



4 Implementation of the Discovery-Based Learning Initiative

4.1 Relation of the QEP to Institutional Planning and Budgeting Activities

As a major undertaking at the University of Houston, the Quality Enhancement Plan has been included among the high priority initiatives expressed in the UH System Strategic Principles. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, Strategic Principle 1 (Institutional Excellence), Initiative 6 states that the University will “develop a plan for and fund a new undergraduate research program at the University of Houston.” In August 2008, the Board of Regents will review the progress of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

At UH, all planning and budgeting decisions are made in the spring. Since implementation of the QEP will require a significant investment of new resources, QEP planning has been aligned with the institution-wide annual planning and budgeting process for FY 2009 and will be part of the UH FY 2009 Annual Plan and Budget, scheduled to be approved by the Board of Regents in August 2008 and annually thereafter. Based on preliminary budget estimates, we anticipate that the University will invest approximately \$5 million over the five-year implementation of the QEP.

4.2 QEP Implementation Schedule

Implementation for the first five years of our QEP is summarized in Table 16. In the preliminary phase (Spring 2008), the Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs will begin to coordinate and administer the proposed programs. The Discovery-Based Learning Initiative website and its associated databases will be developed during the summer and will serve as an information and resource clearinghouse beginning in early Fall 2008. In collaboration with University Marketing, a comprehensive plan will be developed to communicate the initiative’s opportunities and resources to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and prospective community and corporate partners.

Table 16

QEP Implementation Schedule

	2008		Year 1 2008 - 2009			Year 2 2009 - 2010			Year 3 2010 - 2011			Year 4 2011 - 2012			Year 5 2012 - 2013		
	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
1. Establish Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs																	
2. Design and Launch QEP Website & Databases																	
3. Develop Marketing Plan																	
4. Develop Funding Criteria and Guidelines for Programs																	
5. Research-Supportive Curriculum Development Program																	
a. Core Course																	
b. Intermediate Courses																	
c. Advanced Research-Intensive Courses																	
6. Resources for Student Development																	
a. Student Workshops and Tutorials																	
b. Reality Chats: Conversations with Practitioners and Scholars																	
c. College and Department Undergraduate Research Showcase																	
d. Student Travel Fellowships for Undergraduate Research																	
e. Graduate Student Near-Peer Mentor Development Workshops																	
7. Resources for Faculty Development																	
a. Faculty Professional Development Workshops																	
b. Best Practices Conferences for QEP Grant Recipients																	
8. Host Annual UG Research Summit																	
9. Publish UG Research Journal and Online Portal																	
10. Implement Work-Study Research Internship Program																	
11. Expand PURS Research Scholarship Program																	

Faculty committees representing a broad cross-section of disciplines will develop the guidelines and funding criteria for the three grant programs based on preliminary descriptions provided in this report and recommendations of the QEP subcommittees. The inaugural “Call for Proposals” will take place in summer of 2009. Subsequent proposal solicitations will occur bi-annually. Since funds will become available for the QEP programs in FY 2009, the first grants will be awarded effective September 1, 2008. The **Research-Supportive Curriculum Development Program** and the development of workshops and tutorials for students will be the primary focus of the first year of the program. Development workshops for graduate student near-peer mentors and faculty will also begin in the first year.

Increased funding for the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Scholarship (PURS) program will begin the first year and continue each year thereafter. Additional external support for mentored research and other Discovery-Based Learning programs will be sought through grant proposals and fund-raising throughout the five-year period.

During the second year, two campus-wide programs for research dissemination will be initiated, the Undergraduate Research Summit and the Undergraduate Journal with its Online Portal. The Work-Study Research Internship Program will also begin in the second year.

Proposals for the remainder of the QEP programs will be considered beginning in year two, including requests for funding for college/department Reality Chat Series, college/department Undergraduate Research Showcases, and Student Travel Fellowships.

4.3 Operation of the Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs

The Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs will include a director, an administrative assistant, and other support staff. The director will work closely with faculty, departments, colleges, Resource Collaborators, and other University offices to realize the vision of the **Discovery-Based Learning Initiative**. Because of the key role that assessment will play in assuring that our QEP goals and improvements in student learning outcomes are achieved, additional resources will be allocated to the Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness. The Writing and Communication Skills Center will also receive additional support. The databases and website will be developed with assistance from Information Technology Services.

A broad-based, interdisciplinary Faculty Advisory Committee will be appointed to provide consultation to the Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs. The Committee will provide ongoing advice and recommendations regarding the scope and priorities of the programs. Task-specific committees composed of faculty, staff, and/or students will be organized as needed. For example, a faculty committee will be involved in recommending standards for assessing the student learning outcomes as described in Section 5.1. A staff committee will perform a gap analysis on existing learning resources to recommend areas to be addressed by new workshops and tutorials that complement curricular enhancements.

In their own words...

“I had not realized that undergraduates could even be eligible for these opportunities....I would hope that if you start students thinking early in their career, it would be possible to encourage innovation. If you assume that you aren’t allowed then you will not even imagine the possibility. Let’s have doors open for those that want to dream a better world.”

*Jana Sharooni, Undergraduate Student,
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“Call for Ideas” Online QEP Survey*
