Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship
Quality Enhancement Plan

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

a) ABSTRACT/SUMMARY:

To become leaders who can address the complex challenges of the 21st century, Mason students must develop critical skills in acquiring, analyzing, evaluating, integrating, and applying knowledge to generate and develop new ideas and tools. While student survey data reveals that Mason students have confidence in their scholarship skills, they also report a significantly lower level of academic challenge during their time at Mason and few interactions with faculty outside of the classroom. This QEP proposal focuses on creating and nurturing a culture of scholarship, creativity, and research that stretches beyond disciplinary boundaries and permeates Mason. Through the designation of a QEP coordinator position, support for student-faculty scholarship opportunities, development of an introductory scholarship course, and charges to all University community members to be involved in scholarly activity, the vision of this QEP proposal is to make student-engaged scholarship recognizable to every member of Mason as well as the outside community. It is predicted that a culture of student scholarship will invigorate and excite students throughout their time at Mason. Furthermore, it is expected that overall retention, graduation surveys, and postgraduate outcomes will affirm an increase in the quality of education at Mason.

b) VISION:

Mason has a strong emphasis on faculty scholarship, as exemplified by faculty-driven research and creative activities, but a culture of student scholarship remains to be established across the university. In this context, student scholarship is taken to mean research and creative activities that require active student participation to generate new knowledge or create new works. Examples of such activities might include creative discovery and expression in one’s discipline, one-on-one research with a faculty member, or group projects where students work with faculty and community members to address local problems or bring arts and sciences to a wider audience. The goal of this initiative is to create a pervasive culture of student scholarship, beginning in a student’s first year at Mason and continuing through graduation. This will make it evident to all members of the Mason community that students are actively engaged in scholarship and it will invigorate and excite faculty and students, leading to deeper engagement in research and creative activity throughout the university.

A focus on student scholarship encompasses much more than traditional research in the sciences. As testament to the broad application of the term “scholarship,” the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) recently approved a new Division of Arts and Humanities. In the Winter 2008 issue of the CUR Quarterly, which was devoted entirely to Undergraduate Research in the Arts and Humanities, Nancy Hensel writes that “CUR believes that research and scholarship should be public, making it available for critical review and evaluation and allowing it to become a part of ongoing discussions in the scholarly community. Arts and humanities students meet these criteria when they display their paintings, compose music, create plays and poetry, or write and publish original essays on critical moral, ethical, and social
issues.” [1] In order for this QEP to be successful, it is imperative to keep this broader perspective in mind.

In addition to the expansion of faculty-mentored research and creative activity, students will be encouraged to initiate their own projects or engage in creative opportunities that cross disciplinary, curricular, and co-curricular boundaries. Students participating in research and creative activities become part of a community of lifelong learners, generating opportunities to discuss and explore ideas with peers and with those more advanced in the discipline.

c) **CONGRUENCE WITH MISSION AND GOALS:**

Fostering a culture of scholarship will enhance George Mason University’s reputation as a national research university while contributing to the University’s mission and strategic plan. The 2014 Strategic Plan, seeking to raise Mason’s profile as that of a nationally ranked university, states that “campus leaders must find more ways to invest in the creation of a climate that nurtures and supports scholarly inquiry and creative activity.” It explicitly calls for the university to “nurture and support research, scholarship, and creative activity not normally supported by funding agencies.” Achieving these goals will require research, scholarship, and creative activity across all disciplines, and this QEP proposal directly addresses these issues. The 2014 Strategic Plan demands balancing scholarship with an emphasis on lifelong learning, both of which are supported through the development of a university-wide culture of scholarship. This proposal calls for the creation of a new introductory course in scholarship that will be required of all undergraduate students, increased infrastructure investments to support significantly expanded research and creative activity, expanded opportunities for faculty to interact with students outside of the classroom, and increased opportunities for undergraduate students to engage real-world problems by working side-by-side with faculty and graduate students both at Mason and within the community.

