EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every 10 years, as part of reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), The University of Southern Mississippi develops a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), an action plan to improve an area of student learning or the student learning environment in a significant way. The University of Southern Mississippi has designed Eagles Engaged: Enhancing Gateway and Pathway Experiences as its Quality Enhancement Plan based on an institutional process drawing from broad-based involvement and evidence of need. In keeping with the University vision “to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society,” the mission of Eagles Engaged is to improve student success at two critical stages: gateways and pathways. Specifically, gateways are defined as historically difficult, high-enrollment courses foundational to the general education curriculum or to a major. Pathways, for the purposes of this QEP, are significant experiences connected to a student’s post-graduation goals, such as internships, research, service learning, or other fieldwork.

In addressing two crucial transition points, Southern Miss recognizes the need to maintain a balance between significance and scope. As a result, gateway and pathway experiences will be enhanced to have a significant impact with specific cohorts. Southern Miss will enhance five gateway courses (BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106, HIS 101 and MAT 99) through the Gateways to Completion® (G2C®) process.* G2C is part of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, a nonprofit organization of faculty scholars providing a structured, evidence-based approach for improving performance in gateway courses. Through faculty development and statistical analyses, gateway course committees, comprised of the faculty teaching the courses, design specific initiatives tailored to their courses and students. The gateway steering committee supports the gateway course committees through addressing cross-course needs, such as peer-assisted learning, as well as overall implementation. Pathway experience support will be available to all undergraduate students and undergraduate programs, but the primary emphasis will be on supporting students in undergraduate degree programs that do not currently have built-in pathway components. Under the leadership of a pathways director and a pathways council, students will have access to University-wide programs, such as internship preparation, internship advising, and internship scholarships. The pathways program will also provide grants to departments to support initiatives specific to their students’ needs.

The QEP is one plan focused on student success at two critical stages: gateways and pathways. The gateway component addresses student learning outcomes while the pathway component addresses the environment supporting student learning. The QEP Leadership Team will use a comprehensive, yet focused, set of direct and indirect measures to assess the impact on the student learning outcomes outlined below:

QEP Goal 1: Improve learning gains in QEP gateway courses (BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106, HIS 101 and MAT 99)

Gateway Student Learning Outcomes

Students will meet or exceed established student learning outcomes in QEP gateway courses:

1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science. (BSC 110, BSC 250 and CHE 106)
2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures. (HIS 101)
3. Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text. (HIS 101)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts. (MAT 99)

QEP Goal 2: Enhance the environment supporting student learning through pathway experiences that provide real-world opportunities to apply academic studies and develop career readiness

Pathway Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will apply academic content knowledge and/or skills in pathway experiences.
2. Students will develop career-readiness competencies through engagement in pathway experiences.

The overall impact of Eagles Engaged on student success will also be evaluated, including percentages of students successfully completing QEP gateway courses and student participation in pathway experiences.

Eagles Engaged will be supported by an experienced QEP director, faculty scholars from the Gardner Institute, gateway course and steering committees, a pathways director, the pathways council, and an annual budget of over $500,000 for each year of QEP implementation, totaling nearly $3,000,000.

As a result of Eagles Engaged, students will benefit from increased support for learning and success in historically difficult courses and from experiences that bolster the transition to post-graduation goals.

* Gateways to Completion and G2C are registered trademarks of the Gardner Institute and permission has been granted for use in this document.
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  - Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients
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- Appendix A – Call for Topics Email Message from President Rodney Bennett
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CHAPTER 1 / INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS TO IDENTIFY THE TOPIC

Selection of The University of Southern Mississippi QEP topic resulted from a multi-phase process established and implemented by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force over the course of the 2013-14 academic year. The process was designed to ensure opportunity for input from a wide range of constituents, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and members of the University community. The process also included an examination of key issues in relation to focus on student learning outcomes or the student learning environment, evidence of need at Southern Miss, alignment with the University’s mission, measurable goals and outcomes, capability to implement and complete the plan by 2022, and sustainability of the plan. Details of this process are described below, along with an overview of the University mission, vision, values, and strategic goals.

Institutional Context: University Mission, Values, and Strategic Goals

“The University of Southern Mississippi is a community of engaged citizens, operating as a public, student-centered, doctoral-granting research university serving Mississippi, the nation, and the world. The University is dedicated to scholarship and learning, integrating students at all levels in the creation and application of knowledge through excellence in teaching, research, creative activities, outreach, and service. The University nurtures student success by providing distinctive and competitive educational programs embedded in a welcoming environment, preparing a diverse student population to embark on meaningful life endeavors. The University of Southern Mississippi aspires to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society by providing high-quality programs and transformative experiences in a community distinguished by inclusiveness.

“The mission of the institution is supported by the following values: 1) research and instructional excellence focused on student success at all teaching sites and through campus-based and distance education; 2) student engagement that fosters personal growth, professional development, and a lifelong commitment to wellness; 3) an inclusive community that embraces the diversity of people and ideas; 4) institutional governance that respects academic freedom and faculty inclusion; 5) a campus culture characterized by warmth and mutually supportive connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni; 6) an approach to academics, research, and personal conduct based on integrity and civility; 7) an evolving curriculum that fosters lifelong curiosity and critical thinking; and 8) community participation that promotes social responsibility and citizenship. The institution’s strategic goals are to 1) support student success to foster retention, progression, and graduation; 2) promote teaching, research, and creative excellence; 3) strategically expand undergraduate and graduate enrollment; 4) strengthen economic and community partnerships; 5) invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential; 6) promote a culture of inclusiveness of people and ideas; 7) enhance physical, technological, and financial infrastructure to support our mission, vision, and values; and 8) improve efficiency and effectiveness of institutional processes and systems” (The University of Southern Mississippi, 2016).

Establishing the Task Force and Design of the Selection Process

In summer 2013, the University began the process of developing its second QEP at the President’s Retreat. The University’s director of quality enhancement, Dr. Julie Howdeshell, met with President Rodney Bennett and the Executive Cabinet to give an overview of guidelines, best practices, and a general timeline. The first step was to establish the QEP Topic Selection Task Force. Dr. Denis Wiesenburg, provost and SACSCOC liaison officer from November 2011 through June 2015, worked in collaboration with the academic deans, Faculty Senate president, and director of quality enhancement to identify a broad, cross-section of the University community to oversee the topic selection process, including 24 members as noted below:

- 15 faculty members (two from each of the University’s six colleges, the Faculty Senate president, one from University Libraries, and the associate provost for assessment and accreditation)
- Three students (one undergraduate student from the Hattiesburg campus, one undergraduate student from the Gulf Park campus, and one graduate student)
- Six staff members representing the Alumni Association, Learning Enhancement Center, Professional Development, Research Support, Quality Enhancement, and Student Success
Provost Wiesenburg appointed Dr. Kathleen Masters, professor of nursing, as chair given her experience leading a number of University-wide governing bodies. President Bennett sent formal requests for participation to the individuals nominated and charged the Task Force with 1) designing the process for identifying the topic, 2) facilitating input and dialogue across the University community, and 3) submitting recommendations to the Executive Cabinet by the end of the academic year.

QEP TOPIC SELECTION TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Adams</td>
<td>Professor, College of Education and Psychology, Gulf Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammy Barry</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Psychology, College of Education and Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Marie Chilcutt</td>
<td>Student Government Association President, 2013-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micheal Davis</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, College of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry DeFatta</td>
<td>Director of Alumni Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desmond Fletcher</td>
<td>Faculty Senate President, 2013-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adina Green</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Student Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaQuita Gresham</td>
<td>Student Government Association, Gulf Park, 2013-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Howdeshell</td>
<td>Director of Quality Enhancement, Office of the Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.T. Johnson</td>
<td>Director, Center for Research Support, Office of the VP for Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Masters</td>
<td>Professor, Collaborative Nursing Care, College of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed McCormack</td>
<td>Associate Dean and Professor, Gulf Coast Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Milroy</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Marine Science, College of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Molaison</td>
<td>Professor, Nutrition and Food Systems, College of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Peyrefitte</td>
<td>Professor, Management and International Business, College of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Piland</td>
<td>Professor, School of Kinesiology, College of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Powell</td>
<td>Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, Office of the Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheri Lyons</td>
<td>Director, Learning Enhancement Center, Office of the Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Sequeira</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Management, College of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marek Steedman</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Political Science, College of Arts and Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Varnado</td>
<td>Director, Office of Professional Development, Office of the Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney Wallace</td>
<td>Graduate Student Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Waymire</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Music Education, College of Arts and Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Welch</td>
<td>Instructor, Collaborative Nursing Care, College of Nursing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After review of best practices and much dialogue regarding possible models, the QEP Topic Selection Task Force developed a process for identifying the topic with the following goals: 1) ensuring a focus on student learning outcomes, 2) incorporating broad-based input from the University community, 3) evidence of need at USM, 4) alignment with the University mission, 5) achievability within five to six years, and 6) measurability of goals and outcomes. The process outlined by the Task Force included five phases: Call for Topics, Call for Proposals, Task Force Review of Proposals, Call for Feedback, and Task Force Recommendations. The process and timeline, shown on the next page, were announced at Academic Council (the university’s undergraduate curriculum council), meetings of chairs and directors, and posted on the QEP website.
QEP TOPIC SELECTION PROCESS TIMELINE: 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Hold first meeting of the QEP Topic Selection Task Force. Meet with the University's Institutional Leadership Team for Reaffirmation of Accreditation by SACSCOC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>QEP Topic Selection Task Force designs process for selecting the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Explain the nature and purpose of the QEP to University community. Announce timeline and process. Announce and advertise Phase I: Call for Topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Continue Phase I: Call for Topics through end of fall 2013 semester (Dec. 13, 2013). Analyze data from Call for Topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Announce findings from Phase I: Call for Topics. Announce and advertise Phase II: Call for Proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Seek public commentary on proposals (Phase IV: Call for Feedback). Consult with primary units impacted by top proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>QEP Topic Selection Task Force reviews public commentary and recommends top proposals. Recommendations are shared with president (Phase V: Task Force Recommendations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Executive Cabinet reviews recommendations of QEP Topic Selection Task Force and makes final decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PHASE ONE / CALL FOR TOPICS

During the Call for Topics, all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the community, were invited to submit ideas for the QEP through a simple, open-ended survey, which asked the following:

1. What student learning or student success topic do you think Southern Miss should focus on for its next QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan)?
2. Please mark your classification or affiliation with Southern Miss. You may mark more than one as applicable. If faculty, please indicate your college.
3. Please indicate your primary site/campus.
4. If you are interested in submitting a brief proposal or collaborating with others regarding the same topic, please list your name and email address below. (Note: There is no obligation. This will only be used to invite you to submit a proposal and/or work with others interested in the same topic.)

A copy of the Call for Topics is included as Appendix A.

University Communications developed a marketing plan to promote widespread participation from November 11 through December 13, 2013. Using the University mantra of “Southern Miss To The Top” as its basis, the QEP materials included the theme, “Take Your Idea To The Top!” (See poster on next page.) Materials included a QR code and the URL to the electronic survey where ideas could be submitted. Communication was widespread and frequent and designed to reach students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the University community on both campuses. Specifically, communication and marketing included the following:

1. Letter from president (Appendix B)
2. Presentation to Faculty Senate
3. Presentation to Academic Council
4. Napkin holders in student cafeteria
5. Posters in buildings on Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses
6. Presentations to all six colleges
7. Presentation to University Libraries
8. Presentation to Student Affairs
9. Article in student newspaper
10. Advertisement in student newspaper
11. Direct email to 60,000 Alumni Association members
12. Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn
13. Letter from Student Government Association president to student organization leaders
14. Weekly announcement on USM mailout, the University listserv
15. Direct email to Gulf Park faculty
16. Blackboard (online course system)
17. Eagle Vision screen in student union
18. Link on main USM home page
Every 10 years, Southern Miss has the opportunity to develop a new QEP, or Quality Enhancement Plan — an action plan to improve an area of student learning or student success in a SIGNIFICANT way through a university-wide, multi-year initiative.

ALL members of the Southern Miss community are invited to participate. Responses will be received through DEC. 13, 2013.

WANT TO LEARN MORE? GO TO WWW.USM.EDU/QEP.

TAKE YOUR IDEA TO THE TOP!
Call for Topics: Responses by Constituency Group
The Call for Topics yielded 636 responses from a wide range of constituents. Respondents were asked to identify their relationship(s) with the University: undergraduate student, graduate student, faculty, staff, alumni, parent of USM student, community member, and/or employer of USM graduates. Respondents could mark more than one so demographic totals exceed 636. The breakdown of respondents is listed below:

- Alumni – 198
- Faculty – 185
- Undergraduate students – 160
- Staff – 106
- Graduate students – 78
- Parents – 26
- Employers – 11
- Community members (not one of the above) – 5

Call for Topics: Faculty Responses by College/Area
Faculty responses were proportionate to USM faculty demographics. (For example, of the faculty responding, 29% were from the College of Arts and Letters. The percentage of faculty at USM in the College of Arts and Letters at that time was 32%.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Faculty Survey Respondents</th>
<th>% of Faculty at USM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Letters</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Psychology</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Libraries</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Call for Topics: Primary Campus Affiliation
Responses by campus were also proportionate to the size of the teaching sites.

- Hattiesburg – 500
- Gulf Park – 81
- Online – 16
- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory – 3
- Stennis Space Center – 3
- None Indicated – 33

Call for Topics: Top 10 Topics
From the 636 open-ended responses, similar topics/themes were grouped together. The top topics from Phase I were as follows:

1. Retention, graduation, and student success
2. Experiential learning
3. Critical thinking and problem-solving
4. Career preparation and professionalism
5. Student health and well-being
6. Advising and academic planning
7. Tutoring, study skills, test-taking, and time management
8. Math, quantitative reasoning, and statistics
9. Sustainability education
10. Tied: Financial literacy and success; global connections

Call for Topics: Interest in Submitting Proposal
When asked if interested in submitting a brief proposal or collaborating with others regarding the same topic with no obligation, almost half of the respondents (299 of 636) were interested and included their names and email addresses.
PHASE TWO / CALL FOR PROPOSALS

All members of the Southern Miss community were invited to participate in the second phase of the topic selection process, the Call for Proposals. (See one example in Appendix C.) To encourage proposals from a broad range of constituents, incentives were provided. Specifically, the Call for Proposals noted that the top proposals identified by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force would receive from $500 - $1,500 with at least three proposals receiving awards, including at least one student award. Individuals or teams were eligible. In addition to the financial award, the top proposals were shared with the president and Executive Cabinet.

The Call for Proposals requested the proposer to include as much of the following information as possible: 1) working concept title, 2) rationale for the topic, 3) expected outcomes, 4) actions to be implemented, 5) student cohort, 6) assessment plan, 7) resources needed, and 8) contact information. See copy of the Call for Proposals in Appendix D.

The Topic Selection Task Force included the following questions in the Call for Proposals as evaluation criteria:

1. Is the QEP focused on student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning?
2. Is there evidence that a focus on this area is needed at Southern Miss?
3. Is the QEP focus aligned with the University’s mission?
4. Are the goals and outcomes of the QEP achievable within a five- to six-year time period?
5. Are the goals and outcomes measurable?
6. Does the institution have the financial capability to implement the QEP in five to six years and sustain the initiatives long-term?

The Call for Proposals was advertised widely. In addition to announcements via USM Mailout, college meetings of chairs and directors, and other traditional media outlets, members of the University community that elected to include their names and contact information during the Call for Topics phase were specifically contacted by the QEP director and given the opportunity to form teams with other people interested in the same topics.

Twenty-four proposals were received, including proposals written by faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and represented both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses. A list of proposals is provided below:

1. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills Enrichment
2. Environmental Engineering
3. The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students
4. Rethinking Academic Advising through a Career Development Lens
5. Making Connections: Exploring Relationships
6. Ethics Across the Curriculum
7. Curiosity Unfolding: Developing Creative Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills
8. From the Ground Up: Growing an Interdisciplinary, Student-Focused Laboratory for Environmental and Sustainability Studies (LESS)
9. Creative Confidence
10. Tuning: A Model for Increasing Transparency in Student Outcomes
11. PEMDAS: Putting Emphasis on Mathematical Development and Success
12. Increase Retention Rates Through Improved Community and Aptitude Matching
13. Transitions
14. Have a Seat with Us
15. Civic Engagement
16. Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL)
17. Eagle Strong! Creating a Healthy Environment for Student Success
18. Active Engagement
19. Success Matters at Southern Miss – Eagles Engaged
20. Navigating the Knowledge Ecosystem
21. The Promises of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
22. Student-Centered Learning: Academic Learning Commons
23. Integrating Critical Thinking Approaches Across Curriculum and Programming
24. Graduate Assistant Teaching Program
**PHASE THREE / TASK FORCE REVIEW OF PROPOSALS**

In reviewing the proposals, members of the Task Force were asked to first read and review the Call for Proposals document and the University Strategic Plan (Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities). After reading each proposal, each Task Force member was asked to rate the proposal using the QEP Topic Proposal Rubric. See Appendix E. The rubric was developed by the Task Force and reflected the same criteria noted earlier (focus on student learning or the student learning environment, evidence of need at USM, alignment with the University mission, achievability within five to six years, and measurable goals and outcomes). After review of related institutional assessment data and further discussion, six proposals were identified by the Task Force to move to the Call for Feedback phase. These are listed below in alphabetical order, not rank.

1. **Curiosity Unfolding**: Developing Creative Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills
2. **Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL)**
3. **PEMDAS**: Putting Emphasis on Mathematical Development and Success
4. **Rethinking Academic Advising Through a Career Development Lens**
5. **Success Matters at Southern Miss – Eagles Engaged**
6. **The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students**

**PHASE FOUR / CALL FOR FEEDBACK**

Each proposer was asked to develop an abstract. Both the abstract and full proposal were posted on the QEP website and a link provided in all communication during the Call for Feedback phase. Members of the University community were invited to provide feedback either online or through one of three listening sessions. The Call for Feedback announcement and link were highlighted on the USM homepage (Appendix F) and communicated widely.

Online feedback asked respondents to mark the top three topics and required a brief explanation of their choices. Demographics were also included regarding relationship with the University and, if faculty or student, the college of one’s discipline and primary site/campus. A copy of the Call for Feedback survey is provided in Appendix G. Listening sessions were held the week of April 14 with two sessions on the Hattiesburg campus and one session on the Gulf Park campus. (See flyer for Gulf Park session in Appendix H.)

Respondents were also invited to include contact information if they would like to participate during the Research and Design Phase. Over 190 responses were received via online feedback with the strongest response from faculty and alumni. Respondents could select more than one relationship as applicable: 75 faculty; 73 alumni; 40 students; 7 parents; two members of the community (that were not one of the above). Faculty response was distributed as follows: College of Arts and Letters – 10; College of Business – 7; College of Education and Psychology – 13; College of Health – 15; College of Nursing – 6; College of Science and Technology – 15; Libraries – 6. Over 80% of respondents listed their primary campus as Hattiesburg (81.05%), nearly 16% listed Gulf Park (15.79%), and almost 3% indicated online (2.63%). Of the 190 respondents, 69 people included contact information as interested in participating in the Research and Design phase. Seventy-five people participated in the listening sessions, and while this participation was lower in number than online participation, the sessions provided an important opportunity for dialogue and greater discussion about the proposed topics.

Common themes emerged from responses in the Call for Feedback, including the concern of the limited scope of the math proposal for a QEP topic, the similar focus on critical thinking in Curiosity Unfolding and The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students, and the large set of strategies included in the proposal on high-impact practices. Of the 190 responses, Curiosity Unfolding garnered the highest percentage from the Call for Feedback with 67% followed by Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning with 56%. The next three were within 1-2% percentage points of each other: The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students (51%), Rethinking Academic Advising Through a Career Development Lens (50%), and Success Matters at Southern Miss: Eagles Engaged (48%), followed by PEMDAS: Putting Emphasis on Mathematical Development and Success (30%).

**PHASE FIVE / TASK FORCE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Topic Selection Task Force then reviewed input from all phases of the topic selection process and related assessment data.

The data showed that students at The University of Southern Mississippi have scored at or above the national level for many years on standardized tests in the area of critical thinking. Specifically, USM had significantly higher scores in critical thinking compared to national averages on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) in 2005 and 2006. In 2009, scores on the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) were comparable in critical thinking when comparing local and national averages, but were lower in math in comparison to national averages. Similar results were found on the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly MAPP) when compared to national means over the 2008-13 period.

Alumni surveys also showed that they were more satisfied with their preparation to think critically and solve problems in comparison to other items such as the availability of academic support services and tutoring. See the chart on the next page.
CRITICAL THINKING JUXTAPOSED WITH ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Southern Miss Alumni Survey, 2009-10 Cohort
Satisfaction Regarding Academic Coursework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very Satisfied (1)</th>
<th>Satisfied (2)</th>
<th>Neither Dissatisfied Nor Satisfied (3)</th>
<th>Dissatisfied (4)</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied (5)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation to think critically and solve problems</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of academic support services/tutoring</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lower mean = Higher satisfaction

Notes: Of eight items in this section, tutoring indicated least satisfaction; N=98-100; Survey conducted by Institutional Research.

Data also showed that, overall, students were generally satisfied with advising, but less so in regard to discussions about long-term goals and opportunities for fieldwork, internships, etc. The table below shows an academic advising survey conducted in 2009, with 2,019 student responses. Students reported high rates of satisfaction with advising in general, but less so in regard to discussions with advisors regarding long-term goals. Combining “strongly agree” and “agree” responses, satisfaction was 70 – 85% for all items below except for discussion of long-term goals, which was 58.1%.

Academic Advising Survey 2009 (n=2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My advisor</th>
<th>Strongly Agree + Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>helps me make informed decisions regarding my academic career.</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is knowledgeable about degree requirements.</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is knowledgeable about requirements for my major.</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has a positive attitude toward advising me.</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourages me as I progress in my studies.</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discusses long-term goals with me.</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar findings are shown in recent surveys of undergraduate degree recipients. The table below shows findings from spring 2013 and spring 2014, with the lowest percentages related to discussion of career goals.

Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients (Spring 2013 n = 1004; Spring 2014 n = 801)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree + Agree</th>
<th>Spring 2013</th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, the advisors were helpful.</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, the advisors were knowledgeable.</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors were available during posted office hours.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time was available during advising sessions.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advice I received was very useful for my career goals.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advice I received was very useful for my educational goals.</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A survey of Southern Miss alumni (2009-10 cohort) also noted this concern. Alumni were asked to report satisfaction in the context of their academic majors. A lower mean indicated higher satisfaction. Of the 13 items in this section, items 2, 3, and 4 (long-term/career goals, opportunities for internships, and opportunities for research) indicated least satisfaction.

**Southern Miss Alumni Survey, 2009-10 Cohort (n=98-100)**
(Lower mean indicates higher satisfaction.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Availability of advisor</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effectiveness of advisor in establishing long-term/career goals</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Opportunities for internships/fieldwork in major</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opportunities to engage in student-faculty collaborative research</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Preparation to think critically and solve problems</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Availability of academic support services/tutoring</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence of need and opportunity for impact was clear and significant in regard to the need to address historically difficult, high-enrollment courses.

The table below shows a sample of high-enrollment foundational courses with consistently high rates of students earning less than a C or withdrawing. Courses include introductory courses in history, mathematics, biological sciences, chemistry, anthropology, and accounting. Data covers fall 2009 – fall 2014.

**Fall 2009 – Fall 2014: High enrollment courses with consistently high rates of students earning lower than C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th># of times course in &lt;67% list</th>
<th>Total # of students</th>
<th># with C or better</th>
<th># with Less than C</th>
<th># withdrew</th>
<th>Average of % C or better</th>
<th>Average of % less than C</th>
<th>Average of % withdrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIS 101</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9,775</td>
<td>5,401</td>
<td>3,992</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 99</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6,192</td>
<td>2,939</td>
<td>2,984</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS 102</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8,184</td>
<td>5,090</td>
<td>2,818</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 101</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,424</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,987</td>
<td>1,815</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC 250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2,834</td>
<td>1,692</td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 106</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANT 101</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC 200</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>1,386</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above courses, except MAT 99 (Intermediate Algebra) and ACC 200 (Introduction to Financial Accounting), are general education courses. A review of general education student learning outcome data confirmed that students are not meeting targets for the established general education learning outcomes in these courses. It should be noted that students are generally performing at comparable levels nationally on standardized tests in these areas, indicating that these courses are historically difficult nationally. In fact, the John N. Gardner Institute’s Gateways to Completion program shows that of the 13 founding institutions working on gateway, or historically difficult courses, the gateway courses identified most frequently after an intensive review were in the areas of college-level mathematics, biological sciences, history, English, psychology, chemistry, and accounting (Koch, 2015).
Graduation and persistence rates also underscore the need to address student success. As of fall 2015, the six-year graduation rate at Southern Miss was 49.8%, and the retention rate of first-time, full-time freshmen was 72.5%.

