

constituent groups on campus to improve the quality of education. **(Link to SummerInstituteFinalCompleteReport_pp8-9.pdf)**

As a response, in part, to that assessment, and to other recommendations in the report, the university President, Dr. Mary Sias, commissioned two committees in 2006: the Developmental Education Committee (DEC) and the Student Success and Retention Task Force (SSRTF). Comprised of faculty, professional support staff, deans, and administrators, each group was charged with investigating critical functions of the University relating to its educational mission. The SSRTF addressed “all the current retention efforts with an eye to enhancement and making recommendations for the implementation of new efforts. “ **(Link to Final Draft-Student Success Taskforce Report_p3.pdf)** The purpose of the DEC was “to address the need for coordination in KSU's developmental education as a priority area on which to focus as part of a general overall enhancement of support for students to succeed.” **(Link to Report of the Developmental Education Committee 12-11-06_p2.pdf)** Both reports greatly facilitated discussions of the joint QEP Committees, particularly the report of the DEC. **(Link to Joint_minutes_10-02-2007.pdf)** The findings and recommendations in those documents reinforced what had been said in earlier discussions involving faculty, staff, and students, in the white papers, and reports of other campus groups on issues pertaining to student learning.

For the purposes of QEP topic discussion on developmental education, the joint QEP Committees borrowed the language from the DEC Report: “developmental education refers to the courses, programs, and services provided for under-prepared college students to help them achieve their academic, personal and career goals. Under-prepared students are those who need to develop their cognitive and affective abilities in order to succeed in a program of post-secondary education. Developmental education is most effective when implemented in either a centralized or highly coordinated decentralized system of proactive and collaborative strategies designed to ‘help under-prepared students prepare, prepared students advance, and advanced students excel’” (National Association of Developmental Education). **(Link to NADE_Purpose of DevEd_2008.pdf)** **(Link to NADA_DevEd_Goals.pdf)**

The DEC report noted that KSU offers remediation in three areas—reading, writing, and mathematics—but it does not have a developmental program coordinated by a single division or administrator. The Division of Mathematics and Sciences oversees its developmental mathematics classes and their in-house optional mathematics placement test, and the Division of Literature, Languages, and Philosophy oversees the writing and reading developmental classes. Faculty are chosen from each division, and adjuncts are hired each semester to staff the remaining sections of developmental classes. In 2006, seven faculty members were hired specifically to teach developmental courses, four in English and three in Mathematics, in addition to faculty who currently teach those courses. **(Link to Report of the Developmental Education Committee 12-11-06_p8.pdf)** The University hired a new Director of Developmental Education in January 2009 to enhance and coordinate its efforts in Developmental Education. The University is currently in the process of hiring additional full-time faculty to teach in the program. The following classes are considered developmental at KSU for native English speakers: **(Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p23.pdf)**

ENG 088: Reading
ENG 089: Basic Writing I
ENG 099: Basic Writing II
ENG 103: College Reading
MAT 095: Fundamentals of Mathematics
MAT 097: Intermediate Level Algebra

Except for ENG 103, none of the classes carries graduation credit. This means that students requiring full remediation must take 18 hours of classes that do not carry college credit. *For those who persist, it adds at least a year to their stay at the University.*

Students are placed into the appropriate courses according to the statewide public secondary placement policy. Those students who fail to meet the State minimum requirements for admission into college credit-bearing courses are subdivided into remediation levels based on actual ACT sub scores. Many students who enter KSU who require remediation are also in a category called "conditionally admitted" students, or "conditional admits." These are students who fail to meet the minimum University admissions index score (ACT score X 10 + High School GPA X 100) of 430 or who also may fail to meet the CPE's Pre-College Curriculum (PCC) requirements. With scores between 320-429 on the admissions index, conditionally admitted students must earn a college GPA of 2.0 during the first semester or continue to be restricted to a maximum of 13 credit hours in the second semester. If a student fails to achieve a college GPA of 2.0 or better, then he or she may be suspended. All mathematics and English deficiencies must be completed (with a grade of C or better) within the first 30 semester credit hours of course work or be suspended from the University. **(Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p17.pdf)** These students, approximately 40 to 45 percent of each entering freshman class, constitute the largest "at-risk" learning group at KSU. **[Link to ConditionalAdmit_Projections.pdf]**

