The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Proposal Submission Guidelines

QEP proposals are due by Tuesday, March 15, 2022. Please email your proposals to qep@apsu.edu. All proposals will be evaluated by the QEP Topic Selection Committee and reviews will be completed by the end of April 2022.

If you have any questions about the QEP, the proposal process, these guidelines, etc., please contact Troy Priest, Director of the QEP at priestt@apsu.edu or at 931-221-7045.

Please use the accompanying template and guidelines to complete your proposal.

On the cover page of the template, please provide the name and contact information of the contributors of the proposal along with a working, descriptive title of your proposed QEP.

Title of Proposed QEP:

Name and Contact Information:

Contact Person:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Other Contributor(s):

Email Address(es):

SACSCOC Standard 7.2

While completing your QEP proposal submission, it is important that your proposal addresses the 5 requirements of the QEP as specified in SACSCOC Standard 7.2:

The institution has a QEP that
(a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process;
(b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies;
(c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success;
(d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and
(e) includes a plan to access achievement

Sections to be Addressed in the Full Proposal

Using the QEP Topic Proposal Template provided on the QEP Webpage, write a *narrative* that describes your proposed QEP plan and how you think this plan will support APSU student learning and/or student success. Your narrative should address *as many* of the following questions / components as possible. It is not expected that you will answer every question to have a successful proposal. *You may be unable to answer or only able to partially answer some of the questions in each section.* You will find an example proposal below.

Section 1 Abstract / executive summary of QEP (100-150 words)

- Provide a brief abstract or executive summary of your QEP proposal indicating the need for the QEP and the issue(s) it address(es).

Section 2 Institutional context and the QEP (250-350 words)

- What specific student learning outcomes and/or student success issues does this QEP address? And give a rationale why these outcomes or issues should be addressed by the next QEP.
- Describe and summarize any institutional data that support the need for this QEP.
- Describe and summarize any external data that support the need for this QEP, if applicable.
- Identify the target population of students and the number of students expected to benefit from this QEP.
- Would there likely be broad-based support for this QEP? How would institutional support likely be achieved?

Section 3 Activities/Interventions of the QEP (350-450 words)

- Who will be involved in the development, implementation, and assessment of these activities/interventions besides students? (What will be the scope of involvement by faculty, student support staff, other staff, institutional and/or external stake holders, etc.?)
- Describe in detail the specific activities/interventions that will be implemented? Indicate how these activities are directly connected to the improvement of student learning and/or student success.
- Where will these activities/interventions take place?
- When will they take place? Duration? (e.g., one-off event, series of activities, semester-long, etc.)
- How will these activities be implemented and by whom?
- Indicate any existing literature on this QEP topic or related topics.

Section 4 Assessment of student success and the success of the QEP (150-250 words)

- What changes or improvements in student knowledge, student learning, or student behavior would be expected if the QEP were implemented?
- How might we measure student improvement? What are some of the assessment methods that could be used? (These could include direct measures: exams, papers, learning artifacts, etc., or indirect measures: surveys, focus groups, etc.)

Section 5 Institutional and financial resources (150 -250 words)

- How feasible is this project?
- What kinds of resources, existing and new, would be needed to successfully implement the QEP? (Including institutional, financial, technological, human, equipment, time, materials, supplies, professional development, travel, promotional, etc.)

Section 6 References

- Include any works cited or used in the preparation of this proposal or any other sources that should or may be used in further planning, implementation, and assessment of this QEP. You don't need to use any particular citation style. Please include any weblinks, journal articles, books, articles, etc.

SAMPLE PROPOSAL

4

Title of Proposed QEP: Keys to the World

Section 1: Abstract/Executive Summary of QEP (100-150 words)

The Keys to the World QEP plans to enhance student learning through engagement in high-impact practices, such as study abroad and service-learning. These transformational learning experiences will help students apply their learning in practical settings while also promoting critical thinking and self-reflection skills. This QEP will provide students an opportunity to apply their learning and engage in a global society, and also supports the student learning outcomes outlined in the APSU General Education curriculum. This QEP will also address the issue of career preparedness for APSU students by helping them develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and critical thinking.

Section 2: Institutional Context and the QEP (250-350 words)

This QEP will improve student learning by increasing opportunities for self-reflection and critical thinking, while also allowing students to apply their learning in practical settings. For example, a student in a Spanish class would have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the language during a study abroad experience in a country with native Spanish speakers. Another example may be a Graphic Design student working directly with a non-profit organization through a service-learning class to develop a logo and marketing materials, providing a service to the organization while also building the student's skills and resume in the process.

This topic was identified through both external and internal data. Recent studies conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as well as the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) note that while college students and graduates have the content knowledge they need to graduate, they are unable to make connections between that knowledge and its practical application. NACE further notes that recent college graduates lack the soft skills needed to be successful in their career. High-impact practices help students to make those important connections and build soft skills, thus improving their overall learning outcomes and developing skills that will translate to careers. While these studies provide an external context for this QEP, internal focus groups and surveys conducted at APSU also identified the need for increased critical thinking skills and intentional connections between coursework and practical settings.