Enhancing student success also supports current priorities for the institution. Over the last several years, the University has been engaged in a number of efforts aimed at student success. Most notable among these endeavors was the work of the Student Success Steering Committee (SSSC) in 2013, which developed over 40 integrated recommendations designed to enhance student progression and graduation at USM, and the follow-up actions of the Student Success Implementation Team in 2014-15, which began the realization of the SSSC recommendations within University policies and operations. In July 2015, the University administration acted on a key recommendation of the steering committee to establish an associate provost position to coordinate and extend student success efforts by naming Dr. Amy Miller as the associate provost for academic excellence.

After reviewing input from all phases of the topic selection process and an examination of assessment data, the Task Force recommended the following three topics listed in alphabetical order, not rank, below. The Task Force also recommended that one of these three topics be chosen and paired with Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL), which focuses on active and experiential learning in the form of internships and similar experiences. A copy of the minutes is included as Appendix I.

1. Academic advising and career development
2. Critical thinking as articulated in Curiosity Unfolding
3. Student success, as articulated specifically in Eagles Engaged, which focuses on historically difficult classes

An overview of the feedback and data related to the recommended topics was presented to President Bennett and Provost Wiesenburg in May 2014. In narrowing the topic from three to one, the president and provost requested additional data. Chairs of academic departments, as well as the directors of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness, were asked to submit data related to the recommended topics by the director of quality enhancement.

Final Selection of QEP Theme

The need to focus on historically difficult gateway courses and experiences related to students’ post-graduation goals, such as internships, was reflected in every phase of the topic selection process. In Phase I: Call for Topics, the top two topics from the open-ended survey were 1) retention, graduation, and student success and 2) experiential learning. Proposals on these topics were submitted during Phase II: Call for Proposals, and the Topic Selection Task Force selected proposals on these themes for the top six for further review. Assessment data clearly showed greatest evidence of need in regard to a focus on historically difficult classes and the need to increase satisfaction of students and alumni in regard to opportunities to gain experience related to long-term goals. These two critical areas also resonate with the University mission to “nurture student success by providing distinctive and competitive educational programs,” the values of “instructional excellence focused on student success” and “student engagement that fosters personal growth [and] professional development,” and institutional strategic goals to “1) support student success to foster retention, progression, and graduation, 2) promote teaching, research, and creative excellence, and 3) invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential” (USM Mission, 2016). Upon review of the input provided throughout the topic selection phase, institutional assessment data, and the recommendations of the QEP Topic Selection Task Force, President Bennett and the Executive Cabinet voted unanimously to approve Eagles Engaged with a focus on historically difficult gateway courses and experiential learning in the form of internships and related experiences as the QEP theme at their meeting on September 16, 2014. A copy of the University announcement is provided in Appendix J.

With the theme identified, the University began the QEP Research and Design phase in fall 2014. Dr. Bennett issued written invitations to faculty, staff, and students to serve on the QEP Research and Design Team with the goal of having broad-based representation from both campuses and individuals with expertise in areas related to the QEP theme. Kelly Lester, associate professor of dance, was asked to serve as chair given her work as chair of the University Assessment Committee and her involvement in the QEP topic selection phase as a topic proposal contributor. The full membership of the QEP Research and Design Team is listed below and includes broad-based faculty representation, staff from areas related to the QEP theme, and student representatives from both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses.
The first task of the QEP Research and Design Team was to develop operational definitions, goals and student learning outcomes, in keeping with the input of the University community during the topic selection process and alignment with institutional need and assessment data.

Definitions
For the purposes of this QEP, gateways are historically difficult high-enrollment courses foundational to the general education curriculum or major. Pathways are significant experiences connected to a student’s post-graduation goals, significant enough to be included on a graduate school application or résumé, such as internships, research, service learning, entry-level positions and other fieldwork.

Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
Two goals have been established for Eagles Engaged, one for the gateway component and one for the pathway component. The student learning outcomes for each goal are outlined below.

QEP Goal 1: Improve learning gains in QEP gateway courses (BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106, HIS 101 and MAT 99)

Gateway Student Learning Outcomes
Students will meet or exceed established student learning outcomes in QEP gateway courses as listed below:
1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science. (BSC 110, BSC 250 and CHE 106)
2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures, or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures. (HIS 101)
3. Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text. (HIS 101)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts. (MAT 99)

QEP Goal 2: Enhance the environment supporting student learning through pathway experiences that provide real-world opportunities to apply academic studies and develop career readiness

Pathway Student Learning Outcomes
1. Students will apply academic content knowledge and/or skills in pathway experiences.
2. Students will develop career-readiness competencies through engagement in pathway experiences.
CHAPTER 2 / REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND BEST PRACTICES

_Eagles Engaged_ focuses on two critical areas for undergraduate students: 1) successful completion of historically difficult gateway courses and 2) pathway experiences to bolster post-graduation goals. In developing strategies to enhance these two areas, the QEP Research and Design Team first conducted a review of the literature and best practices. This review focused on how other institutions have addressed gateway and pathway experiences and models that USM could adapt to support the specific goals and outcomes of this QEP.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF GATEWAY COURSES**

While access to college has been and continues to be a priority nationally, the focus on college success and completion has also garnered needed attention. As noted by the national nonprofit organization, Complete College America, “between 1970 and 2009, undergraduate enrollment in the United States more than doubled, while the completion rate has been virtually unchanged” (Complete College America, 2015). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at a public four-year degree-granting institution in fall 2007 was 58%. The four-year graduation rate nationally for four-year public institutions for the fall 2007 cohort was 33.5% (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Rates varied based on selectivity of admissions and percentage of applicants accepted. The data is even more concerning given demographic projections as “higher education’s newest participants (first-year students) will be increasingly drawn from the very same populations that have historically fared the worst in postsecondary education” (Koch, 2012, p. 34). Student success at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) constitutes an issue of current critical importance. The six-year graduation rate at USM as of fall 2015 was 49.8%, and the four-year graduation rate was 25.9% (USM Fact Book, 2015).

Given that graduation rates improve with selectivity of admissions, as shown by the NCES data, there can understandably be a rationalization that little can be done to improve student success beyond admitting better-prepared students. However, in _Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter_, Kuh (2005) and his fellow researchers highlight educational practices at four-year institutions with higher-than-predicted graduation rates. The authors note that while there is “no single blueprint for student success” (p. 20), colleges with higher-than-predicted graduation rates engage students at high levels in educationally purposeful activities (p. 173).

In “A Call to Action: Why High-Enrollment, High-Risk, Gateway Courses Require an Intentional Institutional Effort,” Koch (2012) notes that “future success in higher education pursuits is directly correlated with success in gateway courses – students have to succeed in gateway courses to be able to move on to further study” (p. 29). Clifford Adelman, author of _Answers in the Tool Box_ (1999) and _The Toolbox Revisited_ (2006), recommends “for academic administrators to identify their key gateway courses and regularly monitor participation” (p. xix).
Defining Gateway Course Success

Inherent in the discussion of student success and improving gateway courses is the issue of academic rigor. Improving student success in historically difficult foundational courses must not come at the expense of high standards of academic excellence in student learning. So, what is the standard for determining gateway course success? Koch (2012) provides a working definition: “Institutions and their students will have successfully addressed the gateway course failure issue when all students who have the capacity and will to succeed in a gateway course are met with a coordinated institutional system that allows them to do so” (p. 31). This definition neither rewards poor student effort nor allows institutions to tolerate high levels of failure or ignore opportunities that have been shown to have a positive impact on student learning or success.

Strategies for Enhancing Gateway Courses

A number of practices have been identified in the literature to address courses with historically high rates of students earning a grade of D or F, withdrawing, or not completing the course. While not an exhaustive list, strategies for enhancing success in gateway courses include the following:

- Active learning (Armbruster, Patel, et al, 2009)
- Course redesign (Fink, 2007; Kiener, 2009; Lightner, Bober, & Willi, 2007; Twigg, 2009)
- Co-requisite remediation models for developmental courses (Complete College America, 2012)
- Early alert programs (Eimers, 2000)
- Learner analytics (Arnold, K.E. and Pistilli, M.D., 2012; Dietz-Uhler & Hurn, 2013)
- Learning communities (Addis, Quardokus, Bassham, et al, 2013)
- Immediate feedback (Novak, 2011; Persky & Pollack, 2007; Sun et al, 2014)
- Summer bridge programs (Barnett, et al, 2012)
- Supplemental instruction (Martin & Arendale, 1993; Stone & Jacobs, 2008)

Supporting Faculty-Driven Initiatives

As the QEP Research and Design Team evaluated various strategies for improving success in gateway courses, the concern emerged as to how strategies, such as those listed above, would fit the unique needs of various disciplines and teaching styles and how a variety of gateway course faculty would respond to various programs. This concern is discussed by Dee, Hearne and Henkin in the article, “Enabling initiative and enterprise: Faculty-led course redesign in a STEM discipline,” which outlines how institutions can use both institutional-level support and faculty-driven grassroots efforts to promote student success. Dee, Henkin, and Hearne (2011) cite the study by Eckel and Kezar (2003) that examined initiatives funded by the Kellogg Foundation and guided by the American Council on Education that showed that only six of the 26 institutions reviewed were successful (pp. 36-37). Dee et al suggest that, “in contrast to large-scale initiatives, starting at the level of individual courses may be a more productive route to pedagogical improvement. Faculty teams can guide the course redesign process, identify practices to foster student engagement, and build active learning environments that promote higher levels of achievement within the STEM disciplines” (p. 57).

While grassroots faculty-driven initiatives are critical, Dee, Hearne, and Henkin also note the importance of institutional support:

Faculty innovators...report that they frequently struggle to find institutional support for their new ideas (Dee and Daly, 2009). They may experiment with new pedagogical approaches but find that institutional resources remain unavailable to extend their initial efforts. Faculty-initiated pedagogical reforms, consequently, tend to remain peripheral to the institution and seldom result in institutional-wide improvements in student learning... In order to improve teaching and learning, higher education institutions need to foster effective linkages between institution-wide change initiatives and local, grassroots innovations (Kezar & Lester, 2009, pp. 36-37).

Based on work with hundreds of colleges and universities through the Foundations of Excellence process, Koch (2012) also cautions that while strategies or programs such as those noted above are important in enhancing student success in gateway courses, they are “not sufficient” (p. 40). Improving student success in gateway courses calls for “coordinated efforts” to “bring together people and programs to create an intentionally connected gateway course success plan for each of the high-risk courses” (p. 40). This model has been used successfully with institutions in enhancing first-year student success through the John N. Gardner Institute Foundations of Excellence (FoE) process as demonstrated by external evaluation (Drake, 2010).
LITERATURE AND BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO PATHWAY EXPERIENCES

Note: In reviewing the literature on pathway experiences, the term “internships” will be used to include undergraduate research, service at non-profit organizations, and other fieldwork, in keeping with the operational definition of pathway experiences established for this QEP.

The percentage of students participating in internships or similar experiences has seen a steady rise over past decades, as shown in the 2014 Gallup-Purdue data and provided below:

While attending [college name], I had an internship or job that allowed me to apply what I was learning in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation years</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1959</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-69</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-79</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-89</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-99</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-09</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-14</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seymour & Ray, 2014, Gallup-Purdue Index

The increase in participation in internships reflects growing expectations among employers for job candidates with experience as shown by key findings from a 2012 study conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media’s Marketplace, such as the following:

- Employers place more weight on experience, particularly internships and employment during school vs. academic credentials, including GPA and college major when evaluating a recent graduate for employment.
- Weighted results show that college major is the most important academic credential to employers; however, internships and employment during college are the top traits employers consider in evaluating recent graduates for a position.
- An internship is the single most important credential for recent college graduates to have on their résumés in their job searches among all industry segments… (Chronicle, p. 11).

The relevance of the internship to the field of employment is also critical. “Employers generally place unpaid internships, followed by volunteer work and graduate degree program, the best alternatives as they evaluate graduates for hire. Employment in an unrelated field has little to no impact but is much more favorable than no employment at all” (Chronicle, p. 84).

Despite the rise in internships, the Gallup-Purdue University study also shows that “only about one-third of the most recent grads strongly agree they had an internship or job as undergrads that allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom” (Seymour & Ray, 2014).

In Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter, Kuh (2005) and his coauthors note that “internships and other experiential learning activities are plentiful” at institutions with higher-than-predicted graduation rates (p. 236). Kuh also stresses, however, that while many institutions have these types of activities, in order for them to be effective, they must be “high-quality, as evidenced by their positive impact on persistence and graduation rates and student-reported activities” (p. 176). Internships, undergraduate research, and service learning are three of the ten teaching and learning practices that “have been widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds (Kuh, 2008, p. 9).” Further, “these practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts” (Kuh, 2008, p. 9). Kuh goes on to explain the challenge in implementing such practices without institutional incentives.

“If…these and other effective educational activities [were] commonly available to every student, perhaps colleges and universities could do a better job in helping students compensate for shortcomings in academic preparation and create a culture that fosters student success. But left to their own devices, many students and faculty members may not do these things. Educationally effective institutions recognize this and create incentives to induce purposeful behavior toward these ends” (p. 21).

The concern that colleges and universities are not fully utilizing the potential of internship programs was also shown in Weible’s 2009 article, “Are Universities Reaping the Available Benefits Internship Programs Offer?” which shows the results of an internship study in the context of business schools. According to Weible, “Internships are underappreciated for the role they play in business schools. Although 95% of the institutions responding to the survey offered some form of internships, it seems only a small percentage of those institutions cultivate the rewards” (p. 63). Weible’s research also noted the benefits strong internship programs bring to colleges and universities, including recruiting students, enhancing the school’s reputation, and assisting in economic development through community partnerships (p. 63).
In addition to the benefits internship programs have for institutions, students also report high satisfaction with participating in an internship experience. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers Class of 2015 Student Survey, student satisfaction with internship and co-op experiences is high with more than 75% of undergraduates reporting that they were “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with their internship or experiential education assignments (NACE, 2015).

Strategies and Models for Promoting Student Participation in Internship or Pathway Experiences

Given the importance placed on internships by employers, the benefits linked with higher-than-expected graduation rates, student satisfaction by those who participate and the need to expand participation, a number of strategies have been developed to increase participation, including the following:

- Academic credit
- Student workshops
- One-on-one student internship counseling
- Faculty workshops and support
- Assistance to employers in developing internships
- Internship courses
- Internship databases
- Internship fairs
- Stipends and scholarships
- Assistance with logistics
- Student symposiums for students to share internship experiences

Internship Program Models

In developing the initiatives for the pathway component of Eagles Engaged, the QEP Research and Design Team explored a variety of models for promoting internship participation. Below is a sample of internship programs at a variety of institutions, along with information about delivery structures, services, and staffing, where available.

Furman University Internship Office

Furman University, a small liberal arts college in Greenville, South Carolina, has had a college-level internship program in place for more than 10 years, and with nearly 70% of its students completing an internship, provides one successful model. The internship program at Furman includes a dedicated Internship Office led by the internship program director and a coordinator. The Internship Office offers direct support to students seeking internships, to faculty wanting to develop internship opportunities for their students, and to employers seeking interns. The Internship Office assists students in preparing for the internship search, locating internships, and creating internship opportunities to match student interests with organizational needs. The Furman Advantage program directly funds student internships through competitive fellowships. The internship must be an off-campus summer internship that requires 35 to 40 hours per week and lasts a minimum of eight weeks. Students receiving funding are also required to complete academic assignments that compliment what the student learns in the internship (Furman University, 2015).

The University of Central Florida (UCF) Office of Experiential Learning

According to their website, the UCF Office of Experiential Learning “instructs and promotes applied learning, facilitates the development of quality experiential learning courses through coordination with and training for faculty campus-wide, and collaborates with employers and community partners locally, nationally, and internationally to help them access talented students and assist in the educational process” (University of Central Florida, 2015). The office serves as a comprehensive center coordinating a range of experiential opportunities, including co-ops, internships, and service learning and is led by a director, a program director for service learning, and a team of faculty coordinators.

The University of Colorado Denver Experiential Learning Center

The University of Colorado Denver has an Experiential Learning Center (ELC) consisting of seven professional staff that “serve as the primary campus resource for the coordination of experiential learning activities.” This includes “serving students, faculty, employers, and community partners” to “coordinate academic and not-for-credit internships, promote undergraduate research experiences, and provide professional development opportunities” (University of Colorado Denver, 2015). Different majors are assigned to specific internship advisors, and students attend one of their weekly internship orientations before meeting with an internship advisor. The ELC also works with employers to design internships and ensure that they meet university criteria. This includes an employer guide to help employers recruit and hire interns, as well as evaluate their internship programs. The University of Colorado Denver ELC also hosts internship fairs to help students connect with employers. The ELC also provides support to faculty by providing resources and assistance in managing student internship experiences. The UC Denver model also includes connecting students with undergraduate research opportunities.

The University of Mississippi Internship Experience

The Division of Outreach at The University of Mississippi offers degree-seeking juniors and seniors internship opportunities in New York and Washington, D.C., while earning academic credit in their fields of study. As noted on
the Internship Experience website, “a cohort of University of Mississippi students go through the program together, providing friendship, support, and encouragement while learning how to navigate both the workplace and the city” (University of Mississippi, 2014). Internship Experience staff work with students to identify and apply for internships, partner with financial aid to adjust cost of attendance for those receiving federal financial aid, and provide safe, secure housing in apartments and residence halls where internship students live with their fellow cohort participants.

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Career Development Internship Guarantee Program

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Career Development and Placement Assistance (CDPA) instituted an Internship Guarantee Program in which students who complete its Internship Prep Program (IPP) and related requirements are “guaranteed an internship or other experiential learning opportunity before graduation” (NACE, 2015). The IPP includes workshops and individual appointments. According to Cheryl Finlay, director of the program, the CDPA was charged with three objectives: 1) establish an internship preparation program, 2) become a centralized clearinghouse for internship opportunities, and 3) expand internship offerings by cultivating new relationships with internal and external organizations (NACE, 2015). The CDPA has a team of three full-time staff to manage internship initiatives. The success of the program is seen in part through the rise in participation numbers. When the program was launched in 2012, approximately 300 students participated. By the third year of the program, more than 1,300 students were participating. Impact of the program on post-graduation placement will be available after the first cohort graduates in 2016. Based on the CDPA Post-Graduation Status Report for the class of 2013, 76% of students reported completing experiential learning during the course of their undergraduate careers (NACE, 2015).

Summary

The review of literature and best practices provided the QEP Research and Design Team with a repertoire of strategies and structures to consider in enhancing gateway and pathway experiences. In developing the initiatives further, the QEP Research and Design Team conducted University surveys of departments with undergraduate degree programs and invited participation by gateway course faculty in the Annual Gateway Experience Conference to explore strategies further. The use of broad-based involvement in the development of the Eagles Engaged initiatives and an outline of the initiatives is provided in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3 /  
BROAD-BASED INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF INITIATIVES

After a review of the literature and best practices, the QEP was further refined through the work of the QEP Research and Design Team based on additional input from the University community and further analysis of institutional needs. In doing so, the Research and Design Team sought to ensure significant impact while maintaining a manageable scope. The initiatives that comprise the QEP, outlined in this chapter, are designed to have clear alignment with the established goals and outcomes with cohorts that reflect greatest institutional need.

EAGLES ENGAGED INITIATIVES

Eagles Engaged has two gateway initiatives and five pathway initiatives to support attainment of the overall goals and outcomes of the QEP:

GATEWAY INITIATIVES

G1: Participation in the John N. Gardner Institute Gateways to Completion process for five courses, including
   a. A structured course analysis and redesign process;
   b. A teaching and learning academy with face-to-face and virtual workshops; and
   c. An analytics process collaborative with historic and predictive analytics.

G2: $200,000 annually in course grants to support enhancements for the five QEP gateway courses

PATHWAY INITIATIVES

P1. Creation of a dedicated, full-time position to support student pathway experiences
P2. Establishment of a pathways council, an advisory team to promote pathway experiences
P3. $50,000 annually in undergraduate student scholarships to support pathway experiences
P4. $50,000 in departmental grants for degree programs that currently have no required field experiences to develop processes that fit the unique needs of their students
P5. Graduation recognition of undergraduate students completing structured reflection of pathway experiences
DEVELOPMENT OF GATEWAY INITIATIVES

In reviewing literature and best practices related to historically difficult courses, the QEP Research and Design Team became interested in the work of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, a nonprofit group with the mission of “partnering with higher education institutions, individual educators, and other entities to increase institutional responsibility for improving student learning, persistence, and completion” (John N. Gardner Institute, 2015).

ABOUT GATEWAYS TO COMPLETION (G2C)

The Gardner Institute, best known for its work with first-year experience programs, offers institutions an evidence-based process for improving outcomes in historically difficult, high-enrollment gateway courses referred to as Gateways to Completion, or G2C. Institutions participating in the process have seen positive results, including decreases in D, F, W, and I grades, higher performance in the next course in the sequence, increases in first-to-second term retention rates, and decreases in numbers of students in poor academic standing.

G2C was developed with the insight of a distinguished national advisory committee, including representatives from the American Historical Association, the Mathematical Association of America, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE Institute, EDUCAUSE, the International Center for Supplemental Instruction, and faculty and staff from two- and four-year institutions, such as University of Texas at Austin, University of South Carolina, Pennsylvania State University, University of Central Florida, and Purdue University. The membership of the G2C National Advisory Council is provided as Appendix K.

G2C provides a process for institutions to follow to address and improve outcomes in historically difficult, or gateway, courses. As described by the Gardner Institute, Gateways to Completion includes:

1. a structured course analysis and redesign process;
2. a teaching and learning academy with face-to-face and virtual workshops; and
3. an analytics process collaborative with historic and predictive analytics.

The process is faculty-driven. Each gateway course has a course-specific committee that is chaired by and includes faculty teaching the course. The course analysis and redesign process and the teaching and learning academy work together as a faculty development process by facilitating a structured self-study of six principles and 52 key performance indicators addressing academic policy and practice, faculty instruction, continuous improvement, learning, students, and support. The course-specific committees are provided with institutional data about their course, including rates of D, F, W, and I grades with breakdowns by key variables, such as method of instructional delivery, instructor designation (graduate assistant, adjunct, or regular) student gender, full-time or part-time status, age, ethnicity/race, Pell eligibility and first-generation status, and DFWI rates in next course in sequence. In addition, information about support services, institutional policies, early warning systems, and institutional support services is provided. Student input is provided through the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG), an 18-question survey that asks students their perceptions on how a host of variables promote gains in learning. Items address topics such as pace of instruction, peer support, feedback on graded assignments, and students’ willingness to seek help. (More about the SALG is provided in Chapter 5.)

The faculty teaching the course and serving on the committee work through the guided course analysis and redesign process by addressing two principles each month for the first three months of the process. Their assessment of the key performance indicators, supported by evidence drawn from data, is entered into the G2C Inventory, along with recommendations to strengthen each area.

After each course committee meeting and report, the Gateway Steering Committee meets to synthesize the findings and recommendations of the course committees. The steering committee is comprised of the faculty chairs of each course committee, along with other key institutional leaders engaged in student success efforts. Based on the analysis from the course committee reports and steering committee reports, the steering committee develops a comprehensive report of the action items to be implemented.
Faculty also participate in a Teaching and Learning Academy, which includes face-to-face and virtual workshops to study, learn, and apply promising practices and engaging pedagogies as part of the gateway course redesign process. The Teaching and Learning Academy will occur in both discipline-specific and cross-discipline groups. Participation also includes an analytics process collaborative with historic and predictive analytics.

