



BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY  
IN VERITATIS AMORE

Quality Enhancement Plan: ***Exploring Self, Exploring Community***  
QEP Director: ***Graham W. L. Ellis, Ph.D.*** Email: [gellis@bellarmine.edu](mailto:gellis@bellarmine.edu)

Bellarmino University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), ***Exploring Self, Exploring Community*** is a first-year experience focused on elements of inclusivity including self-awareness, identity, perspective-taking, and exploring community. All students will take two courses: BU-100 (***First-Year Focus*** – fall semester; 1 credit hour) and IDC-101 (***First-Year Seminar: Exploring Community*** – spring semester; 3 credit hour).

BU-100 is a substantially revised version of our transition to college course that takes care to weave the QEP elements of diversity, inclusion, identity, and community throughout the already established key BU-100 outcomes related to socialization, personal wellness, and the development of university-level skills necessary for a successful transition to college.

IDC-101 has also been redesigned to meet the needs of our QEP. The course is designed around four key principles: *definition of community*, *community as ecosystem*, *analysis of community*, and *community exploration*. An important component is the focus on a specific community/organization by each separate course section. Individual instructors work with their partner organizations on crafting a curriculum that meets the needs of our students, the partner agency, and Bellarmine University. We want these interactions to serve as examples of equitable, reciprocal, and enriching collaborations between Bellarmine and local/regional partners and thus lay the foundations for successful community engagement opportunities for our students.

Through our QEP, we will give our students, at the beginning of their collegiate journey, the necessary tools (skills, knowledge, and experiences) to allow them to engage successfully with others in dialogue, community, and society. We will do this by taking a transitional and development approach to student learning.

Our QEP will provide a framework (inclusive, ethical, moral, equitable, just, and fact-based) within which our students will have the ability to make the best choices to be successful in their many community interactions. They require a toolkit consisting of a knowledge base, a transferable skillset (physiological and physical), and authentic experiences to aid them on their journey through college and beyond.

Our QEP has a set of student learning outcomes (SLOs) arranged around three core principles; self-awareness, perspective-taking, and connecting with community.

- 1.1 Students can articulate how their experiences have shaped their attitudes and identities*
- 2.1 Students can articulate how each individual has a unique perspective informed by their experiences*
- 2.2 Students can explain how their values and experiences have influenced their perspectives of others*
- 3.1 Students can articulate an individual's responsibility to the community*
- 3.2 Students can analyze community through asset mapping*

A variety of external and internal assessment instruments will be used to evaluate both the goals of the QEP and the SLOs, including course-generated artifacts, focus groups, external surveys (NSSE, BEVI, and CECE), community engagement audits, and student course evaluations. These instruments will be administered throughout the course of the QEP, the results analyzed and then reported out to the community at regular intervals.