### SECTION 2: STUDENT LEARNING

a) **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

Researcher Daniel Pink argues insightfully on behalf of the centrality of creative people to economic advancement: “Mere survival today depends on being able to do something that overseas knowledge workers can’t do cheaper, that powerful computers can’t do faster, and that satisfies one of the nonmaterial, transcendent desires of an abundant age.” [2] Former faculty member Richard Florida has also written about the increasing role of creativity in our economy, identifying the creative class (which includes architects, scientists, educators, designers, and entertainers) as a powerful economic engine [3]. By focusing our Quality Enhancement Plan on creating a culture of student scholarship, we will better prepare Mason graduates to succeed in this new economic environment.
A review of the literature on undergraduate research and scholarly activity [4-10] establishes the following benefits for students who engage in research and creative practices:

- Increased connection to and retention within the field
- Stronger propensity for enrollment in graduate education
- Increased employment in major-related careers
- Greater gains in academic performance and the acquisition of professional skills (cognitive adaptation, communication, and interdisciplinary training)
- Greater participation in other intellectual opportunities on campus
- Increased opportunity to overcome traditional boundaries for women, minorities, and first-generation students

Establishing and sustaining a culture of student scholarship will improve the quality of teaching on campus, improve recruitment and retention of students and faculty, and improve the prominence of the undergraduate program in the eyes of graduate and professional programs as well as national and international scholarship and funding agencies.

b) **SAMPLE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students will recognize the features of critical thinking in disciplinary contexts in order to develop their understanding of research methodologies and scholarly and creative processes in specific disciplines.
2. Students will be able to write competently within their discipline.
3. Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and manage information resources in their field with critical rigor.
4. Students will be able to apply the ideas of their discipline/field to communities outside their classrooms.
5. Students will be able to create an original work in any appropriate format about a topic in their field demonstrating evidence of critical review, analysis, and synthesis of others’ works, as evaluated by those knowledgeable in the content area.
6. Students will understand, adopt, and develop appropriate means of argument through the use of rhetoric, source materials, and conventions of citation in the area of their scholarship, should their scholarship lend itself to evaluation in these areas.
7. Students will be able to communicate about their scholarly or creative work through experiences that encourage one or more of the following: a) collaboration with other student-authors; b) collaboration with and/or outreach to groups or communities outside the university; c) integration of cross-disciplinary information; and d) communication across cultural and/or national borders.
8. Students will be able to identify and assess the validity of key assumptions and ethical dimensions of a research/creative project in their field/discipline.
SECTION 3: SIGNIFICANCE AND URGENCY

Scholarship is the foundation for an education relevant to the 21st Century.

The George Mason University mission statement [11] explicitly states as a desired outcome that its students are prepared to become leaders of the 21st century. To become those leaders, students must have the opportunity to develop confidence and competency in their analytical and imaginative thinking and in making well-founded ethical decisions. The challenges facing our students and our society can be described by the 14 Grand Challenges by the National Academies of Engineering [12]. These challenges are not simple theoretical problems to be solved in a contest by engineers; rather, the problems have a global and societal impact that requires interdisciplinary research and collaboration with expertise outside traditional engineering fields. Already the catalyst for discussing transformative educational change, the Grand Challenge Scholars Program [13] dictates five specific curricular areas of education.

1. **Research experience.** Conducting independent research related to a Grand Challenge.
2. **Interdisciplinary curriculum.** Encouraging students to work at the intersections of fields such as public policy, business, law, ethics, human behavior, risk management, medicine and the sciences. Examples that span these disciplines with a coherent theme include Energy and the Environment, Sustainability, Uncertainty and Optimization, etc.
3. **Entrepreneurship.** Preparing students to translate invention to innovation; to develop market ventures that scale to global solutions in the public interest.
4. **Global dimension.** Developing the students’ global perspective necessary to address challenges that are inherently global as well as to lead innovation in a global economy.
5. **Service learning.** Developing and deepening students’ social consciousness and their motivation to bring their technical expertise to bear on societal problems. Programs such as Engineers without Borders, or Engineering World Health may be adapted to satisfy this component and/or component 3.

While the Grand Challenges were originally directed at engineering education, the power of these challenges not only affects the educational traits we must expect from leaders of the 21st century, but also demands and justifies transformative changes in our institutional curriculum and culture of student scholarship.