PARTICIPATION OF USM TEAM IN GATEWAY COURSE EXPERIENCE CONFERENCE

After participating in a G2C webinar, the Southern Miss QEP Research and Design Team Gateway Committee invited chairs of departments with high DFWI rates to apply for travel grants to participate in the John N. Gardner Institute Annual Gateway Experience Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Applicants were asked to submit student learning outcome data and the names of faculty representatives teaching the course interested in participating in the conference. The QEP Research and Design Team Gateway Committee reviewed the applications and recommended three for travel grants: BSC 250 (Human Anatomy and Physiology), HIS 101 (World Civilization), and MAT 99/101 (Intermediate Algebra/College Algebra), represented by Dr. Jennifer Regan, Dr. Matthew Casey, and Corwin Stanford, respectively. Dr. Doug Masterson, associate professor of chemistry, also participated given his role as chair of the Student Success Implementation Team. (CHE 106, General Chemistry, is also a gateway course). Kelly Lester, chair of the QEP Research and Design Team, and Dr. Julie Howdeshell, director of quality enhancement, also participated. Dr. Michelle Arrington, director of institutional research, and Casey Thomas, statistical data analyst in institutional research, also accompanied the group, forming a team of eight from Southern Miss in all. The USM conference participants attended pre-conference workshops and sessions led by experts on a range of topics related to gateway courses, including the following:

- Dr. Marion Stone, director of academic support and mentoring for the International Center for Supplemental Instruction at the University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Dr. Marguerite Weber, vice president for adult and professional programs, Cabrini College
- Dr. Matthew Pisitlli, director of assessment and planning, Indiana University, Purdue University, Indianapolis
- Dr. David Laude, senior vice provost and professor of chemistry, University of Texas at Austin
- Dr. Susan Ambrose, senior vice provost for undergraduate education and experiential learning, Northwestern University

In addition, USM conference participants attended discipline-specific small group discussions and met with Dr. Drew Koch, executive vice president and chief academic leadership and innovation officer of the Gardner Institute, to discuss specific questions related to the Gateways to Completion process.

Despite beginning with some measure of skepticism, the members of the USM team left the conference with enthusiasm, eager to begin this work. USM conference participants were invited to attend the next QEP Research and Design Team meeting to share their experiences and provide feedback. Faculty participants noted that the Gateway Conference was “eye-opening,” provided a “clear process with support and accountability,” and they were “encouraged that...programs throughout the country can and do have things in place that are making a real difference to students while maintaining the necessary rigor required of the discipline.” See minutes of meeting in Appendix M.

Based on the positive feedback of the faculty and staff participating in the conference and upon the recommendation of the QEP Research and Design Team, a gateway information meeting was held May 7, 2015, for college deans, the provost, the incoming interim provost, and faculty and chairs from prospective gateway courses. Additional information about the Gardner Institute, the Gateway to Completion process, and insights from the travel grant faculty participants were shared. The invitation email is provided as Appendix N.

DETERMINING SCOPE OF GATEWAY INITIATIVES

In discussing G2C participation, one of the key discussions by the QEP Research and Design Team was scope and, specifically, the number of courses that would be included in the QEP. Initially, the QEP and Research Team considered beginning the process with one or two courses and adding more courses later in the QEP five-year timeline. However, based on additional analysis and the recommendation of advisors from the Gardner Institute, USM determined it was both manageable and advisable to begin with five courses from the onset of QEP implementation. As Dr. Drew Koch noted, “experience shows that when institutions use this approach, the process becomes part of a broader institutional change agenda — as opposed to an isolated, course- and/or unit-specific effort” (Source: email correspondence). By having five courses participate, a learning community among faculty is created. Financially, the participation fee per course is lower when more courses are included. In terms of implementation, it was recognized that it will take time to begin seeing improvements as a result of the G2C process; so beginning with all five courses will allow improvements to come to fruition and to make changes as needed. Addressing five from the onset also allows for more cross-course initiatives.
Based on review of the literature and best practices conducted throughout the 2014-15 academic year, assessment data, financial resources, and conference participants’ feedback, the QEP Research and Design Team voted unanimously to recommend University participation in the Gateways to Completion process for five courses.

APPLICATION AS A G2C INSTITUTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF QEP GATEWAY COURSES

The University then began its formal application process to become a member of the 2015 G2C cohort, which begins each year in October. After additional presentations and meetings with 1) the Division of Student Affairs; 2) Dr. Doug Vinzant, chief financial officer; Dr. Denis Wiesenburg, provost; Dr. Steve Moser, then incoming interim provost; Dr. Bill Powell, associate provost for assessment and accreditation; Dr. Amy Miller, associate provost for academic excellence; and 3) a conference call meeting with key leaders from USM and the Gardner Institute, the University made a formal verbal agreement to partner with Gateways to Completion in summer 2015. A written contract was reviewed by the director of contracts and procurement, Steve Ballew, and submitted prior to the September 1, 2015, deadline. The University of Southern Mississippi was accepted as a G2C cohort member on September 21, 2015. Cohort classes begin each October.

During this time, discussions continued with department chairs and faculty from prospective gateway courses. Based on enrollment numbers, DFWI rates, general education student learning outcome assessment reports, opportunity to apply strategies in sequential courses, and interest of department chairs and faculty, the following five courses were invited to participate: BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106, HIS 101, and MAT 99. Department chairs and faculty were provided a list of benefits, requirements, and a draft timeline. The first five courses invited to participate accepted. Course prefixes and titles of the five QEP gateway courses are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSC 110</th>
<th>BSC 250</th>
<th>CHE 106</th>
<th>HIS 101</th>
<th>MAT 99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>Introductory Chemistry</td>
<td>World Civilization I</td>
<td>Intermediate Algebra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that although four of the five courses are housed in the College of Science and Technology, all courses are general education courses, or in the case of MAT 99, a precursor to the general education curriculum, thus serving undergraduate students in all majors. In addition, BSC 250, Anatomy and Physiology I, primarily serves students in the College of Health and the College of Nursing.

Enhancing these five courses has strong potential impact as shown in the enrollment numbers and rates of students earning a D, F, W, or I annually. The data is based on the 2014-15 academic year and includes honors sections where applicable. Given that each course has a second course in the sequence (BSC 111, BSC 251, CHE 107, HIS 102, and MAT 101, respectively) and that the strategies implemented have the potential to be applied in the sequential course, the potential for impact is even greater.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QEP Gateway Course</th>
<th>2014-15 Enrollment</th>
<th>2014-15 DFWI Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC 250</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 106</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS 101</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 99</td>
<td>1,187</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GATEWAY INITIATIVES

1. Participation in Comprehensive Process

Participation in the John N. Gardner Institute Gateways to Completion process constitutes the primary initiative of the QEP for enhancing gateway courses. Specifically, USM will enhance five courses through

- A structured course analysis and redesign process;
- A teaching and learning academy with face-to-face and virtual workshops; and
- An analytics process collaborative with historic and predictive analytics.

2. Gateway Course Grants

In addition, The University of Southern Mississippi has allocated $200,000 to support the course enhancements that emerge from the G2C process. Such enhancements might include peer-assisted learning, attendance monitoring, co-requisite remediation models, increased frequency of assignments, learning communities, placement information sharing with advisors and feeder institutions, physical space designs to support active learning, and increased usage of early warning systems, just to name a few. Given that peer-assisted learning has already been identified as one of the possible strategies, the QEP is supporting a pilot of peer-assisted learning for MAT 99 during spring 2016 with the support of professional staff in the Learning Enhancement Center with certification in supplementary instruction facilitation.

During The University of Southern Mississippi’s first QEP, Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies, faculty participated in a faculty development seminar and redesigned writing and speaking assignments and processes for courses across a wide range of disciplines for implementation the following semester. The curriculum of the writing and speaking seminar served to provide an array of best practices in a non-prescriptive manner, allowing the faculty to determine which strategies would work best for their particular discipline and context. Gateways to Completion serves in a similar fashion, providing a structured self-study, review of key performance indicators aligned with best practices, and dialogue through the teaching and learning academy, allowing the faculty in each course to determine needed changes based on their unique context. The process also provides continuing education through the Teaching and Learning Academy and conferences and support through historic and predictive analytics. In some instances, implementation of a given strategy may occur across all sections of a course, while in others, the strategy may be piloted and implemented in a more limited number of sections. The course committees meet throughout the process to monitor and refine strategies throughout the structured three-year G2C timeline as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>Analyze and Plan</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
<th>Act and Monitor</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>Act and Refine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create Initial Steering Committee</td>
<td>• Implement Plan</td>
<td>• Refine Implementation of Plan and Adjust Implementation Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Complete” Gateway Course Analytics Inventory (GCAI)</td>
<td>• Update GCAI</td>
<td>• Update GCAI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify Course(s) Based on GCAI Evidence - Round Out Task Force</td>
<td>• Re-administer SALG</td>
<td>• Re-administer SALG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administer Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG)</td>
<td>• Continue Analytics Collaborative</td>
<td>• Ongoing Use of Analytics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct Review of Principles and Key Performance Indicators</td>
<td>• Continue Teaching and Learning Academy</td>
<td>• Ongoing Teaching and Learning Academy Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create Initial Action Plan and Implementation Team</td>
<td>• Attend G2C Community of Practice Meeting and Gateway Course Experience Conference</td>
<td>• Plan to Address Other Courses and/or Continue Refinement with Other Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin Analytics Collaborative</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Disseminate Findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin Teaching and Learning Academy</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend G2C Community of Practice Meeting and Gateway Course Experience Conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend G2C Community of Practice Meeting and Gateway Course Experience Conference</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gardner Institute Overview of Gateways to Completion
DEVELOPING PATHWAY INITIATIVES

To learn more about experiential learning activities and perspectives on possible strategies, the QEP Research and Design Team Experiential Learning (Pathway) Committee and Assessment Committee conducted a survey of undergraduate degree programs to learn more about current departmental activities, successes, and challenges related to the topic. The survey used the term “experiential learning” and limited the scope of that term to include experiences significant enough to warrant inclusion on a graduate school application or job résumé. Examples included, but were not limited to the following:

1. Student-faculty collaborative research (scholarly and/or creative)
2. Conference presentations
3. Internships (on and off campus; paid and unpaid)
4. Entry-level jobs related to the field (on or off campus, including part-time jobs or co-ops)
5. Service learning class projects
6. Student organization projects
7. Other activities that provide the student with experience related to their chosen discipline and/or the student’s post-graduation goals.

A copy of the survey, provided in Appendix L, was distributed to department chairs with the request that one survey be completed per undergraduate degree program with feedback from faculty and program coordinators. Data was received for 98 undergraduate degree programs.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Experiential Learning as a Requirement

Of the 98 reporting, 36% reported that an experiential learning requirement, as defined above, was not required. Below is a breakdown by college of degree programs reporting that they do not have a requirement:

- Arts and Letters: 17/35 (49%)
- Business: 9/14 (64%)
- Education and Psychology: 1/6 (17%)
- Health: 1/16 (6.25%)
- Nursing: 0/2 (0%)
- Science and Technology: 7/25 (28%); Note: 10 of the 18 reporting a requirement have a research requirement.

Tracking Student Participation in Experiential Learning

When asked about tracking of student participation in experiential learning, 53/98, or 54%, reported that they did not track participation. When asked if the department tracked job or graduate school placement as related to experiential learning, 68/98 (69%) reported that they did not.

Communication of Experiential Learning Opportunities

In regard to communication of experiential learning opportunities, 12% indicated that advisors were required to discuss opportunities with advisees, and 64% indicated that advisors were encouraged but not required. The most common methods of communication were listservs, email, print, class announcements, and student organizations, with 68% indicating that opportunities were communicated through one or more of these methods.

Ranking of Strategies

Survey respondents were also asked to rank a number of approaches in order of possible initiatives they would like to see in regard to promoting participation in experiential learning as defined above. Scholarships and a dedicated center ranked highest among the options, followed by restructuring advising, student workshops, and faculty seminars. Survey respondents could also suggest and include other options for consideration.
## Method Rank (Mean)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Rank (Mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships for internships</td>
<td>1 (2.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated center</td>
<td>2 (2.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructuring advising with emphasis on mentoring and incorporation of experiential learning opportunities</td>
<td>3 (3.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student workshops</td>
<td>4 (3.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty seminars</td>
<td>5 (3.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (departmental initiatives, dedicated staff within college/dept.)</td>
<td>6 (5.95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Comments and Suggestions

Survey respondents were also asked to provide comments or suggestions.

One respondent provided the following comment in support of the need for internship support:

> "More resources would be helpful in perhaps increasing the number of internship opportunities available. [Another institution] has a staff person… dedicated to finding internship opportunities and placing students in those internships. In addition, this person helps track the students who participate in this process, both before and after their internship experience. We would love to have the same type of staff person. I think this would increase the percentage of our students who would participate in this type of experiential learning opportunity. [Our] profession is hiring from their internship pools much more frequently than 10 years ago. One thing that potential students (or their parents) ask about consistently is our job placement rates, who recruits our students, and what internship opportunities are available. I would love to be able to really impress them with our answers to those questions."

Another respondent with a required internship component highlighted the benefit of doing so:

> "Our students are very different after they complete their internships. They return to USM as young professionals for their last year and have a much stronger understanding of what they are doing in their studio classes. It is so amazing to watch them morph in such a short period. They will all tell you that their internship was a valuable experience for them."

## Exploring Models for Promoting Pathway Experiences

The QEP Research and Design Team also explored models at other institutions, including programs at Furman University, University of Central Florida, and University of Colorado Denver, which vary in terms of scope, services, and purposes. Given that Southern Miss already has a strong service learning program and a Center for Undergraduate Research, the model at Furman seemed to be a good beginning model for Southern Miss. Specifically, the Furman Internship Office helps students find internships, works with faculty to develop internship programs connected to the curriculum, and provides opportunities for scholarships.

## Recommendation of QEP Research and Design Team – Pathway Initiatives

Based on the input provided via the departmental survey and a review of literature, best practices, and institutional analysis, the Experiential Learning (Pathway) Committee recommended that Southern Miss develop infrastructures to connect more students to pathway experiences through a comprehensive set of University-wide and departmental-level initiatives as outlined below:

1. **Creation of a Dedicated, Full-Time Position to Direct Pathway Experiences**

   The pathways director will provide leadership for the pathways program, manage the budget, coordinate services, and assist with the development, implementation, and assessment of the program initiatives. Specific duties and responsibilities of the director include the following:

   a. Promote increased student awareness and student participation in pathway experiences such as internships, research, and other fieldwork
   b. Cultivate relationships with faculty, University departments, and employers to build, monitor, and evaluate pathway experiences
   c. Research, identify, recruit, engage, and sustain pathway opportunities
   d. Develop and implement educational programming, such as workshops, seminars, and courses
   e. Convene regular meetings of Advisory Council
   f. Collect assessment data and develop annual report, including, but not limited to, tracking of student participation based on best practices and assessment plans
   g. Manage budget in keeping with University requirements
   h. Provide current information about trends, opportunities, and successes to University community
   i. Adhere to federal and state guidelines related to internships and pathway experiences
2. Creation of a Pathways Council, an Advisory Team to Promote Pathways
The Pathways Council will serve as an interdisciplinary team to advise the pathway director in the selection of scholarship recipients and departmental grant awards, as well as other aspects of the pathways program so as to increase participation by students. Representatives will include the following:

- Faculty from each of the University’s six colleges
- Pathways director
- Director of Career Services
- Coordinator of student life and Career Services, Gulf Park campus
- Director of the Center for Civic and Community Engagement
- Director of the Center for Undergraduate Research
- Representative from the Alumni Association
- Representative from New Student and Retention Programs
- Coordinator of business internships with the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Representatives from businesses and industries in the community

The Pathways Council will meet monthly during the fall and spring semesters beginning fall 2016. Faculty representatives from each college will be appointed by respective academic deans.

3. Pathway Scholarships
Offering competitive scholarships to support student participation in pathway experiences was ranked first among all strategies in the survey of undergraduate degree programs conducted by the QEP Research and Design Team. Modeled after the Furman Advantage program at Furman University, The University of Southern Mississippi will award $50,000 in pathway scholarships to undergraduate students annually. Stipend amounts will vary based on the amount of funding provided by the sponsoring company/organization and the student’s demonstration of financial need. The base stipend will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Payment</th>
<th>Scholarship/Stipend for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $1,500</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500 to $3,000</td>
<td>$3,000 minus Company/Organization Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000 or more</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional stipend amount, beyond the base stipend, may be awarded by the Pathways Scholarship Committee for students with demonstrated financial need.

**Student Eligibility**: Preference will be given to students scheduled to graduate in the 12 months following the application period and then to students who will have another year to pursue an internship/pathway as a Southern Miss undergraduate. Students must be returning to Southern Miss as a full-time student after their internship/pathway or graduating to be eligible for a Pathway Scholarship. International students must include verification that they are eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

**Hours and Weeks**: The internship must be full-time (35-40 hours per week) for a minimum of eight continuous weeks or the equivalent.

**On-Campus**: Internships on the Southern Miss campus will not be eligible for a pathway scholarship.

**Special Programs**: The Pathways Scholarship Program does not fund workshops, institutes, travel study programs, courses or other similar experiences.

**International Travel**: Pathway experiences in areas listed on the government sanction list or on the U.S. State Department travel warning list will not be eligible for a scholarship.

**Courses**: Students receiving a pathway scholarship may participate concurrently in a Southern Miss internship/pathway course. Applicants taking additional courses, beyond the internship/pathway course, must include an explanation as to how she or he plans to meet the requirements of both the internship/pathway and the course.

**Application**: The application includes three sections: student, organization and faculty. A copy of the full application and frequently asked questions are included at the end of this chapter (pp. 32-37).

Upon submission of the application, the Director of Pathway Experiences will review the application to ensure eligibility requirements are met and that the application materials are complete. Applications will then be forwarded to the Pathway Scholarship Committee for evaluation. The Pathway Scholarship Committee will evaluate the applications using the criteria outlined below:

**Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Evidence of a meaningful experience and involvement in significant professional work or research
2. Evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience
3. Evidence of preparation by the student for the experience
4. Evidence that the experience is related to the student’s post-graduation/career goals
5. Evidence of financial need
6. Evidence of balancing the experience with other time commitments (coursework, etc.)

A copy of the evaluation form used by the Director of Pathway Experiences and the evaluation rubric used by the Pathway Scholarship Committee are included at the end of this chapter (pp. 38-39).

4. Pathway Grant Program
The survey of undergraduate degree programs conducted by the QEP Research and Design Team also highlighted the need to provide funding for initiatives at the department/college level. To meet that need, the QEP will award $50,000 in grants each year for initiatives aimed at increasing the number of students participating in meaningful pathway experiences at the undergraduate level. Typical award amounts will be approximately $5,000 to $10,000. Priority will be given to proposals supporting students in undergraduate degree programs that do not currently have built-in pathway options and that incorporate collaboration with campus and/or community partners. Pathway grant proposals will be evaluated using the criteria below. A copy of the application and the evaluation rubric used by the Pathway Grant Committee are included at the end of this chapter (pp. 40-42).

Evaluation Criteria:
1. Rationale and need for project
2. Impact of proposal to develop intentional learning outcomes for students
3. Impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities
4. Incorporation of best practices for experiential learning, general or discipline-specific
5. Scope of the impact of the initiatives
6. Scalability and transferability of the initiative, as well as potential to become a best practice
7. Human resources to administer the plan
8. Budget showing proposed allocations and plans for sustainability
9. Timeline of planned implementation
10. Effective plan for assessing the impact of the proposed initiatives, including number of student participants and analysis of the impact of participation on student learning and post-graduation goals through structured reflection

5. Pathway Experience Reflection and Graduation Recognition

Eagles Engaged will provide structured reflection of pathway experiences through the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation instrument. Taken during the senior capstone course, students will respond to questions that foster reflection of their overall pathway experiences; the impact of pathways on their own learning and post-graduation plans; and the effects of pathways on their career readiness. Career readiness will be based on the career-readiness competencies established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Students completing pathway experiences and reflection of those experiences will be eligible for a pathway cord to wear at graduation. Graduation cords have become popular among Southern Miss students and will be used to celebrate pathway participation. The project will be piloted in fall 2016 with a representative sample of undergraduate degree programs and will be expanded each year. Minimum requirements will be based on input of the Pathway Council, Director of Pathway Experiences and input from faculty of the respective undergraduate degree programs.

Capstone students who have not completed a pathway experience will be asked to reflect on the reasons why they did not participate. This will serve as a needs assessment to reduce barriers leading to participation. In addition, students who have not participated will be connected to resources available through Career Services and encouraged to request an appointment for consultation.

The Pathway Reflection and Evaluation will also be used to assess the impact of pathway experiences on learning and career readiness. A copy of the instrument is included at the end of Chapter 5.

Determining Scope of Pathway Initiatives

The QEP Research and Design Team also addressed the issue of scope for the pathway initiatives. Given that nearly half of undergraduate degree programs currently require and track participation in pathway experiences and just over half do not, services and programs will be available to students and faculty in all undergraduate degree programs, but the emphasis will be on promoting opportunities for students and faculty in undergraduate degree programs without formalized pathway programs.
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Purpose: The University of Southern Mississippi awards competitive scholarships to undergraduate students who obtain full-time internships or other approved pathway experiences, such as fieldwork or research; meet the eligibility and criteria guidelines of the program; and are selected for participation by the Pathway Scholarship Committee. Program requirements may be modified as necessary to ensure compliance with institutional, state and federal guidelines.

CRITERIA: The application will be evaluated based on the criteria below:

1. Evidence of a meaningful experience and involvement in significant professional work or research
2. Evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience
3. Evidence of preparation by the student for the experience
4. Evidence that the experience is related to the student’s post-graduation/career goals
5. Evidence of financial need
6. Evidence of balancing the experience with other time commitments (coursework, etc.)

APPLICATION: The application includes three sections – student, organization and faculty – and is due by March 1. Students may submit either the complete application or, for internships/pathways that are not finalized, at least the general information and question #1 of the student section to meet the March 1 deadline. See Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

ELIGIBILITY:
*Student Eligibility: Preference will be given to students scheduled to graduate in the 12 months following the application and then to students who will have another year to pursue an internship/pathway as a Southern Miss undergraduate. Students must be returning to Southern Miss as a full-time student after their internship/pathway or be graduating to be eligible for a Southern Miss Pathway Scholarship. International students must include verification that they are eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT).
*Hours and Weeks: Internships/pathways must be full-time (35-40 hours per week) for a minimum of eight continuous weeks. Alternatives may be considered given equivalent time commitments as applicable.
*On-Campus: Internships on the Southern Miss campus will not be eligible for a pathway scholarship.
*Special programs: The Pathways Scholarship Program does not fund workshops, institutes, travel study programs, courses or other learning experiences.
*International: Pathway experiences in areas listed on the government sanction list or on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning List will not be eligible for a scholarship.
*Courses: Receiving a scholarship does not prohibit students from participating concurrently in a Southern Miss internship/pathway course. Applicants who want to take other courses, beyond the internship/pathway course, at the same time as the pathway experience must include course information in the application and explain how he/she plans to meet the requirements of both the internship/pathway and the course.

STIPENDS:
Amounts awarded to the student will vary based on the amount of funding provided by the sponsoring organization and the student’s demonstration of financial need. The base stipend will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Payment</th>
<th>Scholarship/Stipend for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $1,500</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500 to $3,000</td>
<td>$3,000 minus Company/Organization Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000 or more</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional stipend amount, beyond the base stipend, may be awarded by the Pathways Scholarship Committee for students with demonstrated financial need.
SOUTHERN MISS PATHWAYS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I find the Southern Miss Pathway Scholarship application?
   Electronic copies of the application are available at usm.edu/QEP and the Pathway Program webpage linked on the
   Southern Miss Career Services website: usm.edu/career-services.

2. What does the application include?
   The application has three parts: student, organization and faculty. All three sections must be submitted before the
   application is reviewed by the Pathways Scholarship Committee.

3. What if I have applied for an internship/pathway but haven’t received an offer from the company/organization by the March
   1 deadline?
   If an offer has not been made by the company/organization by March 1, students should complete the student section only,
   listing each potential internship/pathway and answering question #1 for each internship/pathway, then submit this form
   by the deadline. An incomplete application will be filed as ‘pending.’ Once the internship/pathway is finalized – before the
   Pathways Scholarship Committee completes their review by the end of March – applicants must submit the updated student
   section to answer all questions and to have the organization and faculty member complete their designated section and
   submit it directly to pathways@usm.edu. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

4. Will a late application be considered?
   Initial applications may be submitted after the deadline; however, these applications will be considered only after all
   applications submitted by the deadline have been reviewed.

5. What does the internship/pathway organization have to do for the Pathways Scholarship Program?
   The internship/pathway organization must complete the Organization section of the application and submit it directly
   to pathways@usm.edu and copy (Cc:) the student using their USM email address by the March 1 deadline or as soon
   as possible in March. The program also requires that the organization complete an online evaluation at the end of the
   internship/pathway experience.

