

1. Freshmen Year Experience (Required Course)

Proposal due date: Monday, November 15, 2004

Submit electronically to dgoforth@loyno.edu

Or, if you prefer, submit a paper copy to David Estes, 242 Marquette, Box 7

View proposed topics at the QEP Web site—<http://www.loyno.edu/sacs/qep/>

Title and brief description of QEP topic: Freshmen Experience - a required 1-3 hour course for all incoming undergraduate freshmen. To help students develop their oral, written and problem solving techniques. Should also teach students about the goals and ideals of a Jesuit education. Faculty from all departments will participate.

Proposal submitted by [optional]: Kathy Gros

Brief explanation of how the topic is “creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning” at Loyola: The resources for a successful freshmen experience are readily available. We can begin with providing them with the very basic information about campus life. We can draw from the expertise of our faculty to provide them with information in their area. If we work with our freshmen from the beginning on particular topics, they feel the connected. They will meet many faculty from different areas and they are bound to find a common bond with not only faculty, but with their fellow students. Once a student feels that he "belongs", he is more apt to stay at Loyola, which, needless to say, helps retention.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]:

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]:

1. Psychology currently has a learning community program

3. "Fostering Critical Thinking and Writing:

Freshman Seminars and Faculty Workshops"

Title and Brief Description of QEP Topic:

"Fostering Critical Thinking and Writing: Freshman Seminars and Faculty Workshops"

In disciplines from accounting to zoology, professionals testify that the best prepared employees are those who can think critically and speak and write persuasively. In the years in which our current students will work, the content or information of their jobs—even the basic nature of their employment—will change over and over but their need to make judgments and voice those judgments will not.

At Loyola, through courses in the common curriculum, such as English 122, through our majors, and through the Writing across the Curriculum Program, we have always stressed critical thinking and writing. Our proposal is to build on that emphasis, as well as improve retention and the unity of the common curriculum, by instituting a freshman seminar program.

We thus suggest that to further stress critical thinking and writing skills across the curriculum, the university institute freshman seminars, which can count as one of the student's common curriculum courses, its slot depending on the department of the teacher who offers it. These classes, which students can elect to take during their first semester, will be focused around a common topic (religious intolerance, globalism) or will involve multidisciplinary topics chosen and developed by individual faculty. Each class will enroll fifteen students who will encounter active learning opportunities within the classroom and coordinated events outside of it.

To consider various methods of stressing critical thinking and writing, participating faculty will attend a workshop, for which they will receive a stipend. There they will consider the methodologies for these seminars:

- critical thinking activities
- writing assignments
- oral performance opportunities
- small-group involvements
- information literacy (discussed in coordination with the Monroe Library's Information Literacy Program)

A Co-Curricular Component: Within the seminar period and beyond it, students will also participate with their group and with others in appropriate service learning opportunities, undertaken along with critical reflection and writing assignments that help students analyze these activities. They will also attend lectures and other events that pertain to the class topic. Further co-curricular activities extending beyond the first semester, for which professors will be given funding, will help students maintain contact with a core group as they take other common curriculum courses and enter their majors.

As teachers participate in the training workshops, they will be considering various instructional design models that enhance critical thinking and writing. Their discussions can also focus on the best means of fostering these key skills throughout the common curriculum and within our majors.

Proposal submitted by:

Katherine H. Adams, Mary A. McCay, Melanie McKay

Brief explanation of how the topic is "creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning at Loyola":

The freshman seminars will involve students in active instructional methodologies: in writing assignments, in critical thinking activities, in oral performance, in small groups, and in opportunities for co-curricular activities, including service learning. Because the seminar will concern a multidisciplinary theme, it will encourage students to integrate ideas from various courses. Because it will foster an involved group considering questions together, it will engage students as active learners. Because the teacher can serve as an advisor and mentor, it will also help students with their adjustment to the university.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]:

Studies suggest that students profit from the diversity of subjects covered within general education, but that overarching themes help them to process and organize this information. Many universities, such as Purdue and the University of Toronto, which report their results through the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience, have found that heightened learning and retention stem from the seminar model's active classroom, co-curricular activities, and connections to faculty. Many researchers, such as Peter Facione of Loyola University Chicago, have especially praised the emphasis on critical thinking that these seminars involve. The freshman seminar will help students to approach subject matter actively and critically and to integrate ideas and approaches from various disciplines while also giving them a "home" on campus.

