THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Quality Enhancement Plan for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

FIRST-YEAR ODYSSEY SEMINARS

SACSCOC On-Site Visit March 1-4, 2011
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

The resulting FYOS program has three overarching goals:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overview of the Process

The University of Georgia is large and diverse, a public, research, land- and sea-grant institution enrolling almost 35,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, with more than two centuries of history for teaching, research, and service and over one quarter million alumni around the world. Designing a QEP that could transform student learning at such an organization presents a myriad of significant challenges. This section describes the grass-roots process used to adopt a plan to improve student learning at the University of Georgia.

Team members were concerned that first-year students too often were limited to large, lecture class experiences, which offer few opportunities for meaningful dialogue with tenured and tenure-track faculty. Currently, the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences seminars are virtually the only small-group courses that bring first-year students into close contact with faculty. These seminars are able to serve only a third of entering students. As a consequence, the University is missing crucial opportunities to engage its newest members quickly and fully in intellectually rich exercises that will provide a pattern for their learning activities and aspirations for the remainder of their undergraduate years.

After in-depth consideration of a wide range of excellent proposals from the University community, the Team eventually decided that a faculty-taught, mandatory, academically challenging seminar directed at incoming first-year students during their first semester would improve student learning on campus. These new First-Year Odyssey Seminars (FYOS) will promote meaningful academic dialogue between our first-year students and tenured and tenure-track faculty in a small class setting.

Following the choice of FYOS as the focus of the QEP, the Team devoted its efforts to designing the seminars and implementing the plan. The Team concluded that each seminar will have a required writing element meant to document the academic dialogue between the student and the faculty member through writing, feedback, and response. Simultaneously, the seminars will encourage interaction between students and faculty that can extend beyond the semester.

The seminars will expose students to the many academic opportunities available on a campus of large size and scope. Students will see how the University engages in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction on campus, in the local community, and globally. Students will also attend campus events that highlight the core missions of the University. The deepest hope is that, over time, an academic experience shared by all first-year students will transform the culture of learning for all students and faculty.

Formation of the QEP Team

The University began its search for a QEP topic in the spring of 2008 with an open, campus-wide meeting to provide an overview of the process and to announce the committee that would
guide the effort. Over thirty members drawn from a wide selection of faculty, administrators, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and alumni composed the Team, assembled by University President Michael Adams. Dr. Adams selected Rodney Mauricio, an associate professor of genetics, to chair the committee. [See a full listing of Team members and their titles in “QEP Team Members” in Appendix A.]

The Leadership Team guides and directs the University’s overall Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation process. [See full list of Leadership Team members and their titles in Appendix B.] The Leadership Team charged the QEP Team as follows:

The charge of UGA’s QEP Team is to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the University of Georgia that complies with expectations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges’ Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. The process of selecting the focus topic of the plan must be highly participatory and must be evidence-based. The topic itself must address improving student learning outcomes. The institution must demonstrate that it has the resources to support the plan over a five year period and that it will be able to assess the success of the plan using measurable indicators.

In order to fulfill this charge, over the next eighteen months the QEP Team should:

1. Identify, investigate, and assess possible areas of focus for UGA’s QEP
2. Recommend to the Leadership Team possible areas of focus for development of a full Quality Enhancement Plan
3. Following approval by the Leadership Team, develop a detailed Quality Enhancement Plan based on the chosen area of focus that will be implemented following the SACSCOC re-affirmation

Encouraging Broad-Based Participation through Pre-Proposals

To create the University’s QEP, the committee went on its own odyssey, which was long, challenging, and filled with intellectual adventures. The QEP Team met regularly from 2008 through the final adoption of this QEP.1 At its first meeting in September 2008, the Team discussed its mission. One result was that the QEP Team renamed itself the Student Learning Enhancement Team to emphasize one of its core beliefs to the University community: this process would focus on improving student learning. Another core belief was that ideas for the QEP had to come from the campus community, so the Team solicited brief “pre-proposal” draft ideas from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Finally, the Team felt that the process of selection had to be transparent. Thus, individuals and groups were encouraged to submit their pre-proposals to a public online site. The pre-proposal was purposely low-stakes and designed

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1 The minutes of the QEP Team meetings are available at http://www.qep.uga.edu/minutes.html.
to promote creativity in thought; no more was required than an idea described in two pages or less.

Through the 2008-2009 academic year, the Team met with faculty, staff, students, and alumni to solicit ideas and pre-proposals. Meetings were advertised campus-wide on a wide range of listservs. Team members met with approximately 170 faculty during two open forums and with staff at a third open forum. The forums were widely advertised on campus and were the focus of several features in the student daily newspaper and the weekly faculty and staff newsletter, both free and widely read by the University community. [See the listing of forums and the listing of articles in campus publications on the QEP website at http://www.qep.uga.edu.]

Another important tool to encourage submission of pre-proposals and maximum participation in the process by the University community was the QEP website.² It provided background on the role of QEP in reaffirming SACSCOC accreditation. In addition, the site served as the portal where all members of the University community were invited to submit short pre-proposal ideas, which others could read and comment upon. In the spirit of inclusiveness as well as transparency, posted comments required signatures. The website received considerable input, and results were gratifying. By January 2009, eighty-five faculty, staff, and students had submitted thirty-one pre-proposals.

At the same time, the Student Government Association (SGA) became deeply involved in choosing a focus for the QEP. Three successive presidents of the SGA served actively and vocally on the Team and its subcommittees, and the SGA directed much energy to canvass student opinion. In late fall of 2008, undergraduates were asked in events at the Miller Student Learning Center and in campus dining halls how they thought the campus environment for the University could improve student learning with these questions:

- What was your greatest expectation for your learning experience at UGA that has been met?
- What was your greatest expectation for your learning experience at UGA that has not been met?
- If you could make one campus-wide change to enhance undergraduate student learning, what would it be?

In all, 374 students provided written comments. [See the summary of the student survey in Appendix C.] Analyzing student questionnaire responses, presented to the QEP Team by the SGA President in January 2009, yielded four major themes:

- Students think relationship-building and increased accessibility to faculty, advisors, and upper division mentors are critical to student learning.
- Students value interactive learning that involves hands-on experiences, real world applications, diversity, research, internships, and international study.

² The QEP website may be viewed at http://www.qep.uga.edu.
• Students desire technology advances in academic and administrative support systems.
• Students seek increased academic assistance and accommodations, such as tutoring and 24-hour study spaces.

Evaluation of the Pre-Proposals

During spring 2009, the Team began formally considering the thirty-one pre-proposals. In January, the University’s Teaching Academy hosted a forum about the QEP, inviting all professors, instructional staff, and students. The Team also hosted an open forum to discuss the pre-proposals.

Then the Team talked. It examined, combined, and re-considered pre-proposals. The Team analyzed student survey results and assessed the pre-proposals extensively using a rubric established in advance.

The rubric used to assess the pre-proposals considered six questions:

1. **Learning-Focused**: Will the plan transform undergraduate learning at the University of Georgia?
2. **UGA-Centered**: Will the plan advance the mission of the University as a public land- and sea-grant university and set an aspirational standard?
3. **Scope**: Will the plan reach broadly across campus?
4. **Adaptability**: Is the plan flexible and scalable?
5. **Evidence**: Is there evidence that the University needs the plan and that it will succeed?
6. **Measurement**: Can the University devise specific, measurable learning outcomes for this plan?

By February 2009, the Team chose six Learning Enhancement themes for further consideration: **advising, research, service-learning, the first-year experience, globalization, and active learning.** During a series of meetings with the Team, the authors of eight pre-proposals that focused on one or more of these six themes presented and discussed their projects with the Team. Other pre-proposals that related to these eight were combined and considered at the same time. The eight pre-proposals presented to the QEP Team were these:

**Advising**

1. **“Taking Academic Advising at UGA to the Next Level: Advising Ombuds, Faculty Mentoring, and Reduced Student-Advisor Ratios”** (Submitted by Dr. Ann Crowther, Associate Vice President for Instruction)

   *Meaningful relationships with faculty and advisors are critical elements of excellent undergraduate education. This pre-proposal suggested the creation of a Student Academic Services Office to house an Advising Ombudsman and a Faculty Mentoring Program.*
2. "Central Advising Resource Center" (Submitted by Julie Noelke, Program Review Coordinator, Office of Academic Planning)
   This proposal called for a Central Advising Resource Center to supplement the existing decentralized advising structure to increase the likelihood of long-term success of "millennial" students.

   Undergraduate Research

3. "Undergraduate Research" (Submitted by Dr. David Hall, Assistant Professor of Genetics)
   This proposal recommended incorporating the teaching of research skills into the curriculum, increasing research opportunities for students, advertising these opportunities, and encouraging student participation in research across all Colleges.

4. "Integrating Research and the Undergraduate Experience" (Submitted by Lara Pacifici, graduate student in Science Education)
   This proposal recommended a framework for undergraduate research that makes information about programs coherent and easily accessible and that allows for tracking the research that is done and its impact on our students.

   Service-Learning

5. "Engaged Scholars, Engaged Citizens" (Submitted by: Dr. David Berle, Associate Professor of Horticulture; Deborah Gonzalez, Public Service Assistant, Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach; Dr. Su-I Hou, Associate Professor of Health Promotion and Behavior; Dr. Paul Matthews, Assistant Director, Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education, College of Education; and Dr. Kathy Thompson, Public Service Associate, College of Education)
   The “Engaged Scholars, Engaged Citizens” initiative proposed creation of a continuum of teaching and learning experiences, linking service with academic study and research to prepare students for community and civic engagement.

   First-Year Experience

6. "Integrated Program for First-Year Experience” (Submitted by Dr. Marcus Fechheimer, Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor of Cellular Biology)
   This proposal called for an integrated program for the first-year experience, including major expansion/changes to: orientation, advising, freshman seminars, learning communities, and sections of first-year composition linked to seminars or majors. This proposal included aspects of research, service-learning, writing, and information literacy.
7. “Re-envisioning the Undergraduate Curriculum In a Global Context” (Submitted by: Dr. Noel Fallows, Associate Dean, Franklin College; Dr. Thomas Lauth, Dean, School of Public and International Affairs; Dr. Robert Galen, Associate Dean, College of Public Health; Dr. Phillip Williams, Dean, School of Public Health; Dr. James Porter, Meigs Professor of Ecology; Dr. John Gittleman, Dean, Odum School of Ecology; Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education; and Dr. Kathleen deMarrais, Professor of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy)

Under this proposal, five colleges would serve as models for globalizing the curriculum, identify courses with international content, structure international emphases within each college, develop gateway or capstone courses, and identify and promote immersive study/research/service/internship abroad options.

Active Learning

8. “Active Scholarship Initiative” (Submitted by: Robin Wharton, graduate student, English; Sara Steger, graduate student, English; Caroline Cason Barratt, Reference Librarian, University Libraries; and Dr. Ronald Balthazor, Academic Professional, English)

The ASI proposed creation of a virtual infrastructure to support pedagogy that cultivates research, analysis, writing, and communication skills. Through participation in customized workshops, process work, and peer review, undergraduates become a scholarly community, actively engaged in learning.

Following this selection of pre-proposals for in-depth presentations, the Team held eleven meetings throughout February and March of 2009 with a wide range of invited guests who passionately argued the positive and negative aspects of each theme and suggested elements that might be included in a QEP. Guests were faculty, staff, and students with expertise in the particular thematic area.

Development of Final Proposals for Presentation to Leadership Team

Meeting several times to winnow the pre-proposals, the Team chose to develop four themes into proposals in March 2009 and agreed to forward to the Leadership Team these chosen themes:

- Service-learning
- Undergraduate research
- First-year experience
- Globalization

Next the QEP Team broke into four groups, one for each theme. Each group included the QEP Team chair and at least one undergraduate student, and each group was charged with developing a four- to six-page QEP proposal. The groups also invited others to join them: faculty, staff, and students who were involved in the original pre-proposal submission or were members of the University community with expertise in an area related to the proposal topic.
In addition, in March 2009, the UGA Alumni Association commissioned a survey of association members. The alumni survey reached 61,105 deliverable alumni e-mail addresses and generated 4,284 responses. Six hundred fifty respondents submitted written comments. [See attached summary of alumni survey in Appendix D.]

The survey asked alumni to rank the four themes according to what would be “most beneficial to current and future students.” Of the more than 4,000 alumni responding to the survey, more than half thought focused attention on the first-term experience of incoming students would be “most beneficial to current and future students.” This rate was four times as many alumni who thought one of the other three options would be “most beneficial.”

At the end of the spring 2009 semester, the Team met to discuss the four final proposals. It made edits on the four proposals and submitted them to the Leadership Team along with the results of the alumni survey. [See Appendix E for a list of members of the QEP Working Groups for each of the four submitted proposals.] The QEP Team was impressed by the excellence of many of the submitted pre-proposals and tried to incorporate some elements from several pre-proposals into the final proposals. Because the pre-proposals included a number of ideas for improving student learning, the Team forwarded all to the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for further consideration outside the context of the SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation effort.

**Selection of the Area of Focus of the QEP by the Leadership Team**

During the summer of 2009, the Leadership Team met twice to discuss the four proposals. They chose the FYOS program as the University’s new QEP. The QEP Team also forwarded the three other proposals to the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for further consideration outside the context of the process for reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC.

**Impact of Prior Initiatives to Improve Student Learning on Selection of the Area of Focus**

The Leadership and QEP Teams were influenced by a combination of campus conversations, self-evaluations, assessment results, and a commitment to continuous improvement of student learning, all taking place over the last several years. The following section summarizes those efforts:

In 1996, President Charles Knapp appointed a Task Force on the Quality of the Undergraduate Experience and presented its report in 1997 to Dr. Knapp’s successor, Dr. Michael Adams. Implementing that task force’s suggestions became a focus of President Adams’ administration.3

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3 The full text of President’s Task Force on the Quality of the Undergraduate Experience, July 1997, is available at [https://sacs.uga.edu/compliance/references/3.5/3.5.1/3.5.1Pres1997TaskForce[15].pdf](https://sacs.uga.edu/compliance/references/3.5/3.5.1/3.5.1Pres1997TaskForce[15].pdf).
This focus on improving student learning continued with the University’s 1999-2000 process for reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC. The University elected to conduct an “alternative model” self-study. The topic of that alternative model self-study, reviewed by SACSCOC in addition to the University’s report on Compliance with the SACSCOC Criteria for Accreditation, was *Creating a Climate of Inquiry: The Undergraduate Experience at a Public Research University and its Relationship to the University’s Mission*.  

Moreover, in the fall of 2002, the University’s vice president for instruction appointed a committee to help assess undergraduate quality and engagement through the National Survey of Student Engagement. That work has continued as an important complement to the work of the 1990s.  

In more recent years, several major campus initiatives were developed or expanded as a result of on-going conversations on improving student learning. These include the creation of the Office of Service-Learning, a Task Force on International Education, and the initiation of Student Learning Communities. 

In 2004, the University provost created a Task Force on General Education and Student Learning. The Provost’s Task Force studied general education and student learning, producing a variety of recommendations in 2005. As with earlier reports, the 2005 Task Force report emphasized that a first-year student’s experiences are indeed crucial, shaping the rest of that student’s education at the University. Several significant Task Force recommendations focus on the first-year experience and include:

- Take steps to ensure that tenured or tenure-track faculty teach more courses typically taken by undergraduate students in the first and second years of study
- Incorporate significant writing assignments into more courses across the University so that students are exposed to rigorous writing experiences throughout their undergraduate careers

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5 The ongoing work of that committee is available on the website of the Office of the Vice President for Instruction at [http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/nsse.htm](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/nsse.htm).


7 The report of the Task Force on General Education and Student Learning, 2005, is available at [http://www.uga.edu/provost/tskfrcrpt05.pdf](http://www.uga.edu/provost/tskfrcrpt05.pdf).
• Encourage first-year students to participate in the first-year seminar program and other innovative seminars that emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as introducing students to faculty
• Increase the exposure of students to and participation in extracurricular cultural events and leadership activities

In addition to these recommendations, the Task Force report recognized the importance of faculty mentoring of undergraduate students, stating, “Task Force members felt that all undergraduate students need to connect with faculty earlier in their undergraduate experiences to foster relationships that can help them develop their future plans regarding a major and career.” Also, the Task Force suggested Emeritus faculty from the University of Georgia can be a valuable resource for the University’s effort to improve undergraduate education.