6. What does the faculty member have to do for the Pathways Scholarship Program?
   Students will need to select a full-time faculty member who knows them; explain the internship/pathway to the faculty
   member; and ask him/her to complete the faculty section of the application and submit it directly to pathways@usm.edu.
   The faculty form should be completed by a faculty member in the student’s academic program, major or minor, or by a
   faculty member in a field associated with the work/research of the pathway experience.

7. When will I know if I am approved for a Southern Miss Pathway Scholarship?
   Once the application is complete (i.e., the student, organization and faculty sections are all submitted), the Pathways
   Scholarship Committee will review the application. Notification of the application status will be sent to the student by email
   after the committee meetings, which occur between mid-March and mid-April. Approved students will then be asked to
   attend a meeting in April to complete the paperwork required for the scholarship.

8. If I get a scholarship, what am I required to do?
   Pathway Scholars are required to post weekly to an online conference; complete an evaluation and portfolio of learning
   artifacts; and a narrative describing application of academic studies and career readiness at the end of their internship/
   pathway experience. Scholars will then be available to speak about their experiences as requested and on Southern Miss
   Eagles Engaged Day, held in the spring, following the internship/pathway experience.
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Student Application

Have you applied for and been accepted for an internship/pathway? □ Yes □ No*

*If no, see FAQ #3 on the previous page: What if I haven’t received an offer by the March 1 deadline?

Name: ___________________________________________ USM ID#: ___________________________________________

Email: ___________________________________________ Phone Number: __________________________________

Home Address, City, State: ________________________________________________________________

Expected Graduation Date: __________________________ Number of credit hours by March 1: ______________

Major: __________________________________________ Overall GPA: __________________________

List courses in the major (numbers and titles) you’ve completed that are relevant to this internship/pathway:

List non-major courses (numbers and titles) you’ve completed that are relevant to this internship/pathway:

Name, Academic Department and Email Address of Faculty providing recommendation: ____________________________________________________________

Name of Organization: __________________________ Location: __________________________

Length of the Internship/Pathway (# weeks): __________________________ Hours/Week: __________________________

Beginning Date: __________________________ Ending Date: __________________________

Amount expected to be funded by the organization for the entire experience*: __________________________

*If you want to be considered for additional funds beyond the base stipend, complete the Budget Form.

Please answer each of the following questions. The quality of your answers to these questions is a significant factor in the selection process.

1. What type of work will you perform during your internship/pathway experience? Please include job duties, responsibilities, anticipated projects, etc.

2. What are your three major learning objectives for this internship/pathway experience, aside from furthering career objectives?

3. Describe how the courses you have taken have prepared you for the work you anticipate in this internship/pathway. Provide specific examples of relevant experiences, assignments or projects.

4. List your career goals and provide a rationale on how this internship/pathway experience will facilitate progression toward your career/post-graduation goals.

5. How did you find out about your internship/pathway? Describe the application process.

6. Where, geographically, will you be placed for your internship/pathway? What are your reasons for interning in this particular city, town or country? If this internship/pathway will take place outside the U.S., please provide locations and dates of previous travel, if any, you have done outside the U.S. Also, include copy of U.S. passport or verification of application for passport.

7. Have you completed an internship/pathway or similar position before? If so, when and where?

8. Please provide information about the company/organization. Include such things as the website, history, mission, etc., to assist the committee in judging the appropriateness of the experience.

9. Do you plan to take courses during the same time as the pathway/internship? If so, please list the courses and how you will balance your academic work with your internship/pathway experience.

By submitting this application, I attest that the contents are answered to the best of my ability and are complete and accurate. Your typed name below will be considered your electronic signature.

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ______________________________________

Send completed form to pathways@usm.edu as a document attachment.
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Budget/Student Expenses Form for the Internship/Pathway

If this internship/pathway is unpaid or you have significant financial need and want to be considered for additional funds beyond the base stipend, please complete this budget/student expenses sheet and include it with your application.

Student Name: __________________________________________ USM ID#: ________________________
Company/Org.: ________________________________ Location: ________________________________
Length of Internship/Pathway (# weeks): ____________________
Hours per week: ____________________________________

Amount expected to be funded by the organization for the entire experience: ______________________

Note: 1) Please be aware that we will contact the Office of Financial Aid for information on your financial need. If your financial situation has changed since filing your last FAFSA, please contact the Office of Financial Aid regarding updating your information. 2) The organization representative may be a resource for obtaining budget/expense information. 3) The scholarship is not intended to replace wages or to cover tuition expenses if the internship/pathway is taken for academic credit.

Please enter the total student out-of-pocket expenses for each item during the internship/pathway experience.

Transportation:
Travel To and From the City of the Internship/Pathway: Total Cost:
Mode of Transportation:

Local transportation while at Site: Total Cost:
Mode of Transportation:

Housing:
Type of Housing: Total Cost:
Utilities (list each):
1. Total Cost:
2. Total Cost:
3. Total Cost:
4. Total Cost:

Other expenses directly related to the internship/pathway experience:
(Please list each item and include them in the cost total.)

SUM OF COST FOR THE INTERNSHIP/PATHWAY: ______________________

Will you be receiving funding from any other source (i.e., grant, scholarship, etc.) during the time of this internship/pathway?

Other information that would be helpful for the Pathways Scholarship Committee:
Southern Miss Pathway Scholarship Program

The Southern Miss Pathway Scholarship Program is designed to offer students an opportunity to work in a field related to their career goals and to allow them to put classroom theory into practice. The Southern Miss Pathways Scholarship Committee reviews applications and awards stipends each year based on the quality of learning opportunities in the internship/pathway and the relationship of the internship/pathway to the student’s career goals. Organizations are asked to complete an online evaluation sent to supervisors at the end of the experience. If you have any questions about the Southern Miss Pathway Program, please send them to pathways@usm.edu.

Name of Student You Have Selected for the Internship/Pathway Position:

Company or Organization:

Student’s Direct Supervisor:

Student’s Supervisor Title/Position:

Phone Number: __________________ Fax: __________________

Email address of Intern Supervisor: __________________

Mailing Address: __________________

City, State, Zip: __________________

Company/Organization Website: __________________

Note: Minimum Program Requirements: 35-40 hours per week, eight continuous weeks.

Dates of Internship/Pathway: From: ____________ To: ____________

Total number of hours per week: __________________

Job Description: What type of work will the student perform? Describe what you expect the student to learn as a result of this experience. Please be as specific as possible by including job duties, responsibilities, anticipated projects, etc. Please attach any additional information about your internship/pathway position or program. Use as much space as needed for this description.

Payment Information for the Intern/Student

Will the student receive any payment from the organization for the internship/pathway experience (i.e., hourly wage, stipend, parking reimbursement, etc.)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what will be the total amount? __________________

Are you providing housing for the student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you providing a housing allowance for the student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please enter the amount of the housing allowance provided: __________________

By typing your name below and providing your electronic signature, you are attesting that 1) the organization is an EEO/AA employer, 2) the organization agrees to abide by the Fair Labor Standards Act, and 3) that the information provided above is accurate.

Site Supervisor: __________________________ Date: __________________________
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Faculty Recommendation Form
Submit completed form directly to pathways@usm.edu.

Name of Student Applicant: ____________________________________________________________

Company/Organization for Internship/Pathway: __________________________________________

Faculty Name: ______________________________________________________________________

Department of Faculty Member: _______________________________________________________

Email Address of Faculty Member: ____________________________________________________

Your role as faculty recommender is to verify that this internship/pathway has educational/academic value for the student submitting the application to the Southern Miss Pathways Scholarship Program.

Describe the relationship of this internship/pathway to the student’s course of study.

Please provide any other insight or information regarding the student’s participation in this internship/pathway that you think would be helpful to the committee.

Have you recommended students for this site before, or are you aware of any Southern Miss students who have had internships/pathway experiences at this site? If so, please comment on the quality of the experience.
The University of Southern Mississippi Pathway Scholarship Program

Evaluation

The Director of Pathway Experiences will review the application and complete the checklist in Part 1 below. Completed applications will then be forwarded to the Pathway Scholarship Committee for evaluation. The Pathway Scholarship Committee will evaluate completed applications using the criteria outlined in the rubric in Part 2.

Evaluation Part 1

Application Submission Dates

- Student Application Received. Date:
- Company/Organization Information Form Received. Date:
- Faculty Recommendation Form Received. Date:

Student Eligibility Requirements

- Pathway experience is full-time (35-40 hours per week for a minimum of eight continuous weeks, or equivalent)
- Pathway experience is off campus
- Experience is not a workshop, institute, travel study program, etc.
- If pathway experience is outside the United States,
  - the experience is not in an area listed on the U.S. Department of State travel warnings
  - the student has a valid U.S. passport or has applied for a passport in time to meet the pathway experience requirements
- If applicant is an international student, the student has completed the verification process for Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Company/Organization Information Form

- Organization has signed off that they are in compliance with the EEO/AA policies and that the experience is in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Full-Time: 35-40 hours per week for a minimum of eight continuous weeks (or equivalent)

Budget/Student Expenses Form (If Applicable)

- Expenses listed are in line with geographic area of experience.
- Expenses listed are in keeping with information provided on Company/Organization Form.
- Based on review by the Office of Financial Aid, does the student provide evidence of significant financial need? Explain.
### Evaluation Part 2: Pathways Scholarship Committee Review Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Evidence that the student will be involved in a meaningful experience and involved in significant professional work or research</td>
<td>Student Question 1 and 8; Organization Job Description; Faculty Form Question 3</td>
<td>Strong evidence that student will be engaged in a meaningful experience and involved in significant professional work or research</td>
<td>Adequate evidence that student will be engaged in a meaningful experience and involved in significant professional work or research</td>
<td>Minimal evidence that student will be engaged in a meaningful experience or involved in significant professional work or research</td>
<td>No evidence that student will be engaged in a meaningful experience or involved in significant professional work or research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evidence that experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience</td>
<td>Student Question 2 and 8; Faculty Form Question 1</td>
<td>Strong evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience</td>
<td>Adequate evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience</td>
<td>Minimal evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience</td>
<td>No evidence that the experience will provide opportunities to apply academic studies to the work or research experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evidence of preparation by the student for the experience</td>
<td>Student Questions 3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>Strong evidence of needed preparation by the student for the experience</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of needed student preparation for the experience</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of needed student preparation for the experience</td>
<td>No evidence of needed student preparation for the experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evidence that the experience is related to the student’s post-graduation/career goals</td>
<td>Student Question 4</td>
<td>Strong evidence that the experience supports the student’s post-graduation/career goals.</td>
<td>Adequate evidence that the experience supports the student’s post-graduation/career goals.</td>
<td>Minimal evidence that the experience is linked to the student’s post-graduation/career goals.</td>
<td>No evidence that the experience is linked to the student’s post-graduation/career goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evidence of financial need</td>
<td>Review by Office of Financial Aid, Budget/Student Expense Form, Organization Form Expenses and Support</td>
<td>Strong evidence of financial need for participation in the experience</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of financial need for participation in the experience</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of financial need for participation in the experience</td>
<td>No evidence of financial need for participation in the experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evidence of balancing the experience with other time commitments</td>
<td>Student Question 9</td>
<td>Strong evidence of balancing time commitments</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of balancing time commitments</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of balancing time commitments</td>
<td>No evidence of balancing time commitments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Overall Recommendation</td>
<td>All 3 Sections and Point Totals</td>
<td>Highly Recommend</td>
<td>Recommend</td>
<td>Recommend with reservations</td>
<td>Do not recommend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Funding Recommendation Amount (Recommendation Score of 2 or higher):**

**Analysis/Comments:**
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PATHWAY GRANT PROGRAM

As part of The University of Southern Mississippi’s Quality Enhancement Plan, Eagles Engaged, the University awards $50,000 in grants each year for initiatives aimed at increasing the number of students participating in meaningful pathway experiences at the undergraduate level, such as internships, collaborative research, fieldwork, etc. Typical award amounts will be approximately $5,000 to $10,000. Priority will be given to proposals supporting students in undergraduate degree programs that do not currently have built-in pathway options and that incorporate collaboration with campus and/or community partners. Program requirements may be modified as necessary to ensure compliance with institutional, state and federal guidelines.

Grant Eligibility and Project Coordination

Individuals employed by Southern Miss or University departments or colleges may apply for funding. If a group applies, one person must be designated as the project coordinator. All follow-up contact concerning the process will be made through the project coordinator. To be considered, please send the completed application form and narrative to the Director of Pathway Experiences at pathways@usm.edu or USM Box 5015 no later than October 31. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>The Director of Pathway Experiences will begin accepting applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Application deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Pathway Council Grant Committee will review proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Grant recipients notified and announced to University community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – February</td>
<td>Funds distributed to grant recipients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The funds should be used over a 12-month time period. Project reports are due from all grant project coordinators one year after receiving funding, including student pathway learning portfolios for QEP assessment purposes.

Criteria for Selection

1. Rationale and need for project
2. Impact of proposal to develop intentional learning outcomes for students
3. Impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities
4. Incorporation of best practices for experiential learning, general or discipline-specific
5. Scope of the impact of the initiatives
6. Scalability and transferability of the initiative, as well as potential to become a best practice
7. Human resources to administer the plan
8. Budget showing proposed allocations and plans for sustainability
9. Timeline of planned implementation
10. Effective plan for assessing the impact of the proposed initiatives, including number of student participants and analysis of the impact of participation on student learning, in keeping with QEP pathway student learning outcomes, application of academic studies in pathway experiences and development of career-readiness competencies
QEP PATHWAY GRANT APPLICATION

Contact Information

Project Coordinator: ___________________________________  USM ID#: ____________________________
Direct Office Phone: ______________________________  Alternate Phone: __________________________
Email Address: _____________________________________  Box Number: _____________________________
Department: ________________________________________  College/Unit: ___________________________
Other individuals, University departments or organizations sponsoring this project:
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Project Information

Project Name: ____________________________________________
Requested Grant Amount ($1 - $10,000 max): ____________________________

Project Description Narrative Requirements

Please submit a typed narrative addressing the following elements and submit with the application form.

1. Overview of the project and justification for why the grant is needed
2. Impact of proposal to develop intentional learning outcomes for students; include specific learning outcomes
3. Impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities
4. Incorporation of best practices for experiential learning, general or discipline-specific
5. Scope of the impact of the initiatives
6. Scalability and transferability of the initiative
7. Human resources to administer the plan; include campus/community partners
8. Budget showing proposed allocations and plans for sustainability
9. Timeline of planned implementation
10. Effective plan for assessing the impact of the proposed initiatives, including incorporation of student pathway learning portfolios
# Pathway Grant Evaluation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Justification for project/project need and alignment with QEP pathway goals</td>
<td>Strong justification of need for project and alignment with QEP pathway goals</td>
<td>Adequate justification of need for project and alignment with QEP pathway goals</td>
<td>Minimal justification of need for project and/or alignment with QEP pathway goals</td>
<td>No justification of need for project/Does not align with goals of QEP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evidence of impact to strengthen student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Strong evidence of impact to strengthen student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of impact to strengthen student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of impact to strengthen student learning outcomes</td>
<td>No evidence of impact to strengthen student learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evidence of impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities</td>
<td>Strong evidence of impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities</td>
<td>No evidence of impact of proposal to develop professional skills that mirror post-graduation academic or career opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Incorporation of best practices for experiential learning (general or discipline-specific)</td>
<td>Strong evidence of incorporation of best practices for experiential learning (general or discipline-specific)</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of incorporation of best practices for experiential learning (general or discipline-specific)</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of incorporation of best practices for experiential learning (general or discipline-specific)</td>
<td>No evidence of incorporation of best practices for experiential learning (general or discipline-specific)</td>
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<td>5. Scope of the impact of the initiatives</td>
<td>Initiatives will benefit a large number of students</td>
<td>Initiatives will benefit a sizable number of students</td>
<td>Initiatives will benefit a small number of students</td>
<td>Initiatives will benefit a very small number of students</td>
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<td>6. Scalability and transferability of the initiative, as well as potential to become a best practice</td>
<td>Strong evidence of scalability and transferability of the initiative</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of scalability and transferability of the initiative</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of scalability and transferability of the initiative</td>
<td>No evidence of scalability and transferability of the initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Adequate human resources to administer the plan and campus/community partnerships, if applicable</td>
<td>Strong evidence of adequate human resources and campus/community partnerships</td>
<td>Adequate evidence of adequate human resources and campus/community partnerships</td>
<td>Minimal evidence of adequate human resources and campus/community partnerships</td>
<td>No evidence of adequate human resources or campus/community partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Budget showing proposed allocations and plans for sustainability</td>
<td>Detailed budget and strong evidence of sustainability</td>
<td>Detailed budget and adequate evidence of sustainability</td>
<td>Detailed budget but minimal evidence of sustainability</td>
<td>Budget is not detailed and there is no evidence of sustainability</td>
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<td>9. Timeline of planned implementation</td>
<td>Detailed timeline</td>
<td>Adequately detailed timeline</td>
<td>Timeline is incomplete</td>
<td>Timeline not provided</td>
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<td>10. Effective assessment plan</td>
<td>Clearly assesses impact of initiatives meeting all required elements</td>
<td>Adequately assesses impact of initiatives but needs minor improvement</td>
<td>Assesses impact of initiatives but needs substantial improvement</td>
<td>Assessment plan is missing required elements</td>
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Total Points:

Overall Recommendation

Funding Recommendation Amount (Recommendation Score of 2 or higher): Highly Recommend

Analysis/Comments:
Development of *Eagles Engaged* Mark

As a way of connecting the pathways component of the QEP and celebrating the talent of Southern Miss graphic design students, the QEP Research and Design Team Public Relations Committee partnered with Rise Creative, a student graphic design agency led by the Southern Miss Department of Art and Design. John Mark Lawler, assistant professor in the Department of Art and Design, serves as creative director and faculty advisor of the student organization.

After a meeting between the QEP Public Relations Committee and members of Rise Creative, student members of the group designed marks for *Eagles Engaged*. These were shared with the full QEP Research and Design Team for feedback via an online survey. Based on responses from the survey and further discussion at QEP Research and Design Team meetings, the final mark shown on the cover and below was selected. The center element of the mark is the light bulb, which incorporates the image used during the QEP topic selection phase and illustrates ideas and learning. The gear in the light bulb is representative of action and movement. The mark will be used as the primary symbol for *Eagles Engaged*. In addition, Rise Creative developed complementary marks for the gateway and the pathway initiatives.
CHAPTER 4 /
CAPABILITY TO INITIATE, IMPLEMENT, AND COMPLETE THE QEP

*Eagles Engaged* has been developed to make a significant change to gateway and pathway experiences in specific, focused ways. This section outlines the institution’s capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the plan as evidenced through the appropriate allocation of financial, human, technological, and physical resources. In addition, the timeline for implementation is provided showing the steps outlined to meet established goals and outcomes prior to submission of the QEP Impact Report to SACSCOC in March 2022.

**Financial Commitment and Capability**
Prior to the initiation of the topic selection process for the University’s new quality enhancement plan, the associate provost for assessment and accreditation and the director of quality enhancement met regularly with the president, provost, and vice president for finance and administration to ensure dedication of needed funding for the University’s second quality enhancement plan. The University administration showed its commitment to the QEP by allocating $200,000 in new funds annually beginning fiscal year 2016 and an additional $200,000 annually in fiscal years 2017 through 2022. These funds are in addition to the base budget of Quality Enhancement Programs as shown in the budget provided on the following page. The QEP Research and Design Team was able to develop the initiatives of *Eagles Engaged* will full awareness of the resources available to support the new initiatives. A letter from Dr. Douglas Vinzant, vice president for finance and administration, confirming the financial commitment of the University is provided as Appendix O. Funding is dedicated in a separate budget string for Quality Enhancement Programs in E & G funds with the director of quality enhancement as primary expenditure authority under the direction of the associate provost for assessment and accreditation in the Office of the Provost. The annual commitment beginning fiscal year 2017 is over $500,000 and totals nearly $3,000,000 by the time of the submission of the QEP Impact Report to SACSCOC in 2022.

In reviewing the budget, note that participation fees for the Gateways to Completion program for five courses for all three years of G2C participation are reserved in the first year ($7,500 per course for five courses per year for three years), allowing for funding in subsequent years to be used solely for course initiatives. Gateway course grants are noted per course; however, funding for courses may be combined to support common efforts, such as redesign of the Biology Tutorial Center supporting BSC 110 and 250 or comprehensive supplementary instruction efforts.
## EAGLES ENGAGED BUDGET (IMPACT REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED SPRING 2022)

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<td><strong>EAGLES ENGAGED GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
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*G2C participation fees for all courses for all three years are reserved in fiscal year 2016.
Human Resources Commitment and Capability

The University of Southern Mississippi has designed the QEP to ensure dedicated oversight of Eagles Engaged through a full-time QEP director, as well as broad-based involvement in the implementation of the QEP through a Gateways Steering Committee, course-specific committees, and Pathways Council. In addition, the QEP will collaborate with staff and faculty in a number of departments on both campuses to ensure the effectiveness of Eagles Engaged.

Human Resources - Overall QEP Project Oversight

The director of quality enhancement serves as the full-time QEP director and has administrative responsibility for Eagles Engaged. The director reports to the associate provost for assessment and accreditation under the umbrella of the Office of the Provost/VP Academic Affairs and works closely with the associate provost for academic excellence through the Gateway Steering Committee and the Student Success Advisory Board. The director of quality enhancement also provides ongoing staff support to the General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee (GECAC) and works closely with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure ongoing compliance with core requirements and comprehensive standards required by the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

The responsibilities of the director of quality enhancement are outlined below:

- Oversees all aspects of the QEP, ensuring the program’s commitment to its goals and outcomes
- Leads and collaborates with QEP committees
- Manages the QEP budget
- Monitors assessment processes for all aspects of the QEP and makes recommendations for improvement
- Collects assessment data on a planned, scheduled basis
- Organizes, analyzes, and reports data
- Writes and submits reports required for the QEP
- Stays abreast of best practices related to the specific QEP topic, assessment, and accreditation guidelines and requirements

Julie Howdeshell has served as the director of quality enhancement since July 2006. Howdeshell earned her Ph.D. in higher education administration from The University of Southern Mississippi, M.A. in political science from Baylor University, and holds bachelor’s degrees in English and political science from The University of Memphis. Dr. Howdeshell oversaw implementation of the University’s first QEP, Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies and authored the QEP Impact Report for Finding a Voice in March 2012. SACSCOC accepted the report without condition, noting the University’s use of best practices in enhancing and assessing oral and written communication. Dr. Howdeshell has also served as a QEP lead evaluator, member of SACSCOC on-site reaffirmation committees, and as a QEP consultant, and has presented on such topics as assessment of faculty development using direct measurement, strategic planning for the QEP from topic selection through Impact Report, and on preparing the QEP Impact Report at SACSCOC annual meetings and the Southern Association of Institutional Research (SAIR). Prior to serving as director of quality enhancement, Dr. Howdeshell taught first-year success/orientation courses, developmental reading, and advised undeclared/exploratory majors for eight years. She currently serves on the Student Success Advisory Board and is an ex-officio member of the General Education Committee, General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee, and the University Assessment Committee.

Human Resources: Gateway Initiatives

The Southern Miss Gateway Task Force

The gateway initiatives are supported by the Southern Miss Gateway Task Force, which includes two University liaisons, a steering committee, and five course-specific committees.

The QEP director and the associate provost for academic excellence serve as the Southern Miss G2C liaisons and have responsibility for the overall management of the institution’s G2C efforts. The QEP director serves as the primary contact to the Gardner Institute senior advisor and for the overall gateway initiatives. The associate provost for academic excellence serves as the co-liaison and is an integral part of the Gateway Steering Committee.