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]:

In the College of Arts and Sciences, the development of a first-year experience involving a shared reading has proven the efficacy of shared academic content and activities. The College of Business's mentor programs also testify to the effect of early interaction between faculty and students. Student groups, such as the Loyola Society for Civic Engagement, have demonstrated the students' desire for treatment of academic subject matter in co-curricular events.

9. Connecting Loyola to New Orleans: Thinking and Writing Critically about New Orleans

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Title and brief description of QEP topic:

Connecting Loyola to New Orleans: Thinking and Writing Critically about through the study of Religion, Science, History, Literature, and Information Literacy

This first year seminar would be a one-semester, three-credit course aimed at building a sense of community among students and improving first year learning via the study of the rich and diverse culture and history of New Orleans. Each section will be led by an anchor instructor, and lecturers from multiple disciplines will visit each section throughout the semester. Students will focus on improving skills in three main areas: information literacy, writing, and oral communications. Peer assistants will be on hand to help students complete their writing, research and technology assignments.

Proposal submitted by [optional]:

Alicia Hansen, Mary McCay, Melanie McKay, Beth Orgeron, Brad Petitfils

Brief explanation of how the topic is “creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning” at Loyola:

I. Building a sense of community among first year students

This first-year seminar focuses on the city of New Orleans and emphasizes social constructivism as an exploratory tool for learning. Guest lecturers from different disciplines will speak on topics ranging from ethnic diversity and cultural traditions to architecture and geography. Peer discussions and experiential learning exercises will allow students to make independent, well-informed decisions and effectively present their convictions as they search for their place in the world. Field trips and out-of-class group activities will promote bonding among students in the course.

The first-year seminar, “New Orleans Texts and Contexts,” taught in Fall 2004, offers a model. The seminar consists of linked courses (English T125 and History X194) which explore the cultural, historical, and literary diversity of the city that Loyola calls home. Student Affairs (SA) staff collaborate with the course instructors to conduct experiential learning activities related to the seminar’s major themes. Writing assignments include short researched analytical essays to analytical essays and position papers. Oral communication assignments include class debates and panel discussions.

II. Improving first year learning

A key goal of the seminar will be to develop students' epistemological awareness. Discussions and activities will emphasize strategies for helping students to recognize how they learn as well as what they are learning. To encourage this recognition, students will self-assess through academic journal writing and peer engagement. They will be responsible for leading class discussions, research teams, and oral presentations. All assignments will integrate technological skills, scholarly research (critical and ethical use of information), and writing.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]:

- Retention – students enrolled in similar seminar courses are more likely to stay and finish their degree programs
- Learning – students enrolled in similar seminar courses have consistently earned higher GPAs in their respective majors

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]:

- **First-Year Experience**

The College of Arts and Sciences has a well-established first-year experience program, one that include common readings for incoming students, as well as lectures, events, and activities in early fall related to that reading. Moreover, the College has offered several experimental first-year courses in recent years—courses involving linkages between courses from different disciplines, courses incorporating the first-year reading text into class discussion and writing assignments, and courses involving collaboration between faculty and staff from Student Affairs.

- **Monroe Library instruction and technology services**

Students have access to workshops and individual instruction on finding and using scholarly information properly and ethically, and on using technology to enhance projects and learning development.

- **WAC peer tutoring**

WAC tutors are undergraduates trained to assist others in all phases of the writing process, from planning and pre-writing to revision and editing. WAC tutors are available daily in the Writing Center to assist students with writing assignments. Tutors are trained to help others with thesis statements, organization, paragraph development, and sentence structure. WAC tutors help students recognize strengths and weaknesses in their writing so that writers can begin to spot their own errors and correct them.