The Task Force report also included recommendations focused on study abroad, service-learning and undergraduate research. The University has already made a number of important changes to improve undergraduate education as a result of these recommendations; for example, the University has implemented a significant update of the general education curriculum, enhanced its study abroad programs, created an Office of Service-Learning, and created programs to support undergraduate research.

Key examples of the progress made in these areas include:

• The number of University students studying abroad has tripled over the last decade. The University currently ranks tenth in the nation among doctoral institutions in total study-abroad participation, with 2,058 total students studying abroad in 2007-2008. The University is ranked second in the nation in the number of students who participate in short-term programs. Approximately 400 students per year study abroad for one or more semesters. The University offers 170 study-abroad programs across the globe, including programs located at its three year-round residential centers (Oxford, England; Cortona, Italy; and San Luis, Costa Rica).

• The Office of Service-Learning was established in 2005 to provide opportunities for students to participate in structured service that allow them to apply what they are learning academically to community issues. The faculty-staff Service-Learning Interest Group has been active since 2004. In 2008, the University sponsored both the Public Service and Outreach Conference to focus on programs and the National Outreach Scholarship Conference to get a sense of what works nationally. The Office administers seed grants and awards Service-Learning Fellowships to faculty who wish to initiate projects in service-learning pedagogy and community engagement. Finally, the University’s commitment to service-learning has resulted in a special coded designation for academic courses so that University departments may track the involvement of their students in service-learning.
Since the year 2000, the Honors Program’s Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) has guided and supported undergraduate student research. Through a variety of programs and services, the Center assists students who want to begin research projects and matches them with faculty mentors. CURO offers classes to introduce students to the research process in various disciplines, as well as workshops on how to prepare a conference presentation or research article. Incoming students can receive CURO apprenticeships, and fellowships are available on a competitive basis for undergraduate research projects. The CURO Center offers a highly popular annual symposium and a refereed journal for students to present their research once it is completed.

The FYOS program will build on the significant progress in the areas of study abroad, service-learning, and undergraduate research, introducing first-year students to study abroad, service-learning, and undergraduate research through the first-year seminars. This exposure will make them aware of these learning opportunities and allow them to take advantage of these opportunities earlier in their academic experience.

Additionally, in 2006, a Task Force on Writing was created to identify barriers to writing at the University and recommend ways to get more undergraduates writing. The Writing Task Force noted that “students do not write enough, nor do faculty assign enough writing.”

The FYOS will encourage writing and include one or more written exercises that support intellectual dialogue between the instructor and the student to enhance learning.

Process for Development of the Final Plan for FYOS

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the QEP Team reconvened to begin the full development of the FYOS proposal. Following reviews of pertinent literature, of current University of Georgia programs, of similar efforts at peer and comparator institutions, and of experiences of University students, the Team held wide-ranging discussions on the specific needs of the QEP. Based on these discussions, the Team then split into the following eight working groups to develop further key aspects of the QEP:

- History of improvement in student learning at UGA
- Literature review and best practices concerning first-year seminars
- Learning outcomes
- First-year seminar program design
- Assessment
- Organizational structure
- Communication with the University community about the QEP
- Budget

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The Program Design working group held a number of meetings to obtain additional campus input as details of the program were crafted. The subcommittee drafting the literature review section added members who helped draft the literature review and assemble reference materials to be housed at the University of Georgia Libraries. The subcommittee drafting the Learning Outcomes section included additional members who helped draft program goals and expected student learning outcomes. [The members of these QEP Team working groups are listed in Appendix F.]

As part of this process, the QEP Team sought to build upon the University’s prior experience with first-year seminars as it designed a plan to ensure that every first-year student participates in one of the new, mandatory first-year seminars. In fall 2009, the Team met with several individuals currently directing first-year seminars operating on campus to determine how the QEP would affect those programs and how those programs might be changed so that they would work with and support the QEP. Included in that meeting were the senior associate dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and director of the College’s First-Year Seminar Program, the director of the Honors Program, and the director of the University’s Student Learning Communities. Team members also met with the Academic Advising Coordinating Council (a large group of academic professionals and faculty), the University Staff Council, the University Curriculum Committee’s Subcommittee on General Education, the full University Curriculum Committee, the Executive Committee of the University Council, and the full University Council.

The QEP Team’s Communications working group emphasized to the entire Team the importance of choosing an appropriate name for the new seminars, one that would communicate clearly to the University community this new initiative. The task of brainstorming for an appropriate name was carried out both in formal subcommittee meetings and many informal venues on and off campus. The cadre of Student Orientation leaders was briefed on the QEP, and they suggested the name “First-Year Odyssey.” The QEP Team was pleased with the classical allusion to an epic journey for a program at a university located in a city named after Athens, Greece, and they forwarded this suggestion to the Leadership Team who approved the name.

In summary, the development of a QEP designed to immerse entering first-year students immediately in the academic life of the University provides a timely opportunity to build on these key reports and make a further commitment to improving undergraduate learning.

**Approval by Leadership Team and University Council**

On July 20, 2010, the Leadership Team approved the FYOS program as the QEP topic. A draft of the plan containing its critical components was reviewed by the Leadership Team and deliberated on at that time. The Leadership Team then charged the Office of the Vice President for Instruction to work with the QEP Team and the Office of Academic Planning on an
implementation plan for the QEP, as well as guide the various proposals that form the core of the QEP through the University governance process.

On August 25, 2010, the University Curriculum Committee voted unanimously to approve a proposal establishing a University-wide requirement that all first-year undergraduate students who matriculate fall semester 2011 and thereafter must successfully complete one FYOS by the end of their first year in residence. (The policy excludes transfer students.) In addition, the University Curriculum Committee approved the creation of a new course prefix (FYOS) and a new course (FYOS 1001). [See Appendix G, proposal to University Council Curriculum Committee.]

On September 23, 2010, the University Council voted to approve the Curriculum Committee’s proposal. [See Appendix H, Approval by University Council signed by President Michael F. Adams.]

In connection with the consideration of this matter by University Council, two key groups provided their endorsement of the QEP:

- The University of Georgia’s Student Government Association [See Appendix I, Resolution adopted by the SGA.]
- The University of Georgia Alumni Association [See Appendix J, Letter of Support from Alumni Association.]

On December 16, 2010, the Leadership Team reviewed the actions taken by the University Curriculum Committee and the University Council plus the refinements to the plan (including the implementation plan) developed following its July 20, 2010 meeting. The Leadership Team approved the plan in its final form and directed the University’s SACSCOC Liaison to submit that plan to SACSCOC.

The time is right for such a plan. Public research universities face significant challenges to their fundamental missions and must do a better job of communicating with their constituencies. In our society, the modern research university functions uniquely as a place where knowledge is both created and maintained. Discovering new knowledge is not a distant, ivory tower activity; rather, knowledge is being created right now in offices, labs, studios, and libraries across campuses. These creative acts define the professional lives of the professoriate and fulfill a core mission of the research university.

The University of Georgia, as a land- and sea-grant university, also has a mandate to serve by disseminating knowledge to its sponsoring communities—the state of Georgia, of course, but also the nation and the rest of the world. The University of Georgia’s tripartite mission states, in part:

- The University of Georgia, a land-grant and sea-grant university with statewide commitments and responsibilities, is the state's oldest, most comprehensive, and most diversified institution of higher education. Its motto, "to teach, to serve, and to inquire into the nature of things," reflects the University's integral and unique role in the conservation
and enhancement of the state’s and nation’s intellectual, cultural, and environmental heritage.⁹

Many University faculty and staff are in daily contact with citizens across the state, nation, and globe helping to solve immediate and important problems. Research produced by faculty and other academic professionals in similar institutions has a palpable, present, and profound effect on all of our daily lives, but that fact may be distant from most of our citizens’ minds. The public often lacks a complete understanding of the fundamental nature of the research university and the role of faculty in it. Undergraduate students may obtain degrees and yet never fully understand what research is, how it affects the learning environment, and what it means to themselves and the broader community. The citizens of Georgia may have little idea how research is conducted or how it serves the real needs of the state.

Thus, on a broader level, this QEP is an attempt to address public perception. By introducing every incoming first-year student to the core missions of their university, they will gain a renewed appreciation for the critical importance of research, land-grant universities. The Team came to the conclusion that there was no better way to create an “environment supporting student learning” at the University of Georgia.

With a clear grasp of the teaching, research, and service missions of the University, students can take more complete ownership of their education and their opportunities for involvement in fashioning a rich undergraduate experience. The QEP will engage students on a personal level in these multiple missions, cultivating a deeper sense of investment in and long-term commitment to learning.

To summarize, the University of Georgia conducted a highly participatory, three-year process first identifying key issues about student learning that emerged from the University’s self-evaluation processes and then designing a QEP focused on meeting this identified student learning need and furthering the mission of the University.

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⁹ The full text of the University of Georgia Mission Statement, as updated in 2010, may be found at [http://www.uga.edu/profile/mission.html](http://www.uga.edu/profile/mission.html). See also the University’s Strategic Plan for the First Decade of the 21st Century (Strategic Direction 1) and the University’s recently adopted Strategic Plan for 2010-2020 (Strategic Direction 1) at [http://www.oap.uga.edu/sp.html](http://www.oap.uga.edu/sp.html).
The preceding section detailed the extensive, institution-wide, multi-year process that the University of Georgia employed to choose a topic for its QEP: a first-year seminar program named the First-Year Odyssey Seminars. This section presents a detailed description of the FYOS.

**Goals of the FYOS**

The FYOS program has three overarching goals:

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

The University of Georgia QEP is designed to transform student learning by providing all first-year students with an academically challenging seminar taught by tenure-track faculty. These new FYOS will engage all 5,000 first-year students in the academic culture of the University. Students who transfer into the University are exempt from the requirement to complete a FYOS.\(^\text{10}\)

**FYOS: Desired Characteristics (Elements) of Each Seminar**

**A. Timing**

The University will offer most seminars in the fall semester so that the program stands the best chance of immediately engaging and exposing first-year students to the academic culture of the University. Then in the spring semester the University will offer a smaller number of seminars to

\(^{10}\) The University of Georgia admits a large number of transfer students, *i.e.*, students who enter having completed all or most of their lower-division work at another college or university. Typically, those transfers enter as third-year students (having completed general education required courses and being admitted directly to a major). The University recognizes the importance of extending a “first-year” seminar to students transferring to the university. Transfer students would benefit from such an experience and many schools and colleges already provide some additional orientation to transfer students. Transfer students, however, present a special challenge for inclusion in this QEP. Students who transfer into the University are usually more academically advanced, arriving with declared majors and with an accelerated academic timeline. Since the University accepts almost 1,800 transfer students each year, the resources required to extend seminars to these students as well as all first-year students were thought by the Team to be too large for this QEP. All schools and colleges are encouraged to develop further efforts to integrate transfer students fully into the intellectual life of the University.
accommodate students who first matriculate in the spring or who cannot enroll or complete the class in the fall.

B. Faculty

Instructors for FYOS will be tenured and tenure-track faculty members, including emeritus faculty and clinical faculty in the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy and in the School of Law who hold the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor. In addition, any administrator with a tenure-track faculty appointment may offer a seminar. Although the University employs a number of instructors without tenure-track appointments, the QEP Team affirmed, at several points in developing the QEP, the critical importance of having tenured and tenure-track faculty make contact with first-year students in these academically focused seminars.

In rare cases, the director of the FYOS program, in consultation with the program’s Advisory Committee, may allow other instructors the opportunity to teach a seminar.

C. Class size

Each seminar will have a small enrollment, ideally a maximum of fifteen students, but in no case more than eighteen students. The small size should encourage meaningful dialogue between faculty and students.

D. Credit Earned

Seminars will be one credit hour.

E. Seminar Content:

Personalized to Faculty’s Scholarship and Academic Passion

A key element of each seminar should be that faculty members introduce students to their own personal and educational backgrounds, describing the experiences that led them to their research interests. Each seminar will have an academic focus, tied to a faculty member’s own scholarship. Faculty should choose seminar topics relevant to their research and teaching interests so that they may excite a class by the passion they feel for their work. [See Appendix K, course descriptions for existing University of Georgia seminars reviewed by the QEP Team as examples of the kind of courses suitable for this QEP.]

Highlight the University’s Mission

Each seminar will introduce students to the instruction, research, public service and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom. Faculty may highlight some aspect of the mission of the University by exploring how the University contributes to research or service in their academic area. To assist
Faculty in accomplishing this aim, the University will develop podcasts or similar materials that faculty can use for a particular seminar. These materials will provide an overview of the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and will be developed in consultation with the corresponding offices (e.g., Offices of the Vice President for Instruction, Research, Public Service and Outreach, and Office of International Education). Faculty can access such podcasts through eLearning Commons, the University’s course management system.

Dialogue and Writing

Although faculty will have considerable freedom in developing their seminars, every seminar should include one or more written exercises that document the intellectual dialogue between the instructor and the student. The purpose of these exercises should be to guide students in thinking—and rethinking—issues related to the academic focus of the seminar. Examples of such exercises could include a written paper, journals, blogs, and written documentation of intellectual dialogue between the faculty and student in the preparation of a poster presentation, an oral presentation, a mathematical proof, or other sorts of projects. Because writing is a cognitive process, such exercises should include the following:

- the student’s original written work
- feedback from the instructor or peers
- response

Faculty may choose to introduce students to the concept of a portfolio. Since the University’s first-year composition program uses such a portfolio system, many first-year students will have some basis for portfolio work. Students can create and develop an online portfolio to document this written dialogue, then maintain and add to it over the course of their time at the University.

Options Encouraged

Faculty may include other learning elements in the seminars as they deem appropriate; for example, faculty may choose to incorporate assignments or include a class period taught by UGA Libraries staff that provides guidance on how to obtain and assess information critically. Faculty may choose to include opportunities for students to refine their speaking and presentation abilities.

F. Mentoring and Advising

A major goal of the FYOS program is to foster faculty-student bonds that might extend outside of the classroom where durable mentorship can develop. The program will encourage faculty to include at least one “social” experience with the students each semester. That event might be tied to the subject of the seminar (attending a performance as a class) or be purely social (dinner at a faculty member’s home). Part of the program’s budget includes funds to reimburse faculty for the reasonable costs of these social events. Faculty might also meet individually with
each student in the class during the first weeks of the course to help establish that more
informal mentorship.

Ideally, a significant number of these mentoring relationships will extend beyond the semester,
for example, through reuniting as a group in the spring semester, as well as individual
discussions with the faculty member. One area where students on the QEP Team expressed a
desire to connect with the faculty was in academic advising. Therefore, faculty members who
wish to serve a more formal advising role may be appointed as advisers to students within their
academic disciplines and allowed to “clear” students for class registration. Students on the
QEP Team saw the ability to clear students as an important function. From a faculty
perspective, advising students provides a unique connection between the faculty member and
the broader University.

G. Consistency

The QEP Team recognized that a critical challenge to the success of this program will be
maintaining consistency in seminar work requirements across more than 300 sections each fall
semester. The faculty, the FYOS faculty director, and advisory committees will work to ensure
that the student workload and attendance policies are consistent.

H. A-F Grading

Best practices from a number of published studies point to the fact that graded seminars are
more likely than pass-fail seminars to succeed for both students and faculty. Therefore, all
seminars will be graded on an A-F scale. All incoming first-year students will have to complete a
seminar successfully, receiving a grade of D or higher to fulfill the requirement.

I. Introduction to University Academic Resources

First-Year Odyssey Seminars will also serve as a gateway to critical intellectual programs and
resources at the University, including undergraduate research, service-learning, study abroad,
and the libraries. The University wants its students to be aware of the considerable resources
available on campus and to become intentionally engaged in the intellectual life of the
University. Therefore, all students enrolled in the seminars will be required to attend at least
three campus events during the semester that highlight some aspect of the mission of the
University. Examples might include a theatrical performance or musical performance, a
department research seminar, service to the community through VolunteerUGA, or attending
the annual Study Abroad Fair. The program will work with campus groups to provide
opportunities for interested students to learn about various opportunities on campus (e.g.,

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11 The University does not mean to replace the role of the professional advisers, but to supplement the
advising the students receive. Therefore, faculty who take on this responsibility will act in consultation with
the student’s professional adviser and will receive training from professional staff as well as other
experienced faculty advisers. Such training could be combined with the faculty development efforts
envisioned as part of the QEP.
undergraduate research, service-learning, study abroad). The program will also develop a web portal that makes all faculty and students more aware of the activities on campus that might particularly interest participants in the seminar program.

