



Quality Enhancement Plan

Critical Thinking for Extraordinary Lives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brenau University's QEP "Critical Thinking for Extraordinary Lives" was developed over three years utilizing broad-based institutional involvement. The university mission, vision, and strategic plan were considered to ensure the constructive alignment necessary for a sustainable improvement plan. Institutional assessment data were analyzed to determine areas needing improvement, and the culmination of this lengthy and comprehensive process was the selection of the improvement of undergraduates' critical thinking skills as the focus of the QEP.

QEP activities began in Fall 2011 and will continue through Spring 2016. There are two complementary goals for the QEP: (1) to graduate students proficient in critical thinking and (2) to build an institutional culture that encourages critical thinking. Faculty members identified three critical thinking student learning outcomes (SLO). Students will be able to:

- evaluate the meaningfulness of data, (SLO 1)
- articulate and defend positions or arguments using evidence and logic, and (SLO 2)
- create, develop or revise solutions to problems by using existing information and materials. (SLO 3)

The QEP's triangulated assessment process integrates summative and formative approaches, internally and externally scored instruments, direct and indirect assessment, and embedded and add-on assessment instruments. Assessment instruments include the Educational Testing System Proficiency Profile (ETSP), National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR), and the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT).

Institutional support for the QEP includes dedicated personnel, funding, and physical resources. QEP director Dr. Heather Gollmar Casey is supported by the Institutional Effectiveness Research Assistant as needed. QEP activities include numerous faculty development opportunities including funding for faculty to attend critical thinking conferences, guest speaker events, instructional units, and programming for students.

With institutional commitment and broad-based support from the university community, Brenau's QEP is well-positioned to improve undergraduate students' critical thinking skills. For more information, please contact Brenau's QEP Director, Dr. Heather Gollmar Casey by e-mail (hc Casey@brenau.edu) or phone (770-534-6192).