The Southern Miss Gateway Steering Committee

The Gateway Steering Committee provides leadership and support for the course-improvement efforts that emerge from the course-specific committee recommendations and institutional data. The steering committee is comprised of 15 members, including the two liaisons, the faculty chairs of the five course-specific course committees, and others with specific expertise related to the gateway initiatives, including directors of Institutional Research, New Student and Retention Programs, and Institutional Effectiveness. In addition, given that four of the five courses are administered in the College of Science and Technology, the associate dean of that college also serves on the steering committee. The associate provost for the Gulf Park campus, the associate provost of assessment and accreditation, and a representative from Academic Council (the University’s undergraduate curriculum committee), also serve on the steering committee.
Southern Miss Gateway Steering Committee members are listed below:

Michelle Arrington  Director of Institutional Research
Shea Houze  Director of New Student and Retention Programs
Julie Howdeshell  Director of Quality Enhancement
Kelly Lester  Academic Council Representative
Cynthia Littlejohn  Instructor, Department of Biological Sciences
Kathryn Lowery  Director, Institutional Effectiveness
Doug Masterson  Associate Dean, College of Science and Technology
Casey Maugh Funderburk  Associate Provost, Gulf Park
Amy Miller  Associate Provost for Academic Excellence
Julie Pigza  Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
William Powell  Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation
Jennifer Regan  Instructor, Department of Biological Sciences
Corwin Stanford  Instructor and Interim Director, Math Zone
Susannah Ural  Professor, Department of History
Southern Miss Gateway Course-Specific Committees

Each of the five gateway courses has a course-specific committee comprised of five to 12 faculty teaching that course with representatives from both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses, as well as online courses, where applicable. In addition, faculty members teaching courses in which the gateway course is a prerequisite serve on the course-specific committees. The membership of each of the five course-specific committees is listed below, including the designated chair of each course committee:

Course Committee - BSC 110: Principles of Biological Sciences
- Cynthia Littlejohn: Instructor, Biological Sciences, Committee Chair
- Francis Bozzolo: Instructor, College of Science and Technology, Gulf Park
- Alex Flynt: Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences
- YanLin Guo: Professor, Biological Sciences
- Kevin Kuehn: Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Michael Sellers: Instructor/Freshman Lab Coordinator, Biological Sciences

Course Committee - BSC 250: Anatomy and Physiology I
- Jennifer Regan: Instructor, Biological Sciences, Committee Chair
- Melissa Gutierrez: Instructor, Biological Sciences
- Holly Huye: Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Food Systems, College of Health
- Jerry Purvis: Instructor, Kinesiology, College of Health
- Robert Turnbull: Instructor, College of Science and Technology, Gulf Park

Course Committee - CHE 106: General Chemistry I
- Julie Pigza: Assistant Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Committee Chair
- Daniel Credeur: Assistant Professor, Kinesiology, College of Health
- Linda Hanson: Instructor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Gulf Park
- Tina Masterson: Laboratory Teaching Coordinator, Chemistry and Biochemistry
- Karl Wallace: Associate Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Course Committee - HIS 101: World Civilization I
- Susannah Ural: Professor, History, Committee Chair
- Matthew Casey: Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies, History
- Lee Follett: Associate Professor, History, Gulf Park
- Max Grivno: Associate Professor, History
- Andrew Haley: Associate Professor, History
- Courtney Luckhardt: Assistant Professor, History
- Andrew Ross: Assistant Professor, History
- Heather Stur: Associate Professor, History
- Andrew Wiest: Distinguished Professor, History

Course Committee - MAT 99: Intermediate Algebra
- Corwin Stanford: Interim Director, Math Zone, Committee Chair
- Lue Bell: Instructor, Mathematics
- Mary Bulloch: Instructor, Mathematics
- Susan Howell: Instructor, Mathematics
- Kalyn Lamey: Instructor, Mathematics, Gulf Park
- Sungwook Lee: Associate Professor, Mathematics
- Marlene Naquin: Instructor, Mathematics, Gulf Park
- Haiyan Tian: Associate Professor, Mathematics
Human Resources: Key Gateway Initiative Partners

Important to the success of the gateway initiatives is an infrastructure that supports student success. This infrastructure is necessary so that the recommendations that emerge from the course committees can be supported and implemented. Key gateway partners are described below.

Associate Provost for Academic Excellence

In summer 2015, based on Student Success Steering Committee recommendations, the University established the position of associate provost for academic excellence. The Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Excellence is responsible for student academic success and faculty development initiatives at The University of Southern Mississippi. This office fosters, coordinates, and supports a range of efforts across the University to enhance the academic performance of students and to provide opportunities for pedagogical and professional development of faculty members. The associate provost for academic excellence also oversees academic policies and processes related to student retention. Dr. Amy Chasteen Miller was named associate provost for academic excellence in July 2015. She comes to the Office of the Provost after serving as associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Arts and Letters (2013-15) and chair of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology (2009-13). Dr. Miller received an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree at the University of Alabama, followed by a Master of Arts in sociology at the University of Tennessee. After completing a Ph.D. in sociology and a graduate certificate in women’s studies from the University of Michigan, Dr. Miller joined the faculty at The University of Southern Mississippi. Since 1997, Dr. Miller has taught 18 different courses, served on more than 40 undergraduate and graduate thesis committees, and has been a recipient of the University Excellence in Teaching Award (2007). Her primary area of research and teaching expertise is gender studies, and she has published in a range of professional journals on topics related to childbirth practices, culture, deviance, and social movements. In addition, Dr. Miller conducts research on student success, retention, and student engagement, with a particular focus on the experiences of “millennials” in higher education. She continues to teach courses in the program in sociology.

New Student and Retention Programs

The Office of New Student and Retention Programs (NSRP) leads the University’s student transition and retention efforts by creating a one-stop shop for student success. From orientation programs for first-year students and families to initiatives designed to increase student retention and persistence, NSRP provides a range of support to the campus community. Programs and resources associated with the department include New Student Orientation, the Jump Scholars Program, Golden Eagle Welcome Week, the First Year Initiative, Parent and Family Programs, the PASS Scholars Program, academic coaching, GS 100 (a required online orientation course), and student outreach initiatives, including personalized communications, a success workshop series and telecounseling. NSRP also provides training for peer-assisted learning. [Peer-assisted learning was piloted on the Gulf Park campus for CHE 106 in spring 2015 and continued in fall 2015. The CHE 106 pilot was expanded to include the Hattiesburg campus for CHE 106 in fall 2015. Peer-assisted learning for MAT 99, Intermediate Algebra, has been piloted on the Hattiesburg campus in spring 2016 through QEP funding.] The mission of New Student and Retention Programs is to facilitate a seamless transition to the academic community and provide intentional programming to increase retention and graduation rates for new and continuing students at The University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Shea Kidd Houze directs the Office of New Student and Retention Programs. Over the past 10 years, Houze has gained experience at a number of different institutions in the areas of new student orientation, student success and retention programming, leadership development, multicultural affairs, career services and student activities. Houze earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in speech communication from USM in 2002. Subsequently, she completed a Master of Education degree in college student affairs administration from the University of Georgia in 2006, and a Ph.D. in educational psychology and research from the University of Memphis in 2014. At Memphis, she also earned a graduate certificate in qualitative research methodology. Dr. Houze also serves on the Gateway Steering Committee.

Office of Institutional Research

The Office of Institutional Research collects, archives, and maintains institutional data for the purpose of analyzing, distributing, and presenting summary information. This information is used to support the decision-making process and the planning needs of all academic and administrative units within The University of Southern Mississippi. The Office of Institutional Research is responsible for reporting official data to the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning for the state of Mississippi (IHL) and the federal government (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - IPEDS). Dr. Michelle Arrington is director of the Office of Institutional Research. In addition, Casey Thomas was hired to provide additional support for institutional research efforts related to student success. Both Arrington and Thomas participated in the Gardner Institute Annual
Gateway Experience Conference in 2015. Dr. Arrington provided oversight of the data upload to the G2C Platform and also serves on the Gateway Steering Committee.

**John N. Gardner Institute**
The gateway initiatives will also benefit from the human resources provided through the Gardner Institute Gateways to Completion. This includes regular communication with a G2C senior advisor, faculty from other institutions sharing their experiences through the G2C Community of Practice, and the G2C Teaching and Learning Academy. The Gardner Institute G2C Program provides ongoing guidance and consulting for each course for a three-year period. Even after the three-year period, faculty may continue to participate in the Annual Gateway Experience Conference. Travel funds for participation are provided throughout the entire QEP process.

**Eagles Engaged Gateway Functional Organizational Chart**

The chart below illustrates responsibility for the gateway initiatives. In terms of decision-making and support, the chart could easily be reversed, as the faculty of the course committees will be the first actors in the G2C process, working through a self-study of their gateway courses and faculty development activities. The chairs of the course committees are on the steering committee and will share their recommendations and concerns through synthesis reports at the monthly steering committee meetings. The steering committee will then respond to their recommendations to provide support in a systematic and comprehensive way.
Human Resources: Pathway Initiatives

The Director of Pathway Experiences

To support the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP pathway initiatives, the University has allocated funding for a full-time director of pathway experiences. The pathways director will provide leadership for the initiatives, manage the budget, coordinate services, and assist with the development, implementation, and assessment of the program initiatives. The director will collaborate with the Office of the Provost, Career Services, department chairs and faculty, Center for Undergraduate Research, and Center for Community and Civic Engagement.

Specific duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Promote increased student awareness and student participation in pathway experiences, such as internships, research, and other fieldwork.
- Cultivate relationships with faculty, university departments, and employers to build, monitor, and evaluate pathway experiences.
- Research, identify, recruit, engage, and sustain pathway opportunities.
- Develop and implement educational programming, such as workshops, seminars, and courses.
- Convene regular meetings of advisor council.
- Collect assessment data and develop annual report, including, but not limited to, tracking of student participation, based on best practices and assessment plans.
- Manage budget in keeping with University requirements.
- Provide current information about trends, opportunities, and successes to the University community.
- Adhere to University and departmental policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Adhere to federal and state guidelines related to internships and pathway experiences.

The job summary for the pathways director position has been posted on The University of Southern Mississippi Human Resources site and advertised in Higher Ed Jobs, The Chronicle, and Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (SoACE).

The Pathways Council

The Pathways Council will serve as an advisory group of faculty, staff, and community members to help guide the pathway initiatives and will be responsible for providing feedback to the pathways director and QEP director on the progress of the pathway initiatives as published in the annual assessment report for the pathways experiences program.

Human Resources: Key Pathway Initiative Partners

Career Services
Career Services is dedicated to helping students succeed in their careers. Career Services provides career consultation, résumé development, career interest inventories, practice interviews, career fairs, co-op opportunities, workshops and presentations. In addition, Career Services has a resource library with online and print resources, including information on graduate schools, employer profiles, job search skills, salary and job demand information, employer directories, career development, interviews, résumés, and specific occupational information. The resource library also houses computers for career-related research. Career Services is located on the Hattiesburg campus in McLemore Hall 125 and on the Gulf Park campus in Hardy Hall 232. Career Services is directed by Rusty Anderson with a professional staff that includes career counselors and a marketing specialist. Jona Burton serves as coordinator of student life and Career Services for the Gulf Park campus.

Center for Community and Civic Engagement
The Center for Community and Civic Engagement (CCCE) promotes community service and service learning at The University of Southern Mississippi through partnerships with faculty, students, and community agencies. Each year, the office documents more than 100,000 hours of community service by Southern Miss students. The center works with over 100 community partners. Students can register for community service opportunities through the CCCE Office. In addition, the CCCE offers a Faculty Fellows Seminar for interested faculty introducing them to the theory and practice of service learning, a method of experiential education in which students learn through active participation in and reflection on thoughtfully organized community service experiences integrated into an academic course. The Center for Community and Civic Engagement is directed by Christy Arrazattee.
Center for Undergraduate Research
The USM Center for Undergraduate Research (CUR) was established in October 2011 with the goal of enhancing the undergraduate experience by promoting and supporting student-faculty collaborations in research, creative projects, and scholarship. Students interested in working on independent research, creative, or scholarly projects are encouraged to explore scholarly opportunities outlined on the Faculty Affiliates website of CUR. Undergraduate students may apply for funding to support their work through the Eagle Scholars Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR), and present their findings at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. CUR is a member of the Council on Undergraduate Research, headquartered in Washington, D.C., which sponsors the National Conference on Undergraduate Research each April. CUR has adopted the Student Opportunity Center (SOC) as a resource for students where they can learn about over 10,000 opportunities specifically focusing on undergraduates. The operation and activities of the center are guided by the CUR Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives from each of the colleges, as well as Faculty Senate, University Libraries, the Learning Enhancement Center, and the Student Government Association. Dr. Marie Danforth, professor of anthropology, serves as chair of the CUR Steering Committee.

Relationship Between Pathways, Career Services, CCCE, and CUR
The directors or chairs of Career Services, CCCE, and CUR were active members of the QEP Research and Design Team and served on the team that developed the pathways initiatives. The pathways initiatives will in no way duplicate the services of Career Services, CCCE, or CUR. Each group has a unique mission and serves particular needs. The pathways director will work with Career Services, CCCE, and CUR and will refer students to opportunities offered by each as part of connecting students to pathways opportunities related to their post-graduation goals. To ensure ongoing communication, the directors of Career Services, CCCE, and CUR, all serve on the Pathways Council.

Pathways Functional Organizational Chart
During the time that Eagles Engaged is the designated SACSCOC QEP (present – 2022), the pathways director will report to the director of quality enhancement under the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. This will ensure a focused commitment to completion of the pathways goals and outcomes during a time in which greater effort will need to be applied in establishing the program. To benefit from the resources already available for post-graduation employment for students, the physical office of the pathways director will be in Career Services in McLemore Hall on the Hattiesburg campus. After completion of the QEP and maturation of the pathways program, the pathways director will report to the Associate Provost for Academic Excellence. This model worked well for Southern Miss for its first QEP and has been vetted through all relevant bodies.
Eagles Engaged will benefit from a strong technological infrastructure that supports the gateway and pathway initiatives.

**Gateway Initiatives – Technological Resources**
The University utilizes one behavior/violation tracking and analysis system, Maxient, and will implement a new retention-oriented advising system, Starfish, in fall 2016. Both have robust capacity for archiving, analyzing, and tracking reports.

Maxient is a software solution that USM uses to manage reports and maintain records of student behavioral and academic concerns. USM uses Maxient to centralize record keeping regarding student issues ranging from academic performance to conduct violations to residence life disruptions. The USM Maxient system receives reports in three categories: concerning situations/behavior (e.g., mental health concerns, hostile behavior); academic performance issues (e.g., need for a tutor, poor attendance); and academic integrity incidents (e.g., alleged plagiarism). Reports can be submitted by anyone on or off campus. Once received, reports are immediately responded to by the appropriate personnel to connect students to resources or address the concerns that have been raised. Common student referrals include counseling, tutoring, financial aid, academic coaching, Writing Center/Speaking Center, and the dean of students. Administrative responsibility for Maxient is in the Office of Compliance, but subsections of the system are managed by the Office of the Provost, the director of the Counseling Center, and the New Student and Retention Programs office.

Starfish identifies at-risk students in real time, pinpoints areas of concern, and connects them with resources, such as advising or tutoring. Starfish helps institutions individualize support for students and assess which services and interventions are working. Administrative responsibility for Starfish is with the associate provost for academic excellence in the Office of the Provost.

**Pathway Initiatives – Technological Resources**
Tracking of participation in pathway experiences will utilize a data-management system associated with SOAR, Southern’s Online Accessible Records, a PeopleSoft system. In addition to tracking pathway experience participation, the data will also be used for compliance purposes for SARA, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, to track in-state and out-of-state practica and internships. The registration form is supported by the Office of Institutional Research and iTech, the University department supporting technology.

**Physical Resource Commitment and Capability**
All five of the designated QEP gateway courses have physical tutorial space. On the Hattiesburg campus, the Department of Biological Sciences operates a Biological Science Learning Center in Walker Science Building 107 and 224. The Chemistry Tutorial Center is in Walker Science Building 228. The Department of Mathematics operates the Math Zone, located across from Cook Library, including tutoring for MAT 99 and 101. A History Lab is located in Liberal Arts Building 458. Space is designated on the Gulf Park campus for support of these courses through the Gulf Park Learning Commons, centrally located in the Gulf Coast Library. The pathway program will utilize space in Career Services in McLemore Hall 125 on the Hattiesburg campus and in Hardy Hall 232 on the Gulf Park campus.
While physical space is allocated for tutorial needs for gateway courses, it is anticipated that some of the course-specific committees may utilize portions of their course grants for enhancement of physical tutorial spaces or classroom spaces to accommodate new learning pedagogies. To support these efforts, the QEP will make use of the expertise of the Learning Space Committee, comprised of instructional designers and interior designers with experience in creating spaces that support best practices pedagogically. Details about the Learning Spaces Committee are provided below.

Learning Spaces Committee
The Learning Spaces Committee serves as the central coordinating body to provide guidance and oversight for design, creation, and implementation of formal and informal environments that support engaged learning and quality teaching at The University of Southern Mississippi. The group provides direction and develops strategy for the future of learning space support on campus and offers specific recommendations and approvals for learning space proposals, projects, and programs that support campus learning spaces.

The primary responsibilities of the Learning Space Committee include the following:

• Facilitating faculty and staff access to resources on best practices in the creation and use of active learning environments
• Providing guidance on learning space development to members of the University community
• Reviewing proposals for learning space creation, design, or redesign
• Supporting assessment of learning spaces
• Participating in strategic planning funding allocation decisions for space enhancements

Eagles Engaged Timeline
The timeline provided on the following page outlines key action items for the gateway initiatives, pathway initiatives, assessment, and SACSCOC compliance for the QEP. Essential in the timeline is the annual reporting for the overall QEP. The director of quality enhancement will submit an annual report of the activities of the QEP, any necessary changes (and the rationale for changes), as well as the findings from general education student learning assessment, the Student Assessment of Learning Gains, Pathway Portfolio Rubric analysis, and the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation. The report will be submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in the same form required for the summative QEP Impact Report to be submitted to SACSCOC in 2022. The timeline also shows the implementation plan for the activities that comprise Eagles Engaged.
# EAGLES ENGAGED TIMELINE: 2015-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of QEP</th>
<th>YEAR 0</th>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 4</th>
<th>YEAR 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Year</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>2020-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semesters</td>
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## Action Items by Area

### GATEWAY INITIATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Year 0</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete Gateway Course Analytics Inventory</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Gateway Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in G2C Webinars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of G2C Principles and KPIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot Peer-Assisted Learning - MAT 99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Chairs Submit Names for Travel Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in Annual Gateway Conference</td>
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<td>Upload Previous Year Data to G2C Platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold Monthly Meetings of Steering Committee</td>
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<td>Hold Monthly Meetings of Course Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of Course Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refine Implementation of Course Initiatives</td>
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### PATHWAY INITIATIVES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Year 0</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire Pathway Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Pathways Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Separate Pathways Budget</td>
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<td>Create Pathways Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocate Departmental Grants</td>
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<td>Allocate Pathway Scholarships</td>
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<td>Promote Pathway Graduation Recognition</td>
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<td>Submit Annual Pathway Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot Pathway Reflection/Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand Implementation of Pathway Reflection/Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold Monthly Meetings of Pathways Council</td>
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### ASSESSMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Year 0</th>
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<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Student Assessment of Learning Gains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collect Student Learning Reports (GEC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Run DFWI Report for QEP Gateway Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administer NSSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administer Survey of UG Degree Recipients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct DFWI Outreach and Focus Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess Pathway Learning Portfolios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct Pathway Needs Assessment</td>
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### SACSCOC-RELATED ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Year 0</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit QEP to SACSCOC and Host On-Site Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in SACSCOC Annual Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit Report to Institutional Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare QEP Impact Report (Due 2022)</td>
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</table>
In the same way that institutional assessment informed selection of the QEP topic, assessment will guide the Gateway Steering Committee and Pathway Council in monitoring progress of the QEP and guiding continuous improvement efforts. The Eagles Engaged assessment plan will be incorporated into the existing institutional effectiveness assessment process with reports submitted annually to the University Assessment Committee. In addition, the director of the QEP will develop an annual report in the format of the QEP Impact Report required by SACSCOC for review by the Gateway Steering Committee, the Pathway Council, and the associate provost for assessment and accreditation. The director of quality enhancement has responsibility for ensuring that the assessment plan outlined in this chapter is followed, data is collected and analyzed, and reports are completed and shared with the relevant advisory councils. In implementing the assessment plan, the director of quality enhancement works with the faculty chairs of the gateway course committees, the director of institutional research, the pathways director, and the General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee.

Two goals have been established for Eagles Engaged. The first is to improve learning gains in QEP gateway courses (BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106, HIS 101 and MAT 99). The second is to enhance the environment supporting student learning through pathway experiences that provide real-world opportunities to apply academic studies and develop career-readiness competencies. For each goal, a set of student learning outcomes has been identified.

The student learning outcomes for the gateway component are the established general education curriculum student learning outcomes for the QEP gateway courses:

1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science. (BSC 110, BSC 250 and CHE 106)
2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures, or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures. (HIS 101)
3. Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text. (HIS 101)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts. (MAT 99)

Eagles Engaged represents one plan with two distinct projects aimed at enhancing student success. The gateway component of Eagles Engaged addresses student learning outcomes in five gateway courses, while the pathways component addresses the environment supporting student learning. Given that these are two distinct high-impact projects, the assessment plan for each is presented separately. The student learning outcomes for both components were designed to be specific and measurable. Assessment includes both direct and indirect measures to triangulate data, to track QEP program strengths and weaknesses, and inform continued program improvement.

Where possible, the assessment plan incorporates existing institutional assessment processes and instruments, including institutional surveys, general education assessment, and data collected by the Office of Institutional Research. New assessment measures include the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG), Pathway Learning Rubric, and the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation.

Detailed descriptions are provided for each assessment measure and instrument followed by the target for achievement. In general, the annual improvement target is to see incremental improvements from the previous year. Where national comparison data is available, as in the case of the National Survey of Student Engagement, the target is to meet or exceed national levels. In addition, data collection processes, timeline, persons responsible, and the use of the data are included for each measure.

In addition to assessment of student learning, the QEP director will track trends in DFWI rates and pathway experience participation and conduct ongoing needs assessments for both the gateway and pathway components. Details of the tracking processes and needs assessments are provided at the end of the assessment sections for each component.
QEP Goal 1: Improve learning gains in QEP gateway courses.

Learning gains in QEP gateway courses will be assessed through general education curriculum assessment (direct assessment) and through the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (indirect assessment).

Gateway Student Learning Outcomes
Students will meet or exceed established student learning outcomes in QEP gateway courses as listed below:

1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science. (BSC 110, BSC 250 and CHE 106)
2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures, or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures. (HIS 101)
3. Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text. (HIS 101)
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts. (MAT 99)

Measure 1: General Education Curriculum Course Assessment Data

Given that four of the five QEP gateway courses are general education courses and the other, MAT 99, is a precursor to a general education course, it was logical to use the University general education assessment structure in assessing student learning in the QEP gateway courses. BSC 110, BSC 250, CHE 106 and HIS 101 have been conducting general education assessment for many years and already have well-established measures and processes, as well as baseline data as shown in the chart that follows. Since MAT 99 is not officially a general education course, but a precursor to general education curriculum, the Department of Mathematics developed an assessment plan for MAT 99 using the general education assessment framework and implemented the plan during the 2015-16 academic year to establish baseline data.

General education assessment at The University of Southern Mississippi is a faculty-driven process. The General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee (GECAC), in partnership with the General Education Committee of Academic Council, oversees general education with support from the director of quality enhancement, who serves as an ex-officio member of the GECAC. The University uses course-embedded assessment to ensure that 1) the measures align with general education competencies, 2) the measures are meaningful to the student, and 3) findings are meaningful and actionable by the faculty. According to Dr. Mary Allen (2006),

“embedded assessment offers opportunities for authentic and performance assessment within the teaching-and-learning context. Both students and faculty are engaged in these activities. Students are motivated because they will be graded or because the activities tie directly into courses they are taking, and faculty care because the assessment is integrated into their teaching” (p. 159).

Allen also notes, “Embedded assessment is probably the most common way to assess student learning because students already generate relevant products and behaviors that are suitable for assessment” (p. 160).

The embedded assessment model has been used effectively at USM for over a decade. All departments offering courses that fulfill general education requirements submit annual reports for the general education outcomes assigned to that course based on general education category. The assessment report includes the general education outcomes, measure, target, findings, analysis, and action plans. At least one direct measure is required. Artifacts include papers, lab reports, portfolios and test questions that align with the outcomes. Artifacts are evaluated by faculty using rubrics, which note the criteria for meeting that level of performance, or in the case of test questions, through accuracy of responses. The GECAC requires that targets be established for each measure by departmental faculty teaching the course assigned to the outcome. Targets are based on faculty expertise, experience and professional judgment after review of baseline data and the difficulty of the measure. In addition to the annual reports, each course submits a periodic report every three years analyzing three years of findings and analyses, along with relevant supporting documentation such as syllabi and rubrics. Each periodic report is evaluated by two reviewers from the GECAC using a review template. The chair of the GECAC develops an executive summary of the reviews and returns the feedback to the department chair. The GECAC chair also shares the summaries with the General Education Committee chair and the director of quality enhancement.