**Student perception, behavior, and confidence in scholarship**

The significance of this proposal is underscored by senior survey responses collected for the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) [14]. A self-comparison between seniors in two cohorts (2003 and 2006) revealed that 2006 seniors reported a significantly lower level of academic challenge during their time at Mason. In spite of increased opportunities to collaborate with students to prepare class assignments and tutor/mentor other students, fewer seniors in 2006 thought their coursework emphasized analytical skills or reading assignments. While 67% of seniors in 2006 claimed they discussed ideas from required class readings with faculty, only 40% of seniors claimed they worked “sometimes” or “often/very often” with
faculty in activities other than coursework (up from 30% in 2003 and 31% in 2000). Compared with other institutions in the NSSE, Mason students report being more engaged in active and collaborative learning in classroom settings, but much less outside the classroom. The proportion of students who have never worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (60%) was significantly higher than 38 Carnegie peers (51%). The 2006 Benchmark report concluded, “Mason seniors are less likely to say they have worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework; they are less likely to have worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements; [and] they talk about their career plans with a faculty member or advisor less often.”

- 44% did a practicum, internship, field, co-op, or clinical assignment, compared to 61% of 7 selected peers and 50% of 38 Carnegie peers.
- 41% reported participation in community service or volunteer work (67% peers, 58% Carnegie)
- 15% engaged in independent study or a self-designed major (20% peers, 17% Carnegie)
- 30% had a culminating senior capstone, thesis, or similar experience (34% peers, 30% Carnegie)

Paradoxically, the graduating senior survey (2006-2007) [15] reports that students have great confidence in their ability to perform creative or scholarly activity. An impressive 97% of Mason graduates felt they were competent in analyzing work in their field and had sufficient knowledge about important work in their field. About 90% felt they were competent in conducting original research or creating original work in their field, and over one third of students thought they were “very competent” in creating original work and conducting original research in the field.

**Tangible measures of student creativity and research**

Tangible evidence of student creativity and research is less apparent than should be at Mason.

- While there are six student-run collections of essays, poetry, or creative output, no student media publication exists that focuses on student creative, entrepreneurial, or engagement activities in any of the member colleges.
- The only known roster of University-wide undergraduate scholarship is found at the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program website (uap.gmu.edu). Only recently have these research contributions been mentioned in the annual Mason Research report.
- No centralized document or showcase of graduate or postdoctoral contributions to institutional research is apparent.
- University student media (Broadside, yearbook, radio, connect2mason) has very little coverage of student scholarship.
- University media (Gazette, website) does highlight student accomplishments, but promotional material rarely highlights student engagement (GMU-TV, GMU iTunesU).
• Since the first Innovations conference in 2000, showcases of student research or creative activity are poorly attended and have fewer than 50 students participating. Little is known about the number of students who participate in regional disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship conferences or competitions.

In summary, graduating students’ participation in scholarship could be significantly increased and matched with stronger tangible creative output by students. If we want our students to see their education as a process of engagement in scholarly inquiry, scholarship must be a core practice of and expectation at the university. Framing scholarship as an expectation for Mason students from the moment they arrive is necessary to foster a pervasive culture of scholarship.

Other factors affecting student creativity and research

A 2008 survey conducted by a Faculty Senate Task Force on Research Productivity [16] underscored the absence of a supportive scholarly/research culture at Mason. Since faculty opportunities and mentoring are essential to the ultimate success of this proposal, any impediment to improving the scholarship capacity of the faculty puts negative pressure on efforts to promote student scholarship. In addition, students develop frustration with the difficulties of obtaining immediate or unambiguous results as part of the scholarship process.

Current and emerging opportunities

To develop a culture of scholarship, a network of interactions must be created and widely promoted between and among departments, disciplines, and units that can help students see and experience how different models of research and creative activity may complement each other. Listed below is a non-comprehensive list of scholarship activities from individual schools or units that could form the foundation of an integrated scholarship program which would help foster a culture of scholarship.