WAC also supports first-year programming by providing trained writing tutors to Learning Community instructors whose courses involve significant writing assignments. The Learning Community in the first-year psychology program offers an example of this support. WAC writing tutors serve the LC faculty as peer assistants (PAs) who help the students with a writing assignment that is done in segments and integrated at semester's end. These PAs are assigned to first-year students in Psychology 100 in a ratio of 1 PA to 10 students.

14. Freshman Year Experience (FYE)

Title and Brief Description of QEP Topic:

Freshman Year Experience (FYE)

This would be an extensive program that would encompass the first two semesters for every undergraduate Loyola University student. The program would include:

- two for-credit required courses (one each semester)
- four (or more) campus-wide programmatic events across an academic year
- special intensive academic advising for one year

All aspects of the program would focus on academic, social and cultural adjustment and growth specific to Loyola University New Orleans.

Brief Explanation of how the topic is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning at Loyola:

This organized and required transition to University community life will impact retention, satisfaction and overall first year success rates as measured by current assessment tools in these areas (by teaching skills, addressing social concerns and learning about resources).

The creative aspect would come from the:

- multi-disciplined nature of topics included in the for-credit required courses
- incorporation of FYE themes into calendar flow and tradition of University life
- diversity of disciplines designing and involved with the FYE program
- unique aspects of the cultural resources of our city and University

Examples of possible unique approaches to include in the FYE:

- Diverse cultural history of New Orleans in relation to globalization
- Jesuit identity, mission, expectations of a Loyola graduate
- Musical heritage of both city and University
- Contemplative component through group retreats and/or academic challenges that are cross-disciplinary
- University community as good citizen in larger community
- expectations of incoming students that can be investigated, articulated, reviewed and addressed through this program

Evidence suggesting the need to address this topic:

- Percentage of universities across the country that have an in-depth FYE program
- 20+ years of research and outcomes related to FYE
- in-house surveys/anecdotal research regarding Loyola students and needs/wants
- issues facing our campus that need to be addressed such as autonomy, -isms, alcohol, and intellectual challenge/vigor of first year students

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic

- Reading program in A& S
- Summer Bridge Program

Proposal Submitted By:

Michelle Andrews, Associate Director for Residential Services x3579

17. “Research and Technology”

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Title and brief description of QEP topic: “Research and Technology”

A credit-bearing, hands-on course designed to equip students with powerful tools to master research, writing and presentation skills. Students will learn to define, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate information. This is not only necessary for academic success, but also to prepare students for their roles as leaders and professionals in a global and technological society.

The success of this course is dependent on strong collaboration between library and teaching faculty to tailor this program to the curriculum (e.g. First-Year Experience, Common Curriculum, academic major).

Proposal submitted by [optional]: Alicia Hansen, Beth Orgeron, Brad Petitfils, Deborah Poole

Brief explanation of how the topic is “creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning” at Loyola: A primary purpose of the information literacy program is to enable students to achieve information literacy competency as defined by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Standards for Information Literacy Competency for Higher Education and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) National Education Technology Standards for Students.

See:

- <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm>
- http://cnets.iste.org/students/s_stands.html

Upon the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Access needed information effectively and efficiently (use online databases, understand the organization of information).
- Use information ethically and legally (demonstrate an ability to create a bibliography and cite resources used, recognize and use copyrighted media appropriately).
- Practice the responsible use of technology systems, information, and software.
- Use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.

- Evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.
- Use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences (understand the importance of utilizing media in presentations in order to target various learning styles, create presentations that incorporate PowerPoint, Web pages, and other types of media such as scanned images, charts and graphs, and clip art).
- Use technology for solving problems and making informed decisions (research topics using library resources, understanding the impact of media as a tool for communicating ideas).
- Develop positive attitudes toward technology use that support lifelong learning, collaboration, productivity and the pursuit of personal interests.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]: We can't ignore that the millennial student lives in a world dominated by media: television, Internet, file sharing, cell phones, and online chat. It's a challenge for librarians and teachers to prepare their students to navigate information sources and make discriminating decisions in this media-driven world.

Many of our students come to Loyola comfortable with computers; however, we've observed that their skills are limited to basic web browsing. With millions of web pages available, we're swimming in information, much of it not suitable for academic research. It seems that students do not have the skills to find, manage, or synthesize information, and as a result are overwhelmed by the simplest research assignments.