**Amplifying the Impact of the Seminars**

To allow faculty considerable flexibility in designing their seminars, they will be encouraged to try different strategies to amplify the impact of their first-year seminars, provided that these strategies meet the program's general criteria. Such strategies might include linking seminars to one another or to other classes or designing seminars around a common event or book.

- **Linked Introductory Courses.** First-year students often take the same courses. Faculty will be encouraged to design a set of first-year seminars specifically tied to a course. All students in the seminars would also be enrolled in the linked course. For example, SOCI 1101 could be the focus of a number of seminars, each seminar dealing with a different aspect of sociology (e.g., poverty, prisons, gender).

- **Linked Follow-up Courses.** Faculty may wish to amplify the effect of the first-year seminar via a second course linked by content to the original seminar. That follow-up course might be another one-credit course or a three-credit course. The course could include or focus on an extended field trip or even a study-abroad experience. Faculty and departments might find that the first-year seminar could act as an attractive entry point into an under-explored major.

The director of the FYOS program will have the authority to determine the best specific steps to take to achieve this goal of extending the effects of the FYOS program beyond the first-year students. For instance, the director might help create a common campus experience that would link the first-year seminar program to the entire campus. Several seminars might focus on a common campus event, a common book, a lecture by a prominent speaker, or a theatrical performance. The University of California, Berkeley offers an excellent model, its “On the Same Page” program.12

The FYOS program could, in conjunction with other campus groups, choose a common book and fund a major speaker and linked events on campus. A group of faculty could formally propose such a book and linked series of events, and receive funds to bring in a speaker. In exchange, the faculty would agree to offer a number of seminars linked to that common book or major speaker.

The seminars will provide an intellectual complement to existing programs designed to ease the transition of high school students to the first year of University life. The University currently has a large number of such programs, most of which are overseen by the Division of Student Affairs.

12 See the “On the Same Page” website at [http://onthesamepage.berkeley.edu/](http://onthesamepage.berkeley.edu/).
[See the list of these programs in Appendix L.] Some of these programs are academic in nature, but many entering first-year students do not have the opportunity to participate due to space constraints or do not choose to participate in such programs at an early point in their academic careers. Therefore, a required, common, academically-focused seminar will greatly supplement the considerable effort already devoted to the first-year experience.
The University of Georgia’s FYOS program is designed to transform student learning by providing all first-year students an academically challenging seminar taught by tenure-track faculty. These new seminars will engage all first-year students in the academic culture of the University.

The University has defined and articulated program goals, course objectives, and student learning outcomes to guide development and implementation of the FYOS program.

The goals of the FYOS program are these:

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

Course objectives derive from the goals and provide direction for faculty in designing their seminars and course activities to produce student learning outcomes. These course objectives guide the development of relatively consistent courses across the FYOS program. Seminars developed using these objectives are more likely to contribute to achieving program goals.

Next, student learning outcomes establish the specific sets of knowledge, skills, behaviors, or values which students should gain from their seminars. Student learning outcomes are defined and measured to determine whether seminars consistently contribute to the achievement of the seminars’ goals.
The following table outlines the goals, seminar objectives, and student learning outcomes for the FYOS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYOS Goals</th>
<th>Seminar Objectives</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics to engage them in the academic culture of the University.</td>
<td>Support academic dialogue through writing, feedback, and response.</td>
<td>Students will be able to describe and reflect on the topic of the seminar through class discussion and written communication. Students will develop self-awareness about the reason for study and the importance of self-directed learning (intentional learning).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions.</td>
<td>Promote student-faculty interaction in a small class setting. Open channels of communication between students and faculty in and out of class. Introduce students to the faculty member’s scholarly path and role in the mission of the University.</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate interaction with the professor through oral and written communication. Students will communicate with faculty regarding an area of scholarship. Students will have positive perceptions of student-faculty interactions. Students will be able to describe the scholarly path of the faculty member and the faculty’s role in the mission of the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom to increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University.</td>
<td>Expose students to opportunities to engage in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction both on campus and globally (e.g. study abroad, practicums, internships). Expose students to campus events that highlight an aspect of the mission of the University.</td>
<td>Students will be able to articulate the opportunities for engagement in the University community, including opportunities to participate in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction, such as study abroad and internships at the University of Georgia.</td>
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V. LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

Introduction

A considerable body of literature focuses on the transition of high school students to their first year at a university (Troxel & Cutright, 2008). These studies, as well as qualitative analyses of the University of Georgia Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and Honors Program seminars, informed the QEP Team as it developed a focused plan designed to fit the University’s unique needs: a stronger academic transition for first-year students into the community of the University, a closer connection between first-year students and the faculty, and clearer understanding of the University’s missions for students. This section summarizes the literature and best practices considered by the QEP Team as the topic was refined and, ultimately, focused on first-year academic seminars.

Students’ transition from high school to the first year of college has received considerable attention recently in the academic literature. In part, the surge in literature on this group of students comes from the Boyer Commission and the Kellogg Commission reports on the experiences of students in American research and land-grant institutions. These two reports, Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for American Research Universities (Boyer Commission, 1998) and Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution (Kellogg, 1999) provide a foundation for the University of Georgia FYOS program.

Further, the Kellogg report reemphasized the land-grant ideals of teaching, research, and public service as well as the fundamental purpose of putting students first. The authors suggest, “We must introduce all students—and in particular first-year students—to classroom experiences that stretch their intellectual horizons and force them to exercise analytical muscles most of them never knew they had.” (p. 4) Such experiences require intentional change. The Boyer Commission stated that, while universities tout esteemed faculty and research facilities, undergraduates too often do not meet faculty members or experience the excitement of research. The lack of interaction with faculty and their research results in graduates who have not been inspired to stretch significantly their skills to think, speak, and write coherently.

The University of Georgia’s decision to implement a first-year academic seminar with variable content is the best way to address the goals that were identified in the planning process: the importance of learning and academics, meaningful interaction with a faculty member, and an introduction to the missions of the University of Georgia. The importance of these goals is supported in the literature on learning and first-year seminars.

Support for the Goals of the FYOS Program

The Importance of Learning

Theories of cognitive, moral, and psychosocial development of traditional-age college students note the importance of creating challenging situations and environments that also offer support for growth (Baxter-Magolda, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Perry, 1999). First-year students
tend to be more absolute in their thinking, looking for the simple, “right” answer. The University of Georgia has a documented institutional desire for its students to acquire learning skills of a higher order. The 2005 Task Force on General Education and Student Learning states, “The University of Georgia’s overarching goal is for our students to be intentional learners and critical thinkers, trained to be engaged, discerning, and independent.” Therefore we must make strides to create an environment in which intentional learning is encouraged, practiced, and achieved.

As stated in Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College, “Intentional learners are purposeful and self-directed having clear goals, an understanding of process, and appropriate action. Becoming such an intentional learner means developing self-awareness about the reason for study, the learning process itself and how education is used” (pp. 21-22). Intentional learners see learning as a goal rather than an incidental outcome (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989). They understand how to focus their own learning efforts and are able to guide their own learning process by asking the right questions and practicing new skills (Huber & Hutchings, 2004).

There is evidence for the University’s support for promoting intentional learning in our students and for encouraging intentional teaching (Huber & Hutchings, 2004) in our faculty. Following on the results of the 2008 NSSE survey that indicated that 40% of UGA first-year students were studying ten hours or less per week, UGA’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) decided in early 2009 that an intervention might be helpful. CTL arranged for copies of an article “Learning (Your First Job)” by Leamnson (2002) to be copied in booklet form and distributed to students at orientation. In addition, CTL secured time for a brief presentation at summer orientation for students and parents. This presentation has been a part of orientation for two summers. Also, videos of faculty promoting the booklet are available on the CTL website (ctl.uga.edu/learning) and availability of the book is regularly announced at faculty orientation and various faculty meetings. Further faculty education on the topic of intentional learning will be provided through faculty development efforts.

Student-Faculty Interaction

Research shows that for students to be retained, they must form meaningful relationships within the campus community with faculty, staff, and other students (Tinto, 1997). The beneficial effects of quality interaction between faculty and students are noted in higher education research spanning several decades. Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) list of seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education identifies frequent student-faculty contact as the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Furthermore, such interaction has been shown to be mutually beneficial to both students and faculty.

Research suggests that students are more successful when they are able to develop meaningful relationships with faculty (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2001; Lampert, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1976, 1979, 1981; Swaner & Brownell, 2008). Positive student-professor relationships can lead students to take greater intellectual risks and may increase their intrinsic motivation for academic performance (Fenty, 1997). Fidler (1991) cites student-faculty interaction and mutual trust and respect as keys to the success of first-year seminars.
Interaction with faculty can positively contribute to learning when faculty act as both teachers of content as well as mentors (Clayton-Pedersen & Finley, 2010).

Faculty can also reap the benefits of frequent interaction with students. Of the relatively little research on faculty motivation for teaching seminars and the satisfaction of the experience, the evidence points to the positive motivators and results experienced by first-year faculty. Increased involvement with first-year students is cited as the top internal motivator by faculty who teach and continue to teach first-year seminars (Soldner, Lee & Duby, 2001). Other benefits have been cited, such as increased opportunities to network with other faculty and the transfer of teaching techniques used in first-year seminars to other classes (McClure, Atkinson & Wills, 2008; Fidler, Neururer-Rotholz & Richardson, 1999). Teaching first-year seminars can also result in an increased awareness of first-year student issues (Wanca-Thibault, Shepherd & Staley, 2002). Faculty that repeat seminar teaching note it to be “a great way to refresh your memory on what first-semester freshmen think, know and believe” (Soldner, Lee & Duby, 2001, p. 310).

Research indicates that the type of interaction between students and faculty may have an impact. Interaction should ideally occur both inside and outside the classroom in order to help students feel more integrated (Astin, 1993). While out-of-class social interaction can often be beneficial, Kuh and Hu (2001) suggest that social contact alone may not elicit a full range of benefits. The authors point to the importance of interaction on topics of an intellectual or substantive nature rather than just social interaction alone. Intellectual interaction in or out of class provides the professor with opportunities to instill excitement for a discipline in a student (Boyer Commission, 1998) and perhaps begin a relationship that can endure for a student’s university career (Cornell & Mosley, 2006).

Few experiences are more closely linked with student learning, persistence, and degree completion than exposure to faculty (Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997). The QEP Team chose the small seminar setting as the most appropriate for interaction between faculty and first-year students. Cohen (1978) stressed that instructors should consider themselves as facilitators of class discussions. In a seminar setting, the faculty more easily encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. In a recent study of first-year students, Aspland (2009) found that the more responsive a teacher is to student learning needs, the greater the likelihood of students becoming engaged in learning. Again, engaged learning and conversations with classmates and professors are more likely to occur when the student feels supported and comfortable, as is more likely in a seminar setting (Aspland, 2009).

Involvement in the University Mission

An additional goal of many first-year seminars is to encourage student involvement in the total life of the institution (Astin, 1993; Keup & Barefoot, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The institutions that are highly successful in preparing first-year students for success in college make the effort to align their resources with their educational missions and curricular offerings (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2005).
First-year seminars can provide one of the best opportunities to introduce students to broader institutional goals and opportunities. Student-faculty relationships may be the essential bridge to student understanding of those goals. Students who are introduced to the many aspects of a faculty member’s career in the context of a first-year seminar are also more likely to learn how faculty deal with professional challenges and, as a result, may better understand the faculty’s institutional role. Furthermore, if students perceive that faculty value a particular practice or activity and participate in it, students themselves are more likely to pursue the same practice or activity (Kuh 2008). First-year seminar participants are more likely to attend campus events and participate in volunteer activities (Keup & Barefoot, 2005; Starke, Harth & Sirianni 2001).

National Trends on the First-Year Experience

Over the last two decades, first-year seminar programs have become common in higher education in the United States, and there is much research to support their positive effects on student persistence in college. This research has shown that first-year students enrolled in these seminars have, on average, higher grades, more connections with faculty members outside the classroom, and are more likely to participate in campus activities (Fidler, 1991).

More than twenty-five years ago, the University of South Carolina established the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition as a network for scholarly practitioners to share their best practices in programs designed to address first-year topics. The work of the National Resource Center has been valuable in designing and planning the implemention and assessment of the University’s FYOS program (Koch, Foote, Keup & Pistilli, 2007).

The Policy Center on the First Year of College (now John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education) (2002) reports that 94% of accredited institutions now offer first-year seminars, with more than half enrolling 90% or more of their first-year students. Such a proliferation of first-year seminars has created many variations. As Friedman and Marsh (2009) state, “Institutions design first-year seminars to meet their specific needs, desires, and realities” (p. 30). One type of seminar identified by Barefoot and Fidler (1992) is academic seminars on various topics.

To measure the effects of these first-year initiatives, national standardized assessments have sought to measure the success and satisfaction of first-year students in programs blending academic and co-curricular activities. Some of the more popular benchmarking tools include the Cooperative Institutional Research Program’s (CIRP) Freshmen Survey, Your First Year of College (YFYC) Survey (CIRP, 2009), and NSSE (NSSE, 2009 and Tobolowsky, 2008). Conducted annually, these surveys enable analysts to examine trends, such as changes in student values and student behavior in college freshmen, and are used by these analysts as a measure of student satisfaction and engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities. The learning outcomes achieved within first-year seminars have been positively correlated with
increased retention rates, student success, and student satisfaction (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009; Jamelske, 2009).


Review of First-Year Programs at Peer and Aspirational Institutions

An exploration of first-year programs at peer and aspirational institutions yielded a diverse array of strategies aimed at facilitating the transition to college and making first-year students successful. The review of peers and aspirants included the following institutions: University of Virginia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Michigan, University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, University of Florida, North Carolina State University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Wisconsin–Madison, University of California–Berkeley, University of Delaware, and University of Maryland. Of the twelve comparators examined, one specific type of first-year program for student success appeared more prevalent. These programs may be classified as first-year seminars.

Seminars at peer and aspirant universities represent multiple formats and a variety of structures. Eight comparators offer a specific course prefix and one or more course numbers, three comparators offer an assortment of first-year courses affiliated with academic departments, and the University of Virginia has a non-credit seminar.

Faculty members teach first-year seminars at five University of Georgia comparator institutions. Either faculty or staff teach the seminars at four institutions. Upper-class peers serve as instructors at two institutions, and academic advisors teach Introduction to University Education 101 and 102 at North Carolina State University.

Participation in the first-year seminar is voluntary at eight comparators. The University of Delaware has a mandatory seminar, and the University of Texas at Austin and Louisiana State University require a sub-set of students to complete the seminar.

With the exception of the University of Virginia, seminar attendance enables students to earn one to four hours of academic credit. Some seminars offer a letter grade, and others use a pass/fail option. About one quarter of the comparators have seminars focused on academic

13 A complete list of the University of Georgia’s peer and aspirational comparators may be reviewed at http://www.oir.uga.edu/comps/peegrps.html.
content; the others focus on extended orientation topics, the theme of transition, and building community.

First-year seminar programs typically report administratively to undergraduate studies, student affairs, or the college of arts and sciences. The duration of most courses is one semester or less. The University of Delaware requires participation throughout the first academic year, although transfer students are generally exempt from the requirement. A few seminars, such as those at North Carolina State University, include a mandatory co-curricular component.

A number of comparators offer first-year seminars that facilitate contact between students and faculty inside and outside the classroom. Some seminars at University of California–Berkeley are tagged as “food for thought” or “beyond the classroom” seminars. “Food for thought” seminars are offered prior to lunch or dinner and include a meal with the faculty member. “Beyond the classroom” seminars include field trips and other opportunities to become acquainted with the surrounding community. Berkeley offers seminars to first-year and second-year students. North Carolina State University creates the opportunity for Pizza with a Professor via their forum series. The University of Texas at Austin has a number of college- or discipline-specific offerings, such as the Freshman Research Initiative and Women in Engineering.

