

FRESH Start: A Quality Enhancement Plan

Berea College
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Berea College has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that aligns with the institutional mission of the Great Commitments, which guide the College across time, and its current strategic plan, Being and Becoming: Berea College in the 21st Century. Broad campus participation and involvement led to the identification of a topic, the development of a plan, and the implementation of work to enhance student learning. The official purpose of Berea's QEP is to deepen and enhance students' overall understanding of health and wellness and to help them develop behaviors and attitudes supportive of their own lifetime health and wellness. Named FRESH Start, "FRESH" is an acronym for "First-year Residential Experience Supporting Health."

FRESH Start is an intentional integration and partnership between Student Life and the Academic Division. It has been guided by an extensive review of literature and best practices as well as attendance at conferences. Data suggest that while Berea students are well below public health recommendations, they do express interest in learning about health-promoting behaviors at levels higher than national averages. Faculty and staff development opportunities also seek to ensure efficacy.

By allowing students to explore the dimensions of wellness in the classroom and their living environments and by applying both life management skills and coping strategies learned in and out of the classroom, the Berea College QEP is designed for all first-year students to learn and practice strategies supportive of wellness and to understand the nature of stress in all its forms.

FRESH Start's curricular dimension occurs in 2015-2016 through HLT 100 (a required term-length course). In 2016 and beyond, it will involve a year-long sequence of two courses—WEL 101 and 102—required of all first-year students in which students are introduced to eight dimensions of wellness. The co-curricular dimension involves a variety of new programming led by a number of co-curricular staff and students to reinforce classroom learning and allow students to practice and apply that learning.

An assessment plan addresses student learning outcomes and includes direct and indirect measures, utilizing a mix of both locally developed rubrics, surveys, and other instruments as well as nationally-normed survey instruments to assess the degree to which students have achieved each of the learning outcomes described in this document. The College has earmarked an appropriate and generous amount of College resources to ensure the QEP's success.

There is a great deal of support for and excitement about this opportunity to deepen student learning in order to make the Berea experience even more transformative for years to come.