This QEP will primarily focus on undergraduate students, and has the potential to impact a majority of the student body. As the QEP gains momentum and campus buy-in, more high-impact practice opportunities will be available for students, thus increasing participation. This topic is likely to have broad-based support from faculty, staff and students. An important way to build campus engagement will be to identify barriers to participating in high-impact practices and addressing them. Another key way to build engagement will be through marketing existing opportunities, as well as working with high-impact offices on campus to advertise these opportunities and educate the campus community on how to get involved.

Section 3: Activities/Interventions of the QEP (350-450 words)

Successful implementation of this QEP will require cross-campus collaboration among many offices and departments. The QEP office will provide oversight of the implementation process,

and will work closely with the high-impact offices already established on campus (i.e., Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange, Center for Service-Learning and Community Engagement, and others) to promote existing opportunities and develop new ones. The QEP office will also work closely with the Office of the Registrar and Decision Support and Institutional Effectiveness to build reports and mechanisms to track student involvement in high-impact courses and provide demographic data to inform decisions. From a faculty perspective, buy-in from academic departments will be integral to the success of this QEP as the instructors provide the high-impact courses for students.

The implementation of this QEP requires three cyclical phases that will occur during the academic year: educating, engaging, and assessing. First, it is important to educate campus constituents about high-impact practices. This involves informing students that these opportunities exist and the benefits of getting involved, and then educating them on how to get involved. Furthermore, faculty must also be educated on how to implement these activities into their courses, as well as the benefits of doing so. After faculty and students are engaged in high-impact opportunities, it is important to assess both student learning and overall satisfaction. This assessment, described in detail in Section 4, will assist the QEP office with addressing issues during the implementation process. Additionally, the QEP office will work with the Office of Decision Support and Institutional Effectiveness to track other student success metrics, such as retention and graduation rates, based on participation in high-impact practices. The research conducted by AAC&U shows that high-impact practices may improve student success metrics overall, and especially among students in underrepresented minority categories, so it will be important to track this data at APSU and use it to make informed decisions throughout the implementation process.

The events and interventions of this QEP will be ongoing and will include both one-off events (such as workshops), as well as regularly scheduled interventions such as grant opportunities, semesterly assessment of student work, and participation in student events (Govs ROW, First Friday, etc.).

Section 4: Assessment of Student Success and the Success of the QEP (150-250 words)

Based on the research conducted by AAC&U, it is expected that this QEP will result in an improvement in student reflection and connecting content knowledge learned in the classroom with practical applications in real-world settings. It is also expected that student participation in high-impact practices will result in improved student success metrics such as retention and graduation rates as well as overall GPA. These improvements in student learning and success will be assessed through both direct and indirect measures. Direct measures will include a self-reflection essay that students will complete at the end of their high-impact experience, which will be assessed using a modified version of the AAC&U Integrative and Applied Learning VALUE Rubric. Assessment will also be conducted through indirect measures including a pre- and post-survey for students taken at the start of the high-impact experience and after it concludes. Retention and graduation rates, as well as overall GPA, will be tracked using reports maintained by the QEP office in collaboration with the Office of Decision Support and Institutional Effectiveness.

Section 5: Institutional and Financial Resources (150-250 words)

Many of the resources required for this QEP are already in place at APSU, making it highly feasible for implementation. High-impact offices are already established and staffed. Additional resources required for this QEP will be financial, human, and time in nature.

From a financial perspective, this QEP will require some monetary investment by the institution. The main expense will be in the form of internal grant opportunities for students and faculty to engage in high-impact experiences. For example, students note that they want to engage in study abroad courses, but lack the funding to do so. Internal grant opportunities would provide financial support for these students to engage in study abroad courses and thus lead to increased participation and improved student success. From a faculty perspective, internal grant funds may be required to implement a high-impact course, such as materials needed for a service-learning project. There may also be a financial investment by the institution in hiring additional staff for the QEP office, such as an individual to track assessment and data or assist in coordinating grant opportunities.

From a human and time perspective, this QEP will require faculty and staff from across campus to invest their time in various activities related to the promotion, engagement, and assessment of the QEP. The QEP office may want to create various committees pertaining to these different areas of the QEP and have individuals from across campus serve based on their interests and areas of expertise.

Section 6: References

The resources used in creating this QEP Topic Proposal include the following:

- AAC&U Integrative and Applied Learning VALUE Rubric - https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics-integrative-and-applied-learning
- High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter by George D. Kuh, published by AAC&U - https://www.aacu.org/publication/high-impact-educational-practices-what-they-are-who-has-access-to-them-and-why-they-matter
- A Comprehensive Approach to Assessment of High-Impact Practices by Ashley Finley, published by AAC&U - https://www.aacu.org/publication/a-comprehensive-approach-to-assessment-of-high-impact-practices
- The Co-Curricular Connection: The Impact of Experiences Beyond the Classroom on Soft Skills, published by NACE - https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/trends-and-predictions/