**Review of Relevant University of Georgia Data**

**University of Georgia Characteristics**

**Classification**

The University of Georgia is a public university classified by the Carnegie Foundation as L4/R (large four-year, primarily residential), FT4/MS/LTI (Full-time four-year, more selective, lower transfer-in) and RU/VH (research university/very high research activity). Founded in 1785, the University of Georgia was designated as Georgia’s land-grant institution as a result of the 1862 Morrill Act and was made a sea-grant institution in 1980.

**Schools and Colleges**

The University’s academic diversity is seen in its sixteen schools and colleges: Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; Franklin College of Arts and Sciences; Terry College of Business; Odum School of Ecology; Education; Environment and Design; Family and Consumer Sciences; Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources; Graduate School; Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication; Law; College of Pharmacy; Public Health; Public and International Affairs; Social Work; and Veterinary Medicine. In 2010, the University admitted the first class of medical students in the Medical College of Georgia/UGA Medical Partnership.
**Enrollment**

The University is a large, competitive, residential university. For fall 2009, enrollment totaled 34,885, including 26,142 undergraduates, 7,136 graduate students, and 1,607 professional students. Ninety-four percent of undergraduates were enrolled on a full-time basis. Undergraduates from all 50 states were enrolled at the University, and 938 undergraduates were enrolled from 105 foreign countries. (University of Georgia Fact Book, 2009).  

In fall 2009, 4,674 first-year students enrolled, and almost 200 first-year students enrolled in the spring semester 2010. Forty-nine percent of all admitted first-year students enrolled, and 26% of all first-year applicants enrolled. The average total SAT score for entering freshmen was 1242. Eighty-seven percent of first-year students attended Georgia high schools. On average, 93% of first-time full-time first-year students returned for their second year. Fifty-nine percent of all undergraduate transfer applicants were accepted, and 1,355 enrolled for the fall 2009. Since 2004, first-year students have been required to live on campus.

**University of Georgia Assessment Data**

*National Survey of Student Engagement, Faculty Survey of Student Engagement*

In order to understand the needs of its students and the campus community, the University draws on nationally recognized assessment measures, currently using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). NSSE is a survey of first-year and senior-year students that includes questions about their academic experiences and measures the quality of undergraduate education. Developed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, NSSE has been in use nationally since 2000.

The University first administered NSSE in 2003, when 1,500 first-year students and 1,500 seniors were randomly selected to complete the survey. Since that time, the University has included NSSE as an important component of its institutional assessment. In 2005, 2,000 first-year students and 2,000 seniors were surveyed; in 2007, 2,500 first-year students and 2,500 seniors were surveyed; and in 2008, 4,000 first-year students and 4,000 seniors were invited to participate. In addition to the NSSE, the University has participated in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) in 2003 and again in 2008.

The QEP Team review of the 2008 NSSE Report identified several areas of concern. The data suggested that first-year students were not adequately engaged academically. Both first-year students and seniors stated that they spent less time preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, or other academic activities) than did respondents in Carnegie Class or peer group institutions. For example,

- Forty percent of first-year students spent ten or fewer hours per week preparing for class as compared to approximately 30% of first-year students in comparison groups.

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Only 17% of seniors spent more than twenty hours per week preparing for class as compared to approximately 25% of seniors at similar institutions. Fewer students stated that their institution emphasized devoting very much time to studying and academic work (35% of first-year and 29% of seniors) than did respondents in the peer group (39% and 36% respectively) (NSSE, 2008, p.8).

*Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)*

According to results of the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 administrations of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), University of Georgia students perform very well compared to their peers across the country (consistently at the 95th percentile or above). However, after adjusting scores for entering academic ability, the University does not appear to develop the critical thinking and writing skills measured by the test to the extent of some of our peers. Our students scored in the 60th percentile of “value added” in the most recent administration. Furthermore, the two administrations show that University of Georgia students consistently show weaker gains on the analytic writing tasks on the CLA than on the broader performance tasks. In the most recent administration, the difference in performance between University of Georgia seniors and freshmen was higher than only 43% of the University’s comparator institutions for that assessment. In other words, 57% of those comparator institutions appear to be adding more to their students’ development of analytic writing abilities than the University of Georgia. This provides additional evidence of the need to include writing early in the student’s academic career. Written assignments aimed at supporting academic dialogue are included in the FYOS.\(^{15}\)

**The University of Georgia’s Efforts to Date in Enhancing the First-Year Experience**

In light of this body of literature, the QEP Team examined the University’s existing efforts to enhance academically the first-year experience. These efforts include several seminar programs (described below) as well as a wide range of other programs designed to facilitate the integration of students into the University community. [See the list of programs designed to ease the transition to college in Appendix L.]

**Franklin College of Arts and Sciences First-Year Seminars (FRES 1010, 1020)**

The Franklin College of Arts and Sciences has offered seminars for first-year students since 1997. These seminars are generally one-credit courses and are not required for any degree program. The Franklin College currently offers about 150 seminars per year. Faculty members, largely from the Franklin College, propose topics for the seminars, and a brief synopsis of each

\(^{15}\) See the full results of the administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment at the University of Georgia at [http://www.oap.uga.edu/assess/CLA.htm](http://www.oap.uga.edu/assess/CLA.htm).
The FYOS will differ from the existing Franklin College Seminars in several important ways. First, the scope of the new program is wider, requiring each first-year student to enroll. The seminars will be graded on a traditional A - F scale and taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty only. Franklin Seminars can be taught as Pass/Fail and by non-tenure-track faculty. Although both seminar programs have an academic focus, the Franklin College seminars allow faculty to teach on any topic of interest, while the FYOS will emphasize a closer connection between a faculty member’s work and the research, service, or global missions of the University. Finally, the seminar program will include one or more written exercises that support academic dialogue through writing, feedback, and response.

The Senior Associate Dean of the Franklin College has administered the Franklin College program since its inception and has also been in close contact with the QEP Team from the start, providing guidance on a number of topics. Upon implementation of the FYOS program, the Franklin College program will cease.

The Franklin College Seminar program has been formally assessed by the dean’s office since its beginning. The assessments are both written evaluations of the seminars by the students and evaluations by the faculty of the success of the seminar. A qualitative assessment of more than ten years of student and faculty data concluded:

- Courses graded on the A - F scale are more academically rigorous.
- Faculty should have control over the course content.
- Academic rigor depends on individual faculty.
- Faculty and student engagement out of class should be an expectation.
- Faculty who meet the classes at informal dinner meetings are more engaged.
- The first class period should focus on the personal and educational background of the faculty and how that led to development of research interests.
- Class attendance should be compulsory.
- Field trips are effective tools in maintaining student interest.
- Inviting speakers to class has been an effective tool.
- An in-class phone interview with authors and experts related to topic has been an effective tool.
- Writing assignments based on research by the students have been effective.
- Giving students the opportunity to make formal presentations is effective.
- A student discussion leader with the professor participating as group member has been effective.
- Faculty combining an occasional class with sessions in related higher-level classes has been effective.

16 Detailed information about the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences First-Year Seminar program may be viewed at http://www.franklin.uga.edu/students/first_year_seminars/.
Seminars focused on “how” have been effective: e.g., “how to watch a film,” “how to look at art,” or “how to read a novel.”

Seminars that use campus resources, such as museum exhibits, dramatic productions, or musical performances, have been effective.

Seminars that take students into the community have been effective; for example, to discuss a dramatic production with the director, or design labels for artwork in a local museum.

Experiential learning has been an effective means of teaching a seminar; for example, class meetings have been built on an experiment that students complete by the end of class, or the students take the entire semester to manufacture a product that is the subject of the class.

Students keep a portfolio of class notes and written assignments.

The University’s eLearning Commons provides a useful internet platform for a variety of assignments.

Honors Program Seminars

The University Honors Program offers a number of one-hour seminars each year: Honors 1000H, Orientation to Honors; HONS 1990H, special topic academic seminars for third- and fourth-year students; and CURO Gateway Seminars (HONS 3010H, 3040H, and 3070H). These introduce first- and second-year students to research opportunities. HONS 1000H seminars are most closely related to the planned first-year seminars for the QEP.17

All incoming first-year Honors students are required to take a one-credit hour pass/fail seminar. The aim of the seminar is to help students acclimate to the culture of Honors. The seminars are taught by trained undergraduate peer leaders who help first-year Honors students engage in the life of the University and the Athens community, as well as to explore internships and study abroad opportunities. The Honors Program plans to continue with its own seminars as an introduction for its students to the Honors program. Honors students will also participate in FYOS.

These Honors Program seminars are also formally assessed each semester through student evaluations. The director of the Honors Program conducted a qualitative analysis of several years of assessment data and provided these best practices:

- Out-of-class mentoring is highly effective; approximately 175 faculty mentors (who mentor up to four first-year students) participate in the Honors Faculty Mentor Network.
- Out-of-class events, such as dinner seminars with faculty, are effective.
- Intentional engagement opportunities can be structured or unstructured.

17 Detailed information about the University of Georgia Honors Program may be viewed at http://www.uga.edu/honors/p_s/dir_msg_ps.html.
• Students are required to participate in six engagement opportunities and must write reflections on each.
• Students assemble a portfolio, developing an ongoing record of their activities and plans for their four years.

UGA Learning Communities

The Learning Communities initiative is a small, academically focused program for first-year students. This initiative, now in its sixth year, is housed in the Office of the Vice President for Instruction in partnership with University Housing. No more than 20 students participate in each of the seven communities. For 2010-2011, the foci are business, family and consumer sciences, global engagement, biochemistry, genetics and cell biology, nutrition and health, music and pre-law. Students within a learning community live in the same residence hall and enroll in a common set of core courses, including a one-credit seminar each semester. In the spring, students participate in a service-learning project. Faculty and student peer advisers guide students in each community. 18

The first-year seminar for the learning community students is a Franklin College seminar available only to students in a particular learning community. Students enroll in two one-credit seminars, one in fall and another in spring. Seminars can be taught by either tenure-track or non-tenure-track faculty and the seminars include undergraduate peer advisers to assist in teaching and mentoring.

Conclusion

The QEP Team, having reviewed relevant literature and best practices from its own and comparator programs, has designed a first-year seminar program which fits the institution’s culture and values. The FYOS program gives the University the opportunity to become more intentional in its teaching and learning and to build assessment processes into the program. The program also offers a transformational opportunity for the University to invigorate its land- and sea-grant mission, create new opportunities to engage constituencies, and put student learning first.

18 Detailed Information about the Learning Communities may be viewed at http://learningcommunities.uga.edu/.
VI. ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Introduction

Creating the FYOS program signals a change in how the University introduces its first-year students to the academic life and culture of the University. This change begins with the introduction of a new undergraduate requirement, the FYOS in fall 2011.

The QEP Team specified goals, student learning outcomes, and desired elements for the seminars. These goals, outcomes, and elements provided the general specifications for planning implementation steps and activities. A review of existing University resources and structures provided additional background for planning the implementation steps to successfully launch and sustain the seminars. In addition, the deliberations of the QEP Team and FYOS Implementation Team, the literature review, and interaction with campus partners guided the design of the implementation plan.

FYOS Implementation Team

Following the approval of the FYOS course and requirement by the University Council, an Implementation Team was appointed to ensure broad-based involvement in the development and proposed implementation of the FYOS program. The Team’s goal is to analyze carefully the institutional context in designing a plan capable of generating the desired student learning outcomes.

The Implementation Team includes faculty, students and representatives from several offices on campus that will interface with and support the seminars. This Team created an initial plan of action based on the work of the QEP Team. The Implementation Team will be involved through the first year of implementation providing input and assistance in putting the plan into action. [A list of the members of the Implementation Team appears in Appendix M.]

Early meetings of the Implementation Team sought to address questions regarding the implementation of the FYOS program. Questions included:

- What are the ways the program might impact your office (your college, you in the role you play at UGA)?

- What processes, procedures, etc., would need to be put in place in your office to support implementation of the program?

- What questions do you or others in your office/college/role have about the program?

- What information do you need to assist with implementation?

Team meetings addressed responses to the questions and covered topics such as advising and advisor support, integration of the seminars into new student orientation sessions, assessment and administration of institution-wide surveys, registration, course scheduling, communication with stakeholders, faculty development, etc. Based on these discussions, the Team developed
detailed action plans; for example, plans were developed to modify the registration system to accommodate the new FYOS. Programming requirements have been developed to ensure 100% enrollment of first-year students. This includes programming logic that will not allow students to enroll in courses for the spring semester without having successfully completed the seminar or being registered for the seminar. Similar detailed plans are in development to address other areas of implementation (e.g., course scheduling, faculty development).

In addition, the Implementation Team reviewed the student learning outcomes and provided input on how to implement a plan that would make it possible to achieve the learning outcomes. The team focused on ways to operationalize the various elements of the seminar, including the focus on learning, student-faculty interaction, and student involvement in the mission of the University; for example, the Team discussed the possibility for developing on-line modules for delivering content related to the University mission.

**Actions to be Implemented**

Actions to be implemented are organized in two phases, Initial Actions: FYOS Start-up and On-going Actions: Sustaining the FYOS. There are several categories that serve to organize the actions to be implemented in each phase—Faculty Governance, Partnership Development, Communication, Processes and Procedures, Faculty and Staff Support, Budgeting and Staffing, and Assessment.

- Faculty governance has been an on-going part of the QEP planning process. Leading the initial actions was developing a course proposal and undergraduate requirement for submission through the faculty governance process from the University Curriculum Committee to final approval by the University Council. Faculty Governance actions will occur throughout the implementation of the seminar program and include processes for approving the seminar proposals, developing guidelines for enforcing the requirement and modifying the seminar requirements based on assessment findings.

- Partnership development is an important part of the implementation strategy. Units across the University will provide support for the FYOS program and contribute to its success. Actions during the initial start-up focus on interaction and consultation with support units to identify opportunities for collaboration. Once partnerships are established they will be sustained through on-going dialogue and involvement with the seminar program.

- Communication with students, faculty, and staff is planned for launching and sustaining the FYOS program and will involve multiple modes (e.g., print, face-to-face, digital media). Initial actions include communication with first-year students following their admission to the University, during summer orientation, and while they are taking a seminar. Communication with faculty will invite their participation and offer support for proposing and teaching the seminars. A communication plan will guide communication decisions as the seminar program is implemented.
• Processes and procedures will be developed and implemented to ensure the success of the seminar program. Actions will include creating processes and procedures for seminar submission and approval, scheduling, registration, communication, and management of the seminar program. Many processes and procedures will be set in place during the initial start-up phase and refined as implementation occurs.

• Faculty and staff support will be critical throughout the implementation of the program. The CTL as well as other campus partners (e.g., Libraries, Student Affairs) will collaborate with the director and assistant director of the program to plan faculty support. The Instructional Advisory Committee of the CTL will provide guidance as resources are developed for faculty teaching the seminars. Faculty input on instructional support needs will be solicited via the website and online proposal submission process throughout the project timeframe.

• Budgeting and staffing actions include establishing and monitoring the budget throughout the project and recruiting key personnel to lead the seminar program. In addition, establishing procedures for faculty compensation and reimbursement and funding incentives for faculty participation will be a part of the implementation actions.