Course Measures, Targets and Baseline Data

The table below shows the gateway student learning outcomes, the QEP gateway course(s) that address the respective outcomes, the direct measures, targets established by the faculty, and findings from the last two academic years. Findings include the overall percentage meeting the target and breakdowns by campus when applicable (“HBG” is Hattiesburg campus and “GP” is the Gulf Park campus). For the science courses, the outcome aligned with the lecture portion of the course will be used for the QEP. Where rubrics are used, this is indicated and provided in Appendix P. Test questions are not included in the QEP document but are available upon request.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gateway</th>
<th>QEP Gateway Course</th>
<th>Direct Measure</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Findings 2013-14</th>
<th>Findings 2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will differentiate the basic concepts in a discipline of science.</td>
<td><strong>BSC 110: Principles of Biological Sciences I</strong></td>
<td>Related exam questions</td>
<td>At least 70% will answer exam questions correctly.</td>
<td>Overall: 55.5% (n=530); Fall ’13 HBG 50.2% (n=295); GP 93% (n=42); Spring ’14 HBG 55.4% (n=193)</td>
<td>Overall: 62.3% (n=634); Fall ’14 HBG 62.0% (n=355); GP 77.6% (n=76); Spring ’15 HBG 56.2% (n=185); GP 66.7% (n=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BSC 250: Human Anatomy and Physiology I</strong></td>
<td>Related exam questions</td>
<td>At least 70% will answer exam questions correctly.</td>
<td>Overall: 45% (n=704); Fall ’13 HBG 42.3% (n=298); GP 87.5% (n=40); Spring ’14 HBG 59% (n=266); GP section not taught spring term</td>
<td>Overall: 68.8% (n=557); Fall ’14 HBG 65.2% (n=270); GP 87% (n=39); Spring ’15 HBG 69.8% (n=248); GP section not taught spring term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHE 106: General Chemistry I</strong></td>
<td>Course exams about basic concepts of chemistry</td>
<td>50% of the exams will be rated as good (3) or excellent (4) on a 4-point scale.</td>
<td>Overall: 27% (n=696); 9% Excellent; 18% Good; 24% Fair; 49% Poor. Includes all sections taught on HBG and GP</td>
<td>Overall: 25% (n=623); 8% Excellent; 17% Good; 25% Fair; 50% Poor. Includes all sections taught on HBG and GP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures, or the literary, philosophical or religious contributions of world cultures.</td>
<td><strong>HIS 101: World Civilization I</strong></td>
<td>Rubric for GEC Outcome 7 applied to a representative sample of papers or assignments</td>
<td>70% to achieve a 3 or higher for the outcome on a 5-point scale, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest</td>
<td>Combined: 67% (n=164) scored 3 or higher; HBG 65% (n=130); GP 76% (n=54)</td>
<td>Combined: 71% (n=390) scored 3 or higher; HBG 68% (n=293); GP 81% (n=97) Both campuses saw an increase in student performance for this outcome (HBG up 3% and GP up 5%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text.</td>
<td><strong>HIS 101: World Civilization I</strong></td>
<td>Rubric for GEC Outcome 8 applied to a representative sample of assignments</td>
<td>70% to achieve a 3 or higher for the outcome on a 5-point scale, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest</td>
<td>Combined: 64% (n=78); HBG: 61% (n=54); GP: 70% (n=24)</td>
<td>Combined 76% (n=205) scored 3 or higher; HBG 74% (n=191); GP 100% (n=14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with real-world situations involving fundamental math concepts.</td>
<td><strong>MAT 99: Intermediate Algebra</strong></td>
<td>A set of questions administered as part of the final exam that addresses the ability of students to work with fundamental math concepts</td>
<td>The achievement target is to obtain an average student score of 70% for each question.</td>
<td>Since this is not a GEC course, but a precursor to a GEC course, an assessment report was not required. An assessment plan has been developed, and data is being collected for 2015-16 for QEP purposes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible**

The chair of the General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee (GECAC) sends requests for general education data to the chairs/directors of the departments/schools administering courses fulfilling general education requirements. Requests are sent via email to the chairs and directors listserv and/or in print mailings. Information is also available on the GEC page of the InfoCenter, the University’s intranet. Annual and periodic reports are due each summer by the date set by the GECAC and are sent electronically to gec@usm.edu. The director of quality enhancement provides administrative support to the GECAC and, thus, receives the reports and supporting materials. These reports are then shared with the GECAC for review.

For purposes of the QEP, the findings, analysis and action plans included in the GEC report for each QEP gateway
The Student Assessment of Learning Gains is an online instrument used as part of the Gateways to Completion process that allows college instructors to gather learning-focused feedback from their students. According to the Student Assessment of Learning Gains site (salgsite.org),

“The Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) was developed in 1997 by Elaine Seymour while she was co-evaluator for two National Science Foundation-funded chemistry consortia (ChemLinks and ModularCHEM) that developed and tested modular curricula and pedagogy for undergraduate chemistry courses. The original SALG was used by over 1,000 instructors in 3,000 classes and by over 65,000 students. The instrument was subsequently revised by Stephen Carroll, Elaine Seymour and Time Weston in 2007 to better reflect goals and methods used in a broader array of courses beyond chemistry.

“The SALG focuses exclusively on the degree to which a course has enabled student learning. In particular, the SALG asks students to assess and report on their own learning and on the degree to which specific aspects of the course have contributed to that learning...

“Information on the development of the SALG and on validity and reliability evidence of the approach can be found in “Creating a Better Mousetrap: Online Student Assessment of Their Learning Gains” by E. Seymour, D. Wiese, A. Hunter and S.M. Daffinrud, a paper presented at the National Meeting of the American Chemical Society.”

The version of the SALG used by G2C (and that is being used for Eagles Engaged) consists of 18 questions derived from the broader Student Assessment of Learning Gains survey. The questions address the following topics:

1. How the class topics, activities, reading and assignments fit together
2. The pace of the class
3. Participating in discussions during class
4. Participating in group work during class
5. Doing hands-on class activities
6. Comments on how class activities helped learning (open-ended)
7. Graded assignments in this class
8. The number and spacing of tests
9. The way the grading system helped me understand what I needed to work on
10. The feedback on my work received after tests or assignments
11. Explanation of how the class activities, reading and assignments related to each other
12. Explanation given by instructor of how to learn or study the materials
13. Explanation of why the class focused on the topics presented
14. Working with peers during class
15. Working with peers outside of class
16. Result of student work on gains in understanding of main concepts explored in class
17. Result of student work on gains in understanding the relationships between the main concepts
18. Student willingness to seek help from others when working academic problems

Students rate how much each aspect of the class helped their learning with 0= not applicable; 1 – no help/gain; 2= a little help/gain; 3 = moderate help/gain; 4 = much help/gain; and 5 = great help/gain. A mean is calculated for each question for each course.

A copy of the Student Assessment of Learning Gains is included as Appendix O.

Target: Annual improvements in mean score for each course for each item

Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

As recommended by G2C, the SALG is administered in each QEP gateway course at the end of the fall semester when students have had time to complete as much of the course as possible (mid-November through mid-December). As a result, the Student Assessment of Learning Gains includes all students regardless of eventual grade (A, B, C, D or F). The course-specific committee chairs work with the faculty teaching the gateway course to administer the survey. The instrument may be administered either in an online or paper format. Online versions have a link to the survey for each course section that is uploaded to the G2C platform. Paper copies are sent to the QEP office and then uploaded to the G2C platform. Paper copies are kept secure in a locked cabinet in a locked office. No student names or identifiers are on the survey instrument.

Use of Data

Survey results will be maintained in the G2C platform through at least 2018. Results from surveys administered from fall 2015 – fall 2021 will be maintained by the QEP office and will be included in assessment reports annually. Survey findings
are analyzed at the section and aggregate levels. All data is anonymous so that student identities are protected. The Gateway Steering Committee and Gateway Course Committees will use the assessment data and analysis to inform changes each year.

The table below shows mean scores for all five QEP gateway courses at the course aggregate level for 17 of the 18 items based on fall 2015 data collection. One of the items is an open-ended question and not represented below. The scale is from 0 – 5, with 5 representing the highest gain. Specifically, students rate how much each aspect of the class helped their learning with 0 = not applicable; 1 = no help/gain; 2 = a little help/gain; 3 = moderate help/gain; 4 = much help/gain; and 5 = great help/gain. Responses provide instructors with feedback from the students as to the impact of the different variables on learning gains to aid in informing needed changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Assessment of Learning Gains Item</th>
<th>Fall 2015 Data</th>
<th>BSC 110 (n=243)</th>
<th>BSC 250 (n=134)</th>
<th>CHE 106 (n=331)</th>
<th>HIS 101 (n=624)</th>
<th>MAT 99 (n=193)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How the class topics, activities, reading and assignments fit together</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace of the class</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in discussions during class</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in group work during class</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing hands-on class activities</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded assignments (overall) in this class</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number and spacing of tests</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way the grading system helped me understand what I needed to work on</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feedback on my work after tests or assignments</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of how the class activities, reading and assignments related to each other</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation given by instructor of how to learn or study the materials</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of why the class focused on the topics presented</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with peers during class</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with peers outside of class</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main concepts explored in this class</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationships between the main concepts</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to seek help from others (teachers, peers, TA) when working on academic problems</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Gateway Assessment

DFWI Rates

As part of Eagles Engaged, the Gateway Steering Committee will also track changes in DFWI rates, specifically the percentages and raw numbers of students earning a D, F, W (withdrawal) or I (incomplete) in each gateway course. The DFWI rates are determined using undergraduate student enrollment and grades by academic year to include summer, fall and spring semesters. For example, the 2014-15 academic year includes summer 2014, fall 2014 and spring 2015. All sections taught at USM are included in the data, including honors sections, online sections, and sections taught at Hattiesburg and Gulf Park. The following is baseline data for the five gateway courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QEP Gateway Course</th>
<th>2014-15 Enrollment</th>
<th>2014-15 DFWI Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC 250</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 106</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS 101</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 99</td>
<td>1,187</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,918</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

Grades are entered by course instructors upon completion of the course and maintained in PeopleSoft, the University’s recordkeeping management system. Each fall, the director of institutional research (also a member of the QEP Gateway Steering Committee) updates the inventory in the G2C platform and uploads the required data from the previous academic year for analysis. In addition, the director of institutional research will run reports at the end of each semester to provide preliminary information to the Gateway Course Committees and Gateway Steering Committee. The QEP director is responsible for requesting an updated inventory from the Office of Institutional Research, and the director of institutional research is responsible for ensuring that the data is uploaded. The Gateway Steering Committee and gateway course committees have access to the data in the G2C platform. The QEP director is responsible for ensuring that the findings are included in the annual assessment report.

Use of Data

DFWI data are stored in the G2C platform. The QEP director will also maintain copies of the ratings in the QEP Office. DFWI rates are analyzed overall and by student cohort (developmental education, first year, etc.), method of instruction delivery (face-to-face, blended or online), gender, full-time status, age, ethnicity/race, Pell eligibility, first-generation status, and instructor designation. The data is uploaded on a student level by using an anonymous query ID for which only the institution holds a key. The sole purpose for sharing this anonymous data is educational improvement and has educational benefit for the institution and its students. As part of the agreement for G2C participation, the Gardner Institute agrees to conduct their support efforts in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. In addition, the data is not purposed for use in the evaluation of individual faculty.

Understanding and Supporting Students with DFWIs – Outreach and Focus Groups

In order to gain additional and meaningful information from students who withdraw from QEP gateway courses or earn a grade of D, F or I, the University has developed a systematic plan of outreach and follow-up focus groups. Specifically, a team of four trained graduate assistants will provide outreach to students who are struggling academically to 1) point them to additional academic support and 2) gather data on reasons for their lower-than-desired performance in one or more QEP gateway course. The data gathered will provide faculty with new insights into their students who are struggling and add to the understanding of factors to consider in course redesigns.

The four graduate students will work 20 hours per week on the project beginning mid-August with oversight by the associate provost for academic excellence, who is also a G2C liaison. The graduate students will be selected based on their experiences with student outreach, academic coaching and/or data analysis, and all must have strong communication skills marked by empathy, sympathy, and the desire to help others.

Training

The graduate students leading the outreach and focus groups will participate in a full day of training to create consistency in preparation and ensure clear understanding of the G2C process. Specific topics to be covered include:

- The nature of the QEP and the particular structure, scope and purpose of the G2C initiative;
- The organization of the outreach plans for fall 2016;
- Confidentiality, FERPA and legal boundaries;
- Campus resources for academic support;
• Communication scripts and strategies for phone, email, text and face-to-face communication with struggling students;
• Data collection methods to be used;
• Data analysis; and
• Expectations for communication with faculty and staff.

Faculty, Staff and Graduate Student Connections

The graduate student team will initially meet all Gateway Course Committee chairs and other steering committee members at the first Gateway Steering Committee meeting of the academic year. The plan for outreach will be presented and discussed, then the G2C liaisons (Howdeshell and Miller) will work to coordinate the details of the plans with each committee chair.

At the start of the semester, the graduate students will also attend several class meetings for each course to gain insight into the course content, organization and feel. After that, they will remain in contact with the professors, providing feedback based on what they hear from students at key points of outreach.

The graduate student team will remain in regular communication with the associate provost, meeting weekly to discuss work and address any challenges that may arise. As needed and desired, they can also attend the steering committee or course committee meetings to provide input.

Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

1. Week one: Create base spreadsheets
   All G2C course rosters will be provided to the graduate student team as Excel spreadsheets. They will be converted into base spreadsheets to use for the outreach processes, with columns designated for interim grades, any information from the faculty members, outreach efforts and notes. Graduate students will tentatively be assigned to particular courses and students, with the recognition that assignments may change if the outreach needed is not proportionate.

2. Weeks 2-6: Outreach to students requesting to withdraw
   After the first week of the semester, students at USM are not able to drop a class without instructor permission, and if they do get that permission they then have a “W” on their record and do not receive any refund on their tuition. When a student initiates a request for a W, the professor will provide the information on that request to the graduate student assigned to their course, and that student will then reach out by phone and/or email to discuss the reasons for wanting a W. Students will be given information about resources, and the graduate student will discuss study strategies and other topics with the student if he or she is interested.

   The information gathered in this outreach will be tracked in a spreadsheet.

3. Weeks 6-7: Outreach to students with a D or F interim grade
   At the six-week point, all instructors of record will assign all students an “interim grade” in the system, which is designed to provide the students and their advisors with an assessment of where they stand academically at that point.

   The graduate student team will review all interim grades for the G2C courses and engage in outreach to any student with a D or F. The outreach script will involve discussion of the student’s situation and their perception of why they are performing poorly, available and relevant campus resources, the ability of the student to improve the grade significantly in the 10 remaining weeks of the term, and strategies for studying, time management and note-taking.

   All conversations and student responses will be entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. Faculty teaching the courses will then meet with the graduate students to discuss the information gathered and any feedback that might be useful to the faculty member(s).

4. Weeks 7-10: Outreach to students requesting a W
   Students may continue to request a W in the course until the 50th day of the semester. As such, the graduate students will continue to track these requests and to reach out to all students initiating them. Data will be collected and used for analysis.

5. Weeks 7-16: Outreach to students who continue to struggle academically
   In the second half of the semester, faculty will provide the graduate student team with information on students who earn Ds or Fs on key assignments, so that the students will be able to reach out to those students for support.

6. End of Term: Incompletes
   Once grades are submitted, students who received a grade of “Incomplete” will be identified, and a spreadsheet will be built noting the reasons for the incomplete. Such “I” grades are by policy to be given only in the event of extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control, so the professors should be able to provide information regarding reasons for the incomplete grades to the graduate student team.
Data Analysis

Once the final grades are submitted, the graduate student team will analyze the data collected with the support of the associate provost and other affiliated faculty with relevant research experience. Analysis of withdrawals will be complete by the end of fall (e.g., W requests), whereas other data will be analyzed after the term is complete (e.g., DFI grades). The graduate students will review and analyze the information collected, including the following:

- Number of Ds and Fs at interim grades in comparison with the final grades
- Number of requests for Ws and how many were approved vs. how many chose to stay
- Reasons given for W requests – qualitative analysis of information provided, by course and across all courses
- Number of students who received some form of outreach and the number of those students who improved their grades, indicated behavioral change, or responded in another fashion to the outreach
- Number of incompletes granted by course and reasons for the incompletes, analyzed by course and across all courses
- Qualitative analysis of reasons given by students for the academic challenges; identification of prominent themes and possible points of intervention; exploration of possible correlation between reasons and final grade of D, F or other

Focus Groups

The graduate student team will conduct student focus groups in January on how to improve the courses. Invitations will be steered toward those with DFWI, but due to FERPA restrictions, will not exclusively include that group. Instead, attendance will be taken so that the responses of those earning DFWI grades can be analyzed directly.

Use of Data

The data analysis will result in a report that will be provided to the committee chairs, as well as the G2C liaisons, for discussion in the spring semester to inform course redesign changes.

QEP Goal 2: Enhance the environment supporting student learning through pathway experiences that provide real-world opportunities to apply academic studies and develop career readiness.

The impact of pathway experiences on student learning will be assessed through evaluation of student artifacts using the Pathway Learning Portfolio Rubric (direct assessment) and through the Student Reflection and Evaluation (indirect assessment).

Pathway Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will apply academic content knowledge and/or skills in pathway experiences.
2. Students will develop career-readiness competencies through engagement in pathway experiences.

Measure 1: Pathway Learning Portfolio Rubric

As part of the Pathway Scholarship Program and Pathway Grant Program, students will develop and submit portfolios of their pathway experiences that includes artifacts demonstrating application of academic studies and development of career-readiness competencies. Artifacts must include a narrative written by the students synthesizing their academic studies and pathway experiences, and analyzing how their pathway experiences furthered their career readiness as outlined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career-readiness competencies for new college graduates. Career-readiness competencies include critical thinking/problem solving, oral/written communications, teamwork/collaboration, information technology application, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, and career management.

Pathway Learning Portfolios will be assessed using the Pathway Learning Rubric provided below. Reviewers will note the learning elements noted in the portfolio by the student (academic content knowledge/skills and development of career competencies), then evaluate the artifacts and narratives to determine the level in which the student provided evidence of application of academic studies in the pathway experience and the evidence in which the student developed career-readiness competencies.
Pathway Learning Portfolio Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of Academic Content Knowledge/Skills in Pathway Experience</th>
<th>3 - Strong Evidence</th>
<th>2 – Adequate Evidence</th>
<th>1 – Minimal or No Evidence</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong evidence that student applied academic studies in the pathway experience</td>
<td>Adequate evidence that student applied academic studies in the pathway experience</td>
<td>Minimal or no evidence that student applied academic studies in the pathway experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewer Analysis of Evidence of Application of Academic Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of Career-Readiness Competencies</th>
<th>3 - Strong Evidence</th>
<th>2 – Adequate Evidence</th>
<th>1 – Minimal or No Evidence</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong evidence that student developed one or more career-readiness competency</td>
<td>Adequate evidence that student developed one or more career-readiness competency</td>
<td>Minimal or no evidence that student developed one or more career-readiness competency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewer Analysis of Evidence of Development of Career-Readiness Competencies

The director of pathway experiences will work with the pathway scholarship recipient cohort throughout their pathway experiences via online conferencing to ensure ongoing development of the learning portfolio. Students must include at least three artifacts that demonstrate application of academic content knowledge and/or skills aligned with the three learning objectives outlined in the application process. In the event that the pathway experience changes, a student may identify other learning objectives in consultation with the pathway director. Scholarship recipients must also include three artifacts demonstrating development of at least three career-readiness competencies. The site supervisor or the faculty member overseeing the experience must also review the portfolio and submit a letter that the portfolio is reflective of the student’s work and the experience. The project coordinator for each pathway grant will work with the students included in the grant to ensure ongoing development and submission of pathway learning portfolios.

**Target:** 1) Annual increase in number of students demonstrating application of academic studies in pathway experiences and 2) development of career-readiness competencies through pathway experiences (2 or higher on a 3-point scale)

**Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible**

Review of pathway learning portfolios will follow the same data collection and analysis process conducted by The University of Southern Mississippi during its first QEP, which collected writing and speaking artifacts and evaluated those artifacts using a rubric. Student portfolios will be uploaded to the QEP Pathway Learning course shell in Blackboard. Each fall semester, the Pathways Council will review the learning portfolios and evaluate them based on the rubric below after training in the use of the rubric to ensure inter-rater reliability. Each portfolio will be reviewed by two committee members with at least one faculty reviewer from the discipline of the area connected to the learning area.

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**The University of Southern Mississippi**

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Use of Data

Findings and analyses will be included in the annual QEP report. The Pathways Council and director of pathway experiences will use the data to inform needed changes in the Pathway Scholarship Program and Pathway Grant Program.

Measure 2: Pathway Reflection and Evaluation

The Pathway Reflection and Evaluation serves as an indirect measure of student learning in pathway experiences. This measure will capture data from all students participating in pathways, not just students receiving pathway scholarships or participating in pathway grant activities. The instrument includes two sections specifically designed to align with the two pathway student learning outcomes: 1) application of academic content/knowledge and 2) development of career-readiness competencies.

For application of academic content knowledge/skills, students are asked to reflect on their experiences and provide a written response to the following questions:

1. Briefly describe how your academic coursework prepared you for this experience.
2. List three examples of specific theories, knowledge or skills from your major or from your general education curriculum that you applied in this pathway experience.

Students are then asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the following statements (strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or not applicable).

1. My academic studies prepared me for the pathway experience/internship.
2. I applied academic content knowledge and/or skills in my pathway experience.

For development of career-readiness competencies in pathway experiences, students are asked to reflect on their experiences and provide written responses to the following questions:

1. Give examples of how you had to analyze issues, solve problems, or demonstrate originality or inventiveness during your pathway experience.
2. How were your verbal and communication skills enhanced as a result of this experience?
3. Describe how you worked and interacted with others (colleagues, supervisors, customers). Did you work with diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and/or viewpoints?
4. What technology did you use (software applications, equipment, etc.)?
5. How were your leadership skills enhanced as a result of this experience?
6. How was your work ethic and professionalism enhanced as a result of this experience (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, time/workload management, professional image)?
7. Describe your skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to your academic/career goals.
8. What areas do you need to grow in professionally?

Students are then asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the following statements (strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or not applicable).

1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: As a result of this experience, I have been able to further develop my abilities to analyze issues, make decisions and overcome problems.
2. Oral/Written Communication: My verbal and written communication skills were enhanced as a result of this experience.
3. Teamwork/Collaboration: My ability to work in diverse teams and manage conflict were increased as a result of this experience.
4. Information Technology Application: During this experience, I have enhanced my knowledge and application of information technology applications to solve work-related problems and goals.
5. Leadership: As a result of this experience, my leadership skills were developed and/or improved.
6. Professionalism/Work Ethic: I have been able to understand the importance of professionalism and work ethic in a corporate/organization setting.
7. Career Management: As a result of this experience, I have a better understanding of skills, strengths, knowledge and goals as it relates to my professional goals.
8. Career Management: As a result of this experience, I have a better understanding of the areas I need to grow in professionally.

A copy of the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation is included at the end of this chapter.

Target: Annual improvement in mean scores of responses

Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

The Pathway Reflection and Evaluation will be administered via Qualtrics to seniors as part of their senior capstone courses, a requirement for the undergraduate degree.
Students enrolled in capstone courses will receive an email with a unique link. The instrument will be administered with settings that allow the student to save and return to the form to edit as needed prior to submission. To incentivize participation in the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation, students will receive a Pathway Graduation Cord upon completion of the form and verification of completion of the pathway experience by the director of pathway experiences. Students completing pathway experiences earlier in their undergraduate careers will have the option of completing the reflection earlier than the capstone course by contacting the director of pathway experiences.

For the first year, the instrument will be piloted in a representative sample of capstone courses (representing degree programs with and without built-in pathway components and a variety of disciplines). The director of pathway experiences will oversee the process in consultation with the Pathways Council.

Use of Data

The Pathways Council and director of pathway experiences will use the data from the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation to inform needed changes in the Pathway Scholarship and Pathway Grant Programs. The Council will also examine the feasibility of using the Pathway Learning Rubric to evaluate a representative sample of narrative responses from the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation.

Additional Pathway Assessment

Pathway Experience Participation Rates

The University of Southern Mississippi will track pathway experience participation rates through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and through the University's Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients.