• Since 2000, the Division of Instructional Technologies has organized Innovations, a symposium of undergraduate creativity and scholarship. While 40 presentations were made at Innovations 2000, only 20 presentations were made in 2001. Little public information about participation is apparent beyond that date. Last year only 30 presentations were made. No attendance counts are reported.
• Central tracking of student creativity and scholarship is currently limited to the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program. Founded in 2001 by the Provost, 45 creative/research projects and 6 undergraduate writing fellows have been supported per year with $1000/semester stipends and an extra $100 for research support. As of 2008, a small allowance for faculty has also been approved on an as-needed basis. Previously monitored under the Center for Teaching Excellence, it is now administered by the Office of Postgraduate Fellowships and Scholarships in the Honors College with assistance from Health Professions Advising. Representation of the College of Recreational, Health, and Tourism; the School of Management; the College of Health and Human Services; and the Undergraduate Program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution are key points of outreach as they are typically
underrepresented. Non-traditional and transfer students are especially encouraged to apply for this program if they are engaged in faculty-mentored scholarship.

- In the College of Visual and Performing Arts, one-to-one relationships between faculty and students are established as early as the freshman year, and undergraduates and graduate students often work together with a faculty mentor in workshop settings or performing groups (i.e. a theater or dance production, an orchestra concert). CVPA students not only participate in experiences outside the traditional classroom, but also have many opportunities to learn from peers at various stages of their craft. Guest artists of national and international renown are brought to the college to work with students in individual, small, and large group settings. Collaborations between departments within CVPA take place to a lesser extent, although this is a current focus of the college; the student-based organization Artists in Action, designed to develop and promote an appreciation for the arts through events and programs for Mason and surrounding communities, is an example of an initiative within the college to foster greater interdisciplinary activity and community outreach. Furthermore, senior surveys of CVPA students show that they have much greater confidence in their abilities to be creative or be involved in disciplinary work compared to their fellow graduates from other colleges.

- In 2009, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences organized its first Undergraduate Research Symposium. This event was organized by Associate Dean Matthew Zingraff and Director of Technology and Learning Initiatives Dr. Glenda Morgan.

Two other formal internship opportunities are available within the College of Science:

- With their colleagues at the College of William and Mary since 2008, the Department of Mathematics has additional established opportunities through NSF grants for undergraduate research in computational mathematics.
- Since the summer of 2006, 15-20 unpaid internships were available to high school students and undergraduates through the Aspiring Scientist Summer Internship Program. Last year was the first year a Mason student participated.

**SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND SCOPE**

a) **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

Listed below are the activities that we propose will be needed to successfully implement this QEP proposal.

**QEP Coordinator**

All but one of the institutions represented in a recent survey [17] have at least one committed university official who promotes and supports student scholarship throughout the university. Thus, we propose that George Mason University establish a position of QEP coordinator within
an existing office, such as the Center for Teaching Excellence. This individual will provide support and coordination for student scholarship activities at Mason and will be a key to ensuring that a culture of scholarship is realized at Mason. Specifically, the coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Work with faculty to design and implement a new course in Scholarship which will be required of all undergraduate students at Mason
- Coordinate a faculty development program for mentoring students in conjunction with CTE
- Evaluation of the progress by the University in Student Scholarship using NSSE, BCSSE, and other assessment data
- Assess program outcomes
- Explore external funding opportunities in conjunction with the Office of Research Development and the Office of Sponsored Programs
- Consult with other University offices (Libraries, Student Life, Academic Advising, IT services, CTE, etc) to advocate for student research
- Coordinate with the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement to identify service-learning projects
- Collect applications for Scholarship Seed grants and coordinate review by an advisory board of students and faculty
- Coordinate student travel to conferences for presentation of scholarly activities
- Maintain a database of faculty/student scholarship projects supported by the QEP
- Plan a yearly “Scholarship Day”
- Plan scholarship activities during Family Weekend

Additional support will likely be required to complete all of the tasks listed above, plus others that have not been anticipated at this stage. Some of the responsibility will fall upon existing offices such as the Center for Teaching Excellence, Student Academic Affairs and Advising, and University Life. Use of the CTE and/or Fenwick Fellows to help coordinate the QEP during the initial phase may also be an option.