• Assessment will occur throughout the implementation of the seminar program. Assessment strategies will gather input from students, faculty, and staff participating in the program. Assessment data will provide information for program changes and improvements.
## VII. TIMELINE

### Initial Actions: First-Year Odyssey Seminars (FYOS)

* (Summer 2010-Summer 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer/Fall 2010</th>
<th>Faculty Governance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop, submit, and gain approval for a new course, First-Year Odyssey Seminar, FYOS 1001, and an undergraduate University requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish and approve process for enforcing the undergraduate requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop proposal review criteria and review process</td>
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</table>

**Partnership Development**

- Collaborate with the Learning Communities program and the Honors Program to develop options for offering the seminars within their existing programs
- Consult with campus units that would like to contribute to the FYOS program (*e.g.*, Libraries, Office of Service-Learning, Office of Student Affairs, Writing Programs, Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Office of International Education, Office of the Vice President for Research, Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach)
- Partner with the Registrar’s Office regarding programming requirements for implementation
- Partner with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to develop faculty support
- Interact with faculty groups to gain their insight and support for the program (*e.g.*, Senior Teaching Fellows, Lilly Fellows, College/School faculty groups)
- Interact with stakeholder groups to gain their insight and support for the program (*e.g.*, Admissions Advisory Council, Provost’s Advisory Council, Deans Council, Academic Affairs/OVPI staff group)
- Interact with student groups, including the Freshman Board and Freshman Forum, to gain insight and support for the program

**Communication – Materials and Messages**

- Initiate faculty recruitment via letter of invitation to all tenured and tenure-track faculty and request to Deans and Associate Deans to support faculty recruitment efforts
- Develop FAQ for faculty, staff, and students
- Create a listserv to communicate with faculty
- Establish an e-mail account for FYOS to communicate with faculty, staff, and students
Summer/Fall 2010

**Processes and Procedures**
- Establish an FYOS Implementation Team
- Identify transferable processes and procedures from Franklin College seminar program
- Identify best practices from institutions with successful first-year seminar programs
- Develop guidelines to assist faculty as they prepare seminar proposals
- Confirm availability of classroom space for seminars
- Define process for scheduling individual seminars
- Develop process to allow students access to a range of seminar topics across the summer orientation sessions (e.g., gradual release of seats throughout the summer)
- Create specifications for the seminar proposal application
- Develop programming requirements to create a web-based seminar proposal process
- Consult with Legal Affairs regarding out-of-class activities in compliance with University policy
- Initiate development of marketing and communication plan in consultation with campus and off-campus experts

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Initiate planning with the CTL for faculty professional development
- Collaborate with Student Affairs to develop faculty support materials regarding the characteristics of first-year students

**Budgeting and Staffing**
- Recruit FYOS director
- Establish procedures for faculty compensation and reimbursement for out-of-class social/educational activities
- Establish budget

**Assessment**
- Establish assessment plan

Spring 2011

**Faculty Governance**
- Faculty submit seminar proposals via online submission site
- Approve seminars on a rolling basis as received

**Partnership Development**
- Partner with Admissions to include FYOS information in Freshman Orientation
- Collaborate with student orientation leaders to develop student communication messages and to integrate FYOS information during orientation
Spring 2011

- Collaborate with campus units to develop instructional tools such as podcasts, learning modules, videos
- Partner with the CTL to develop faculty support
- Finalize plans for campus unit involvement in the FYOS program (e.g., Libraries, Office of Service-Learning, Writing Programs, Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Office of Student Affairs, Office of International Education, Office of the Vice President for Research, Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach)
- Continue interaction with faculty groups to gain their insight and support for the program (Senior Teaching Fellows, Lilly Fellows, Teaching Academy, College/School faculty groups)
- Continue interaction with student groups, including the Freshman Board and Freshman Forum, to gain insight and support for the program
- Continue meeting with various advisory committees for input and guidance
- Continue interaction with stakeholder groups
- Establish partnership with the Instructional Advisory Committee of the CTL to provide advice and counsel in regard to faculty support for FYOS
- Propose faculty learning communities

**Communication – Materials and Messages**

- Recruit faculty to teach the seminars
- Launch seminar website
- Develop and disseminate seminar information to accepted first-year students
- Update and distribute FAQ for faculty, staff, and students
- Prepare advising information on the seminars for academic advisors and residential student staff
- Design and develop print communication pieces for distribution to target groups (students, faculty, etc.)

**Processes and Procedures**

- Launch online seminar proposal submission site
- Continue meetings of the Implementation Team
- Implement undergraduate requirement in the registration system
- Begin entering seminar topics into the registration system
- Implement room scheduling
- Develop a system for tracking student participation in campus events as per seminar requirements
Spring 2011

- Publish seminars on FYOS website
- Publish seminar and undergraduate requirement in fall 2011 *UGA Bulletin* (description, course objectives, and topical outline)
- Incorporate recommendations from the SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Review Team into the implementation plan

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Solicit input from faculty regarding professional development needs
- Plan and implement faculty development and orientation program
- Post faculty resources for developing seminars (*e.g.*, sample syllabi, guidelines, assignment examples)
- Provide faculty with instructional tools such as podcasts, learning modules, videos

**Budgeting and Staffing**
- Hire additional FYOS staff

**Assessment**
- Refine assessment plan

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**Summer 2011**

**Faculty Governance**
- Faculty submit seminar proposals via online submission site
- Faculty Proposal Review Committee will review and approve seminar proposals for fall and spring

**Partnership Development**
- Collaborate with academic advisors throughout the summer to ensure smooth implementation during orientation

**Communication – Materials and Messages**
- Recruit faculty for fall 2011 and spring 2012 seminars

**Processes and Procedures**
- Enter seminar topics for fall into the registration system
- Register students for seminars during summer orientation
- Update seminar topics on website and in *UGA Bulletin*
- Track patterns of student selection of seminars
- Continue meetings of the Implementation Team
- Develop incentives and rewards for participation in seminars

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Continue faculty development and support as determined by faculty input
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2011</th>
<th><strong>Assessment</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement assessment plans</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th><strong>Faculty Governance</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty submit proposals for spring and summer via online submission site</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review and approve seminar proposals for spring and summer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Communication – Materials and Messages**
- Recruit faculty for spring and summer 2012 seminars
- Prepare advising materials for incoming first-year students starting in spring 2012
- Contact first-year students starting in spring 2012
- Conduct mid-point communication with faculty to solicit feedback

**Processes and Procedures**
- Offer inaugural fall seminars
- Enter seminar topics for spring semester into the registration system
- Register students for spring seminars
- Update seminar topics on website and UGA Bulletin
- Track patterns of student selection and completion of seminars
- Continue meetings of the Implementation Team

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Continue faculty development and support as determined by faculty input

**Assessment**
- Implement assessment plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
<th><strong>Faculty Governance</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty submit proposals for summer and fall via online submission site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review and approve seminar proposals for summer and fall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communication – Materials and Messages**
- Recruit faculty for summer and fall 2012 seminars

**Processes and Procedures**
- Enter seminar topics for summer and fall semester into the registration system
- Register students for summer and fall seminars
- Update seminar topics on FYOS website and UGA Bulletin
Spring 2012

- Track patterns of student selection and completion of seminars
- Continue meetings of the Implementation Team

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Continue faculty development and support as determined by faculty input

**Assessment**
- Implement assessment plans

Summer 2012

**Faculty Governance**
- Faculty submit proposals for seminars for fall and spring via online submission site
- Review and approve seminar proposals for fall and spring

**Partnership Development**
- Collaborate with academic advisors throughout the summer to ensure smooth implementation during orientation
- Propose faculty learning communities

**Communication – Materials and Messages**
- Continue faculty recruitment as needed for seminars

**Processes and Procedures**
- Enter seminar topics for fall into the registration system
- Register students for seminars during summer orientation
- Update seminar topics on website and *UGA Bulletin*
- Track patterns of student selection and completion of seminars
- Continue meetings of the Implementation Team
- Follow procedure for enforcing the requirement

**Faculty and Staff Support**
- Continue faculty development and support as determined by faculty input

**Assessment**
- Implement assessment plans
## On-going Actions: Sustaining the FYOS

*(Fall 2012 – Summer 2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Governance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty submit proposals for seminars via online submission site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approve seminars on a rolling basis as received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modify seminar requirements based on assessment</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Partnership Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner with Admissions to include the FYOS program in Freshman Orientation (spring only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with student orientation leaders to develop student communication messages and to integrate FYOS information during summer orientation (spring only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue interaction with faculty groups to gain their insight and support for the seminars (Senior Teaching Fellows, Lilly Fellows, Teaching Academy, College/School faculty groups)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue interaction with student groups, including the Freshman Board and Freshman Forum, to gain insight and support for the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to partner with CTL to refine and implement faculty support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue meetings with the Instructional Advisory Committee of the CTL to provide advice and counsel in regard to faculty support for the seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue meeting with various advisory committees for input and guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue interaction with stakeholder groups</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication – Materials and Messages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit faculty to teach seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update advising information on the seminars for academic advisors and student residential staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise print communications pieces for distribution to target groups (students, faculty, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update FYOS website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise and disseminate FYOS information to accepted first-year students (fall and spring only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update and distribute FAQ for faculty, staff, and students</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes and Procedures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter seminar topics into the registration system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register students for seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update seminar topics on FYOS website and in <em>UGA Bulletin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track patterns of student selection and completion of seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue meetings of the Implementation Team</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Faculty and Staff Support
- Solicit input from faculty regarding professional development needs for teaching a seminar
- Revise and implement faculty development and orientation program
- Update faculty resources for developing seminars (e.g., sample syllabi, guidelines, assignment examples)
- Update instructional tools such as podcasts, learning modules, videos
- Continue faculty development and support as determined by faculty input
- Provide incentives and rewards for FYOS participation

Budgeting and Staffing
- Monitor and adjust budget

Assessment
- Implement assessment plans
- Review assessment data for needed changes and improvements
- Revise assessment plans as needed
- Evaluate incentives and rewards for participation in FYOS
- Prepare SACSCOC QEP Impact Report (fifth year after implementation)
VIII. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

FYOS Administration

The FYOS program will be administratively housed in the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. Staffing for the program will consist of a program director, an assistant director, and an administrative assistant. The program director will be selected from among tenured faculty and will lead efforts to recruit faculty for the initial launch of the seminars and will develop plans for the ongoing recruitment of faculty. The director will identify and partner with campus offices to support the FYOS and will have oversight of the budget. The director will also provide leadership for evaluation and assessment of the seminars for continual improvement. The director will report to the Vice President for Instruction. The assistant director will direct the day-to-day operation of the office and represent the director at meetings and other situations, as appropriate. He or she will also work with the appropriate campus offices to schedule and load classes into OASIS. The assistant director will develop and maintain campus-wide distribution of information about the courses and will provide assistance to and support for faculty instructors. Lastly, an administrative assistant will provide the necessary support for both the director and assistant director.

Implementation Team and Supporting Committees

The Implementation Team comprised of faculty, staff and representatives from OVPI and campus units that interface with and support the seminars will continue to function during the first year of the program’s implementation. An Advisory Committee will be established to provide input and guidance for the program. A Faculty Proposal Review Committee will be formed to review and recommend approval of FYOS proposals. In addition, existing faculty and student committees and boards will also provide input and guidance to sustain the FYOS program; for example, the Instructional Advisory Committee of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) will provide input and counsel related to FYOS faculty instructional support. The University Curriculum Committee will consult on issues related to the course and University requirement. Student groups such as the Freshman Board and Freshman Forum will be consulted each semester for input and to gain students’ perspectives. A description of the Implementation Team and the supporting committees follows.

Implementation Team

The Implementation Team is comprised of faculty, staff, and representatives from OVPI and campus units that interface with and support the seminars. This Team provides valuable input on matters such as registration requirements and procedures, seminar requirements and how to implement them, and identification of necessary faculty and student resources. The Implementation Team will continue to function during the first year of the program’s implementation and provide input to the director.
**FYOS Advisory Committee**

The advisory committee will consist of faculty and students who will advise on issues pertinent to the on-going development, implementation, and assessment of the seminar courses and program. Members will also provide valuable input on student and faculty feedback and concerns.

**Faculty Proposal Review Committee**

A faculty group will be named to review course proposals on a rolling basis. This committee will be responsible for closely examining proposals to ensure that they address the goals of the seminars and include the required seminar elements.

**Instructional Advisory Committee**

The Instructional Advisory Committee plays an important role in the development and implementation of the various programs and activities of the CTL. The committee consists of members of the Teaching Academy appointed by the Chair and Executive Committee of the Academy. The IAC screens nominees for Outstanding Teaching Assistant and Graduate School Excellence in Teaching Awards and also engages in a variety of other activities related to teaching. The IAC will provide expertise and support for guiding the development of faculty teaching the seminars.

**University Curriculum Committee**

The University Curriculum Committee, one of the standing committees of the University Council, is responsible for developing curriculum policies and procedures for the University of Georgia; reviewing proposed degrees, majors, minors, new courses, and course changes; and handling other matters related to curriculum. The FYOS program leadership will consult with the UCC on issues related to the course and University requirement.

**Freshman Forum**

The Freshman Forum is designed to equip leaders entering the University with skills and practice in leading successful organizations at the collegiate level. With the support of the Student Government Association, the Freshman Forum has the power to make improvements, share ideas, and work hand-in-hand with top students and campus leaders to make their ideas come to life. The 60 freshmen are divided into five color groups. Each group is guided by a Personal Advisor and an Assistant Personal Advisor as they work to complete their group projects. Responsibilities of the Freshman Forum include the leadership development program with focus on leading through service, providing exposure to various campus organizations and activities, inviting speakers from campus and the Athens area, and involving first-year students in group community service and campus projects.

**Freshman Board**

The Freshman Board serves as the representative voice for first-year students. The Board will expose a group of highly motivated freshmen to all that UGA and Athens have to offer. They will
gain experience, knowledge, long-lasting memories, and develop close relationships with fellow Freshman Board members. The Freshman Board works to effectively represent the voice of the freshman class by serving as a voting member of the Student Government Association senate. The Board also designs, implements, and follows through with various initiatives in an effort to better the University and the Athens community.
IX. RESOURCES

Faculty Support Resources

The success of the FYOS program depends on committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic faculty. Support based on faculty-identified needs will be put in place to ensure this success.

Literature on first-year seminars as well as best practices from other institutions with first-year seminars point to the necessity of adequate preparation of instructors. Empirical analysis of the steps taken to support first-year faculty at some institutions indicates that this preparation, as well as the subsequent teaching of first-year courses, has lasting impact on both faculty and students. Faculty who participate in such professional development programs report numerous benefits, such as knowing more about their students and learning new, often technological tools for teaching them (Barefoot, 1993). Faculty development programs also provide opportunities for exchange with other faculty, often from diverse disciplines (Kelly, 2006). This may be particularly beneficial to new faculty seeking mentorship (Kemp & O'Keefe, 2003). Research also suggests that teaching staff who take part in these development programs are able to transfer the teaching techniques they learn to other classes (Fidler, Neururer-Rotholz & Richardson, 1999; McClure, Atkinson & Wills, 2008). Lastly, faculty response to such programs can be very positive (Allred, 2010).

The University of Georgia has also considered the practices in place at other institutions that provide professional development to faculty of first-year seminars. Institutions such as the University of South Carolina, Virginia Tech, the University of Richmond, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of California-Davis, Rutgers, and the University of Iowa have faculty development procedures and resources, often housed in a larger unit already devoted to campus-wide instructional support. Some institutions require participation in multi-day workshops while others offer elective programming such as first-year faculty meetings, brown bag discussions, or seminars that meet periodically throughout the year. The University does not plan to require FYOS faculty to participate in any professional development programming but will strive to attract faculty to events offered in multiple formats (face-to-face, small and large group meetings as well as online and print resources).

Many of the University’s efforts to support seminar faculty will be achieved with the close collaboration of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL has been successful in providing faculty support for teaching and learning on a variety of fronts and will be an essential resource in seminar faculty development efforts. The CTL and its Instructional Advisory Committee (IAC) will provide expertise and support for guiding the development of faculty support for teaching the seminars. The IAC plays an important role in the development and implementation of the various programs and activities of the CTL. The committee consists of members of the Teaching Academy appointed by the Chair and Executive Committee of the Academy. This connection to the Teaching Academy will be instrumental in tapping the
expertise of distinguished faculty on campus and gaining their support for the seminars. The annual Teaching Academy symposium to be held in spring 2011 will focus on "Understanding our Students" and will feature a breakout session on FYOS.

The CTL will also provide expert input and assistance to faculty preparing their seminars. This assistance could include the development of a FYOS Faculty Resource Manual (in print and online) to outline the goals of the program and provide suggestions for course designs that will maximize the likelihood of achieving program goals. Additionally, CTL faculty and staff will offer strategies for engaging the first-year student, for assigning work appropriate to a one-hour course, suggestions for using writing assignments in the seminar, seminar and syllabus design, tips for grading the seminar, and much more. A fifty percent time position will be added to the CTL to focus on instructional support for the seminar program. In addition, CTL will collaborate with the dedicated writing programs on campus to provide support for the writing component of the seminars.

Faculty groups will provide input regarding support needs throughout the implementation process. The current broad-based Implementation Team will continue to provide input to the program director. As the first cycle of seminars is completed, faculty who have taught the seminars will be invited to input on their experiences to the Implementation Team and Advisory Committee. The University’s Senior Teaching Fellows and Lilly Fellows have given valuable input thus far and will continue to provide input regarding faculty as well as student needs.