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]: **Several activities between the library and teaching faculty illustrate the integration of information literacy into the curriculum. These are only a few examples:**

- **Electronic portfolio creation – departments across campus are beginning to experiment with this summative tool that tracks student progress throughout their undergraduate career. In Education and Counseling, students are using e-Portfolios as a type of annotated electronic resume in job interviews.**
- **Authentic assessment via web page creation assignments, e.g. Michelle Johnston (CBA), Tim Cahill (A&S), Ed McCaughan (A&S), etc. Students learn how to do research, and how to design and publish web pages that present their findings; in CBA, students are assigned a local small business (chosen by the Small Business Development Center) that does not currently have a website, are then divided into teams and compete against one another to build the winning website.**
- **English 122, Professor Jennifer Shimek, dedicates a week of classes to engaging students in learning how to use the library's online catalog and information resources (such as databases,**

indexes, and evaluating web sites). Working in groups, students learn search techniques and become familiar with navigating various media to accomplish their information needs. Information literacy skills are applied to researching and analyzing a contemporary issue.

- **Cells and Heredity, Professor Maureen Shuh.** Students were required to view a web tutorial created using RoboDemo software that showed how to find scholarly articles in the biological sciences. After viewing it on Blackboard, students were required to prepare bibliographies of scholarly research using appropriate citation format. Librarians checked students' work before they submitted their assignments to Dr. Shuh.
- **Technology Tuesdays/Thursdays:** open clinic time in the library with an Instructional Technologist. Students independently seek assistance with technology, e.g. PowerPoint, web page design, Excel, video production, scanning.
- **Presentation equipment installations increasing in classroom pool and stated intentions to add more** (see UPT Objectives, 2004-2005 and Academic Affairs Strategic Plan); additional equipment installations in library and departmental classrooms; increasing demand for portable multimedia use by faculty and students (data projectors, laptops, digital cameras, video cameras--see Media Services Annual Report, 2004).
- **The Dean of Libraries and Library Instruction Coordinator visited each dean with a plan to implement information literacy as a two-hour, pass/fail, course that would integrate research methodologies with technology skills. It would impart the "how to's" of research, evaluation of information and bibliography creation through various technology projects.**

18. Fostering Global Citizenship from a Jesuit Perspective

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Title and brief description of QEP topic: Fostering Global Citizenship from a Jesuit Perspective

To become an effective citizen of the world, one must first become an effective citizen at home. Learning to truly appreciate the world view of others goes far beyond mere tolerance, and requires inquiry, examination and immersion into the historical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives of the panoply of diversity among people and traditions found at home and abroad. This QEP proposal seeks to focus and ground this inquiry and examination within the context and ideals of Jesuit higher education including, but not limited to, linking faith with justice, special concern for the poor and oppressed, commitment to service, and learning from experience. As contemplatives in action, the campus would have the opportunity to have access to the City of New Orleans and the surrounding region, unique in its history, location and development, and to fully utilize its cultural and educational resources.

Proposal submitted by [optional]: The Division of Student Affairs

Brief explanation of how the topic is “creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning” at Loyola:

To designate "The City as a Classroom" creates a host of unique learning environments and learning communities for students throughout the spectrum of the curriculum and allows students to put theory into practice. This creates an ideal environment in which Academic Affairs and Students Affairs can work together in creative partnership to build a seamless learning environment inside and outside the classroom. This can also create a focus for Business Affairs and Institutional Advancement to open new doors in grant writing, foundation giving and other partnerships that, in turn, may result in strengthening all of the university's programs.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]:

A cursory look at local, national and international events strongly suggests that a polarizing dualistic world view is the prevailing trend. (e.g. "red states v. blue states", "our values v. their values") By uniting in our commitment to engage in experiences and utilize pedagogies that foster critical thinking, reflection, civil discourse and personal integrity, without rancor, we can help to set in motion within the individual, a life-long commitment to learning through inquiry, thoughtful examination and reflection.

