

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

CREATING LEADERS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal Executive Summary

The University of Texas at Austin has a long tradition of providing leadership education opportunities for its undergraduate students. Indeed, one of the University's Core Values reads:

- Leadership: The will to excel with integrity and the spirit that nothing is impossible

As the Basic Education Requirements Preamble states, "The University strives to enroll exceptionally well-prepared, highly motivated students and to produce self-reliant graduates who will become leaders in both their chosen professions and their communities."

The University began exploring Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topics in 2015, and since that fall has convened three consecutive committees dedicated to different aspects of the inquiry. The committees reviewed hundreds of UT Austin academic and non-academic programs, multiple sets of organizational data, and many articles, among other resources. Consistently, committee members found that many leadership components already were being taught well all across campus. They found strong evidence for students learning critical thinking, ethical leadership, oral communication, civic engagement, and decision-making skills in curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Importantly, they recognized that one crucial leadership element was not receiving the emphasis it deserved: teamwork.

The 2018 QEP, then, focuses on improving the teaching and assessment of teamwork or collaborative learning. The committees considered many units in determining where to house the QEP. Ultimately, they recommended the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) because the unit reaches almost all undergraduate students. Over the next five years, UGS will coordinate all QEP teamwork activities, involving over 200 faculty members and evaluating over 6,000 student artifacts. This dedicated effort will ensure that the University's graduates are even better prepared to become leaders in their chosen professions and their communities.

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