Several tools will be provided for faculty to access or request information pertaining to the seminars. A website, http://www.fyo.uga.edu, will provide information including, but not limited to, seminar guidelines, sample syllabi, an email address for submitting questions or comments, links to campus resources, and the link to the online proposal submission form for submitting course proposals. The Faculty Proposal Review Committee will be charged with review of those proposals and for working with faculty to ensure that proposed courses are likely to meet the goals of the program. An online listserv will also be developed to allow faculty to share teaching resources and best practices as well as successes and failures.

**Advisor Resources**

Advisors will play a significant role in the program and will be encouraged to use the online resources developed for faculty teaching seminars. Additional advisor-focused materials will also be developed and could include FYOS website resources for advisors and an annual information session for advisors (face-to-face and online).

Another important venue for disseminating information to advisors will be the advisor workshop held each year for faculty and professional staff advisors from all of the University’s schools and colleges. Among other things, the workshop serves the purpose of providing important information to new and experienced advisors about degree requirements, campus resources, and other issues related to academic advising. For a number of years, advising has been
supervised by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, and that office will work with the appropriate organizing staff to make sure that the FYOS program is the central topic of upcoming workshops and that later workshops include appropriate updates of FYOS information.

**Faculty Compensation**

The QEP Team discussed how faculty might be encouraged to participate in teaching these seminars. Currently, faculty in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences who teach its first-year seminars are allocated $400 for use in scholarly support. Faculty teaching a First-Year Odyssey Seminar will be compensated with $2,500 for each seminar taught. These funds should be available as either extra compensation or for research and scholarly support (e.g., travel, supplies, computer, equipment, salary for a research assistant). Additional funds will also be available to reimburse the costs of informal meals with students, as well as to provide opportunities for special events or activities.

The Team considered whether faculty could teach these seminars as part of the normal teaching load. Despite considerable discussion, the Team finally decided that faculty should not be allowed the option of teaching these seminars as part of their normal teaching duties. The primary reason was concern about removing faculty from other classes, particularly given the significant constraints that the University faces on faculty hiring at this time. Therefore, the teaching of the FYOS will be strictly voluntary. Whether a faculty member is teaching an “overload” as strictly defined by the University plays no part in compensation for teaching a seminar.

**Proposed Budget**

The six-year proposed budget is an estimate of the costs of developing, implementing and managing the FYOS program. The budget includes resources for support personnel, instructional support, assessment costs, marketing and publicity, supplies and equipment, and travel. Funds to support the program have been identified from internal and external sources.

The FYOS support personnel category includes resources to compensate faculty for teaching the seminars at a rate of $2,500 per seminar (340 seminars proposed). Salary is included for a faculty director (part-time), assistant director, and administrative assistant. Resources to support additional staffing in the CTL for faculty instructional support are proposed (e.g., faculty seminars, learning communities, podcasts, eLC site). In addition, web development support to create and maintain applications for faculty, students and program administration is included (e.g., online portal, database and proposal approval routing, student database of seminar information for query, online resources, social media).

Instructional support includes non-state funds for out-of-class events such as purchasing meals or tickets for performances. Resources for writing will support development of a workshop for faculty and the development of print and web-based materials for students and faculty; for example, student materials will provide information on writing centers and tutoring on campus,
and faculty materials will focus on good practices and a menu of writing options they might incorporate, such as writing-to-learn exercises, in their seminars. Faculty innovation grants are supported to encourage faculty to consider ways to extend the effects of the seminar (e.g., adding a common book, linking courses). Funds for faculty incentives and awards will allow for a simple recognition event and awards.

Resources for evaluation and assessment of the program and student learning outcomes are outlined in the budget. A graduate assistant to assist with evaluation is included. The budget assumes that the FYOS support personnel will have primary responsibility for coordinating a wide range of assessments. Other campus offices (e.g., Office of Academic Planning, Academic Advising Services) will collaborate with the FYOS program on the administration of nationally standardized scales (NSSE and BCSSE) and other participation measures as part of on-going campus-wide assessment efforts. The budget also assumes that faculty will evaluate student work to provide assessment data.

Resources for marketing and publicity are included to build and sustain awareness of the FYOS program. Materials include postcards targeted at admitted first-year students and a booklet of seminars for the admissions packet. In addition, posters, table-top displays, banners, and other promotional items are included. Funds are also included for development of a logo and website design. Also, a promotional event is proposed in order to increase awareness of the FYOS program among faculty.

The supplies and equipment budget includes items for the on-going office operation of the FYOS program. A server to house web applications and databases as well as funds to purchase technology needs such as computers and telephones for FYOS personnel are included.

Funds are included to support travel to national conferences for the director and members of the FYOS Team (FYOS staff, advisory group members, etc.). Funds are also included for selected faculty who are teaching seminars to attend national conferences related to the first-year experience or undergraduate education. In addition, funds are included to support the attendance of a team of faculty and staff at an upcoming seminar on the first-year experience in spring 2011.

A number of offices across the University will contribute to the success of the FYOS program. [A listing of these offices and their supporting roles is included in Appendix N.]
## FYOS Program (6-year Budget Projections)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty compensation @ $2,500 per seminar</td>
<td>$82,500</td>
<td>$850,000</td>
<td>$850,000</td>
<td>$850,000</td>
<td>$850,000</td>
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<td>FYOS admin. leadership</td>
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<td>32,500</td>
<td>33,475</td>
<td>34,479</td>
<td>35,514</td>
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<td>Faculty instructional support</td>
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<td>29,250</td>
<td>30,128</td>
<td>31,031</td>
<td>31,962</td>
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### Instructional Support

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<tr>
<th>Out-of-class events</th>
<th>150,000</th>
<th>150,000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resources for writing</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty innovation grants</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty incentives/awards</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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### Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Graduate assistant</th>
<th>12,000</th>
<th>24,000</th>
<th>24,720</th>
<th>25,462</th>
<th>26,225</th>
<th>27,012</th>
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<td>Assessment web support</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>3,348</td>
<td>3,448</td>
<td>3,552</td>
<td>3,658</td>
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<td>Focus group surveys</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instrument (BCSSE)</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>4,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualtrics license</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course evaluations/reports development</td>
<td>8,640</td>
<td>8,640</td>
<td>8,640</td>
<td>8,640</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment assessment development</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admitted student materials</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional materials</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo and web identity design</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring promotional event</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Supplies and Equipment          |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Technology                      | 26,234  | 1,750   | 1,750   | 1,750   | 9,250   | 1,750   |
| Office Supplies                 | 3,000   | 3,000   | 3,000   | 3,000   | 3,000   | 3,000   |

| Travel                          |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| FYOS personnel/team             | 14,000  | 5,000   | 5,000   | 5,000   | 5,000   | 5,000   |
| Faculty                         | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000  |

| TOTAL                           | $281,949| $1,343,700| $1,351,321| $1,335,169| $1,350,753| $1,351,579|

**SIX-YEAR TOTAL, FY2011-2016** $7,014,471
X. ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Assessment

The plan for assessing the FYOS program has three interrelated purposes:

- Formative—to provide ongoing information to the program faculty and administration that can be used to improve the seminars
- Summative—to determine the overall effect of the program on student engagement and student learning at the University
- Communicative—to provide ongoing information about program results to a variety of constituents

The success of the FYOS program depends entirely on the success of individual seminars accomplishing the following goals:

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

Assessment Methods

The University will use a range of assessment methods and measures to implement the overall assessment plan. These methods include direct and indirect measures, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods.

The primary assessment methods, elaborated upon later in this section, include the following:

- The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)
- Direct evaluation of student work
- Student course evaluations
- Student focus groups following the seminar
- Faculty course evaluations
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Tracking of Institutional indicators
Responsibility for Assessment

The FYOS director, FYOS Advisory Committee, the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, and seminar faculty have primary responsibility for implementing these assessments and using the results. Students also play a critical role. Their active and thoughtful participation will reinforce the goals of the program as well as advance the development of an academic culture that values and uses evidence to inform decision-making. Other campus offices will contribute expertise and resources to support FYOS assessment. These offices include the Office of Institutional Research, the Survey Research Center, the CTL, the Office of Student Affairs Assessment, and the Office of Academic Planning.
# Mapping Assessment to Student Learning Outcomes and Program Goals

The following tables illustrate the FYOS program’s strategy for assessing program goals.

1. **Goal**: Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics to engage them in the academic culture of the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYOS Goals</th>
<th>Seminar Objectives</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Procedures to Meet Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics to engage them in the academic culture of the University.</td>
<td>Support academic dialogue through writing, feedback, and response.</td>
<td>Students will be able to describe and reflect on the topic of the seminar through class discussion and written communication.</td>
<td>Students will enroll in FYOS in the first year of residence.</td>
<td>Level of enrollment in seminars (Audit measure).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote intentional learning.</td>
<td>Students will develop self-awareness about the reason for study and the importance of self-directed learning (intentional learning).</td>
<td>Seminar will focus on the instructor’s area of scholarship.</td>
<td>NSSE Benchmark Selected items- Level of Academic Challenge; Active and Collaborative Learning; Assessment of Educationally Purposeful Activities (composite of nineteen NSSE items) .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar assignments and discussion will encourage reflection on the topic of the seminar.</td>
<td>Course evaluation items on seminar activities (e.g., class discussion, written communication, self-directed learning).</td>
<td>Evaluation of sample seminar assignments to determine student understanding of the seminar topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar assignments and discussion will encourage self-reflection and intentional learning.</td>
<td>Faculty reports on level of academic dialogue in seminars.</td>
<td>Focus group feedback on developing self-awareness and self-directed learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Goal: Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYOS Goals</th>
<th>Seminar Objectives</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Procedures to Meet Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions.</td>
<td>Promote student-faculty interaction in a small class setting.</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate interaction with the professor through oral and written communication.</td>
<td>FYOS will be limited to 15-18 students to encourage student-faculty interaction.</td>
<td>NSSE Benchmark Selected items-Student-Faculty Interaction (Select NSSE items); Assessment of Educationally Purposeful Activities (composite of nineteen NSSE items).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open channels of communication between students and faculty in and out of class.</td>
<td>Students will communicate with faculty regarding an area of scholarship.</td>
<td>Seminar format will promote dialogue and discussion of ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce students to the faculty member’s scholarly path and role in the mission of the University.</td>
<td>Students will have positive perceptions of student-faculty interactions.</td>
<td>Resources will be made available to support out of class activities for faculty-student interaction (e.g., meals, performances).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to describe the scholarly path of the faculty member and his/her role in the mission of the University.</td>
<td>Faculty will describe their own scholarly path and role in the University, including research, service and outreach and teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

resources will be made available to support out of class activities for faculty-student interaction (e.g., meals, performances). Faculty will describe their own scholarly path and role in the University, including research, service and outreach and teaching.

Faculty reports on level of dialogue and interaction with students.

Course evaluation items on seminar activities (e.g., class discussion, student-faculty interaction, out-of-class activities).

Focus group feedback on faculty scholarship and role in the University mission and perceptions of faculty and the level of interaction.
3. **Goal:** Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom to increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYOS Goals</th>
<th>Seminar Objectives</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Procedures to Meet Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom to increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University.</td>
<td>Expose students to opportunities to engage in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction both on campus and globally (<em>e.g.</em>, study abroad, practicums, internships).</td>
<td>Students will be able to articulate the opportunities for engagement in the University community, including opportunities to participate in research, public service and varied forms of instruction, such as study abroad and internships at the University of Georgia.</td>
<td>Faculty will discuss opportunities for engagement. Students will attend campus events related to engagement. Student will complete online modules with content related to teaching, research, public service and outreach, and other opportunities.</td>
<td>NSSE Benchmark Selected items-Enriching Educational Experience. Course evaluation items on course activities (<em>e.g.</em>, campus events, University mission). Focus group feedback on University mission. Content quizzes from mission-related modules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of Assessment Methods

Seminar Enrollment

A goal of the FYOS program is to give all entering first-year students the opportunity to engage with a tenure-track faculty member in a small seminar setting. Enrolling 5,000-plus students in 300-plus seminars is ambitious and will challenge capabilities of the University in many different areas—from academics, to logistics, to resources. Therefore, the first measure of success will be achieving the enrollment of 100 percent of the fall 2011 entering class in a first-year seminar in fall 2011 or spring 2011.

BCSSE

BCSSE was administered to incoming University students in summer 2010 to establish pre-seminar baselines and will be administered each summer for the next four years. The University will make information from the survey available to faculty teaching the seminars to provide an overall portrait of entering students at the University. In addition, the University will use data to inform orientation programs for faculty preparing to teach the seminars.

BCSSE results will also be used in conjunction with NSSE results to gauge the specific effect of the FYOS program as it is implemented. BCSSE results will be compared with the NSSE results from the same population of students after they finish the seminar to gain a pre- and post-measure of changes in student perceptions related to FYOS outcomes.

Direct evaluation of student work

The University will collect samples of student work from across a broad range of seminars. Systematically evaluating this work using rubrics (to be defined by FYOS director, Advisory Committee, and seminar faculty) will allow the University to assess student understanding of seminar topics and levels of engagement in the academic topics of the courses.

Student course evaluations

The University will design a research-based, centrally administered course evaluation with items constructed to elicit data not only about student perceptions but also about student behaviors and expected behaviors relevant to specific learning outcomes, clustering the items on the evaluations according to program goals. Student responses will provide individual faculty members with student feedback that they can use to improve future seminars. In addition, completion of the course evaluation will encourage students to reflect on the experience of the seminar, reinforcing the goals of the program and increasing the likelihood that they will carry forward the desired outcomes.

Course evaluation data aggregated at the program level will provide the program director and advisory committee with powerful information about the program as a whole. Information will be
gathered on the types of writing activities and assignments used in the seminars, the types of out-of-class activities, and the range of campus events attended.

**Student focus groups following the seminar**

In the early spring, the University will gather focus groups with students who have recently completed seminars to elaborate the course evaluation data. Together, these assessments will form a rich source of information to inform the practice of faculty developing seminars, suggest areas for faculty development, and communicate the program’s ongoing successes and challenges to the campus community.

**Faculty course evaluations**

The University will administer a focused seminar evaluation instrument for faculty that complements the student evaluation. This data may provide additional confirmation of student evaluations or may reveal differences in perception that are instructive for conversations with faculty and for faculty development needs. In the past the University has used differences between NSSE and FSSE data in this way.

**The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

The desired outcomes and program goals of the seminars closely align with a number of student perceptions measured by individual items and benchmark areas of NSSE, which the University has used on a three-year cycle since 2003. NSSE will help assess FYOS outcomes and goals in three ways. First, it will be the “post” measure in conjunction with the administration of BCSSE. Second, using pre-seminar NSSE data as baselines, specific targets have been set for NSSE Benchmarks in Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Enriching Educational Experience. Targets here are modest because University of Georgia students currently respond at levels at or above these benchmarks as compared to groups of peer institutions. The third use of NSSE—to track movement on specific, select individual NSSE items related to FYOS outcomes—may be more productive. Again, using pre-seminar NSSE data, the University will measure progress on these goals in NSSE-related surveys in 2012 as the first cohort of students moves through the seminars and in subsequent NSSE administrations in 2014 and beyond. [Goals for Benchmarks and select NSSE items are specified in Appendix O.]