Keeping developmental classes to an effective size and staffing them with appropriate faculty has been difficult. As a matter of best practice, the National Council of Teachers of English recommends that 20 is the maximum size for reading and writing classes on the college level but the organization considers 15 students as the maximum for remedial classes. **(Link to NCTE_Remedial.pdf)**

The University has made efforts to provide learning and advising support for students through the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), the Office of Academic Advising and its Faculty Advising Council, the block scheduling of some, but not all, students who have similar developmental needs, and the creation of a Summer Academic Bridge Program for at-risk students, which began in 2005. These efforts have had mixed success. ACE has proven to be particularly successful. Learning support outside of the classroom comes primarily from this academic support unit, which is a **comprehensive learning center** for all KSU students, not simply a tutorial service for developmental students. Formed in 2004 as a merger of the former KSU Communication Skills Center and the Peers Empowering Peers Lab, ACE **provides tutoring in a number of academic areas**, including reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as **providing workshops** to help students with study strategies, test-taking skills, and time management. With its Director, Associate Director, an Administrative Assistant, and approximately 20 peer tutors and supplemental instructors, ACE also provides workshops for students and integrative services for faculty that include

classroom visitation. **Some** instructors encourage their students to seek help at ACE by offering extra-credit points or making ACE hours a requirement. **ACE has an impressive track record for helping students** succeed academically. For example, the fall 2005 to fall 2006 retention rate was **75** percent for regular ACE students (those who utilized the Center's services 7 or more times during the semester) compared to **55** percent for the entire University. Of those students, 85 percent passed with a "C" or better the classes in which they received tutoring. For the fall 2006 to fall 2007 term, the retention rate for freshmen students who used ACE had increased to **88** percent compared to the University average that year of 47 percent. In-house student surveys of student satisfaction with the overall services of ACE (Instructional Counselors, Supplemental Instructors, and peer tutors) revealed that 94 percent of surveyed students rated the Center as "Excellent/Good;" 97 percent rated **courteous treatment** to be "Excellent/Good;" and 94 percent indicated that the **study skills strategies** they learned were "Excellent/Good." ([Link to Report of the Developmental Education Committee_p15_12-11-06.pdf](#)) ([Link to Ace Increase in Retention.pdf](#))

Areas that have proven to be especially **challenging** for the University have been academic advising for students with **undeclared majors** and helping new students with developmental needs in their transition from high school to college. Providing adequate advising for students with undeclared majors, particularly freshmen, is the primary task of the Faculty Advising Council (FAC). It is under the Director of Advising and is staffed by 8 faculty from various colleges and departments. While more successful than the university's former, less coordinated approach to advising students with undeclared majors, the FAC is constrained by the fact that many of the faculty advisors do not have the students they advise in their classes, which makes it difficult for them to be in touch with their advisees. In an effort to strengthen the program, the University is in the process of hiring two additional full-time professional advisors. Helping a select group of students in their academic transition to college is the function of the Academic Bridge Program. It is a preparatory program for enhancing the academic background and experience of high school graduates who require some developmental course work in one or two subject areas prior to entering the University for the fall term. The Bridge program provides a learner-centered introductory environment designed to ease the transition from high school to college and to promote academic success. Students enroll in nine hours of classes and participate in other academically-related activities during the summer academic term. Once students complete Summer Bridge they enroll for fall courses but no longer receive the extra attention the program provided. In the case of the Bridge Program for 2007, an examination of the grades earned by students during the fall semester shows that 47 percent received grades below "C" or withdrew from gateway courses, and when all courses taken are factored into the results, 62 percent received grades below "C" or withdrew. ([Link to 2007Bridge_Fall_Unsatisfactory_Dev&GateGrades.pdf](#)) Those results suggest that students with developmental needs require continued support if they are to have a reasonable chance of success at the University.

