem, or hypothesis
2. Collect information or data relevant to the research problem
3. Evaluate and analyze information to effectively address the research problem
4. Identify findings or results and present them using a discipline-specific medium

How will the UNA QEP be implemented?

- The implementation and evaluation of the QEP student learning outcomes begins in English 112/122. These courses will be used as the baseline assessment for research skill development.
- Academic departments will implement the QEP and evaluate the student learning outcomes across three levels: Sophomore, Junior, and Senior with each level building on the prior level.
- The course(s) in which the student learning outcomes are implemented must be sequenced in an appropriate manner.
- Implementation and assessment methods are determined by the academic departments.
- Evaluation results will be reported in June of every year. Individual departments will make changes, as appropriate, based on the results of their assessment findings.
- Findings from the combined academic departments' assessments will be reported to campus in fall of the following year.

QEP Planning Timeline

Pre-Proposal Phase

- **April 2009** – SACS information meeting with faculty and staff; informal survey asked “If UNA could focus on just one thing to improve student learning, what should it be?”
- **Fall 2009** – QEP Planning Committee members meet with constituency groups including Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and Department Chairs to communicate aspects of the QEP development process
- **September 2009** - Formal survey issued to students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers asking questions relevant to ways to increase student learning.

Seven topics emerged from the survey: Critical Thinking , Analysis, and Decision Making; Mathematical Reasoning; Science Understanding ; Service Learning / Experiential Learning; Global Studies; Information Fluency / Literacy; and Oral and Written Communication.

Proposal Phase

- **October 2009** - QEP Planning Team solicits preliminary proposals related to the seven topics. Ten proposals were submitted and three were selected for further development. The topics included: Service Learning, Research Literacy, and Global Understanding.
- **December 2009** – The three proposals were presented to the SACS Leadership Team who selected **Research Literacy** as UNA’s QEP topic.

Introduction of **Research Literacy** Topic to Campus

- **Spring 2010** – QEP Working Group hosts meetings for chairs and disciplinary writing course instructors.
- **Fall 2010** – QEP Working Group hosts two “lunch and learn” opportunities for chairs and faculty to discuss student learning outcomes and assessment

QEP Implementation Timeline

- **August 2011** – QEP Director hired in a part-time capacity
- **January 12, 2012** – Final QEP Process submitted to SACSCOC on-site visitation team
- **February 28 to March 1, 2012** – SACSCOC on-site visitation team at UNA to study compliance and QEP process
- **Fall 2012** – Level I courses offered and outcomes evaluated
- **Spring 2013** – Level I (as appropriate) and II courses offered and outcomes evaluated
- **June 2013** – English 112/122, as well as academic departments’ Levels I and II assessments submitted
- **July 2013** – Analysis of assessments and development of findings based on the 2012-2013 implementation
- **Fall 2013** – Findings report to campus constituency groups; Levels I, II and II courses offered and outcomes evaluated

Building Success through Discovery supports UNA’s mission by focusing on the creation of a rich undergraduate experience where students’ have the opportunity to increase their ability to solve problems, think critically, and communicate their findings; all through guided practice and mentored relationships with faculty members. Students will be involved in conducting their own research and understanding the development of knowledge within their disciplines in an atmosphere of discovery leading to opportunities for advancement within their chosen fields and career paths.

Why is undergraduate research and literacy important to students?

Research is no longer the domain of academia but is important in the business, industry, and public sectors.

Through undergraduate research, students gain important career skills in:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Data and information collection
- Organization
- Verbal and written communication
- Self-direction
- Creativity
- Situational assessment

Who are the partners in UNA’s QEP?

Students, faculty, academic departments, and colleges are the key partners in the *Building Success through Discovery*.

Supporting organizations include Division of Student Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs and Provost, Center for Writing Excellence, Center for Academic Advising and Retention, Center for Academic Success, and Collier Library.



Appendix K: QEP Director, Dr. Lisa Keys Mathews', Vitae



Education

- GISP Certified Geographic Information System Professional, 2009
Ph. D. Earth Sciences (Concentration in Geography), University of Memphis, 2007
M.S. Geography (Concentration in GIS and Remote Sensing), University of South Carolina, 1987
B.A. Professional Geography, University of North Alabama, 1985

Professional Experience

1992- Present University of North Alabama, Florence, Alabama

Positions Held at UNA:

- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Director**, August 2011 to present
- Associate Professor** (2008), Assistant Professor, and Instructor, Department of Geography
- Program Coordinator**, Master of Science in Geospatial Science (July 2010 – August 2011)
- Interim Chair**, Department of Geography (January, 2010; January – May, 2011)

2009 – Present Co-coordinator, Alabama Geographic Alliance

- 1999 (summer) US Space and Rocket Center, Geospatial Technology and Analysis Center, Huntsville
- 1990 – 1992 DBA Systems, Fairfax, Virginia (Staff Scientist and GIS Group Manager)
- 1988 – 1990 Teledyne Brown Engineering, Huntsville, Alabama (Project Manager)
- 1987 – 1988 Intergraph Corporation, Huntsville, Alabama (Systems Engineer)

Awards

- **Geographer of the Year**, 2007 (awarded by the UNA Geography Alumni Association), 2007
- **Faculty Alumni of the Year**, 2005
- **Phi Kappa Phi Eleanor Gaunder Teaching Excellence Award**, 2002
- **National Council for Geographic Education's Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award**, 2001 (one of ten Geography faculty in the US and Canada)

Scholarship

- Refereed Papers: 10 (most recent: 2011)
- Maps published in books, brochures, and stand-alone: 10 (Two tourism maps ~ over 150,000 copies)
- Refereed / Invited Presentations: 4
- Invited Member: International Network for Learning and Teaching Geography
- Posters delivered at professional conferences: 13; Presentations delivered at professional conferences: 23

Research / Project Funding

- PI, Department of Justice "Crime Mapping and Disaster Recovery Project"
- Co-PI, NOAA Coastal Services Center, "GeoSpatial Analysis of Weather Phenomena and Disaster Recovery"
- Researcher, NSF project "GIS Access" active learning project funded to Cypress College (CA)
- External Funding: \$1,213,825 (DoJ, NOAA, NASA, National Geographic Society, Legacy, NSF - subcontract)
- Internal Funding: \$33,325

Professional Development Workshops Conducted

- Alabama Geographic Alliance Summer Institute Director (2008 and 2009)
- Legacy / Alabama Geographic Alliance Workshop Director (Summer 2000)
- Total Teacher Workshops conducted: 11 plus nine (9) Workshop Presentations

Professional Memberships

- Association of American Geographers and National Council for Geographic Education,
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Theta Upsilon International Geographical Honor Society, and Phi Beta Delta International Scholars Honor Society

Fieldwork and Research

Gulfport, Mississippi and **New Orleans, Louisiana** - post Katrina; southern **Peru** - post Arequipa earthquake; **Costa Rica** - urban land use analysis (Traveler's and researcher's knowledge of Spanish); **Mindanao Philippines** - training Filipino teachers; and **Kwajalein Atoll** in the Marshall Islands – GPS data collection and mapping