NSSE

Each year, NSSE “collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students’ participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from college” (NSSE, 2015). In regard to pathway experiences, the following items will be used as measures for comparison with national benchmarks.

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution? (Recoded: 0=Have not decided, Do not plan to do, plan to do; 1 = Done. Thus, the mean is the proportion responding “Done” among all valid responses.)

1. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience or clinical assignment
2. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements

The NSSE data presented below is from the 2009 administration of the survey (n=596; 252 first-year and 344 seniors). The NSSE was also administered in 2011 by the Office of Admissions; however, survey response fell below 10%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Southern Miss</th>
<th>Carnegie Class – Mean (Effect Size)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.07 (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.53*** (-.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements</td>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.20 (.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001 (2-tailed)

Data Collection Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

The NSSE was administered in spring 2016 by the Office of Institutional Research. Results are to be received by NSSE in late July or early August 2016. The NSSE will be administered in the spring semester every one to three years by the Office of Institutional Research. The director of quality enhancement is responsible for requesting the data, incorporating it into annual assessment reports, and sharing the data and reports with the Gateway Steering Committee and Pathways Council.

Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients

Participation in pathway experiences will also be tracked through the Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients. Each semester, the Office of Institutional Research administers the Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients to seniors prior to graduation. In fall 2015, the following question regarding pathway experience participation was added to the survey to get baseline data and breakdowns by undergraduate degree program and college:

Have you participated in one or more of the following? Yes/No
If yes, indicate type: practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, clinical assignment, student teaching, service-learning, and work on research with faculty member.
According to the fall 2015 results, 47.9% of the 537 students completing the survey responded that they had participated in one or more of the pathway experiences. Degree program sample sizes were small given one semester of reporting, so college breakdowns are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>N (Survey Respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Letters</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>56/109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>30/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>49/72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>13/55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Psychology</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>52/94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>57/111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>257/537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001 (2-tailed)

Data Collection, Process, Timeline and Persons Responsible

The Survey of Undergraduate Degree Recipients is administered online via SOAR, Southern’s Online Accessible Records. Students who have applied to graduate are prompted to take the survey at the end of the semester in which they are graduating. The survey is administered by the Office of Institutional Research, and findings are posted on the Institutional Research intrasite. The director of quality enhancement will incorporate findings from the survey in the annual assessment report for the QEP to share with the Pathways Council and director of pathway experiences.

Understanding Barriers to Participation in Pathway Experiences – Needs Assessment of Students Not Participating in Pathway Experiences

In order to learn more about the barriers of participating in pathway experiences, a needs assessment is included in the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation taken by senior capstone students. Students noting that they have not participated in a pathway experience will be directed to the questions below:

If you selected “none of the above,” please indicate why. You may mark more than one as applicable.

- **Financial:** Participating in an internship or other pathway experience would have been difficult financially.
- **Logistical:** I was unsure of how to arrange logistics to participate, for example, housing and travel away from home or campus.
- **Possible Delay in Graduation:** Participating in a pathway experience would have delayed my graduation.
- **Time Commitment:** Given other responsibilities, I did not have time to participate in a pathway.
- **Lack of Information:** No one talked to me about the importance of these experiences or how to pursue participation in one.
- **Interest:** I was not interested in participating in an internship, fieldwork, or other similar experience.
- **Not needed:** I already have a job in the field I want to pursue.
- **Other:**

Students will also be asked an open-ended question as to how The University of Southern Mississippi could better prepare students for internships or other pathway experiences, and will then have the opportunity to be connected with resources from Career Services.

This needs assessment will provide valuable information to the Pathways Council as to specific areas of improvement. A copy of the Pathway Reflection and Evaluation is provided at the end of this chapter.
PATHWAY REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Southern Miss is engaged in a Quality Enhancement Plan to increase the number of undergraduate students engaged in pathways experiences, such as internships, research or other fieldwork. If you have not participated in a pathway experience, your responses will be helpful in addressing barriers to participation. You will also have the opportunity to be connected with resources to assist you in your post-graduation plans. If you have participated in a pathway experience, or are currently participating, you will have the opportunity to apply for a USM Pathway Graduation Cord. Your responses will also help you reflect on what you learned from your pathway experience, which, research has shown, is a valuable part of the overall learning experience.

First Name: ___________________________________ Last Name: __________________________ USM ID#: __________________
Major: ___________________________________ 2nd Major (if applicable): ___________________ Minor (if applicable): ___________________
Anticipated Graduation (Semester/Year): ______________________________________________________

Post-Graduation Plans:
☐ Graduate/Professional School ☐ Volunteer Service (i.e., Peace Corps)
☐ Employment ☐ Other
☐ Military Service

Please indicate if you have participated, or are currently participating, in any of the following pathway experiences related to your post-graduation goals/career plans. If you are unsure of how to classify the experience, select the descriptor that is most used in association with the experience. If you have not yet participated in a pathway experience, please select none of the above.

☐ Paid Internship ☐ Research Project with Faculty Member
☐ Unpaid Internship ☐ Part-Time or Full-Time Job
☐ Practicum ☐ Volunteer Service
☐ Clinical Assignment ☐ Other:
☐ Fieldwork ☐ None of the Above

Students indicating “none of the above” will be directed to the questions below.

If you selected “none of the above,” please indicate why. You may mark more than one as applicable.
☐ Financial: Participating in an internship or other pathway experience would have been difficult financially.
☐ Logistical: I was unsure as to how to arrange logistics to participate, for example, housing and travel away from home or campus.
☐ Possible Delay in Graduation: Participating in a pathway experience would have delayed my graduation.
☐ Time Commitment: Given other responsibilities, I did not have time to participate in a pathway experience.
☐ Lack of Information: No one talked to me about the importance of these experiences or how to pursue participation in one.
☐ Interest: I was not interested in participating in an internship, fieldwork or other similar experience.
☐ Not needed: I already have a job in the field I want to pursue.
☐ Other:

How could The University of Southern Mississippi better prepare students for internships or other pathway experiences?

Thank you for your feedback. If you would like to contact a staff member from Career Services, please indicate this below and include your email address and the best phone number to reach you.

Email Address: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

Students indicating participation in a pathway experience will be directed to the questions below.

Pathway Graduation Cord Recognition
As a result of your participation in a pathway experience, you are eligible to apply for a Pathway Graduation Cord to receive at commencement. If you participated in more than one pathway experience, please base your responses below on the one that was most meaningful and related to your goals. Please answer the following questions and submit upon completion. You may save your work and return to this form as needed before submitting final responses. The form must be submitted no later than six weeks prior to graduation. Upon review of your application and verification of your participation, you will receive an email regarding your application.
Part 1: Overall Pathway Experience

About the Pathway Experience/Internship
Start Date __________________________ End Date __________________________
Number of Weeks Total ___________ Average Number of Hours Per Week ___________

About the Company/Organization
Name of Company/Organization ____________________________________
Name of Supervisor _________________________________________________
Street Address _____________________________________________________
City, State and Zip Code _____________________________________________
Email Address ______________________________________________________
Phone Number ______________________________________________________

Please respond to the following questions based on your level of agreement with each statement: strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or not applicable.
1. The pathway/internship was directly linked to my post-graduation goals.
2. I have a better understanding of this academic/career field as a result of this pathway experience.
3. My responsibilities were challenging and meaningful.
4. My supervisor provided adequate training.
5. My supervisor provided ongoing mentoring and feedback.
6. I would recommend this pathway experience to others.

Part 2: Application of Academic Content Knowledge and Skills in Pathway Experience

Reflection
1. Briefly describe how your academic coursework prepared you for this experience.
2. List three examples of specific theories, knowledge or skills from your major or from your general education curriculum that you applied in this pathway experience.

Text box expands as text is entered.

Evaluation
Please respond to the following questions based on your level of agreement with each statement: strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or not applicable.
1. My academic studies prepared me for the pathway experience/internship.
2. I applied academic content knowledge and/or skills in my pathway experience.

Part 3: Development of Career-Readiness Competencies in Pathway Experience

The following questions are based on the career-readiness competencies for new college graduates and the impact your pathway experience had on those competencies. A text box will be provided for each question and expand as text is entered. Students may save their work and come back at a later time to edit responses before submitting.

Reflection
1. Give examples of how you had to analyze issues, solve problems, or demonstrate originality or inventiveness during your pathway experience.
2. How were your verbal and communication skills enhanced as a result of this experience?
3. Describe how you worked and interacted with others (colleagues, supervisors, customers). Did you work with diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and/or viewpoints?
4. What technology did you use (software applications, equipment, etc.)?
5. How were your leadership skills enhanced as a result of this experience?
6. How was your work ethic and professionalism enhanced as a result of this experience (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, time workload management, professional image)?
7. Describe your skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to your academic/career goals.
8. In what areas do you need to grow professionally?
Evaluation

Please respond to the following questions based on your level of agreement with each statement: strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or not applicable.

1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: As a result of this experience, I have been able to further develop my abilities to analyze issues, make decisions and overcome problems.
2. Oral/Written Communication: My verbal and written communication skills were enhanced as a result of this experience.
3. Teamwork/Collaboration: My ability to work in diverse teams and manage conflict were increased as a result of this experience.
4. Information Technology Application: During this experience, I have enhanced my knowledge and application of information technology applications to solve work-related problems and goals.
5. Leadership: As a result of this experience, my leadership skills were developed and/or improved.
6. Professionalism/Work Ethic: I have been able to understand the importance of professionalism and work ethic in a corporate/organization setting.
7. Career Management: As a result of this experience, I have a better understanding of skills, strengths, knowledge and goals as it relates to my professional goals.
8. Career Management: As a result of this experience, I have a better understanding of the areas in which I need to grow professionally.

How could The University of Southern Mississippi better prepare students for internships or other pathway experiences?

Thank you for your feedback. If you would like a staff member from Career Services to contact you, please indicate this below and include your email address and the best phone number to reach you.

☐ Please contact me about resources and services available through Career Services.

Email Address: _______________________________ Phone: _______________________________
REFERENCES


University of Southern Mississippi (2016). Vision, mission, and values. Retrieved from The University of Southern Mississippi website: http://www.usm.edu/about/vision/vision-mission-values


APPENDICES

Appendices are formatted in keeping with this document. Original documents found within the appendices will be available during the on-site review.

APPENDIX A

Call for Topics Announcement from President Bennett

Subject: Message from the President: Call for Topics for Quality Enhancement Plan
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2013
From: USM Mailout
To: all-facstaff@usm.edu, all-students@usm.edu

Members of the Southern Miss Community,

Every 10 years, as part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Southern Miss has the opportunity to develop a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve an area of student learning or student success in a significant way through a university-wide, multi-year initiative. Our first QEP, Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies, resulted in the expansion of the Writing Center, establishment of the Speaking Center and faculty development strategies to improve students’ speaking and writing skills, and it continues to make an impact on student outcomes in these areas.

As a member of our campus community, you are invited to participate in the topic selection process for our next QEP. It is extremely important to get a sense of the needs and opportunities that all members of the Southern Miss community think are important. The process will occur in multiple phases with a final topic identified by the end of the spring 2014 semester. In the first phase, you are invited to submit topic ideas for consideration. In the second phase, you will be invited to submit proposals for possible QEP topics. The top proposals will be identified by the students, faculty and staff on the QEP Topic Selection Task Force guiding this process and shared with the Southern Miss community for discussion and feedback.

As we enter the first phase, we need your input regarding the student learning and student success issues you think would be most beneficial for Southern Miss students. I encourage you to visit this link today to share your idea in one or two words, phrases or sentences. The QEP Topic Selection Task Force will receive responses through Dec. 13.

Thank you for your participation in this important process. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell, director of quality enhancement, at Julie.Howdeshell@usm.edu, or Dr. Kathy Masters, chair of the QEP Topic Selection Task Force, at Kathleen.Masters@usm.edu.

Rodney D. Bennett
President
APPENDIX B /  
Call for Topics Online Survey

QEP 2016: Take Your Idea to the Top - Phase 1 Topic Submission
What student learning or student success topic do you think Southern Miss should focus on for its next QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan)?

Please mark your classification or affiliation with Southern Miss. You may mark more than one as applicable.
- Undergraduate Student
- Graduate Student
- Faculty
- Staff
- Southern Miss Alumni
- Parent of Southern Miss Student
- Member of the Southern Miss Community (and none of the above)
- Employer of Southern Miss Graduates

Please indicate your college.
- College of Arts and Letters
- College of Business
- College of Education and Psychology
- College of Health
- College of Nursing
- College of Science and Technology
- University Libraries

Please indicate your primary site/campus.
- Hattiesburg
- Gulf Park
- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
- Stennis Space Center
- Keesler Air Force Base
- Online

If you are interested in submitting a brief proposal on your topic or collaborating with others regarding the same topic, please list your name and email address below. (Note: There is no obligation. This will only be used to invite you to submit a proposal and/or work with others interested in the same topic.)

Name

Email Address
APPENDIX C /

Call for Proposals Email Message from QEP Task Force Chair to Department Chairs and Directors

Subject: Please Share QEP Proposal Reminder with Faculty and Staff
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2014
From: Kathleen Masters
To: chairsdirs@usm.edu

The QEP Topic Selection Task Force invites proposals for the University’s new QEP from all members of the University community. The proposals are intended to be brief (approximately three to five pages). The top proposals will be identified by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force and will receive from $500 – $1,500 with at least three proposals receiving awards, including at least one student award. In addition, the top three proposals will be shared with the president and Executive Cabinet. Complete details and guidelines are linked here. Proposals will be received through February 26, 2014.

Thanks,
Kathy Masters
Chair, QEP Topic Selection Task Force
Kathleen Masters RN, DNS Associate Professor
Director of Transitional Programs
The University of Southern Mississippi
College of Nursing

601.266.5899
Kathleen.Masters@usm.edu
The QEP Topic Selection Task Force invites proposals for the University’s new QEP from all members of the University community.

Every 10 years, as part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Southern Miss has the opportunity to develop a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve an area of student learning or student success in a significant way through a University-wide, multi-year initiative.

The University is now in the process of selecting the new QEP. The QEP Topic Selection Task Force, comprised of 24 members (15 faculty, three students, and six staff) has designed a multi-phase process to identify the topic of focus. In the first phase, all members of the Southern Miss community were invited to submit topic ideas for consideration. Over 600 responses were received, and the top 10 categories are listed below.

1. Retention, graduation, and student success
2. Experiential learning (student research, service learning, internships, etc.)
3. Critical thinking and problem-solving
4. Career preparation and professionalism
5. Student health and well-being
6. Advising and academic planning
7. Tutoring, study skills, test-taking, and time management
8. Math, quantitative reasoning, and statistics
9. Sustainability education
10. Tied: Financial literacy and success; Global connections

The second phase in the process is the Call for Proposals. All members of the Southern Miss community are invited to participate. Proposals from the top 10 categories noted above are encouraged but are not limited to these categories. The proposals are intended to be brief (approximately three to five pages). The top proposals will be identified by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force and will receive from $500 – $1,500 with at least three proposals receiving awards, including at least one student award. Individuals or a team may submit proposals. For proposals submitted by teams, the award will be divided among the team members. Payment will follow USM policies and procedures. In addition, the top three proposals will be shared with the president and Executive Cabinet.

Please read the Frequently Asked Questions, Evaluation Criteria, and Guidelines before submitting your proposal. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell, director of quality enhancement, at Julie.Howdeshell@usm.edu, or Dr. Kathy Masters, chair of the QEP Topic Selection Task Force, at Kathleen.Masters@usm.edu.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a QEP? A QEP, or Quality Enhancement Plan, is a plan of action to improve student knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, or behaviors, or to impact the student learning environment and student success. For example, the first QEP at Southern Miss focused on improving students’ speaking and writing skills through faculty development seminars, establishment of the Speaking Center, expansion of the Writing Center, and improved assessment.

Why is Southern Miss developing a new QEP?
A new QEP is required with each reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges). Southern Miss is scheduled for reaffirmation in 2016.

Can I submit more than one proposal?
Yes, you may submit more than one idea individually or as part of a team.

What is my commitment if my proposal is selected?
We understand that you may be wondering how involved you will be if your proposal is selected and want to assure you that just because you submit a proposal, you are not responsible for developing the complete plan or for coordinating or implementing the plan. When the official QEP is selected, there will be broad-based involvement in the development of the topic, including committees to assist with the literature review, assessment, budget, publicity, etc. While those submitting a proposal may be asked to serve on a committee, as will others, they will not be responsible for any large portion of the work themselves. This will be a widely shared University effort with support from the Department of SACS-Quality Enhancement Programs.

What happens to my proposal after I submit it? Who will see it? How will it be shared?
Proposals will be shared with the QEP Topic Selection Task Force and will be posted on the QEP website (www.usm.edu/qep) for public commentary. Proposals will be discussed at focus groups and at various University meetings. The name(s) of the individual(s) submitting the proposals will not be shared or posted during the discussion phase. The focus of these discussions and the public commentary is to determine the best fit for the University’s new QEP.

Evaluation Criteria

In submitting your proposal, keep in mind that you are not being asked to provide a fully detailed plan. Your proposal will be reviewed by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force in light of how the idea might be developed in terms of the following expectations outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

1. Is the QEP focused on student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning?
2. Is there evidence that a focus on this area is needed at Southern Miss?
3. Is the QEP focus aligned with the University’s mission?
4. Are the goals and outcomes of the QEP achievable within a five- to six-year time period?
5. Are the goals and outcomes measurable?
6. Does the institution have the financial capability to implement the QEP in five to six years and sustain the initiatives long-term?

Guidelines

Directions: In a separate word document of approximately three to five pages, include as much of the following information as possible. (The Task Force understands that all information might not be available to you and that some components will need to be more developed later, so it is acceptable to submit the proposal without completion of all sections.) Send to qep@usm.edu as an attachment no later than February 26, 2014. In submitting the proposal, it is understood that you have read the Overview, FAQs, and Evaluation Criteria. Proposals will be posted on the QEP website and will be shared for feedback by the University community. The names of the persons submitting the proposals will not be included during the discussion phase.
Working Concept: Provide a short but descriptive title.

Rationale for the Topic/Problem Statement/Opportunity for Growth: Briefly explain why this topic is particularly important to The University of Southern Mississippi at this time and how Southern Miss students and the overall institution would benefit. Include any related USM data. (Data is available on the Institutional Research website at http://www.usm.edu/institutional-research. You may also contact QEP@usm.edu for assistance.)

Expected Outcomes/Impact on Student Learning or the Student Learning Environment: Briefly explain the expected outcomes of the plan in terms of students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and/or behaviors. What impact would the plan have on students?

Strategies/Actions to Be Implemented: Briefly describe how you would go about improving student learning or the student learning environment for the proposed topic. What initiatives or strategies would be employed?

Student Cohort: Briefly explain which students would be affected by your plan. For example, undergraduate students, graduate students, first-time full-time freshmen, first-year students, at-risk students, etc. (The QEP does not have to affect every student, but, as noted by SACSCOC, “the topic does need to be sufficiently broad to be viewed as significant to the institution and as a major enhancement to student learning” and be manageable in terms of institutional capability.)

Measurement/Assessment: How would we know if this plan were successful? How might this evidence be captured and measured?

Resources: What departments would need to be involved in implementing this idea successfully? What resources would they need (additional staff, software, physical space, etc.)?

Name(s) and Contact Information: List the name(s) and contact information for the person(s) submitting this proposal.

Name

Relationship to the University

Email Address

Phone Number
## THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI QEP TOPIC PROPOSAL RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1 – Unacceptable</th>
<th>2 – Minimally Acceptable</th>
<th>3 - Acceptable</th>
<th>4 - Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on SLOs/ student learning environment</strong></td>
<td>Focus on student learning outcomes or student learning environment not stated; stated focus not related to student learning; support for assertions largely absent</td>
<td>Focus on student learning outcomes or student learning environment is stated; stated focus is only partially related to student learning; support is offered but inadequate</td>
<td>Focus on student learning outcomes or student learning environment is clearly stated; stated focus is clearly related to student learning; credible support is provided</td>
<td>Focus on student learning outcomes or student learning environment is vividly stated; stated focus is strongly related to student learning, thorough, and directly on point; strong support is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of Need at USM</strong></td>
<td>Need for proposed topic at USM not stated; statements concerning need largely inaccurate; evidence of need not provided</td>
<td>Need for proposed topic is stated; statements concerning need are mostly, but not always, accurate; evidence of need is offered but inadequate</td>
<td>Need for proposed topic is clearly stated; statements concerning need are accurate; credible evidence of need is provided</td>
<td>Need for proposed topic is vividly demonstrated; statements demonstrating need are accurate, thorough, and directly on point; strong evidence of need is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment with University Mission</strong></td>
<td>Alignment with University mission not stated; stated focus not aligned with University mission; support for assertions largely absent</td>
<td>Alignment with University mission stated; stated focus only partially aligned with University mission; support offered but inadequate</td>
<td>Alignment with University mission clearly stated; stated focus clearly aligned with University mission; credible support provided</td>
<td>Alignment with University mission vividly stated; stated focus strongly aligned with University mission; strong support provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievability within 5-6 years</strong></td>
<td>No timeline provided for achievement of goals/outcomes; goals/outcomes impracticable; no evidence of achievability or financial capability provided</td>
<td>Timeline provided for achievement of goals/outcomes; goals/outcomes largely, but not wholly, practicable; evidence of achievability and/or financial capability provided but inadequate</td>
<td>Clear timeline provided for achievement of goals/outcomes; goals/outcomes practicable; credible evidence of achievability and financial capability provided</td>
<td>Appropriate timeline provided for achievement of goals/outcomes; goals/outcomes clearly practicable; strong evidence of achievability and financial capability provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurable Goals and Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>No direct measures for goals/outcomes stated; measures for goals are not fiscally achievable; stated measures do not support goals/outcomes of proposal</td>
<td>Direct measures for goals/outcomes stated; measures for goals not clearly fiscally achievable; stated measures largely, but not wholly, support goals/outcomes of proposal</td>
<td>Direct measures for goals/outcomes clearly stated; measures for goals are fiscally achievable; stated measures credibly support goals/outcomes of proposal</td>
<td>Direct measures for goals/outcomes quantifiable and actionable; measures for goals are fiscally achievable; stated measures strongly support goals/outcomes of proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F / Link to QEP for Feedback on USM Homepage (See lower left icon.)

At Southern Miss, we tackle tough issues head-on.

Take a closer look at our helmet technology to protect athletes and soldiers > (http://goo.gl/pym6E6)

#CloserLookUSM

Quality Enhancement Plan: Read and respond
Offer feedback on the top six proposals for student learning by April 23.

New students, register for Orientation
Take the final step toward joining the Golden Eagle family.

Commencement May 9 on Hattiesburg campus
10 a.m., 2:30 p.m.
APPENDIX G /
Call for Feedback Online Survey

QEP 2016: Call for Feedback

Southern Miss is in the final phase of selecting the topic for the new Quality Enhancement Plan. The Quality Enhancement Plan Topic Selection Task Force received over 600 responses during the Call for Topics and 24 proposals from faculty, staff, students and alumni during the Call for Proposals. Although all of the proposals have promising ideas, we can only have one QEP. The Task Force reviewed the proposals and identified six to move to the next round – the feedback phase. The next step is to narrow these six proposals to three.

The QEP Topic Selection Task Force needs your input in determining which will make the best fit for the University's official QEP. To do this, we need to hear from you!

The top six proposals are listed below along with a link to a short abstract describing the proposal. Full proposals are available at www.usm.edu/qep. Please read through the provided materials and evaluate each, keeping the following criteria in mind:

1. Focus on Student Learning Outcomes or the Student Learning Environment
2. Evidence of Need at Southern Miss
3. Alignment with University Mission
4. Achievability within Five to Six Years
5. Measurable Goals and Outcomes

Please note that these are concept papers with kernels of ideas. The focus is still on the topic itself and which is the best fit for Southern Miss at this time. After the topic is selected, the University will begin the Research and Design Phase to build the specific strategies and initiatives. This will happen with broad-based input over the next year.

You will be asked to identify up to three proposals that you think would make a strong QEP at Southern Miss and why you selected these. This is a chance for open-ended input. Your feedback is appreciated, but please submit your recommendations only once.

- Curiosity Unfolding: Developing Creative Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills
- Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL)
- PEMDAS: Putting Emphasis on Mathematical Development and Success
- Rethinking Academic Advising Through a Career Development Lens
- Success Matters at Southern Miss — Eagles Engaged
- The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students

Select three proposals that you think would make the best fit for The University of Southern Mississippi’s new QEP.