Overall, the DEC report concluded its findings with the statement, "In summary, the current KSU developmental program is **decentralized with very little coordination** among the groups involved. The lack of academic, personal and social support for this large group of students contributes to the high failure rates that we see." ([Link to Report of the Developmental Education Committee_p8-9_12-11-06.pdf](#)). Since that

report, support has been provided in some areas such as the **hiring of a full-time Director of Advising, strengthening of the Academic Center for Excellence, and the hiring of full-time developmental education faculty**. The QEP is designed to address these shortcomings.

The Developmental Education Committee made several specific recommendations to address weakness in current practice and to improve developmental education at KSU. ([Link to Report of the Developmental Education Committee 12-11-06.pdf](#)) These included

- Create a Developmental Education administrative position with primary responsibility for coordination of developmental courses and services with the (1) chairpersons of Math and Sciences and Literature, Languages and Philosophy and (2) the Coordinator of the Composition Program to insure that students in developmental classes learn what they need for gateway courses. The administrator would also serve as Director of the Summer Bridge Program.
- Hold regular meetings of all those involved in the delivery of developmental courses and services.
- Have the Developmental Education Committee serve as advisors to the Developmental Education administrator.
- Integrate developmental courses with academic support services.
- Work closely with the Director of the First Year Experience Program to provide intrusive counseling services to students in the Bridge Program and during the regular semesters.
- Hire a team of full-time faculty with training, expertise, or experience in developmental instruction specifically to teach developmental courses and to house them, as appropriate, in either the Division of Literature, Languages, and Philosophy, or the Division of Mathematics and Sciences to foster a sense of "belonging," reduce the disconnect between developmental classes and gateway core classes, and foster coordination between those areas.
- Develop and articulate a mission statement and common goals for the developmental program.
- Track and assess systematically the performance of students in developmental courses and in post-developmental classes.
- Increase the staffing of the Academic Center for Excellence to a level that can adequately serve the needs of the student body and continue to assess the need for tutoring and special services to students to help them learn more effectively.

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- Establish a team of professional advisors to complement the Faculty Advising Council to guide each incoming student regarding his or her academic and professional goals and the use of various academic support services.
- Create learning communities on campus, particularly in housing, through establishing a pilot living/learning community where faculty, Student Affairs staff, Residence Life, academic support services and students can work to accomplish common educational goals and objectives.
- Include developmental education in the University's long-range strategic planning and budgeting process.
- Promote the importance and understanding of developmental education across the campus.

The Student Success and Retention Task Force made recommendations that supported those of the DEC, while adding a few of its own, such as

- Establish an electronic means for taking attendance (e.g. swipe cards).
- Set aside one evening each week for quiet study time when no campus activities are scheduled.
- Implement a Code of Behavior for students. ([Link to Final Draft-Student Success Taskforce Report_pp5-14.pdf](#))

After investigating the status of the recommendations in the Developmental Education Committee Report, the QEP Committee found that the University had taken action on several of them, as, for example, the creation of mission statements for developmental classes in each area, the inclusion of developmental education in the University's long-range planning and budget, and the hiring of seven additional faculty to teach developmental classes, the latter of which was of great importance to reduce class sizes. ([Link to Dev_Ed_report_subcommitte_SueF.pdf](#)) ([Link to QEP Committee Minutes 1-30-2008.pdf](#)) The University has hired a full-time Director of Developmental Education. ([Link to Director_DevEd_Ad.pdf](#)). The Director has a critical role to play in establishing an official program, helping coordinate curriculum development, initiating greater faculty development, and collaborating with the Director of the QEP. By the time the QEP is implemented, a more cohesive developmental program will be in place.

