

Columbia International University
Quality Enhancement Plan
Executive Summary

Imbedding Institutional Core Values Within the First-Year Experience

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Columbia International University (CIU) established a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled *Imbedding Institutional Core Values Within the First Year Experience* for undergraduate resident students. This QEP builds upon institutional research and guides the university to advance student learning using measurable outcomes in a specific educational program. Toward that end, faculty and administration have focused attention on “values education” and behavioral “lifestyle standards” as ways of facilitating spiritual transformation. The goal is to stimulate students to not only know the historic core values of the institution, but to embrace those core values in a transformational manner at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels.

Historically, the university has made clear statements of intention to provide its students with an experience that includes spiritual transformation. While spiritual transformation is a broad concept, CIU will limit the focus within this QEP to aspects of its five institutional core values. This QEP is designed (1) to formally structure the educational process used to facilitate spiritual transformation related to these core values, and (2) to meaningfully assess this process through both qualitative and quantitative measures. To the degree to which this project is successful, the QEP should provide a substantially higher level of educational credibility pertaining to institutional statements that are routinely made by the university concerning spiritual transformation. Furthermore, once CIU finishes the QEP, knowledge gained will guide faculty and administration in knowing how to imbed the core values in first year experiences for graduate students, seminary students, and students who enter CIU via other delivery systems.

Assessment includes a pre-test/post-test inventory administered in the foundational fall course SOC 1112 (commonly referred to as “CIU 101”). The small class size in the spring renders a spring assessment statistically insignificant. An internally developed instrument, the Spiritual Beliefs and Attitudes Inventory (SBAI), has been utilized to provide the quantitative data for this assessment. The SBAI is a statistically reliable instrument that measures the extent to which students resonate with the five core values of the institution. Data to this point indicates that while there is growth in regard to three of the core values (Authority of Scripture, Prayer and Faith, World Evangelization), there is an absence of growth regarding the two remaining core values (Evangelical Unity, Victorious Christian Living). The qualitative measure (“Rhythm of Life” paper) has demonstrated that the students desire to imbed the core values in their lives, but again, there is some sense of disconnect between knowing the core value and experiencing the core value.

The QEP team will conduct assessments over four years (2009-2013), making formative course adjustments in order to determine which components of the institution serve best in imparting the core values to CIU undergraduate students.