Development of a new course which introduces students to Scholarship
In order for all students to benefit from this QEP, we propose the development of a first year course which introduces students to scholarship. Ideally, all students, both incoming freshmen and transfer students, would be required to take the scholarship course, possibly as part of existing general education requirements.

We can conceive of at least three options for the development of a scholarship-based course. The first option involves the modification of existing courses which already have a scholarship focus. Faculty will work to modify their courses so that they emphasize the process of scholarship and meet many of the student learning objectives listed in section 2. As an example, HHS 201 involves collaboration between Health Professions Advising, the Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics, and University Career Services and enrolls students from the College of Science, the College of Health and Human Services, and the College of Recreation,
Health, and Tourism. A case-based inquiry-learning assignment on the care of a specific patient by the healthcare team is a key feature of this course that involves research and creative expression.

A second option involves the creation of a 1-credit scholarship course, such as those offered by some universities examined in a recent study [17]. Faculty from across the University would give 1-hour seminars on the process of scholarship within their discipline and would highlight examples of scholarship occurring on campus. The goal of this course would be to make students aware of the vast array of scholarship on campus during their first year at Mason, thus planting the seed for their involvement in scholarship later in their academic career.

The third option involves creation of a 3-credit scholarship course built on the foundation of the 1-credit course listed above, but which could include additional lectures and discussions on the process of scholarship as well as activities outside the classroom. Students would actively participate in scholarship activities as part of this course. Projects would be chosen which benefit the University and local community with the assistance of the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement, Student Life, the Office of Sustainability, and various student organizations. This course would not only introduce students to the theoretical process of scholarship, it would also involve them directly in scholarship activities. Graduate students might be a source of mentors for these projects.

Faculty Development – Mentoring of Students
Training of faculty to effectively mentor students will be required if this QEP proposal is to be successful. Thus, we propose that the Center for Teaching Excellence develop workshops to train faculty in student mentoring and that these workshops be offered at least two times each semester.

Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program
The Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program (UAP) currently supports about 50 student projects per year. We propose an increase in the number of supported projects to 125-150 per year. The UAP currently funds projects involving collaboration between one faculty member and one undergraduate student. The UAP will establish a separate competition for scholarship teams where one (or more) faculty member oversees multiple undergraduates in interdisciplinary projects. This will dramatically increase the number of students who are engaged in interdisciplinary, community-relevant scholarship and who receive recognition for their efforts. These team scholarship activities will differ from the seed grants described below in that they will be faculty-driven rather than student-driven.

Student Travel Funds
Students will be encouraged to present their scholarly activity at local and national conferences. To facilitate these presentations, a student travel fund will be established. Students will submit applications for these funds to the QEP coordinator, who will be responsible for reviewing the applications with the assistance of representatives from faculty, students, and staff.
Seed Grants for Student-Initiated Scholarship Activity
Seed grants for student-initiated scholarship will be available to student teams. Multiple students will work with faculty members, and potentially graduate students, on community-oriented projects. These projects may be focused on the University community or to the surrounding community. For example, a team of students might propose to study the effect of the inclusion of a Women’s History unit on the attitudes of college students toward women’s rights. The QEP coordinator will collect project proposals and convene a panel of reviewers to provide rankings. Sample criteria that can be used as a basis for applications and evaluations will be developed by the QEP coordinator in conjunction with appropriate experts.

On-line Publication of Student Scholarship
The collection and publication of student scholarship will assist in fostering a culture of student scholarship on campus. Students will have the satisfaction of viewing the results of their research and creative activity in a published format. In addition, these collections will provide students and faculty access to the enormous variety of scholarship being conducted on campus. Project results will be published in both electronic and print format. The Colonial Academic Alliance has already committed to create a print publication of student scholarship and electronic publication venues for other projects. A faculty member could be given a course release to oversee digital publication venues.

In addition to publication, students will be encouraged to include their scholarly and creative works (where feasible) in the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS), which will allow the university to make student scholarly work widely available via online distribution, as well as provide a clearinghouse of work that can be used for QEP program assessment.

