



Call for Quality Enhancement Plan Concept Papers

East Carolina University is announcing the call for Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) concept papers from individuals or groups of individuals. The QEP is an important part of the reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The QEP is a plan intended to implement and assess a focused set of initiatives designed to improve student learning or student success across the university.

The QEP Selection Committee will evaluate the papers using the attached rubric and make recommendations to the Academic Council. Three topics will be selected for further development into full proposals for the ECU community's consideration.

To learn more about the QEP or how to submit a concept paper, Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR) will host two virtual workshops in TEAMS on Monday, October 12, 2020 from 1:30 – 2:30 pm and Friday, October 30, 2020 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm. QEP Concept Papers must be submitted via email to [Dr. Cyndi Bellacero](mailto:Dr.CyndiBellacero) no later by January 15, 2021.

Using the cover page template below, please provide the following information:

Name and Contact Information:

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Topic or Theme:

Please provide a working title that is descriptive of the content or focus.

All Aboard: Building an Inclusive Pirate Nation

Concept Paper Guidelines

The concept paper should be a maximum of three, typed, single-spaced pages with one-inch margins and 11 to 12-point font.

Please submit the concept paper as an email attachment by the deadline to Dr. Cyndi Bellacero, SACSCOC Liaison, at bellaceroc18@ecu.edu. Use the following naming convention for the file name: **QEPConceptPaper_Last name of sender**.

Sections to be Addressed in the Concept Paper

Summary:

Include in your summary:

- What areas of student learning or student success will be impacted by this topic or theme?
- What data or evidence exists to support the topic?
- Describe how this project will improve student learning or student success.
- Who the target population of students for this topic?
- Why is it important for student learning in this area to be improved at ECU?
- Indicate if this proposal will be a new initiative, or if it will expand upon an existing enhancement plan.
- What mechanism will be used to measure the success of the project?
- What plan will be developed to garner broad-based support across campus?

PROPOSAL

All Aboard: Building an Inclusive Pirate Nation proposes the implementation of a QEP centered around the development of the intercultural competency (IC) of ECU students. The goal of the QEP is to equip students with the necessary skills and characteristics for effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett, 2015). Through well-designed educational interventions (both academic and co-curricular), the QEP seeks to move students from a foundational level, where they become interested and engaged in the exploration of cultural differences, toward a more advanced level where they can accomplish complex tasks while respecting the norms of other cultures. In other words, the students will begin their studies thinking about a variety of cultural contexts; they will graduate with the necessary skills to behave appropriately in those contexts.

The acquisition of IC is a process. In the Higher Education context, certain practices such as content courses, study abroad, language or service learning are important, but one component alone is not enough (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2012). Rather, it requires a well-designed implementation plan that ensures its sustainability and takes into consideration institutional and student attributes, resources, and leadership. The plan must be coupled with a rigorous assessment process ([AACU, 2017](#)).

Based on consensus from administrators and scholars, Deardorff (2006) identified 19 components that define IC. Of those, this QEP proposes to focus on the development and assessment of four:

- Understanding of other worldviews.
- Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment.
- Openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures.
- Adaptability.

The proposal is built upon the establishment of a thematic focus on inclusivity that will be introduced to first time-first year students during fall semester. The theme will remain a university-wide focus for four years. The following interconnected and overlapping initiatives will take place during those years:

- Learn! Curricular Opportunities. Students will receive information about specific curricular opportunities around the focus in General Education, Majors and Minors.

- Do! Co-curricular Opportunities: Students will have to attend one or two events specifically designed around diversity each academic year, with a minimum of 6 events during a 4-year period.
- Help! Creation of a Diversity Academy with students and faculty as its members. Members of the Academy will become advocates for intercultural competence on campus. They will be ECU's experts in this area. They will organize events, identify guest speakers. Their efforts will be recognized at graduation and in professional advancement.
- Grow! Workshop opportunities for faculty who want to incorporate developing intercultural competence into their courses. Most workshops will be offered by internal experts on the field, others by outside experts.

These initiatives have been designed taking into consideration much of the work that many offices on campus are already carrying out. The QEP will give coherence, support, and impetus to this already existing work. On the other, the implementation and assessment of some of these initiatives will be immediate and the refinement of medium- and long-term goals can start from the get-go.

ASSESSMENT

As widely agreed among experts, the project will use a variety of direct and indirect means of assessment to measure the degrees of acquisition of students' IC over a period of 4 years from a sample collected Fall semester first time-first year freshmen class. To recruit and retain a representative and stable participant pool, we will offer incentives for students who participate in the initiative. We will use an IC inventory as a baseline assessment of students' IC before they participate in the proposed programs. We will also measure students' perceptions of the interventions using a survey based on Expectancy-Value Theory of Motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) after they participate in each intervention. As a direct post-assessment measure, we will administer the same IC inventory we used for the baseline assessment to measure growth. Additional direct means of assessment will include the design and implementation of a series of case scenarios paired with Mursion®, an immersive mixed reality simulation platform, with students' responses assessed using the "Intercultural knowledge and competence VALUE rubric" (AACU, 2017), as well as a portfolio with samples of students' written responses to various case scenarios, which will also be evaluated using the VALUE rubric. For the fourth type of intervention, faculty training, we will administer a survey to measure participants' perceptions of the workshops.

NEED FOR PROPOSAL

The interest of employers in IC competent employees has been well documented in multiple reports, such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities' 2002 [Greater Expectations](#). Even the US Supreme Court in [Grutter vs. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306 \(2003\)](#) noted that "major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints."