Because more than 80 percent of KSU's entering freshman require at least one developmental course, and half require two, the QEP Committee strongly endorsed the belief that the actions taken to improve student learning for developmental students would need to be continued in those gateway courses at KSU that often prove to be stumbling blocks to academic success (see Table 4, p. 14):

ENG 101: English Composition I
ENG 102: English Composition II

MAT 111: Contemporary Mathematics
MAT 115: College Algebra
BIO 101: Life Science
CHE 109: Chemistry in Context

As stated in the *KSU 2007-2008 Catalogue*, to fulfill its teaching mission, "Meeting student needs shall be paramount. The University shall focus on the needs of its students . . ." ([Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p7.pdf](#)) The QEP is a significant step toward meeting those needs.

Committee Conclusion for the QEP Topic

From its thorough investigation of the problems facing the institution in regard to student learning, the QEP Committee concluded the following: what KSU clearly needed was a Quality Enhancement Plan that **addressed issues of student under-preparedness (developmental education), their attitudes toward college and college life (advising, mentoring, counseling), and the skills and reasoning they must develop in key (gateway) courses in which too many do not succeed. At KSU these three issues are inseparable.** The QEP topic chosen embodied those three issues: "Academics with Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success."

IV. DESIRED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Overview of Educational Goals

The purpose of the Kentucky State University QEP, Academics With Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success, is to foster in students an attitude of educational engagement and planning necessary for academic success in developmental and gateway classes. A student with proper "attitude" is engaged with learning, is motivated to succeed academically, and forms the habits to achieve academic success. A student with proper "attitude" demonstrates this mindset in the following ways:

- devotes a reasonable amount of time and effort to studying
- reads assignments and discusses ideas seriously with others, while exhibiting decorum and respect for opposing points of view
- understands the importance of punctuality, class attendance, and timely completion of assignments
- joins a community of learners
- exhibits genuine confidence in his or her ability to do well in courses that require reading, writing, and speaking

- displays self-assurance of doing well in math and science courses
- shows commitment to complete a college degree
- views professors and administrators as competent, reasonable, and caring individuals
- is academically successful

For students to develop the proper attitude, they must first acquire a *perspective* on what is required to be academically successful (**Goal 1**), followed by *engagement* in the processes through which the necessary skills for success are acquired (**Goal 2**). Once those are achieved, students become part of a *scholarly community* characterized by their collective desire to enter the world of ideas found in university classes and by completing them successfully (**Goal 3**). *Goals 1 and 2 are directed primarily at freshmen students in developmental classes and University Orientation; Goal 3 is directed toward students who have entered University gateway classes.*

The Three AWA Educational Goals and Associated Learning Outcomes

The Academics with Attitude (AWA) QEP establishes a set of associated learning outcomes for each educational goal to indicate the degree to which it has or has not been met. At the start of the fall semester of 2008 the University initiated a QEP Pilot Project—a miniature version based on our larger proposal—to establish baseline data for use when the AWA project is fully implemented. Sixty students are participating and another 60 are serving as a control group. A larger pilot (approximately 120 students) that begins in the summer, rather than the fall, will commence in 2009. More on the pilot projects can be found in Section VI. Given the financial difficulties and work schedules of many of our students, we considered the percentages assigned to the action learning outcomes as reasonable and attainable. A more thorough discussion of the particular direct and indirect measures used to assess the learning outcomes is found in Section V: Assessment.

Educational Goal 1: AWA Perspectives (Awareness)

Students recognize and understand effective habits for academic and personal success.

Students advancing to college-level study recognize and integrate the positive, constructive changes in personal and academic awareness that developmental education experiences, knowledge, and skills provide for academic success.

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Learning Outcome 1.1A: Students will improve study habits					
Indicators for Learning Outcome (LO) 1.1A	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	50% of students in the sample group will increase study habits by 10% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase study habits by 15% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase study habits by 20% of the baseline	65% of students in the sample group will increase study habits by 25% of the baseline	70% of students in the sample group will increase study habits by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.1B: Students will develop an increased desire to finish college					
Indicators for LO 1.1B	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	40% of students in the sample group will increase desire to finish college by 10% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase desire to finish college by 15% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase desire to finish college by 20% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase desire to finish college by 25% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase desire to finish college by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.1C: Students will increase their academic confidence in reading, writing, math, and science					
Indicators for LO 1.1C	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	40% of students in the sample group will increase academic confidence by 10% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase academic confidence by 15% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase academic confidence by 20% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase academic confidence by 25% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase academic confidence by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.2A: Students will attend each class					
Indicators for LO 1.2A	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014

