



### 3.3 Existing Resources to Support the Implementation of Our QEP

The five key Resource Collaborators - the Writing and Communication Skills Center, the UH Libraries, the Office of Educational Technology and University Outreach, the Office of Undergraduate Research, and the Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness - have been deeply involved in the QEP development process and will play major roles in supporting both faculty and students upon implementation of our Quality Enhancement Plan. Their roles will be further elaborated in Section 3.7. The following is a brief overview of some of the current services each partner offers.

#### Writing and Communication Skills Center

The UH Writing Center, also known as the Writing and Communication Skills Center, has quintupled in size since it was established in September 2000. Its mission is to provide writing instruction across the curriculum that supports the academic, professional, and personal needs of our diverse student population. In 2006 alone, the Writing Center served over 7,000 students through more than 30 college, departmental, and course collaborations. The Writing Center's website received more than 3 million visits in 2006. In order to meet the demand for its services, the Center currently employs over 63 people and occupies nine rooms, including six computer classrooms fully equipped for multimedia and web-based instruction.

The Writing Center defines and teaches writing strategies, values, and conventions in all subject areas, helping students connect abstract writing theory to concrete application in their specific fields of study. Most of the Writing Center's initiatives, courses, and programs include multi-tiered assessment and evaluation, and target the unique needs of our students, including the large number of transfer students and the many who speak and write English as a second language. Many of the Writing Center's programs and instructional models employ writing consultants - undergraduate peer tutors or writing coaches - who support students at all levels of the writing process in small group meetings and in one-on-one tutorials.

The Center's Writing in the Disciplines (WID) partnerships with faculty, departments, and colleges have provided a broad array of writing assistance to thousands of UH students. Three of our colleges - the C. T. Bauer College of Business, the UH Law Center, and the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management - require their majors to matriculate through a Writing Center "assess and address" program designed according to their writing specifications. Other college partners working within the Writing Center's WID program include the Cullen College of Engineering, the College of Pharmacy, and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In addition to the students participating in the Center's **ENGL 1300: Fundamentals of English** and walk-in consultation programs, the Writing Center expects to serve approximately 6,000 students through its WID initiatives in the coming academic year, bringing the total number of students served to more than 8,000.

Through the experience and understanding gathered from its WID program, the Writing Center has developed a variety of writing support services that will be available for implementation in college, department, and course-level QEP initiatives.

## UH Libraries

The UH Libraries include the M.D. Anderson Library (the central library), and its four branches: the William R. Jenkins Architecture and Art Library, the Music Library, the Weston A. Pettey Optometry Library, and the Pharmacy Library. Other libraries on campus are the O'Quinn Law Library and the Conrad N. Hilton Library. Together, these libraries provide access to a wide range of quality information resources and instruction in information literacy to support teaching, learning, and research.

The UH Libraries house 2 million volumes and 15,000 journal and other serial subscriptions, while providing access to over 300 bibliographic databases and large quantities of microforms, maps, and other materials. A comprehensive collection of electronic resources makes it convenient for remote access by students at off-campus sites or to those enrolled in distance education courses. The Special Collections Department houses rare books, manuscripts, and primary source materials along with the University archives. In recent years, our libraries have provided more than 200 course-related instruction sessions and approximately 50 open workshops to facilitate the use of these resources. Currently, information literacy instruction sessions at the Libraries are offered in response to faculty requests and as open workshops.

The UH Libraries strive not only to acquire and provide access to information resources, but also to impart the knowledge and skills that will enable students to choose and effectively use resources. By partnering with the Libraries, faculty and academic units will be able to meet information literacy teaching and learning goals through local QEP initiatives.

## Office of Educational Technology and University Outreach

The Office of Educational Technology and University Outreach (ETUO) works with colleges, faculty, and other administrative units to coordinate course and program delivery, student support services, and faculty development opportunities. As part of the QEP implementation, instructional designers will be available to develop technology-based solutions for research-intensive courses or research skills modules. This can be accomplished through direct support to faculty from college and central ETUO instructional designers or through the ETUO-administered *Faculty Development Initiative Program* (FDIP), which provides competitive grant funding for faculty engaged in innovative teaching with technology (see Section 3.4.5).

The university outreach function of ETUO includes the Distance Education Office that coordinates the delivery of distance education courses. A survey of graduating seniors for 2006 indicated that 60 percent took at least one distance education course while an undergraduate at UH. Distance education courses are considered to be any course taken entirely online, through purchased media such as DVDs, via broadcast media, or by attending face-to-face or live-interactive courses at one of the Multi-Institution Teaching Centers located in outlying areas – the UH System Sugarland, UH System Cinco Ranch, The University Center at the Woodlands or the Texas Medical Center. Hybrid classes that combine face-to-face instruction with substantial online requirements are scheduled through the Distance Education office but are not considered distance education courses. Distance education courses extend the reach of UH, and address the commuting problem of many students at our metropolitan university.

Since the majority of distance education students also take courses on the main UH campus, they will benefit directly from the various QEP initiatives. Distance education students will also be able to access online tutorials and other resources remotely or through WebCT modules. Furthermore, with the help of instructional designers, faculty can integrate research-based enhancements into their distance education and hybrid courses.

### Office of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research was created in 2004 to organize, facilitate, and enhance opportunities for students to conduct undergraduate research on campus. The Office of Undergraduate Research is dedicated to helping students find and secure research opportunities and carry out creative projects conducted under the guidance of UH faculty. Housed within the Honors College, the Office assists UH undergraduates from any college or major who meet minimum GPA requirements. Students may apply to participate in the three programs offered by the Office of Undergraduate Research:

**Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship**, or SURF program, provides stipends to students and faculty to collaborate on full-time, 10-week summer research projects, and to showcase their work through presentations at the annual Undergraduate Research Day.

**Provost's Undergraduate Research Scholarship**, or PURS program, offers juniors and seniors scholarships to conduct part-time semester research projects with a faculty mentor.

**Senior Honors Thesis** program offers students up to six hours of credit during their senior year to conduct a thesis project either within or outside of their major.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, over 150 students representing various colleges participated in the SURF, PURS, and Senior Honors Thesis Programs (see Table 3). Stipend-supported mentored research will be expanded as part of the QEP and administration of these faculty mentored research programs will remain in the Office of Undergraduate Research. The Office of Undergraduate Research will also assist the Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs in promoting awareness about travel fellowship and recognition award opportunities to students who have participated in mentored research.

### Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness provides research-based information regarding the University and its role in higher education in order to support strategic planning and institutional effectiveness. The primary responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness include official university reporting, institutional research and analyses, database design and maintenance, and comparative resource materials maintenance. The institutional effectiveness function provides general academic assessment support, assists UH academic and administrative units in the institutional effectiveness planning process, and facilitates general education assessment. Staff with expertise in institutional research and effectiveness will be key partners in the assessment of QEP student learning outcomes and program goals evaluation.