

Strategies for Building Reading Excellence (SaBRE)

A Quality Enhancement Plan

Kentucky Christian University

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The Quality Enhancement Plan for Kentucky Christian University is the result of a process, thirty-six months in duration, which involved deep discussions of the nature of the University, its mission, and its direction. This plan began as a list of perceived needs. It evolved into a very complex and ambitious proposal that attempted to be all things to all people. From that broad proposal came the seeds of a focused, assessable, academically rigorous, broadly supported plan, by which we aim to improve student learning by strengthening the reading skills of our students.

We have named this plan *SaBRE*, which stands for *Strategies for Building Reading Excellence*. We define “reading excellence” as follows:

- Excellent readers spend significantly more time reading for pleasure than the national average for readers in their age group.
- Excellent readers read as a life-long habit. Reading is not just something done for a specific assignment or need, but it becomes part of the person’s identity.
- Excellent readers understand and utilize a variety of techniques that aid their comprehension of written texts.
- Excellent readers are capable of high-level processing of written information. They move beyond simple comprehension to analyzing and (particularly for critical reading) evaluating, so that they truly master material from written texts.

True realization of these ideals is beyond the scope of this QEP, or any single project. To us, these ideals function as a compass, pointing out a direction for lifelong pursuit. If successful, *SaBRE* will help students at the University orient themselves with this compass, changing values and skills and behaviors, so that they can begin (or continue) moving in the right direction.

The Student Learning Outcomes for *SaBRE* consist of changes in two overarching areas: critical reading skills and general reading habits. As this document will demonstrate, our plan to improve our students’ critical reading abilities utilizes a group of assessable strategies. The central strategy for improving critical reading skills is a series of curricular changes. Students will be required to take a series of select classes, across the curriculum, in which critical interaction with written texts is a significant component. The professors teaching these select classes will receive special training in critical reading, and will pool their resources and experience “as iron sharpens iron.” The full faculty will also receive training aimed at improving the way they formulate and assess reading assignments.

Our strategy for improving students’ reading habits is a series of changes to the learning environment. These changes include physical changes to campus and other initiatives, all of which are intended to make the campus of Kentucky Christian University more reader-friendly, thus developing a climate and culture of reading excellence at KCU. Each of these strategies will be assessed from several angles for effectiveness, using direct and indirect assessment as applicable.