

## **Quality Enhancement Plan “Building International Competency”**

The University of Tampa academic mission is expressed through four goals addressing its commitment to a distinctively rich and rewarding educational experience. Goal IV, “Engaging the Larger Community and World,” is the focus of the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The purpose is to promote exceptional international education experiences both on- and off-campus that will allow for measurement of progress towards building international competency in students. The model for this project is constructed around these three core areas: creating a campus learning environment that promotes international competency; creating exceptional international-related learning experiences and opportunities; and maximizing learning outcomes by repeated exposure and multiple interventions for all students at all levels. The QEP will also serve to coordinate and systematize the University’s many on-going efforts to build international competence in its students.

The QEP will assess and measure progress towards instilling the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary to form internationally competent citizens. These include such behaviors as: awareness of the complexity and interdependence of world events and issues; understanding and appreciation of diversity in world views; sensitivity and respect for personal and cultural differences; multiple perspective-taking; foreign language skills, comparative thinking skills, and coping and resiliency skills in unfamiliar situations. The QEP was defined through a two year process by the SACS Leadership Team, faculty, and staff groups. The group created a literature review, with special care to investigate measurement and assessment tools. Participants focused on choosing a topic that was viable and central to the University mission and employed UT’s Baccalaureate Experience goals. These goals will be assessed and become part of the QEP evaluation process.

The QEP will entail development of an elective program, offered to all UT students. The program will offer options in language studies, courses with international content, study abroad options, and work experience or extra-curricular activities. At the outset, baseline measures will be taken to assess the skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to identified international competencies. Assessment instruments will include operational definitions of the key goals and will address the question, “How does a student most effectively acquire international competency?” Selected assessment tools will be adapted or devised in-house. It is hoped that development of a demographic profile of students who are most likely to engage in this type of a program will result.

Participating students, identified during the admissions and registration processes, will be tracked through program phases. The Co-curricular Transcript process will be adapted to include international activities. The self-selected participants will be compared to non-participating students.

The major anticipated outcome will be enhanced student achievement of the *UT Educational Experience* goals with special emphasis on measurable increases among students whose skills, knowledge and attitudes in the area of international competency are significantly improved. The plan will demonstrate improvement toward the desired outcomes and provide evidence for curricular and co-curricular enhancements. Student cohorts will be followed longitudinally, tracing their activities and responses to the program’s direct and indirect interventions.

### ***The QEP Development Process***

At present, sub groups of the QEP Group are collecting data on assessment and program evaluation matters, benchmarking to other successful programs, creating a budget and resource allocation plan, and further refining details of this student-centered program as presented next. The QEP Group consists of the SACS Leadership Team, faculty members, and a student member.

The QEP is the result of a number of meetings and forums held over the past year. The topic of international competency was chosen from a list of six mission-based initiatives that the University has plans to further develop. These initiatives are all derived from the *UT Educational Experience* document, a strategic plan to further strengthen and enhance the University’s core mission. Feedback from both faculty and student groups indicated that the topic of internationalization was the one to prioritize at this point.

### **Proposed Program Components**

UT students who complete the program requirements will have demonstrated that they have attained the skills, knowledge and attitudes/values to be called internationally competent. When implemented, the QEP will result in a special distinction that will be recognized publicly.

The members of the faculty International Programs Committee are currently reviewing the following QEP components. They will revise and make improvements to the plan as they see fit, as well as to further delineate the program rules and requirements. At present these areas serve as their starting point:

1. Language Studies
2. Courses with international content
3. Study Abroad Experience
4. Work or co-curricular activities
5. Other requirements

The International Programs Committee of the faculty, along with the SACS Leadership team, will decide upon the final plan elements this semester. The current timeline aims for QEP implementation in 2005-06.