University Scholarship Day
At peer institutions, presentations of student creativity and scholarship are set aside as University-wide events or are held in conjunction with already-existing programming, such as Parent’s Weekend or a designated day of student scholarship and engagement. We propose that a single day be set aside each spring for a celebration of student scholarship. Regular classes would not meet on this day so that the entire University community can focus on the scholarly activity of the faculty, students, and staff. In addition, we propose that student scholarship be a focus of Family Weekend. Students will be given the opportunity to present their scholarly activities to parents and alumni who are visiting the University. This will help to create a culture of student scholarship in the alumni and parent communities.

Program Assessment
Student learning outcomes will be assessed by national surveys (NSSE and BCSSE), end of semester evaluations of the Introduction to Scholarship course(s), various rubrics, and the collection of a list scholarship activities. Rubrics already exist to measure some of the student outcomes, as described in section 6, and additional rubrics will be developed with assistance from the Office of Assessment. The QEP coordinator will be responsible for collecting and cataloging as much of the scholarly activity as possible. This information will be used for assessment, publicity purposes, and for funding submissions by individual faculty members and groups of faculty and staff. Funds will be available for regular participation in national
surveys such as the NSSE and BCSSE so that Mason’s progress in scholarship can be quantified and compared to peer institutions.

b) **Commitment to and Support of the Topic:**

Two major concerns about this topic have been commonly expressed: would this proposal have an impact that includes a majority or all of the students within our community, and, in order to achieve even satisfactory outcomes, would this proposal require more financial and temporal support for implementation than is available? In order to achieve the vision for a self-sustaining and nurturing culture of scholarship, the suggestions listed here involve 1) strategic, coordinated publicity of student scholarship throughout the entire University that takes advantage of and potentially enhances existing programs, 2) exposure to the process of disciplinary and interdisciplinary creativity and scholarship through a first-year scholarship course, and 3) facilitation or development of new or existing opportunities for students and faculty to forge new collaborations. The success of this QEP will require enthusiastic support from all community members at Mason including academic units, the Offices of Research and Sponsored Programs, Libraries, Learning Support Services, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Writing Center, Student Government and Organizations, Housing and Residence Life, and University Life.

All students will be impacted by this QEP through the proposed Introduction to Scholarship course. By itself, however, this course will not foster a culture of student scholarship. Funds to support joint projects between faculty and students at all levels of experience (freshmen to graduate students) will build on the foundation established in the first-year course. Publicity of the scholarly pursuits via a University-wide research day, Family Weekend presentations, print and electronic publications, and individual department, college, and unit celebrations will ensure that each student, faculty member, and staff member has an opportunity to experience the excitement of student scholarship.

### Section 5: Assessment

**a) Student Learning Outcomes:**

The eight student learning outcomes proposed in section 2 will be assessed in the following ways:

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<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will recognize the features of critical thinking in disciplinary contexts in order to develop their understanding of research methodologies and scholarly and creative processes in specific disciplines.</td>
<td>(1) Application a rubric for critical thinking skills to a portfolio of student work that would be developed in the proposed credit course (sampling only of student work); or (2) use of a critical thinking performance measures test under consideration (but currently on hold) for adoption by the university--see <a href="http://www.tntech.edu/cat/">http://www.tntech.edu/cat/</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to write competently within their discipline.</td>
<td>Data provided by rubrics in writing-intensive courses.</td>
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### Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