One of the most comprehensive survey of employers appears in the 2015 [Falling Short?](#) report by Hart Research Associates. The report documents that "Nearly all employers (96%) agree that, regardless of their chosen field of study, all students should have experiences in college that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own, including 59% who strongly agree with this statement" (p. 3). Employers also report an 89% agreement with the statement that "every college student should take courses that build the civic knowledge, skills, and judgement essential for contributing to our democratic society" and 87% agreement that "all college students should gain intercultural skills and understanding of societies and countries outside the United States" (p. 2).

Multiple studies demonstrate that diversity courses reduce bias, cultivate empathy, and promote respectful treatment across sociocultural differences (Chang, 2002; [AACU, 2005](#)). Most interestingly, studies demonstrate that diversity courses contribute positively to students' moral development during 4 years of college (Parker et al., 2016). The initiatives included in the proposal,

which include faculty and students, will prove to be transformational to the campus culture. The benefits of the QEP will be sustainable after the project is completed because it will change the way ECU approaches diversity.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In Academic Year (AY) 1996-1997, ECU established a 3 s.c.h. Cultural Diversity (CD) Undergraduate Graduation Requirement. The requirement had no Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) associated with it; it was void of content and it lacked assessment of its effectiveness. In 2012, following a recommendation from ECU's Chancellor Leadership Council to revise the CD and a recommendation of the [2007 UNC Tomorrow Commission Report](#) to prepare graduates to compete in the global economy, ECU Faculty Senate approved the implementation of the [Diversity Undergraduate Graduation Requirement](#) as it currently exists: 3 s.c.h. in courses designated as Domestic Diversity (DD), and 3 s.c.h. in courses designated as Global Diversity (GD). Since the reformulation of the requirement, there has not been any assessment to determine whether the SLOs are being met. The appropriateness of the SLOs or the requirement itself have not been assessed either.

The work for the QEP will begin before students set foot on campus, with a campus-wide discussion of how ECU defines intercultural competence and a careful design of SLOs that reflect the definition. The continuous assessment of SLOs over the life of the QEP will be based on best practices in the field of intercultural competence and will allow for a more sophisticated approach to diversity than currently employed on campus. What until now has been an add-on requirement will become central in the academic development of students.

DATA

Data from the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) indicate that since 2015, ECU 4th-year seniors have reported significant increases in some High Impact Practices, such as completion of a senior project (from 51% to 63%) or completion of an internship (from 53% to 61%). However, the percentage of seniors who participated in a study abroad program remained the same (13%).

For 2018, the Survey shows that 54% of seniors considered that their experience at ECU contributed very much to their critical and analytical thinking skills, 43.6% to their ability to write clearly and effectively, 38.5% to analyzing numerical and statistical information. Three skills and personal development traits related to intercultural competence received lower ratings: 37.3% for understanding people of other backgrounds, 34.3% in solving complex-real world problems and only 29.7% about becoming an informed and active citizen. Furthermore, in the Survey only 28% and 19.8% of seniors respectively considered that the institution emphasized very much "contact [with] students from different backgrounds" and "attend events that address important social, economic, or political issues." These two areas of emphases are critical in encouraging intercultural competence.

The data clearly indicate that ECU has not met neither in qualitative nor quantitative ways its strategic commitments to foster a diverse inclusive campus and to prepare students for a global marketplace.

Relationship to University Mission and Goals:

Describe how the project relates to:

- [ECU Mission](#)
- [ECU Strategic Plan](#)

As applicable (must relate to at least one):

- [ECU General Education Outcomes](#)
- [Program Learning Outcomes](#), program name
- Other Learning Outcomes
- Student Success

ECU'S MISSION

This QEP proposal is directly related to several aspects of [ECU's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#), Commitments 4 and 7 in "Maximize Student Success": "We will reflect a global workplace and society" and "We will foster ... a culture that encourages a diverse living-learning community." In preparation for this proposal all units' strategic plans were reviewed. The metrics established by units to demonstrate achieving these commitments are numerical (for example, percentages of students travelling abroad, number of courses taken or developed). This QEP proposes a competency-based approach to demonstrate that ECU's commitments are indeed being fulfilled.

Available ECU Expertise:

Explain the interest in and experience of all contributors with this topic. Describe any previous research that has been conducted on this or related topics. What other units or individuals at the university can/will contribute to this theme or topic?

EXPERTISE

Dr. Purificación Martínez is Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies in FLL. She has been at ECU since 1995. She has a demonstrable record of effective leadership of diverse groups of faculty, students and staff at the national level (Vice Chair of the AAUP Assemble of State Conferences), state (Director of the UNC Study Abroad Program in Santander, Spain), university (Chair of ECU Faculty, Chair of GEIEC, Chair of Faculty Governance), department (Assistant Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies), and section (Chair of Spanish Curriculum Committee). She approaches her research and teaching from an interdisciplinary perspective that moves among cultures, countries and time periods.

Dr. Laura Levi Altstaedter is Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies in FLL. Dr. Altstaedter's excellence in teaching has been recognized through various teaching awards, including the 2019 Scholar-Teacher Award, the 2016 Board of Governors Distinguished Professor for Teaching Award, as well as the 2016 Robert L. Jones Award for Outstanding Teaching. She has published articles on foreign language curriculum design, pre-service educator preparation and student motivation. She has extensive experience with program evaluation and assessment, as she has served as reviewer, lead reviewer and member of the National Audit Team for ACTFL/CAEP.

At different stages of the planning of the proposal, the contributors met with different constituencies on campus to gather input, including faculty representatives from each college. The successful implementation of this QEP will require the involvement and expertise of Student Affairs, Global Affairs, Office of Equity and Diversity, and Faculty Excellence.