☐ Curiosity Unfolding: Developing Creative Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills
☐ Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL)
☐ PEMDAS: Putting Emphasis on Mathematical Developmental and Success
☐ Rethinking Academic Advising Through a Career Development Lens
☐ Success Matters at Southern Miss — Eagles Engaged
☐ The Use of High-Impact Practices to Increase Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Students
Briefly explain why you selected the three topics/proposals you did and/or why you did not select the others. You may also comment as to whether certain threads from various proposals should be woven together or provide any related comments/suggestions.

Please mark your classification or affiliation with Southern Miss. You may mark more than one as applicable.

- Current Undergraduate Student
- Current Graduate Student
- Faculty
- Staff
- Southern Miss Alumnus
- Parent of Southern Miss Student
- Member of the Southern Miss Community (and none of the above)
- Employer of Southern Miss Graduates

Please indicate your college.

- College of Arts and Letters
- College of Business
- College of Education and Psychology
- College of Health
- College of Nursing
- College of Science and Technology
- University Libraries

Please indicate your primary site/campus.

- Hattiesburg
- Gulf Park
- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
- Stennis Space Center
- Keesler Air Force Base
- Online

If you are interested in participating on a committee to develop one of the topics you identified, please include your contact information below. This will occur during the Research and Design Phase during the 2014-15 academic year. Thank you.

Name

Relationship to the University

Email Address
DATE: Tuesday, April 15  
TIME: 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
PLACE: FEC 104  
WHAT: Every 10 years, Southern Miss selects a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Join us in an open discussion and tell us what you think about the top six proposals. Proposals are online at usm.edu/qep.

For more information or to RSVP, please email laquita.gresham@eagles.usm.edu.

AA/EOE/ADA GCUC 78795 04.14
APPENDIX I  /  
Minutes of QEP Task Force Meeting with Decision on Recommendations to President Bennett

QEP Topic Selection Task Force  
April 30, 2014 – 10:30 a.m. – EHH 118 Hattiesburg; FEC 307 Gulf Park

Attendees: Tammy Barry, Jerry DeFatta, Julie Howdeshell, J.T. Johnson, Kathryn Lowery, Kathy Masters, Ed McCormack, Elaine Molaison, Joe Peyrefitte, Scott Piland, William Powell, Sheri Lyons, Jennifer Sequeira, Marek Steedman, Fred Varnado, (LaQuita Gresham and Fred Varnado submitted input via email)

I. Chairperson Kathy Masters presided over the meeting.

II. Meeting agenda was approved.

III. April 23, 2014 minutes approved

IV. Decision related to topic recommendations
   A. Kathy Masters reported that email responses regarding members’ top three suggestions were received by 11 members. She provided a brief summary and asked members to share their recommendations.
   B. As a starting point, Dr. Masters asked if any of the topics/proposals could be eliminated. After brief discussion, there was consensus that while math could be included in the Eagles Engaged proposal, it would not work well as a stand-alone topic for purposes of the QEP. There was additional discussion about the proposal on high-impact practices and consensus that it could be combined with Curiosity Unfolding.
   C. Several members suggested combining the proposal, Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning (GOAL), with the Curiosity Unfolding proposal or with the topics of advising or student success.
   D. Eagles Engaged is very specific, not just applicable to general education, and has a lot of data to support need for the topic.
   E. Marek Steedman suggested that GOAL be combined with Eagles Engaged, Curiosity Unfolding, or advising.
   F. Ed McCormack stated that he thought Marek Steedman’s suggestion was a good idea and added that we should learn from Julie Howdeshell’s experience as a QEP director in leading us in the right direction.
   G. Julie Howdeshell noted that if GOAL were combined with another topic that the issue of cohorts and scope would need to be reviewed during the development phase.
   H. Tammy Barry suggested that, based on the input and assessment received, the three recommended topics/proposals should be advising, Curiosity Unfolding, and Eagles Engaged, listed in alphabetical, not rank order, with GOAL paired with the one selected.
   I. Scotty Piland made a motion to support Tammy Barry’s summary of the recommendations, and Marek Steedman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Decision related to distribution of monetary awards
   A. Sheri Lyons noted that the Awards Committee recommended that the top three awards receive $1,000 each and the bottom three receive $500 each at their April 16 meeting. Since another topic is being added to each of the top three, this becomes complicated.
   B. Julie Howdeshell noted that the proposer of one of the top three had communicated not wishing to receive a financial award and that since GOAL was being added to each of the three top recommendations, that award could be given to GOAL. Further, since there were seven members of the team proposing GOAL, each could receive $200 with the total award of $1,400. Howdeshell made a motion to accept this modification, and the motion passed.

Adjournment
   A. Kathy Masters thanked everyone on the Task Force for their service, and the meeting was adjourned.
Announcement of QEP Topic by President Bennett

Subject: Announcement of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Topic
Date: Friday, October 3, 2014
From: USM Mailout
To: all-facstaff@usm.edu

Members of the University Community:

Every 10 years, The University of Southern Mississippi has a special opportunity to enhance student learning as part of its reaffirmation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) through development and implementation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Over the past year, the QEP Topic Selection Task Force engaged the University community in the process of identifying the topic for our new QEP. Using the working title of Eagles Engaged: Golden Opportunity Through Active Learning and drawing from elements of the proposals recommended by the Task Force and institutional data, the QEP will focus on enhancing student learning in our most challenging gateway courses and engaging students in experiential learning opportunities. The QEP has the potential to reinvigorate the undergraduate curriculum, strengthen student learning, and make our students more marketable for the work place.

The next phase of the QEP is the development of the topic into an action plan based on review of the literature and best practices, as well as continued dialogue with the University community. QEPs are University-wide efforts, and your help will be needed in the coming year as we prepare a plan that will be beneficial to our students and to our institution.

For more information about the QEP itself, contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell, director of quality enhancement, at julie.howdeshell@usm.edu.

Rodney D. Bennett
President
Gateways to Completion National Advisory Committee

Gateways to Completion is being informed by a distinguished National Advisory Committee. These experts are from an array of institutional types, higher education organizations, accreditors, policy makers, and scholars. The committee helps us ensure that the G2C process enables participating institutions the benefit of the soundest evidence-based practices and cutting-edge quality improvement approaches as they work to enhance student outcomes in gateway courses.

Members of the G2C National Advisory Committee:

- Lou Albert, Pima Community College
- Linda Baer, Minnesota State University – Mankato
- Trudy Bers, Oakton Community College
- Hunter Boylan, National Center for Developmental Education
- Linda Braddy, Mathematical Association of America
- John Campbell, West Virginia University
- Jeff Cornett, Ivy Tech Community College Central Region
- Elizabeth Cox Brand, Oregon Community Colleges Association
- Brent Drake, Purdue University
- Johanna Dvorak, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee and National College Learning Center Association
- Maribeth Ehasz, University of Central Florida
- Scott Evenbeck, City University of New York – Stella and Charles Guttman Community College
- Casey Green, The Campus Computing Project
- Trinidad Gonzales, South Texas College/American Historical Association
- Bob Guell, Indiana State University
- Jeanne Higbee, University of Minnesota
- Amber Holloway, Higher Learning Commission
- Christine Keller, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
- Jillian Kinzie, Center for Postsecondary Research and National Survey of Student Engagement Institute
- Robert Kubat, Penn State University
- Tricia Leggett, Zane State College
- Julie Little, EDUCAUSE
- Jean MacGregor, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education
- Jodi Koslow Martin, North Park University
- George Mehaffy, American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Jerry Odom, University of South Carolina
- Karan Powell, American Public University System
- Lynn Priddy, National American University
- Elaine Seymour, University of Colorado at Boulder
- Marion Stone, International Center for Supplemental Instruction
- Emily Swafford, American Historical Association
- Uri Treisman, University of Texas at Austin
- Ross Peterson-Veatch, Goshen College
- Kaye Walter, Bergen Community College
- Cynthia Wilson, League for Innovation in the Community College
Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Degree Programs Survey

The University of Southern Mississippi is in the Research and Design Phase of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Eagles Engaged, which focuses on strengthening learning in historically difficult gateway courses and enhancing experiential learning within undergraduate majors. Institutional data from alumni and student surveys consistently show the need to increase opportunities for experiential learning related to a student’s major and goals and to embed more effective career-related discussions with advisors.

The faculty, staff and students that comprise the QEP Research and Design Team want to learn more about your department’s activities, successes, challenges, and ideas in terms of connecting more students to experiential learning opportunities.

While there are many definitions of experiential learning, for the purposes of this QEP survey, experiential learning includes experiences that are significant enough to warrant inclusion on a graduate school application or on a job résumé. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

1. student-faculty collaborative research (scholarly and/or creative)
2. conference presentations
3. internships (on and off campus; paid and unpaid)
4. entry-level jobs related to the field (on or off campus, including part-time jobs or co-ops)
5. service learning class projects
6. student organization projects
7. other activities that provide the student with experience related to their chosen discipline and/or to the student’s post-graduation goals

Please group programs with similar experiential learning opportunities together and complete separate survey responses as appropriate. For example, it is recommended to complete one survey for licensure programs and another for non-licensure. The QEP Research and Design Team needs your response by Friday, February 20, 2015. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell at julie.howdeshell@usm.edu or 601.266.4525.

Tell us about you, your department, and the undergraduate programs included in this response.

Name of person completing this response: 
Email address of person completing this response: 
College: 
Department: 
Name(s) of programs included in this response: 

Please complete the sentences below based on the undergraduate degree programs included in this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>crucial</th>
<th>helpful, but not necessary</th>
<th>unnecessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For undergraduate students planning to enter the workforce after graduation, having an internship or job-related experience prior to graduation is...</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For undergraduate students planning to attend graduate school after graduation, having collaborated with faculty on a major research project or completing a similar experience or project, is...</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do students in the undergraduate program(s) listed above learn of experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, student-faculty collaborative undergraduate research, or similar activities? Mark all that apply; then briefly describe.

- An internship, practicum, student-faculty research project, service learning class project, or similar experience is **required** as part of degree requirements. Briefly describe the type of experiential learning, how the opportunities are coordinated, how students are prepared, and any other related information you think would be helpful to the Research and Design Team.

  - Advisors are **encouraged** to discuss experiential learning opportunities with advisees but are not required to do so. Briefly describe and/or provide examples:

  - Advisors are **required** to discuss experiential learning with advisees as part of the mentoring that occurs with students. Briefly explain the process below.

  - Experiential learning opportunities are shared via **listservs, email, print, in class**, or **through student organizations**. Briefly describe who coordinates this, the frequency, and any follow-up actions as to whether students pursue the opportunities:

  - Other:

Does the department or program track the number/percentage of students participating in experiential learning?

- Yes (Briefly describe below.)

- No

Does the department track the number/percentage of students placed in jobs or graduate school related to their experiential learning?

- Yes (Briefly describe below.)

- No
What resources are used to coordinate and promote experiential learning opportunities for your majors?

What are the greatest challenges in coordinating and encouraging experiential learning for your majors?

How effective do you think each of the following approaches would be in engaging more students in experiential learning related to their majors/goals (internships, service learning class projects, student-faculty collaborative undergraduate research, etc.)?

Rank the following approaches in order of effectiveness by clicking and dragging each item, placing the most effective at the top.

- Restructuring advising so that advising sessions can focus more on mentoring, including connecting students to experiential learning opportunities
- Faculty seminars on connecting students to experiential learning opportunities
- Student workshops on experiential learning opportunities
- A dedicated experiential learning center, which would assist students seeking experiential learning opportunities, assist faculty by providing resources to connect students to such opportunities (similar to the list provided for external funding options), and work with employers, community agencies, and faculty to develop experiential learning opportunities
- Competitive scholarships for students to help fund living/travel expenses while completing the experiential learning opportunity
- Other:

Please provide any general comments or suggestions related to enhancing experiential learning.
QEP Research and Design Team Meeting Minutes, April 15, 2015 Excerpt

QEP Research and Design Team
April 15, 2015 – Noon – International Center 318; Gulf Park Learning Commons

Team Attendees: Kelly Lester, Julie Howdeshell, William Powell, Rusty Anderson, Christy Arrazattee, Valerie Craig, Mary Funk, Jeffrey George, Tammy Barry, Bonnie Cooper, Jack Covarrubias, Trent Gould, Crystal Stinson, Sarah Mangrum, Michelle Arrington; Guests: Kathryn Lowery, Casey Thomas, Corwin Stanford, Jennifer Regan, Matthew Casey

I. Chairperson Kelly Ferris Lester presided over the meeting.
II. Meeting agenda was approved.
III. Reminder of scheduled meetings: April 29
IV. Team Updates – including overview of submitted initiatives
   A. Public Relations: Sarah Mangrum distributed the winning mark, the mark with the popular vote out of a total of 21 responses. The committee met with RISE and presented the comments. We could use the other designs in other pieces.
   B. Assessment: The revamped Undergraduate Exit Survey is live. The Office of Institutional Research will take over ownership of the Student Success Inventory.
   C. Experiential
      a. Submitted initiatives were distributed to the team.
      b. Priorities: Connecting Students to Experiential Learning Opportunities
         1. Place to go for information (includes a leader to work with departments to provide resources and direction; Name is important.)
         2. Department-level engagement/incentives
         3. Scholarships for students
         4. Measure of effectiveness (how the experience ties to career goals)
   D. Gateway
      a. Submitted initiatives were distributed to the team. Priorities include the following:
         1. Empower students to greater success in gateway courses.
         2. Engage departments in enhancing gateway course success.
         3. Engage advisors to identify students early with college-level skill issues.
         4. Enhance data collection to identify students earlier that lack basic college skills.
V. To Dos for next meeting
   A. The team will take a vote on the initiatives at the next meeting.
   B. Experiential Committee – Create a job description.
   C. Gateway – Submit a proposed timeline.
   D. PR – Submit a timeline.
   E. Assessment – Follow up on Student Satisfaction Inventory.
VI. Gateway to Completion Conference Feedback
   A. Eight University representatives attended the conference sponsored by the Gardner Institute.
   B. G2C (Gateway to Completion) includes in-depth data analytics (beyond D, F, W rates), consultations with faculty scholars from the non-profit Gardner Institute, and a Teaching and Learning Academy.
   C. The faculty will form a committee that goes beyond the department and develop a course self-study.
D. The courses work with the institution-level steering committee on cross-course initiatives.

E. Faculty representatives were invited to present feedback:

Jennifer Regan (Biological Sciences)
1. As I teach these courses by myself, I appreciate the committee approach to the initiative. This ensures the commitment of others. As the momentum starts, it continues because of accountability.
2. It is a centralization of many ideas. It will be easier and more efficient to work in that environment.

Matt Casey (History)
1. The conversations we are having are national conversations.
2. The conference was a very productive use of time. I now have a better perspective of the University through the team discussions.
3. I will not wait to implement. If I ever receive a teaching award, I will credit it back to this conference.
4. I will be that person in my department who knocks on my colleagues’ doors and encourages their participation.
5. I like the Gardner Institute because they are not trying to sell a technology, and they work with a variety of intuitions.

Corwin Stanford (Mathematics)
1. I am supportive of G2C. It is a clear process that uses analytics.
2. They have already worked through this process and can advise us based on others’ experiences.
3. Koch sat down with us and answered our specific questions.

F. There is value in including five courses as part of Gateway to Completion.

G. Baseline data will be pre-conference.

H. Conference exceeded all expectations. Participants were inspired.

I. If there is an experimental learning equivalent to this conference, we need to tap into that.

VII. Meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.
APPENDIX N / Invitation to QEP Gateway Meeting and Lunch

Subject: Invitation to QEP Gateway Meeting and Lunch
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2015
From: Julie Howdeshell
To: Matthew Casey, Kyle F. Zelner, Shiao Wang, Jennifer Regan, Cynthia Littlejohn, Gwen Pate, Faye W. Gilbert, Corwin Stanford, Bernd Schroeder, Ann Kinnell, Kelly F. Lester, Kathryn Lowery, William Powell, Douglas Masterson, David Hayhurst, Steven Moser, Denis Wiesenburg, Ann P. Blackwell, Michael Forster, Katherine Nugent

All,

Last year, Southern Miss selected Eagles Engaged: Enhancing Student Learning in Gateway and Pathway Experiences as its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) theme. (The QEP is a core requirement for our 2016 SACSCOC reaffirmation.) Briefly, and for the purposes of this QEP, gateway experiences are defined as historically difficult, high-enrollment courses that are foundational for the general education curriculum or to a major. Pathway experiences, for the purposes of this QEP, are defined as experiences connected to a student’s post-graduation goals that warrant inclusion on a graduate school application or résumé, such as internships, practicums, research, service learning, etc.

The QEP Research and Design Team has been developing the specifics of the plan over the last six months. Earlier this semester, the QEP Research and Design Team invited chairs to apply for travel grants for the Gateway Course Experience Conference. Three courses were selected, including BSC 250, HIS 101, and MAT 101. Each chair also identified a faculty member to represent the course (Jennifer Regan, Matthew Casey, and Corwin Stanford, respectively). The purpose of the trip was to learn more about best practices in improving gateway courses and to consider the possibility of participation in the Gateway to Completion (G2C) program, which is part of the non-profit Gardner Institute. While we all went in with some measure of skepticism, the faculty representatives and others participating (Doug Masterson, Kelly Lester, and I) left eager to begin this work. Jennifer Regan, Matthew Casey, and Corwin Stanford shared their experiences with the QEP Team on April 15, and the QEP Team unanimously voted to recommend participation in G2C at the April 29 meeting.

We would like to invite you to a lunch meeting to hear from the faculty conference participants and learn more about the G2C program. If you are unable to attend, but would like to have someone come in your stead, please let me know. In order to confirm lunch reservation counts, please reply by Monday, May 4. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

With much thanks,

Julie

Julie G. Howdeshell, Ph.D.
Director, Quality Enhancement
Office of the Provost
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5026
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
601.266.4525
To: QEP Leadership Team
From: Dr. Douglas H. Vinzant, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Re: Institutional Commitment for QEP Implementation
Date: January 13, 2016

I am writing to confirm institutional support for the implementation of the University Quality Enhancement Plan Eagles Engages: Enhancing Gateway and Pathway Experiences. The QEP complements and extends many of our University goals and ongoing efforts to improve student success at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Funding for the QEP has been built into the University budgets, beginning with the current 2016 fiscal year and increasing for operational costs with a steady per fiscal year level of funding through the 2021 fiscal year. Both the Gateway and Pathway dimensions have appropriate funding for the implementation of the overall QEP.

Finally, let me express my appreciation for the work done by the QEP Topic Selection Task Force, the QEP Research and Design Team, the QEP Leadership Team, and now the QEP Gateways to Completion Steering Committee and the planned QEP Pathways Council. Our exciting new Quality Enhancement Plan marks new and important investments in enhancing the success of Southern Miss students.

xc: Dr. Steven Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
     Allyson Easterwood, Associate Vice President for Finance/Controller
APPENDIX P /

Department of History - Rubric for General Education Learning Outcome 7

Learning Outcome 7: Students will evaluate major developments in world history, the historical roots of contemporary global cultures, or the literary, philosophical, or religious contributions of world cultures.

5 – Student analyzes the cultures, events, and/or processes of one or more times and places by employing valid methods (i.e. logical arguments, specific claims and appropriate types and amounts of evidence). No major factual errors.

4 – Student describes the cultures, events, and/or processes of one or more times and places by employing two of the following (i.e. logical arguments, specific claims and appropriate types and amounts of evidence). No major factual errors.

3 – Student demonstrates comprehension of the cultures, events, and/or historical processes of a given time and place with little analysis. Student may consistently employ only one of the following: logical arguments, specific claims and appropriate types and amounts of evidence. Any factual errors do not detract from the overall analysis.

2 – Student’s evaluation of the cultures, events, and/or historical processes is unsatisfactory. Historical evidence does not conform to any logical narrative or address the assignment. Claims are devoid of any real substance and coupled with little or no evidence. Factual errors detract from the overall analysis and interpretation.

1 – Student commits gross errors of fact or distortion that belie basic cultural or historical knowledge. Claims and evidence are non-existent. The basic tenets of the assignment are ignored.

Department of History - Rubric for General Education Learning Outcome 8

Learning Outcome 8: Students will comprehend and proficiently interpret text. [This rubric should only be applied to assignments where textual analysis is required. i.e. not essay exams]

5 – Student demonstrates comprehension of the text and proficiently interprets it in accordance with the assignment. Demonstration of high-level interpretation could include identifying the author’s subjectivity or bias, exploring the document’s larger historical context, and/or placing it into meaningful dialogue with another text (comparison, synthesis, etc.).

4 – Student demonstrates comprehension over a text’s major points and engages in the process of interpretation. Student is incomplete in their exploration of either the content or context of the document in question. Textual misinterpretations are minimal.

3 – Student demonstrates partial comprehension of the text. Any misinterpretations are slight. Student fails to move beyond basic comprehension. They do not identify the author’s subjectivity or bias, explore the document’s larger historical context, or place it into meaningful dialogue with another text (comparison, synthesis, etc.).

2 – Student displays a limited comprehension of the text. Student commits major errors in interpretation or makes no attempt to interpret.

1 – Student fails to comprehend or interpret the text. Student makes gross errors of interpretation or comprehension.
APPENDIX Q /
Student Assessment of Learning Gains - Paper Version of Online Survey

You are invited to participate in a brief survey as part of The University of Southern Mississippi Quality Enhancement Plan, *Eagles Engaged*, a major University initiative to improve student learning and student success. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decline altogether or leave blank any questions you don’t wish to answer. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Survey data will be kept secure and reported only as a collective combined total. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study.

By participating in this survey, you agree that you voluntarily agree to participate, are 18 years of age or older, and have read the above information.

If you have any questions about this project, contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell, director of quality enhancement at julie.howdeshell@usm.edu. Information on the rights of human subjects in research is available through The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board at www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board.

Thank you for your participation in this important initiative at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Please confirm your course section for [NAME OF COURSE] below.
☐ Section Number - Days and Time of Course, Course Location

### The Class Overall / Section 1 of 7

**HOW MUCH did each of the following aspects of the class HELP YOUR LEARNING?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no help</th>
<th>2 = a little help</th>
<th>3 = moderate help</th>
<th>4 = much help</th>
<th>5 = great help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How the class topics, activities, reading, and assignments fit together</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>The pace of the class</td>
<td>☐</td>
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### Class Activities / Section 2 of 7

**HOW MUCH did each of the following aspects of the class HELP YOUR LEARNING?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no help</th>
<th>2 = a little help</th>
<th>3 = moderate help</th>
<th>4 = much help</th>
<th>5 = great help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in discussions during class</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in group work during class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing hands-on class activities</td>
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</table>
Please comment on how the class activities (discussions, group work, and/or hands-on class activities) helped your learning.

Assignments, graded activities and tests / Section 3 of 7

HOW MUCH did each of the following aspects of the class HELP YOUR LEARNING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no gains</th>
<th>2 = a little gain</th>
<th>3 = moderate gain</th>
<th>4 = good gain</th>
<th>5 = great gain</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Graded assignments (overall) in this class</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number and spacing of tests</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way the grading system helped me understand what I needed to work on</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feedback on my work received after tests or assignments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information you were given / Section 4 of 7

HOW MUCH did each of the following aspects of the class HELP YOUR LEARNING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no help</th>
<th>2 = a little help</th>
<th>3 = moderate help</th>
<th>4 = much help</th>
<th>5 = great help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of how the class activities, reading, and assignments related to each other</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation given by instructor of how to learn or study the materials</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of why the class focused on the topics presented</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support for you as an individual learner / Section 5 of 7
HOW MUCH did each of the following aspects of the class HELP YOUR LEARNING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no help</th>
<th>2 = a little help</th>
<th>3 = moderate help</th>
<th>4 = much help</th>
<th>5 = great help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with peers during class</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with peers outside of class</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your understanding of class content / Section 6 of 7
As a result of your work in this class, what GAINS DID YOU MAKE in your UNDERSTANDING of each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no gains</th>
<th>2 = a little gain</th>
<th>3 = moderate gain</th>
<th>4 = good gain</th>
<th>5 = great gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The main concepts explored in this class</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationships between the main concepts</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class impact on your attitudes / Section 7 of 7
As a result of your work in this class, what GAINS DID YOU MAKE in the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 = not applicable</th>
<th>1 = no gains</th>
<th>2 = a little gain</th>
<th>3 = moderate gain</th>
<th>4 = good gain</th>
<th>5 = great gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to seek help from others (teacher, peers, TA) when working on academic problems</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>