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## Appendix C

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### QEP Planning Process

In June 2007, Provost Donald J. Foss appointed a diverse group to the QEP Undergraduate Research Planning Committee. Members included deans and associate deans, department chairs, the Faculty Senate president, the Student Government president, faculty, program directors, and other University administrators. The committee was chaired by Dr. Elaine Charlson and charged with developing a QEP focused on undergraduate research that incorporated elements of writing and mentoring. Several subcommittees were formed to advance the process.

An initial subcommittee proposed an approach to the plan. Recognizing that UH students are part of an increasingly tech-savvy, media-fluent generation, the subcommittee quickly realized that the QEP should appeal to students' real world interests in order to attract students to the University, retain them, and engage them in a culture of research. The subcommittee also realized the need to draw upon the extensive learning and technological resources at UH to attract the interest of students unfamiliar with the diligent process of high-level research. Considering the pragmatic outlook of UH students, the subcommittee recommended a plan that would emphasize how research-related skills training and an undergraduate research experience provide our students a competitive edge in today's job market. The QEP's valuable and useful focus would be a central component of UH's marketing strategy in order to attract and retain motivated and qualified students.

A second subcommittee recommended a definition of research that would encompass the diversity of scholarly endeavors at UH (Section 2.4). The subcommittee also developed preliminary goals and measurable student learning outcomes (Section 2.5). One of the distinguishing features of outstanding universities is the high priority given to integrating meaningful research in their curriculums. Upon entering college, many students are unlikely to possess the requisite skills and knowledge to actively participate in research projects of any kind. Therefore, the subcommittee recommended a QEP that will include providing students with research-related skills training at all levels. Elements indispensable for life-long learning: substantive inquiry, critical thinking, information literacy, teamwork, and communication, would be the pedagogical foundation for the QEP.

A third subcommittee reviewed the framework of the QEP and recommended strategies to ensure that transfer students and distance education students will benefit from the enhancement programs. The subcommittee recommended that resources be made available online so that students can readily access them remotely. Transfer students who complete their Core Curriculum elsewhere should have access to online tutorials and open workshops that provide research-related skills training. Tutorial modules could also be incorporated into WebCT course sites. Efforts should be made to integrate research-based pedagogy in major and upper level courses in which transfer students and distance education students are most likely to enroll.

Finally, four content-specific subcommittees reviewed best practices and data from various constituents to recommend central programs and services and new grant programs. Their work will be further elaborated below.

### Gathering Ideas from the UH Community

The QEP Planning Committee included a broad cross-section of the University community in developing the plan. During the data gathering phase, numerous constituencies were called upon to share their ideas on how to integrate research into the undergraduate experience.

### Involvement of Faculty and Staff in the Colleges

In order to affect student learning across a broad population of students, the QEP Planning Committee solicited preliminary plans for activities at four levels: core, intermediate, advanced, and co-curricular. This multi-tiered approach was used to accommodate students, including transfer students, at different levels of interest in and aptitude for research. Thus, the colleges were invited to submit ideas and preliminary plans for activities in these categories:

- **Core** - Basic research activities would be incorporated into courses in the Core curriculum, providing students with a fundamental understanding of and appreciation for the research process and promote research awareness.
- **Intermediate** - Mid level courses in a student's major incorporating assignments that reinforce research-related skills such as research assignments resulting in the submission of a research paper or delivery of an oral presentation.
- **Advanced** - Upper level courses including faculty-mentored research projects, team projects, capstone courses, senior honors theses, etc.
- **Co-curricular** - Initiatives that complement curriculum-based training and may include programs such as research days, speaker series, seminars and internships that would enhance student interest in and appreciation for research and scholarship.

Colleges were asked to review their existing research-related activities and develop preliminary plans to integrate research into their programs. To solicit preliminary plans, some colleges distributed the guidelines directly to all faculty members in their colleges, while others employed a more formal process to collect ideas. Many of the colleges, including Business, Technology, Natural Science & Mathematics, Engineering, Education, Hotel & Restaurant Management, and the Honors College, held planning meetings which included groups of interested faculty, administrators, and staff. The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) hosted three forums for faculty and staff to share their existing undergraduate research activities and brainstorm new ways to integrate research into the undergraduate experience. A CLASS QEP blog was developed for faculty and staff to share ideas and best practices (<http://classqep.wordpress.com/>).

Over 145 preliminary plans were submitted from the colleges. In addition to these planning efforts, meetings and brainstorming sessions were hosted for staff of the Libraries, Writing and Communication Skills Center, and Educational Technology & University Outreach, resulting in a compilation of resources and services that will facilitate implementation of the QEP.

## Involvement of Students

Student forums were hosted with the assistance of associate deans in each of the colleges. The forums were advertised broadly through student listservs and flyers, and were moderated by Dr. Veronique Tran, director, SACS QEP. Sixteen forums were conducted across campus with at least one forum hosted in each of the undergraduate degree granting colleges. Three of the forums were conducted in junior and senior-level courses by invitation of the course instructor. At each forum, students brainstormed ideas in these general categories:

- how to incorporate active learning into courses
- resources needed for effective research
- events/programs to excite students about research
- ways to expose freshmen/sophomores to research

Feedback and ideas contributed by the students were shared with college administrators and the QEP Planning Committee.

The student newspaper, *The Daily Cougar*, covered the forum held for the School of Theatre & Dance students. The paper further encouraged students to submit ideas via online survey (<http://media.www.thedailycougar.com/media/storage/paper1206/news/2007/10/31/News/Student.Forum.To.Enhance.Programs-3068362.shtml>).

## Involvement of the Broader Campus Community

The broader campus community was invited to submit ideas via an announcement, "Call for Ideas: Integration of Research into the Undergraduate Experience," sent to faculty, staff, and student listservs by Dr. Elaine Charlson. The announcement was linked to an online survey. An article in the faculty and staff newspaper, *UH Today News*, also outlined the QEP Planning process and encouraged submission of ideas via the online survey ([http://www.uh.edu/uhtoday/2007/09sept/091307qep\\_sacs.html](http://www.uh.edu/uhtoday/2007/09sept/091307qep_sacs.html)).

Members of the University QEP Committee presented information to groups on campus and encouraged their members to submit ideas online. These included the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Staff Council Executive Committee, the Student Government Association, the vice president for student affairs and his executive staff, the dean of graduate & professional studies, the vice president for research, the Deans' Council, the Council of Chairs, and the Undergraduate Council.

## Subcommittee Review of Ideas

Four subcommittees were formed to review sorted data from the QEP preliminary plans, student forums, online survey, and best practices.

- #1: Course-Based Research
- #2: Mentored Research
- #3: Resources and Workshops for Students and Faculty
- #4: Other Co-curricular Activities

Each subcommittee reviewed the data relevant to its category to develop guidelines for new grant programs or centrally administered programs. These guidelines and recommendations were shared and discussed among QEP Planning Committee members to determine the elements of the University's QEP as described in Section 3.

### **University Community Review and Support of the QEP**

A draft of the QEP was posted online from December 20, 2007 to January 18, 2008 for public comment by faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

The QEP was also presented to the University's leadership, including the president and the Board of Regents.

In March 2008, the campus community will learn about the components of the *Discovery-Based Learning Initiative* through the commencement of a broad awareness campaign that includes news articles, electronic announcements, online posting of the QEP report, and other activities.