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	50% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 10% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 15% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 20% of the baseline	65% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 25% of the baseline	70% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.2B: Students will attend course-related out-of-class functions					
Indicators for LO 1.2B	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	40% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 10% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 15% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 20% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 25% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase attendance by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.2C: Students will submit assignments by specified dates					
Indicators for LO 1.2C	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	40% of students in the sample group will increase submissions by 10% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase submissions by 15% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase submissions by 20% of the baseline	55% of students in the sample group will increase submissions by 25% of the baseline	60% of students in the sample group will increase submissions by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.2D: Students will attend faculty/professional staff referrals to academic support services (Academic Referrals—AR)					
Indicators for LO 1.2D	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	30% of students in the sample group will increase AR attendance by 5% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase AR attendance by 10% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase AR attendance by 15% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase AR attendance by 20% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase AR attendance by 25% of the baseline

Learning Outcome 1.3A: Students will participate in AWA-program activities sponsored by Residence Life, Student Life, and First Year Experience					
Indicators for LO 1.3A	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	30% of students in the sample group will increase activities participation by 5% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase activities participation by 10% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase activities participation by 15% of the baseline	45% of students in the sample group will increase activities participation by 20% of the baseline	50% of students in the sample group will increase activities participation by 25% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 1.3B: Students will attend to referrals to personal health services (PHS)					
Indicators for LO 1.3B	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase PHS referrals by 5% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase PHS referrals by 10% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase PHS referrals by 15% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase PHS referrals by 20% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase PHS referrals by 25% of the baseline

Educational Goal 2: AWA Engagement (Skills)

Students practice an interdisciplinary acquisition of basic skills.

Students advancing to college-level study demonstrate effective and appropriate practice of basic academic skills necessary to support college-level academic success. Through inquiry-based teaching and learning, students will be able to read a variety of texts, write an essay based upon an arguable thesis and supporting evidence, solve mathematical problems, and practice scientific inquiry.

Learning Outcome 2.1A: Students will read at the appropriate grade level					
Indicators for LO 2.1A	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014

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	20% of students in the sample group will increase reading level by 5% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase reading level by 10% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase reading level by 15% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase reading level by 20% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase reading level by 25% of the baseline
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Learning Outcome 2.1B: Students will write at the appropriate grade level					
Indicators for LO 2.1B	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase writing level by 5% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase writing level by 10% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase writing level by 15% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase writing level by 20% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase writing level by 25% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 2.1C: Students will perform basic mathematical manipulations and solve basic mathematical problems and practice scientific inquiry at the appropriate grade level (Basic Mathematical and Science Skills--BMSS)					
Indicators for LO 2.1C	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase BMSS skills by 5% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase BMSS skills by 10% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase BMSS skills by 15% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase BMSS skills by 20% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase BMSS skills by 25% of the baseline

Educational Goal 3: AWA Scholarly Community (Knowledge)

Students perform as viable college students and probable college graduates.

Students who advance to and participate in college-level study demonstrate that they have achieved—and model to others—the critical behaviors and cognitive engagement needed to utilize the curricular experiences offered at a liberal arts institution.