**Tracking of Institutional Indicators**

Participation rates in undergraduate research, service-learning opportunities, study abroad, internships, independent study, and other learning opportunities should rise in response to increased student awareness. The University will closely track these participation rates over the next five years as a part of existing University assessment plans. As feasible, the University will incorporate items related to desired FYOS outcomes into its other assessment efforts.
XI. CONCLUSION

The University of Georgia, having concluded the institutional process of identifying a topic for its QEP, identifying the goals and outcomes designed to improve student learning, and developing a five-year implementation plan and budget to accomplish those goals and outcomes, now looks forward to the review of this plan by SACSCOC, discussions with SACSCOC about the plan, and the actual implementation of the plan. Based on this three-year institutional process, the University community feels a great deal of optimism about the likelihood of success of the plan. This optimism is accompanied by a strong institutional commitment to fund the plan, to assess the progress of the plan, and to make mid-course corrections when called for by the assessment results. Most importantly, we look forward to the improvements in student learning and the overall academic culture of the University that we believe will take place as a result of the FYOS program.
XII. WORKS CITED


XIII. APPENDICES

Appendix A: QEP Team Members

- Margaret Amstutz, Chief of Staff to the President
- Leslie Atchley, * Assistant Director of Assessment and Staff Development, Office of Student Affairs
- Allan Aycock, Director, Assessment and Accreditation
- Katie Barlow, * Undergraduate Student
- Irwin Bernstein, Distinguished Research Professor, Psychology
- Robert Boehmer, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
- Kathryn Bowers, § Undergraduate Student
- Josef Broder, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
- Paige Carmichael, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Veterinary Medicine
- Paul Chambers, Alumnus
- Cheryl Dozier, Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity
- Art Dunning, * Vice President for Public Service and Outreach
- Denise Gardner, Director, Institutional Research
- Laura Jolly, § Vice President for Instruction
- Pamela Kleiber, Associate Director, Honors Program
- David Knauft, Associate Dean, Graduate School
- Kasee Laster, § Director of Study Abroad
- David Lee, Vice President for Research
- Jerome Legge, Associate Dean, School of Public and International Affairs
- Heidi Leming, § Graduate Student, Higher Education
- Jean Martin-Williams, Professor, Hodgson School of Music
- Rodney Mauricio, † Associate Professor, Genetics
- Connor McCarthy, Undergraduate Student
- Jere Morehead, * Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
- Luke Naeher, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Science
- Marisa Pagnattaro, Associate Professor, Legal Studies
- William Potter, Associate Provost and University Librarian
- Shannon Scott, Assistant Editor, Institute of Continuing Legal Education
- Judith Shaw, * Associate Provost for International Education
- Frances Teague, Meigs Professor, English
- Robin Tricoli, * Associate Provost, Institutional Strategic Planning
- Kyle Tschepikow, § Assistant Director of Assessment, Student Affairs
- William Vencill, § Professor, Crop and Soil Sciences
- Jan Wheeler, Associate Director for Accreditation
- Barbara White, Chief Information Officer and Associate Provost
- Shannon Wilder, Director, Office of Service-Learning
- Steve Wrigley, § Interim Vice President for Public Service and Outreach
- Adam Wyatt, Graduate Student, Higher Education

† Chair
* Original appointment but left Team during QEP development
§ Added after Team originally formed
Appendix B: Leadership Team Members

- Michael F. Adams, President
- Meg Amstutz, Chief of Staff
- Jere Morehead, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost
- Timothy Burgess, Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration
- Thomas Landrum, Senior Vice President for External Affairs
- Rodney Bennett, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Robert G. Boehmer, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
- Marcus Fechheimer, Professor, Cellular Biology
- Denise Spangler, Professor and Head, Math and Science Education
- William Vencill, Professor, Crop and Soil Sciences
Appendix C: Summary of 2009 Student Survey for QEP Topic Selection

Student Learning Enhancement Team
Summary of Student Questionnaire Responses
January 2009
Submitted by Leslie Atchley, Denise Gardner, and Connor McCarthy

An analysis of the student questionnaire responses yielded four major themes. The responses to each of the three questions are divided into three categories: faculty, coursework, and academic assistance and enhancement. The four major themes are woven throughout these categories.

Major Themes (in order of prevalence)

1) Relationship-building and increased accessibility to faculty, advisors, and upperclassmen mentors is critical to student learning.
2) Students desire technology advances in academic and administrative support systems.
3) Students seek increased academic assistance and accommodations such as tutoring and 24-hour study spaces.
4) Students value interactive learning that involves hands-on experiences, real world applications, diversity education, research, internships, and international study.

Question #1: What was your greatest expectation for your learning experience at UGA that has been met?

- Faculty
  - experts in their field
  - receptive to student needs
  - accessible to offer assistance outside of class: tutoring, study skills
  - develop personal relationships
  - care about students
  - get to know students, even in large classes
  - diverse teaching styles

- Coursework
  - research opportunities
  - rigor of courses
  - apply classroom learning to future career, grad school
  - wide variety of interesting courses
  - honors courses
  - internships
  - study abroad
  - exposure to new ideas, cultures, people
  - diverse perspectives in courses and material
  - personal way of thinking is challenged
  - independent, self-directed learning
  - interactive classes with discussion
  - small classes provide better learning
  - taking foreign languages
• Academic assistance and enhancement
  o great places to study at all hours (SLC)
  o tutoring
  o excellent technology (computers, labs, etc.)
  o involvement with student organizations

**Question #2:** What was your greatest expectation for your learning experience at UGA that has *not* been met?

• Faculty
  o would like more faculty to value teaching over research
  o fewer PowerPoint lectures and more interactive classes with diverse teaching styles
  o little interaction with students; lack of personal relationships
  o don’t care about students
  o don’t love teaching
  o unavailable
  o some graduate students not strong teachers

• Coursework
  o large classes impersonal; lack of faculty interaction and class discussion
  o focus on memorization and not critical thinking
  o not challenging—classes feel like high school again; need more thought-provoking courses
  o lack of academic/intellectual culture among students
  o want more hands on learning and real world application
  o did not get to study abroad

• Academic assistance and enhancement
  o more tutoring opportunities
  o insufficient number of classes offered
  o not enough small classes
  o limited by core requirements/difficulty taking classes outside major
  o more guidance in choosing majors and classes
  o better advising
  o need more late night and weekend places to study
  o more quiet places to study

**Question #3:** *If you could make one campus-wide change to enhance undergraduate student learning, what would it be?*

• Faculty
  o more enthusiastic and committed to teaching
  o use multiple teaching styles; interaction and discussion during classes
  o more one-on-one time available
Coursework
- smaller classes
- more breakout sessions/smaller breakout sessions to allow faculty/student interaction and engagement
- ability to take more classes beyond major and core requirements—explore new interests, specialize
- more freshman seminars
- first year experience program
- courses to help students transition to real world
- more real world examples in classes
- hands on, interactive learning in field of study
- more research opportunities
- get rid of or change the plus/minus system

Academic assistance and enhancement
- Tutoring: expand services, offer one-on-one, advertise better
- 24 hour study areas needed
- quiet study areas
- better wireless access across campus
- more computer labs
- sustainability
- more career guidance
- more buses
- better environment for students of color; more integration
Appendix D: Summary of 2009 Alumni Survey for QEP Topic Selection

**Student Learning Enhancement Team**

**Summary of Alumni Survey Responses**

**April 2009**

Contribution: Adam Wyatt, Maggie Crowson, Allan Aycock

On March 31, 2009, after consultation with Paul Chambers, Alumni Representative on the Student Learning Enhancement Team, and Stan Jackson, UGA Alumni Relations, a survey was sent to all alumni on the UGA Alumni Relations listserv (n=61,105 deliverable email addresses), asking them to rank the four central ideas for Student Learning Initiative (SLI) topics based on the following descriptions:

**1st Term Experience:** A program of integrated first-term experiences for incoming students that connects orientation, advising, small seminars with faculty members, and core courses to introduce students to the intellectual and academic expectations of the University.

**Research Opportunities:** A program to substantially expand opportunities for undergraduates to engage in significant research projects with faculty members.

**Community & Civic Engagement:** A program to substantially expand teaching and learning experiences that combine academic study with community and civic engagement projects.

**Global Focus:** A program to integrate global experiences and issues into the undergraduate curriculum, including expanding “deep immersion” experiences abroad and developing a global focus for on-campus courses.

Please note that these descriptions (the description for 1st Term Experience in particular) may not accurately represent the content of four final proposals forwarded by the SLET to the Leadership Team. The proposals continued to evolve after the survey was initiated.

The survey also allowed for open-ended narrative comments.

**Results:**

Of the 61,105 delivered emails, 8,653 were opened, and 4,284 responded to the survey. More than 650 respondents also submitted narrative comments.

**Analysis:**

In general, the alumni strongly supported all four ideas, both in ranking and narrative comments. A high percentage of alumni praised all four ideas, even while explaining their preference for one. General comments from the alumni indicated they place a high value on:

- practical, “real-life” experience and preparation,
- strong mentoring programs, and
focus on academic basics.

Many alumni noted that the selected program should not be mandatory for students. On the other hand, a noticeable minority of alumni suggested that all the ideas were digressions from the fundamental purpose (variably defined) of a UGA education.

First Term Experience

This was clearly the alumni favorite, although, as noted above, the description seen by the alumni differs significantly from the final proposal. Alumni noted that the first term program would help students transition from high school to college, create a smaller environment within the large university, and help students identify a clear purpose for their college careers.

Community & Civic Engagement

Alumni indicated that they placed a high value on this idea as a way to get students out of the “college bubble” and connected to real world applications, noting the importance of practical experience as preparation for future employment. Alumni also noted that this program would have significant direct benefits for the local and state communities. A significant number of alumni mentioned the centrality of community service in their post-collegiate lives and highlighted the importance of “paying back.”

Global Focus

Strong alumni support of this idea was based on its relevance to current events and the emergence of globalization as a primary economic force in the 21st century. Many alumni noted the importance of their own study abroad experiences and supported a need for increased opportunities. A significant number of comments suggested the need for non-study abroad opportunities that enhance global understanding.

Research Opportunities

Alumni noted the importance of “significant” research, especially in the context of preparation for graduate school and for the opportunity it provides for connecting with faculty members. A number of respondents noted that research enhances practical and intellectual skills. Some alumni suggested that there were already enough opportunities for those interested in research or that research was more appropriate at the graduate level.
Raw Data:

![Bar Chart]

Number of Votes per Option

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Number of Written Responses: 662
Appendix E: QEP Team Working Groups to Develop Proposals for QEP Topic to Leadership Team (2009)

QEP Working Groups for Each of the Four Proposals Submitted to Leadership Team

1. "Putting Undergraduates at the Frontiers of Knowledge"
   • Leslie Atchley, Assistant Director of Assessment and Staff Development, Office of Student Affairs
   • Ronald Balthazor, Academic Professional, English
   • Caroline Cason Barratt, Reference Librarian, University Libraries
   • Irwin Bernstein, Distinguished Research Professor, Psychology
   • Harry Dailey, Professor, Microbiology; Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; Director, Biomedical Health Sciences Institute
   • David Hall, Assistant Professor, Genetics
   • Pam Kleiber, Associate Director, Honors Program (Group chair)
   • Jean Martin-Williams, Professor, Hodgson School of Music
   • Lara Pacifici, Graduate Student, Science Education
   • Cleveland Piggott, Undergraduate Student, Biology
   • William Potter, Associate Provost and University Librarian
   • Paul Quick, Coordinator of Faculty and TA Development, Center for Teaching and Learning
   • Hugh Ruppersburg, Senior Associate Dean, Franklin College
   • Shannon Scott, Assistant Editor, Institute of Continuing Legal Education
   • Sara Steger, Graduate Student, English
   • Frances Teague, Meigs Professor, English
   • Karen Webber, Associate Professor, Higher Education
   • Robin Wharton, Graduate Student, English

2. "Engaged Scholars, Engaged Citizens"
   • David Berle, Associate Professor, Horticulture
   • Robert Boehmer, Associate Provost for Academic Planning
   • Paul Chambers, Alumnus
   • Deborah Gonzalez, Public Service Assistant, Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach
   • Su-I Hou, Associate Professor, Health Promotion and Behavior
   • David Knauff, Associate Dean, Graduate School
   • Connor McCarthy, Undergraduate Student
   • Paul Matthews, Assistant Director, Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education, College of Education
   • Kathy Thompson, Public Service Associate, College of Education
   • Robin Tricoli, Associate Provost, Institutional Strategic Planning
   • Barbara White, Chief Information Officer and Associate Provost
   • Shannon Wilder, Director, Office of Service-Learning (Group chair)

3. "The Integrated Program for First-Year Experience"
   • Kathryn Bowers, Undergraduate Student
   • David Lee, Vice President for Research (Group chair)
   • Jerome Legge, Associate Dean, School of Public and International Affairs
   • Jere Morehead, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
• Luke Naehler, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Science
• Marisa Pagnattaro, Associate Professor, Legal Studies

4. “Looking Out, Looking In: Re-Envisioning The Undergraduate Curriculum In an International Context”
• Allan Aycock, Director, Assessment and Accreditation
• Kathryn Bowers, Undergraduate Student
• Paige Carmichael, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Veterinary Medicine
• Denise Gardner, Director, Institutional Research
• Jane Gatewood, Associate Director, Office of International Education
• Cheryl Dozier, Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity
• Judith Shaw, Associate Provost for International Education (Group chair)

QEP Team Implementation Subcommittee Additional Members:

Literature Review Subcommittee outside members:
• Jan Barham, Director of Assessment and Staff Development, Student Affairs
• Caroline Cason Barratt, Reference Librarian, University Libraries
• Diane Cooper, Professor, College Student Affairs Administration
• Laura Dean, Assistant Professor, College Student Affairs Administration
• Mary Milan, Graduate Student, Office of Academic Planning
• Christine Miller, Assistant Dean and Director of Information Technology, Franklin College

Learning Outcomes Subcommittee outside members:
• Jan Hathcote, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research, College of Family and Consumer Sciences
• Brian Glaser, Professor, Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
• Fiona Liken, Director, Curriculum Systems
Appendix F: QEP Team Working Groups to Develop Elements of Final QEP (2009 - 2010)

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*denotes chair
Appendix G: Proposal to University Council Curriculum Committee

A. Approve a New University-wide Undergraduate Requirement:
   All first-year undergraduate students who matriculate fall semester 2011 and thereafter must successfully complete one First-Year Odyssey Seminar by the end of the first year in residence. This policy excludes transfer students.

B. Approve a New Prefix: FYOS, First-year Odyssey Seminar

C. Approve a New Course: FYOS 1001
   Proposal: 1. COURSE ID: FYOS 1001

   2. TITLES
      Course Title: First-Year Odyssey Seminar
      Course Computer Title: FIRST YEAR ODYSSEY

   3. COURSE DESCRIPTION
      A seminar to engage first-year students in the academic culture of the University. Seminars will promote meaningful academic dialogue between students and faculty in a small class setting that encourages reflective thinking and learning to learn. Varied topics based on faculty scholarship. Exploration of the unique learning environment at UGA, including opportunities to engage in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction, both on campus and globally.

   4. GRADING SYSTEM
      A-F (Traditional)

   5. CREDIT HOURS AND LECTURE/LAB/DISCUSSION HOURS
      Credit Hours 1 Lecture Hours 1

   6. NON-TRADITIONAL FORMAT (if lecture/lab hours or lecture/discussion hours are fewer than credit hours, please justify)

   7. REPEAT POLICY
      Course cannot be repeated for credit

   8. DUPLICATE CREDIT STATEMENT (do not list quarter course IDs)

   9. REQUIRED PREREQUISITES

   10. PREREQUISITE OR COREQUISITE COURSES

   11. COREQUISITE COURSES

   12. PRIMARY DELIVERY MECHANISM (select only one):
      Seminar

   13. COURSE WILL BE OFFERED
      Every Year
14. EFFECTIVE SEMESTER AND YEAR OF CURRENT VERSION OF COURSE
   Fall 2011

15. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE SYLLABUS
   COURSE OBJECTIVES OR EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES
   This course will:
   • Enhance student-faculty interaction in a small class setting
   • Document academic dialogue through writing, revision and resubmission
   • Open channels of communication between students and faculty
   • Develop students’ skills for creative thought and effective reasoning
   • Promote intentional and reflective learning
   • Expose students to opportunities to engage in research, public service, and varied forms of instruction both on campus and globally (e.g., study abroad, practicums, internships)
   • Expose students to campus events that highlight an aspect of the mission of the University

TOPICAL OUTLINE
UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY
   UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. Every course syllabus should include the instructor's expectations related to academic integrity.

Approved by University Curriculum Committee, August 25, 2010
Appendix H: University of Georgia, University Council, Resolution Approving Mandatory First-Year Seminar Requirement

University Council Recommendations
The University of Georgia

To: President Michael F. Adams
Re: Document Number: 2010.09.23.11
Issue: A proposal from the University Curriculum Committee for a University-wide undergraduate requirement for a first-year Odyssey Seminar
Discussion: A lengthy discussion took place with Provost Morehead, Dr. Laura Jolly and Dr. Rodney Mauricio fielding most of the concerns presented.
Action: The vote was called and the proposal was approved.