April 3, 2009

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<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Evidence/Assessment Method</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and manage information resources in their field with critical rigor.</td>
<td>Data provided from rubric developed for proposed “Introduction to Scholarship” course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to apply the ideas of their discipline/field to communities outside their classrooms.</td>
<td>An instrument, currently under development, for assessing the integration of student academic outcomes with student leadership activities in the co-curriculum (to be used in conjunction with a portfolio of student projects and activities).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to create an original work in any appropriate format about a topic in their field demonstrating evidence of critical review, analysis, and synthesis of others’ works, as evaluated by those knowledgeable in the content area.</td>
<td>Evidence of scholarly and creative works will be collected, categorized, and inventoried. In addition, a number of synthesis and capstone courses address this learning outcome and those that have assessment mechanisms in place will be used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will understand, adopt, and develop appropriate means of argument through the use of rhetoric, source materials, and conventions of citation in the area of their scholarship, should their scholarship lend itself to evaluation in these areas.</td>
<td>Rubric for Writing-Intensive courses (currently, each discipline/department at the university develops its own rubric for these courses; but there is a goal of creating a uniform score sheet for university-wide writing assessment).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to communicate about their scholarly or creative work through experiences that encourage one or more of the following: a) collaboration with other student-authors; b) collaboration with and/or outreach to groups or communities outside the university; c) integration of cross-disciplinary information; and d) communication across cultural and/or national borders.</td>
<td>Evidence of communication about scholarly and creative works will be collected, categorized, and inventoried. In addition, a number of synthesis and capstone courses address this learning outcome and those that have assessment mechanisms in place will be used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify and assess the validity of key assumptions and ethical dimensions of a research/creative project in their field/discipline.</td>
<td>A rubric will be developed for senior course projects to assess ethical dimensions or an ethical dimension will be added to current senior course project assessments; however, the rubric for the proposed Introduction to Scholarship course could also address ethical issues in scholarship in a more basic way.</td>
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Presentations by eminent scholars should be promoted throughout the Washington, D.C., area and in the classroom to inspire further post-event discussion. Syllabi could be scrutinized to assess the expectation of scholarship by students, and appropriate grading schemes that reward students who emulate the ideals of scholarship could be developed. Course feedback should specifically ask students about their own interest in further scholarship or how the course enhances their interdisciplinary interest in scholarship within the major. Inquiry-based methods should become a more welcomed and standard practice throughout the Mason curriculum, and instruction in those techniques should be valued.

#### b) Other Outcomes:

A primary expected outcome from this QEP topic is an increase in student-initiated work that demonstrates creativity or scholarship. The ultimate goal for every faculty-mentored student project should be the creation of a work that is deemed by peers as acceptable innovative scholarship. Thus, the quality control for student-initiated scholarship is already designed into the production process. However, the University does not currently have careful documentation of products of student creativity and scholarship. While this information may
normally be kept at the faculty level, a central compilation is needed and should be administered at the college and university levels. It is expected that implementing the student learning goals will result in a greater level of high-quality student research and creativity. Other objective outcomes that reflect positive change toward a culture of student scholarship and engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Increased number of students enrolling in department independent credit to pursue scholarly activity.
- Increased number of senior theses completed by students.
- Increased number of student-authored publications or conference presentations/awards.
- Increased number of students who are co-authors on peer-reviewed publications or who have exhibited their creative work.
- Increased number of applications and greater disciplinary and interdisciplinary diversity of projects supported by the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program.
- Better preparation for advanced study as measured by more acceptances to graduate/professional programs or competitiveness for national/international scholarships.
- Increased number of projects involving collaboration among university units or with investigators/scholars at other institutions.
- Increased number of active internships offered by the University and an increase in the number of students involved in these internships.
- Increased number of students (native undergraduate, transfer, graduate, or professional) or faculty at all ranks from culturally diverse, historically underrepresented, or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds involved in all aforementioned metrics.

**SECTION 6: RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

**PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

In order to conduct the necessary background research and develop a full QEP document before December 2010, funding for the following will be needed:

- A QEP Planning Committee to examine institutional data and documents, identify potential areas where student learning could be strengthened, present information about the QEP to various academic units, develop preliminary proposals and white papers, and attend bi-weekly meetings.
- Research and writing stipends for members of the white paper subcommittees.
- A QEP Planning Committee Coordinator and an administrative support person to coordinate committee meetings and activities, provide research support, prepare and edit documents, respond to emails, etc.
- A web developer to maintain and make updates to the QEP website to ensure that the Mason community is informed and aware of our process and topic.
- Preliminary assessment of the chosen topic.
• Travel expenses for site visits to other institutions that have successfully implemented the chosen topic; travel expenses and consultation fees for members of successful institutions to visit Mason.
• Publicity and advertising of the QEP and the chosen topic to the Mason community via posters, banners, pamphlets, and other promotional materials.
• Faculty development, including stipends for workshops, teaching and learning events, and sending faculty to conferences.
• Final editing, printing, and distribution of our 100-page QEP document.

SECTION 7: BIBLIOGRAPHY

17. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/rsw/undergrad/cetl/.