Learning Outcome 3.1A: Students will communicate accurately and effectively through writing (Effective and Accurate Writing Communication--EAWC)

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Indicators for LO 3.1A	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase EAWC by 10% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase EAWC by 15% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase EAWC by 20% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase EAWC by 25% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase EAWC by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 3.1B: Students will think critically and analytically (TCA)					
Indicators for LO 3.1B	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will improve TCA by 5% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will improve TCA by 10% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will improve TCA by 15% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will improve TCA by 20% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will improve TCA by 25% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 3.1C: Students will read with comprehension at the college entry level (RCCEL)					
Indicators for LO 3.1C	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase RCCEL by 10% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase RCCEL by 15% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase RCCEL by 20% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase RCCEL by 25% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase RCCEL by 30% of the baseline
Learning Outcome 3.1D : Students will use the methods of mathematical and scientific inquiry successfully (Methods of Math and Science Inquiry—MMSI)					
Indicators for LO 3.1D	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014
Baseline data pilot program enacted in 2008-2009	20% of students in the sample group will increase MMSI by 10% of the baseline	25% of students in the sample group will increase MMSI by 15% of the baseline	30% of students in the sample group will increase MMSI by 20% of the baseline	35% of students in the sample group will increase MMSI by 25% of the baseline	40% of students in the sample group will increase MMSI by 30% of the baseline

Goals are Mission Driven

Having more students achieve those educational goals, particularly goal 3, is central to the liberal studies mission of the University. Kentucky State University is the Commonwealth of Kentucky's "unique liberal studies" institution [[Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p7.pdf](#)]. As stated in the *KSU Catalogue*, liberally educated students are those "who wish to think clearly, to argue persuasively, to write with clarity and liveliness [I]n short, liberal studies develop independent and critical thinking. . . . [T]he development of independent thinking is the foundation for personal growth. The possession of specific skills, however important they may be, is insufficient if one is unable to confront life changes with resourcefulness and clarity of thought. Job skills change with the passing of time and the shifting demands of industry; however, the ability to think for oneself is the governing resource of truly educated individuals." [[Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p21.pdf](#)]. Whether the subject matter is philosophy, politics, history, economics, mathematics, or biology, to name only a few traditional academic disciplines, the development of one's reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities is essential for mastery of each. The faculty of KSU recognized the importance of these foundational principles and included them as the first four of the twelve Liberal Studies Learning Outcomes for the liberal studies (general education) core: [[Link to Catalogue_2007-2008_p21.pdf](#)]

1. To communicate accurately and effectively in writing and speech.

Students must be familiar with the conventions of standard usage in both written and spoken English and be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

2. To think critically and analytically.

Students must be able to use reason and logic to understand ideas, appreciate nuances and recognize ambiguities, and formulate their own position on issues.

3. To read with comprehension at a level appropriate for college students.

Students must be able to understand and interpret reading matter from a variety of disciplines.

4. To use the methods of mathematical and scientific inquiry.

Students must be able to use the methods of mathematical and scientific inquiry to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.

In its current cycle of assessment, KSU is evaluating the degree to which it is meeting those four Liberal Studies Learning Outcomes. Thus the learning outcomes associated with AWA educational goal 3 fit within the University's current assessment strategy and are appropriate given KSU's educational mission. Improving student attainment of AWA educational goal 3 will boost student performance as measured by the instruments used to assess the Liberal Studies Learning Outcomes (for example, the Rising Junior or CAAP exam and the Liberal Studies Core Committee Learning Outcomes Assessment). Attaining educational goal 3, however, relies upon meeting AWA goals 1 and 2.

V. ASSESSMENT

Overview

The purpose of the Kentucky State University QEP, Academics with Attitude: Building the Foundation for Student Success (AWA), is to effect attitudinal changes in students that will result in improved behavioral and academic performance in developmental and gateway classes. The three AWA Educational Goals and their associated learning outcomes (described in Section IV and again below) are clear, specific, and measurable. To assess the degree to which those educational goals and learning outcomes have been achieved, the project Implementation Committee will have access to a comprehensive system of instruments that provide direct and indirect measures of (1) attitudes among students indicative of their engagement in the learning process and (2) student academic performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and basic science skills. The expectation is that students who participate in the QEP will outperform those who do not. The 2008-2009 QEP Pilot Project, which consists of 60 students under QEP management and a control group of 60 who are not, will provide valuable baseline information for assessment purposes. An initial evaluation of data from the first semester of the QEP Pilot Project conducted by the Pilot Coordinator, the faculty-staff teams who participated in the project, and the QEP Committee showed encouraging results. **(Link to COMPARATIVE GRADES FOR 084 PILOT.pdf)** Compared to the control group of students, students in the Pilot Project passed their courses with a C or higher at significantly greater rates:

ENG 088	+14.8%
ENG 089	+24.8%
MAT 095	+21.9%
UNV 101	+ 9.9%

Near the end of the 2009 spring semester, the AWA Implementation Committee will begin its evaluation of data collected during the first pilot project, formulate recommendations, and implement them in time for the summer 2009 pilot.

