Quality Enhancement Plan Impact Report

I. Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes of the QEP

Valdosta State University (VSU) identified *Undergraduate Engagement in Discipline-Based Inquiry* as its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which provides students with focused opportunities for engaging with faculty in research, creative, and scholarly activities appropriate to their discipline. Faculty, staff, students, and university administrators all played key roles in the selection of the QEP topic. In 2008 a campus-wide solicitation of QEP topics resulted in a total of 28 potential topics for consideration, and IRXU PLQL-SURVSHFWXVHV ZHUH GRSHGRQWKPRVWSURPLVLQJWRSLFV968¶V4(3WRSLFDVVHOHFWHG in 2009 based upon information collected from institutional assessments, an analysis of results from national surveys conducted at VSU, and a review of the literature on undergraduate research. Discipline-based inquiry was selected as our QEP topic because of the powerful impact undergraduate research has

B B B

In our fifth QEP project, **Nursing** students learned research concepts and developed skills supporting evidence-based nursing practice. Working with a major hospital system comprised of six acute care hospitals, the students investigated end-of-life care communication and the level of moral distress. In our final project of the first round, students from the **Interior Design** program in the Department of Art explored the differences between kitchen layouts in assisted living facilities designed by

after the conclusion of the project. Table 2 reveals that students reported learning gains for 23 of the 24 questions from the pre-test to the post-test. Utilizing a difference of means test (t-test), statistically significant differences emerged for approximately half (11 of 24) of the questions. In relation to the first QEP goal, students will develop basic knowledge of discipline-specific skills, statistically significant differences from the pre-test to the post-WHVWZHUHHYLGHQWIRUUHDGLQJSURIHVVLRQDOGLVFLSOLQHOL
For the second QEP goal, students will apply discipline-specific inquiry skills from the classroom to resolve a specific question or problem, statistically significant gains were evident for ³following a scripted lab/project in which the outcome is unknown,´FRQGXFWLQJSURMHFWVWKUHVWGHQWVHYLQSW
LQWRWKUHVHDUFKURFHVVDQGFRQGXFWLQJSURMHFWHQWLUHO\RQWKHLURZQ´
questLRQVSHUWDLQLQJWRWKILUVWWRJRDOVVWGHQWOHDUQLQJJDLQVZHUHPRVWFRQVSLFXXIRU
UHVHDUFKURSRVDOFROOHFWLQJGDWDDQGDQDO\]LQJGDWD´ In relation to the third QEP goal, students will learn why and how to present the results of discipline-based inquiry in a professional or academic forum, VLJQLILFDQWJDLQVZHUHUHSRUWHGWKVWGHQWVIRU³SUHVHQWLQJUHVXOWVURDOOSUHVHQWLQ
ZLWWHQSDSHUVRUUHSRUWV³SUHVHQWLQJSRVWHUVDQGFULWLTXLQJWKURURIRWKUVWGHQWV*I
nature of our discipline-based inquiry projects, we were particularly pleased to see the most dramatic gains in Table 2 IRUZLWLQJDUHDSURSRVDOFRQGXFWLQJSURMHFWHQWLRIVWGHQWGHVLJ
³SUHVHQWLQJUHVXOWVURDOOFULWRUTXRIWKUVWGHQWVDQGFROOHFWLQJGDWD´

Table 2: Pre-test/Post-test Results

projects prepared progress reports and a final project report that detailed the results of the assessments of student learning outcomes and program goals. Faculty directors evaluated the student learning outcomes through lab reports, quizzes, exams, journals, portfolios, research papers, and presentation rubrics. The final project reports and student work products were reviewed by a faculty peer reviewer in the home department of the QEP project or a related discipline. Faculty peer reviewers were selected by the QEP coordinator. The faculty peer reviewers completed a rubric for evaluating how well the projects met specific student learning outcomes, program goals, and overall QEP goals.

In the round one projects, a sample student learning outcome pertaining to the first QEP goal was that ³VWXGHQWVZLOOXQGHUVWDQGWKHGLIIHUHQWW\SHVRITXDOLWDWLYHPHWKRGRORJLHVDQGKRZHDFKWHF VKRXOGEHXVHGIRUWKH%RUGHUODQG(SHULHQFHSURMHFW´ Two sample student learning outcomes pertaining to the second QEP goal were that students participating in the Communication Sciences and Disorders SURMHFW³ZLOOZRUN in pairs to collect and analyze one language sample of a child-parent or child-caregiver interaction,´ while students participating in the History project ³ZLOOGHPRQVWUDWHWKHDELOLW\ to complete a research project based on archival resources.´ For the third QEP goal, a sample student learning outcome IURPWKH1XUVLQJSURMHFWDUWLFXODWHGWKDW³VWXGHQWVZLOO-based practice through the dissemination of research findings LPSDFWLQJFOLQLFDOFDUH´,QWKHURXQGWZRSURMHFWVDVDPSOHVWXGHQ learning outcome for the first QEP goal, stemming from the Engineering project, was that students will ³GHPRQVWUDWHNQRZOHGJHDERXWPHWKRGVDSSOLHGIRUFRQVWUXFWLRQRIWHVWV operation of research HTXLSPHQW´)RUWKHVHFRQG QEP goal, Math and Computer Science project VWXGHQWVZLOO³HYDOXDWH tradeoffs involved in design choices.´ For the third QEP goal, a student learning outcome from the *HRVFLHQFHVSURMHFWVSHFLILHGWKDW³students will create and present research-based presentations on climate action plans.´ The faculty peer reviews carefully evaluated these student learning outcomes.