Submitted by: Rebecca L. Macon, Secretary
Date: 9.29.2010

☐ Approved
☐ Reconsider
☐ Vetoed (see attached explanation)
☐ Received

Michael F. Adams, President
Date: 10/4/10

Attachment
Appendix I: University of Georgia Student Government Association, Resolution of Support for QEP

Resolution 23-04

Resolution to endorse the 2010 Quality Enhancement Plan First-Year Odyssey Seminar

Sponsored by Senator Gregory Locke of the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences

WHEREAS the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is an integral part of our reaccreditation procedure for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and

WHEREAS the reaccreditation of the University is of the utmost importance to all faculty, staff, and students, and

WHEREAS the QEP is the culmination of work and ideas dating back to the Charles Knapp administration, including input from senior administration, faculty, and students, and

WHEREAS the First-Year Odyssey Seminars will help foster more actively engaged students who better understand the missions of the University of Georgia and have connections with tenure-track faculty within their first year,

Be it resolved that The Student Government Association of the University of Georgia

ENDORSES The Quality Enhancement Plan First-Year Seminar as passed by the University Council Curriculum Committee, and

ENCOURAGES The Office of the Vice President for Instruction to continue to elicit student input in the implementation process.

Joshua Delaney
President, Student Government Association
Appendix J: University of Georgia Alumni Association Letter of Support for QEP

September 17, 2010

Rodney Mauricio, Ph.D.
Department of Genetics
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7223

Dear Dr. Mauricio,

As president of the UGA Alumni Association, and on behalf of the more than 260,000 graduates, it is my pleasure to endorse the proposal of the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan Committee to add a freshman seminar to the school’s curriculum as part of UGA’s periodic accreditation process from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

I am pleased to say that UGA alums played a significant role in this process through their responses to a survey of ideas more than a year ago. As such, the Alumni Association is proud to have played a key role in assisting and enhancing the accreditation procedure.

Therefore, the University of Georgia Alumni Association heartily endorses the plan to have a mandatory one credit, academically-focused, seminar for incoming first-year students taught by a tenure-track faculty member. We share the belief that this seminar will greatly add to the student-experience while at UGA and will lead to enhanced alumni engagement after graduation.

Sincerely,

Vic Sullivan
President, UGA Alumni Association
Appendix K: Course Descriptions of Existing UGA Courses Considered as Examples of the Intended Content of First-Year Odyssey Seminars

Bioenergy and Bioproducts from Biomass.
We shall go beyond the headlines better to understand the potential that biomass offers for producing sustainable, economically viable transportation fuels in the U.S. on a scale that significantly reduces dependence on fossil fuels. We shall consider the role of different types of biomass and explore the various challenges to overcome, including basic technical hurdles as well as land-use and feed-versus-fuel concerns. The potential for producing other value-added bioproducts from biomass and the related topic of carbon recycling will also be discussed. Along the way we shall learn what UGA does to support research and to ensure that discoveries reach the market place, and we shall also review opportunities for undergraduates to get involved in research. We shall also learn about UGA outreach activities designed to foster a bioenergy industry in Georgia.

A Cure for Cancer: Where Are We?
It has been nearly 40 years since President Richard Nixon declared “war on cancer” and initiated the remarkable build up in cancer research that exists in the U.S. today. Yet there are many who would argue that we have made surprisingly little progress. In this seminar, we shall learn the fundamentals of cancer in order to understand the challenges to preventing or even treating this collection of diseases. We shall also consider the advances that have been made and the benefits that have accrued, and we shall learn about promising current strategies to prevention or treatment. We shall also consider some of the cultural disparities in cancer treatment that exist across Georgia and what might be done to mitigate these disparities. Along the way we shall learn what UGA does to support research and to ensure that discoveries reach the market place, and we shall also review opportunities for undergraduates to get involved in research as well as public service/outreach.

Comparative Health and Healthcare Systems in the Developed World: Is the U.S. the Best?
In this seminar we shall review major health statistics and disease trends across the developed world, and we shall examine the organization and financing of health care systems in these same countries. Why are costs so much higher in the U.S. and life expectancy less? What role do disparities and social determinants play in this? How is medicine practiced? Our goal will be to get beyond the headlines and sound-bytes in order better to understand and participate in the current national health care debate. How can the U.S. health care system be reformed from policy, systems, and financial perspectives? Along the way we shall learn about research being conducted to address these issues in the new UGA Center for Global Health as well as the new College of Public Health, how UGA supports this research, and how undergraduates can get involved. We shall also connect this focus on health and health care systems in other countries to international education opportunities at UGA.

Page to Stage.
Each fall the Department of Theatre and Film Studies produces a literary classic. We shall center our study around this term’s production. First the class will read and analyze the literary original. We shall compare it with several other works, both for stage and screen, to discover its particular strengths and how productions have altered in a mass-market culture. Then different students will present their findings about different aspects of both the history and the ideas that the play presents. Performers and staff from the production will visit to describe how to balance aesthetic and pragmatic decisions. The class will have a night out at the theater to see the production. Finally, we shall conclude with some consideration of what role the arts play in this and other communities.
### Appendix L: UGA Programs Supporting Transition to First Year of College

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<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/campuslife/bigdawg/index.html">http://www.uga.edu/campuslife/bigdawg/index.html</a></td>
<td>All first-year students</td>
<td>A week of activities and events for new and returning students. This event starts the Sunday before fall semester classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>OVPI: Academic Advising Coordinating Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/advising/aacc.html">http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/advising/aacc.html</a></td>
<td>All first-year students</td>
<td>Academic advising is decentralized to the individual schools and colleges. Academic advising is required for all students, every term. Students register for classes themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.E.S.T. (The Black Educational Support Team)</td>
<td>OVPSA: Office of Multicultural Services and Programs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/aacc/">http://www.uga.edu/aacc/</a></td>
<td>Support program for first-year students: 350 mentees</td>
<td>Team of peer mentors/counselors who serve as information sources, academic tutors, resource centers, and as liaisons between students and their involvement in other extracurricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brumby Buddies</td>
<td>OVPSA: Univ. Housing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/housing/academic/aaca_programs.html">http://www.uga.edu/housing/academic/aaca_programs.html</a></td>
<td>All Brumby residents</td>
<td>This program exposes Brumby residents to staff and faculty role models while improving communication in a non-classroom environment through mutual participation in floor meetings, programs and planned events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Academic and Retention Effort (CARE)</td>
<td>OVPI: Division of Academic Enhancement</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dae/services/care/care_index.html">http://www.uga.edu/dae/services/care/care_index.html</a></td>
<td>First-year students on academic probation</td>
<td>Early intervention program designed to address the individual needs of freshmen on academic probation. Participation in CARE includes creating a personalized improvement plan with an Academic Specialist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.L.A.S.S. Advocates (Continuing the Legacy of African American Student Success)</td>
<td>OVPSA: Univ. Housing</td>
<td>[<a href="http://www.uga.edu/housing/policies/reslife">http://www.uga.edu/housing/policies/reslife</a> staffer.html](<a href="http://www.uga.edu/housing/policies/reslife">http://www.uga.edu/housing/policies/reslife</a> staffer.html)</td>
<td>Support program for first-year students</td>
<td>Advocates live and work in the residence hall community and are members of the residence hall staff. CAs address the needs and concerns of African American students living in the residence halls and help African American students adjust to life on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Title</td>
<td>Sponsoring Office</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creswell SMARTEES (Starting Meaningful Academic Relationships Enhances Every Student)</td>
<td>OVPSA: Univ. Housing; funded by UGA Parents and Families Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/housing/academic/aca_programs.html">http://www.uga.edu/housing/academic/aca_programs.html</a></td>
<td>All Creswell residents</td>
<td>Improves resident success through increased faculty/staff interaction, recognition of academic achievement and identification of academic resources through a series of events, activities and a newsletter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawg Camp (D.C.)</td>
<td>OVPSA: Center for Leadership and Service, Center for Student Activities, Georgia Outdoor Recreation Program</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp">http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp</a></td>
<td>Incoming first-year students</td>
<td>A series of summer programs that facilitate the transition from high school to college by providing participants with exposure to student life at UGA before move-in day. Dawg Camp participants are mentored by upper-class student leaders and have the chance to make connections and get a head start on their college careers by learning about leadership, service, and involvement opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.: Adventure</td>
<td>OVPSA: Georgia Outdoor Recreation Program</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp">http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp</a></td>
<td>48 first-year students</td>
<td>A separate wilderness component: Paws or Paddle, which will include the UGA Ropes Course, backpacking, whitewater rafting, sea kayaking, and rock climbing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.: Camp Classic City</td>
<td>OVPSA: Center for Leadership &amp; Service</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp">http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp</a></td>
<td>10 first-year students</td>
<td>Five-day program that focuses on teambuilding, learning how to get involved at UGA, and develop leadership skills through community service-learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.: Discovery</td>
<td>OVPSA: Center for Leadership &amp; Service</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp">http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp</a></td>
<td>300 first-year students</td>
<td>Three-day retreat focuses on first-year experience, campus involvement, leadership opportunities, history and traditions. Incoming first-years have the opportunity to interact with forty student leaders as well as several UGA faculty and staff members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Title</td>
<td>Sponsoring Office</td>
<td>Website</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.C.: Fusion</td>
<td>OVPSA: Center for Leadership &amp; Service and the Center for Student Activities and Organizations</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp/">http://www.uga.edu/dawgcamp/</a></td>
<td>12-14 first-year students</td>
<td>Four-day program connects students with Athens' rich history and culture and taps into students' passions to promote involvement on campus in those arenas. Students will learn about the history of Athens music and musical venues, visit the campus radio station, interact with different music groups, and even have opportunities to share their talents with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Composition</td>
<td>Franklin College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td><a href="http://web.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/home.html">http://web.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/home.html</a></td>
<td>All first-year students</td>
<td>English 1101 is concerned with argumentative discourse, English 1102 with constructing academic arguments through literature. We also offer a wide range of special topics courses, online writing classes, and composition courses that are associated with the UGA Learning Communities or employ Reacting to the Past pedagogy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix M: First-Year Odyssey Implementation Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office/Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura Jolly</td>
<td>OVPI-QEP Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Gordon</td>
<td>OVPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona Liken</td>
<td>OVPI-Curriculum Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Crowther</td>
<td>OVPI-Associate VP &amp; Student Academic Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Hilton</td>
<td>OVPI-Center for Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Macon</td>
<td>OVPI-Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milly Gorman</td>
<td>OVPI-Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Cook</td>
<td>Franklin College Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Barratt</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Tschepikow</td>
<td>Student Affairs-QEP Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Legge</td>
<td>School of Public &amp; International Affairs-QEP Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisa Pagnattaro</td>
<td>Terry College of Business-QEP Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy Desmet</td>
<td>Faculty-English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Thompson</td>
<td>SGA Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter Galbraith</td>
<td>SGA Senator-Franklin College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N: Supporting Campus Units

A number of units on campus will contribute to the First-Year Seminar. These offices and their suggested supportive roles plus links to their websites are listed below:

- **Writing programs at UGA:** Support the inclusion of written exercises in the seminars, including training for faculty in the design and assessment of the exercises and support for portfolio development and use in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning. See the First-Year Writing Program, [http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/home.html](http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/home.html), and the Creative Writing Program, [http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/cwp/home.html](http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/cwp/home.html).


- **Office of Service-Learning:** Provide support for faculty wishing to include an overview of service-learning or a service-learning experience. See [http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu/blog/](http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu/blog/).

- **Office of the Vice President for Research:** Provide support for faculty wishing to include an overview of research at the University. See [http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/about/](http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/about/).

- **Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach:** Provide support for faculty wishing to include an overview of public service and outreach at the University. See [http://outreach.uga.edu/](http://outreach.uga.edu/).

- **Center for Teaching and Learning:** Provide support for faculty development, particularly through the best practices workshops, which are designed to expose faculty to a range of pedagogies that can be used to teach the seminars. See [http://www.ctl.uga.edu/](http://www.ctl.uga.edu/).

- **Office of International Education:** Provide support for faculty wishing to include an overview of international activities at the University. See [http://www.uga.edu/oie/](http://www.uga.edu/oie/).

- **Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities:** Provide support for faculty wishing to inform seminar enrollees to the opportunities for undergraduate research at the University. See [http://www.uga.edu/honors/c_s/undergrad_rsch/about_curo.html](http://www.uga.edu/honors/c_s/undergrad_rsch/about_curo.html).

- **Learning Communities:** Collaborate with the new First-Year Seminar program on extending the effects of this program, which also reports to the Vice President for Instruction. See [http://learningcommunities.uga.edu/](http://learningcommunities.uga.edu/).

- **Office of the Vice President for Instruction:** Collaborate with the First-Year Seminar program to insure inclusion of experiences as appropriate on the University’s extended campuses in Griffin, Gwinnett, Buckhead and Tifton. See [http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/univ/Extended.html](http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/Bulletin_Files/univ/Extended.html) and [http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/).

- **Office of the Senior Vice President for External Affairs:** Collaborate with the First-year Seminar program to promote the seminars and connect with alumni and external constituencies. See [http://www.externalaffairs.uga.edu/ea/](http://www.externalaffairs.uga.edu/ea/)
Appendix O: Goals for Benchmarks and Suggested NSSE items

UGA has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to freshmen and seniors several times, most recently in the spring of 2008. The next regular iteration is spring of 2011. Results from 2005, 2008, and 2011 surveys will be compared. In addition, UGA administered the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) for the first time in the summer of 2010. First-year students who completed that survey and also complete NSSE in spring 2011 will be compared.

One way we will assess the effects of the FYOS is through continued administration of NSSE and BCSSE surveys.

1. BCSSE responses from 2010 first-years (pre-FYOS) will be compared to 2011 and 2012 first-years (post-FYOS).
2. Responses from students who took NSSE at the end of their first year in 2008 and 2011 will be compared to first-year students who take NSSE in spring 2012 (the first class to take the seminars) and spring 2013.
3. Changes in 2010 BCSSE – 2011 NSSE (pre-FYOS) will be compared to changes in 2011 BCSSE – 2012 NSSE (post-FYOS) and 2012-2013.
4. Changes of students who took NSSE as first-years in 2008 and seniors in 2011, and the next group of 2011 to 2014, will be compared to post-FYOS students who take it as first-years in 2012 and seniors in 2015.

Goal one: engagement in academic culture

This goal can be measured by positive change in the Level of Academic Challenge and Active and Collaborative Learning benchmarks, and by items such as:

- Preparing for class
- Working harder than though would to meet instructors’ standards/expectations
- Campus environment emphasizing spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work
- Coursework emphasizing analysis of basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Time spent studying
- Providing support to help succeed academically
- Asking questions in class; contributing to class discussions

Examples of measurement:

- Actual high school vs. expectations in college (both on BCSSE) vs. actual college (NSSE at end of first year); and differences from seniors pre-FYOS and post-FYOS: how often ask questions in class / participate in discussions, how often discuss grades or assignments with instructor/faculty, how often discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructor/faculty outside of class
- Time expect to spend studying vs. actual time spent first year
- Pre-FYOS first-year's understanding of the campus emphasis on spending significant amounts of time on academic work vs. FYOS students
Goal two: student-faculty Interaction

This goal can be measured by positive change in the Student-Faculty Interaction and Supportive Campus Environment benchmarks, and by items such as:

- Receive prompt written or oral feedback on your performance
- Discuss grades or assignments with instructor
- Discuss ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
- Work with faculty members on activities other than coursework
- Campus environment provides support to help academic success
- Quality of relationships with faculty members

Examples of measurement:

- Expectations of interaction vs. actual as reported at end of first-year
- Pre-FYOS first-year student responses vs. post-FYOS: discussion of grades and ideas
- Differences from seniors pre-FYOS and post-FYOS: relationships with faculty members, working with faculty on non-coursework

Goal three: University mission

This goal can be measured by positive change in the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark, and by items such as:

- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Attending campus events and activities
- Time spent on co-curricular activities
- Serious conversations with students different than yourself
- Campus environment encourages contact among students from different economic, social, racial/ethnic backgrounds
- Participation (usually after first year) in undergraduate research, practicums/internships, study abroad, community service / volunteer work, independent study, senior capstone

Examples of measurement:

- Expectations of time spent on co-curricular activities vs. actual as reported at end of first-year
- Pre-FYOS first-year student responses vs. post-FYOS: campus environment encouraging contact with different students
- Differences from seniors pre-FYOS and post-FYOS: levels of participation in undergraduate research, practicums/internships, study abroad, community service / volunteer work, independent study, senior capstone