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]:

- 1. Cultural immersion/study abroad opportunities: locally, nationally and internationally**
- 2. Service learning programs involving the local community and beyond**
- 3. "Global perspectives" addressed throughout the curriculum and in co-curricular venues**
- 4. Student leadership training programs and retreats**
- 5. Hosting of international conference and study abroad programs**
- 6. Increased focus on the mechanisms and skill development necessary in cultivating civil discourse such as : critical thinking, clarity in the written and spoken word, listening skills, confrontation skills and ethics**
- 7. Greater knowledge and utilization of Jesuit pedagogies**
- 8. Suitable for potential tie-ins to Freshman Year Experience programs and activities**
- 9. Model UN programs**

19. Critical/Creative Thinking in Action: Strengthening Student-Centered Learning

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Title and brief description of QEP topic:

Critical/Creative Thinking in Action: Strengthening Student-Centered Learning in Departments and Programs

Increasingly, students attend (or leave) a university because of a specific program or major and hope to be engaged in that major early in their college career. They also expect the college experience at a small liberal arts institution such as Loyola to be focused on the student with learner-centered classes different from the traditional "lecture to the masses" format. However, students at Loyola have complained about the rigor of classes taken early in their career as well as a lack of involvement in their chosen field of study. These criticisms could be addressed by increasing the number of student-centered experiences both in common curriculum and in early major courses. Loyola could move toward national preeminence by increasing rigor and focusing on a student learning outcome that all programs, from the the sciences to the humanities to the common curriculum, could share: Improving critical and creative thinking through student-centered experiences. Programs supported by this QEP could include:

- Developing student-centered classes, within the major and in the common curriculum which break from the traditional lecture format
- Continued support for service-learning projects that engage students in the community, provide for reflection on their experiences, and promote the Jesuit ideals of the university
- Expansion of undergraduate research programs which allow students to become engaged in their field of interest
- Development of first-year programs within departments to engage freshmen eager to participate in their chosen field of study

We envision this QEP to be driven by initiatives developed by academic programs within the university as there are many benefits to a discipline- or program-based approach.

- 1) The QEP is inclusive. By strengthening a universal student outcome, all academic units can participate (including the common curriculum, women's studies, honors, WAC, etc).
- 2) The QEP provides motivation for wide participation. Because this QEP deals with discipline-specific opportunities, faculty should be interested in participating for the good of their majors.
- 3) This approach can increase Loyola's national reputation. By developing outstanding programs of study, admission counselors can recruit students who are interested in studying these specific content areas.
- 4) This approach would focus on one of Loyola's central goals. We advertise as a "critical thinking" university. Encouraging this skill through student-centered learning within each major would demonstrate commitment to the university's mission.

To manage this QEP we propose that the Loyola Leadership team institute an RFP system where departments, programs, and academic units can propose projects to increase student-centered learning. These programs will manifest themselves in different ways depending on the emphases and strengths of the department. For instance, the departments in the sciences might focus on undergraduate research opportunities, English might focus on freshman writing seminars, and social science departments might focus on community-based experiential learning and social justice.

Proposal submitted by [optional]:

Elizabeth Yost Hammer, Psychology

Thom Spence, Chemistry

Brief explanation of how the topic is “creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning” at Loyola:

Every department has critical or creative thinking as a goal or student-learning outcome of its major. This QEP would provide support for this outcome to be strengthened through discipline-specific and faculty-endorsed student-learning experiences. This outcome could be assessed through each department's proposed SACS assessment plan.

Evidence (or potential sources of evidence) suggesting the need to address this topic [optional]:

From the recent survey of Arts and Science freshmen who did NOT return to Loyola, many mentioned that their decision was because they were not satisfied with their specific course of study. Further, admissions officers are always looking for unique characteristics of majors to use when recruiting. This QEP would encourage strengthening of specific majors. There is evidence that, at least early in students careers, there is a lack of rigor in classroom experiences and a lack of engagement with the student's department.

Current and planned activities at Loyola related to this topic [optional]:

Currently there are programs that support faculty engaging in innovative teaching (e.g., PIES). This QEP would allow a focus for these initiatives centered around the common student-learning outcome of critical/creative thinking.