



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI®



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Southern Mississippi has designed *Eagles Engaged: Enhancing Gateway and Pathway Experiences* as its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) based on an institutional process drawing from broad-based involvement and evidence of need. In keeping with the University vision “to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society,” the mission of *Eagles Engaged* is to improve student success at two critical stages: gateways and pathways. Gateways are historically difficult, high-enrollment courses foundational to the general education curriculum or to a major. Pathways are significant experiences connected to a student’s post-graduation goals, such as internships, research, service learning, or other fieldwork.

Gateway and pathway experiences will be enhanced to have a significant impact with specific cohorts. Southern Miss will enhance five gateway courses through the John N. Gardner Institute Gateways to Completion® (G2C®) process*: BSC 110 (Principles of Biological Science I), BSC 250 (Anatomy and Physiology I), CHE 106 (General Chemistry I), HIS 101 (World Civilization I), and MAT 99 (Intermediate Algebra). Through faculty development and statistical analyses, gateway course committees, comprised of the faculty teaching the courses, design initiatives tailored to their courses and students. The gateway steering committee provides support through addressing cross-course needs, such as peer-assisted learning, as well as overall implementation. Pathway experience support will be available to all undergraduate students, but the primary emphasis will be on supporting undergraduate students in degree programs that do not currently have built-in pathway components. Under the leadership of a pathways director and a pathways council, students will have access to pathway counseling and pathway scholarships. The pathways program will also provide grants to departments to support initiatives specific to their students’ needs.

The QEP Leadership Team will use a comprehensive, yet focused, set of direct and indirect measures to assess the student learning outcomes outlined below:

QEP GOAL 1: Improve learning gains in QEP gateway courses

Students will meet or exceed established student learning outcomes in QEP gateway courses:

1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science. (BSC 110, BSC 250, and CHE 106)
2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures. (HIS 101)
3. Students will demonstrate and proficiently interpret text. (HIS 101)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts. (MAT 99)

QEP GOAL 2: Enhance the environment supporting student learning through pathway experiences that provide real-world opportunities to apply academic studies and develop career readiness

1. Students will apply academic content knowledge and/or skills in pathway experiences.
2. Students will develop career readiness competencies through engagement in pathway experiences.

Eagles Engaged will be supported by an experienced QEP director, faculty scholars from the Gardner Institute, gateway course and steering committees, a pathways director and council, and a budget totaling nearly \$3,000,000. As a result of *Eagles Engaged*, students will benefit from increased support for learning and success in historically difficult courses and from experiences that bolster the transition to post-graduation goals.

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