Table 3 summarizes faculty peer reviews of the QEP projects. The evaluations of the student learning outcomes (A) all rank as strong (4) to exceptionally strong (5), ZLWKWKHKLJKHVWVFRUHVIRU³PDVWHUWKH UHVHDUFKSURFHVVDQG³SURGXFWLRQRIVFKRODUO\ZRUN´ the assessment of program goals (B), the average VFRUHVDOOUDQNDVVWURQJWRH[FHSWLRQDOO\VWURQJH[FHSWIRU³FXUULFXODULPSDFW´ introduction) which ranks as acceptable. The lower score is attributable to certain round two QEP projects that did not impact the curriculum through the creation of a new course, as such an outcome was not their priority and/or intention.)RUSURJUDPDVVHVVPHQWWKHKLJKHVWVFRUHVZHUHHYLGHQWIRU³HQJDJLQJVWXGHQW ³LQYROYLQJVWXGHQWVLQDFDSVWRQHH[SHULHQFH´DQG³UHFUXLWPHQWSDUWLFLSDWLRQ0RVWVLJQL faculty peer reviewers gave high marks to the projects for achieving the three goals of the QEP (C): 4.85 for the first goal, 4.54 for the second goal, and 4.77 for the third goal.

Table 3: Faculty Peer Reviews of the QEP Projects

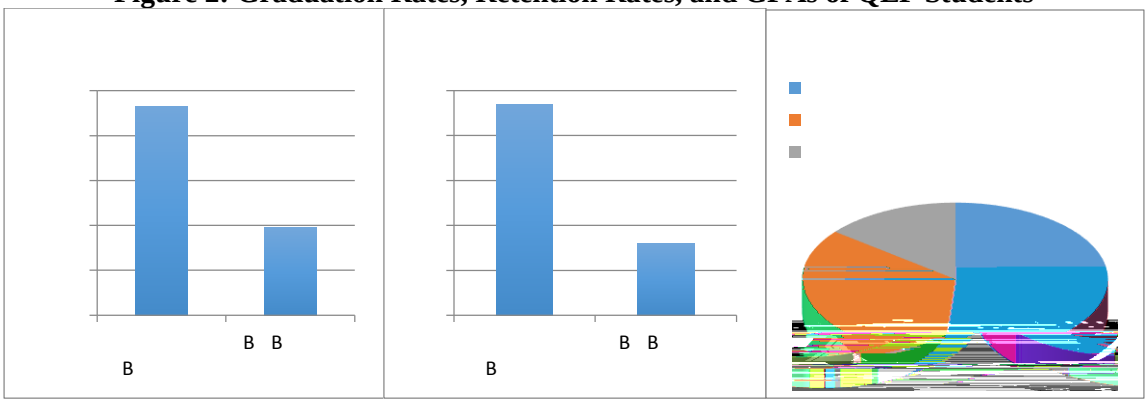
B			

B

B B B

degrees at VSU. Of the 15% who are no longer at VSU, roughly half transferred to Georgia Tech from our Engineering project given that our two-year Engineering Studies program has a transfer agreement with Georgia Tech. We have graduated, retained, or successfully transferred more than 90% of the students from the round two QEP projects. We should note that only our Academic Cultures QEP project involved students exclusively from the Honors College. The percentage of Honors students amongst the total of 400 QEP students mirrored the general student population. The focus groups clearly revealed that first-generation college students as well as minority students were well represented across the QEP projects.

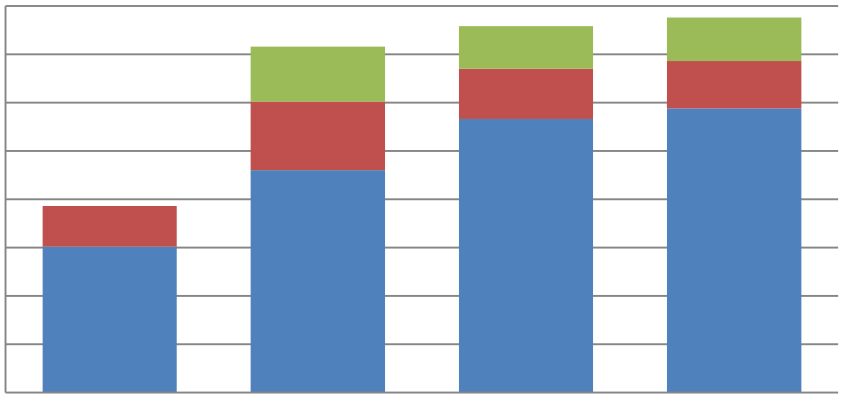
Figure 2: Graduation Rates, Retention Rates, and GPAs of QEP Students



Assessment of Student Presentations at the Undergraduate Research Symposium

Beyond the discipline-based inquiry projects, our QEP called for the expansion of our Symposium on Undergraduate Research from the College of Arts and Sciences to a campus-wide event. The Symposium is held for three days each April. As documented in Figure 3, we have witnessed exciting growth in the number of student presentations, which have doubled from 193 in 2012 to almost 400 in 2015. This growth has been driven by a dramatic increase each year in the number of campus-wide research poster presentations. In 2013, the VSU Student Art Competition was added to our annual April Symposium. Student art works are judged each year by a visiting artist who makes the final selection of works for display in the Student Art Competition. Approximately 50 student art works are on display in our Fine Arts Gallery each year for the Symposium. Undergraduates also deliver oral presentations on panels. These paper presentations have ranged from 42 to 71 over the past four years.

Figure 3: Number of Symposium Presentations (2012-2015)



B B B

are evaluated based upon research, organization, and presentation. The total average scores have shown a slight increase over time from 20.52 to 20.98. The most dramatic increase in scores has been for the College of Education posters, with a slight decline in scores for the social sciences over the last four