Responsibility for Assessment and Actions Based on Assessment Results

The QEP Implementation Committee and its Director have the responsibility for ensuring that the data for evaluating the QEP is preserved in a retrievable and useful form, that proper and timely assessments of the QEP occur, and that corrective actions based on the evidence are taken when necessary for improving student success in achieving the three AWA Educational Goals. Members of the Implementation Committee were selected because each is familiar with an area critical for the success of the QEP and has knowledge of the types of assessments conducted in it. They will work with the Director to

- (1) coordinate and monitor assessments conducted in the component parts of the QEP (e.g., QEP designated University Orientation classes, QEP designated developmental and gateway courses, ACE sessions with QEP students, QEP resident life/learning communities)

- (2) compare the assessed performance of students in the QEP with those who are not
- (3) develop recommendations for improvements in the delivery of instruction and support in appropriate areas as revealed after each cycle of assessment
- (4) consult with affected faculty and staff before implementing changes
- (5) evaluate after each cycle of assessment the suitability of the instruments used to assess specific learning outcomes
- (6) modify, develop, or select more appropriate instruments of assessment if necessary

Evaluation of the QEP and its components will build upon assessment practices already in place at KSU. In 2008 the University adopted the WeaveOnline assessment management system to provide a unified, seamless, electronic record of unit/program educational goals, learning outcomes, and assessment practices throughout the University. ([Link to IE_WeaveOnLine.pdf](#)) The QEP Director will be responsible for tracking assessments relevant to the QEP using this powerful tool. Collaboration between the QEP Director/Implementation Committee and other offices on campus that have responsibility for conducting assessments will aid the Director and Implementation Committee in evaluating the degree to which the QEP is enabling students to attain the three AWA Educational Goals. Among these the most important are the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) and the University Placement and Testing Center (PTC). The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness provides professional analysis of assessment results and, when requested, assists in the selection and design of surveys and other evaluation tools. National tests and surveys, such as the ACT, SAT, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), and NSSE require consultation with the Director of the University Placement and Testing Center, who notifies students and faculty and arranges the time and place for them to be administered.

In addition to their regular meetings to direct the operations of the QEP, the Director and Implementation Committee will meet at the end of each semester specifically to evaluate the findings of the various assessments conducted during that term. At the end of each academic year (in May), the Director will prepare an annual report of the operations of the Academics with Attitude project, including the results of assessment and a recommended plan of action for correcting deficiencies. The report will be submitted to the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and sent to the President and SACS Leadership Team for review and feedback.

Description of Direct Measures

Records kept by faculty and academic support staff on student attendance (e.g., classes, advising appointments, and required special events), their timely completion of assignments, and their regular use of University support services will serve as one set of direct measures of student attitudes and engagement with the educational experience. An additional measure of student performance, both direct and indirect, will be the evaluation by a team of faculty of an **electronic portfolio** submitted through Blackboard by each student in his or her University Orientation class

(AWA 101), which integrates the student's various learning experiences during the summer portion of the program. Faculty/staff teams participating in the QEP Pilot Project will develop the initial rubrics for evaluating the e-portfolios over the summer of 2008. Current assessment instruments used in the developmental program, including diagnostic exams for reading and exit exams for writing and for mathematics, will also be a means for **measuring student academic performance**. Assessments used (and others currently under development) by the Division of Mathematics and Sciences and the Division of Literature, Languages, and Philosophy in their gateway courses, along with the newly created Liberal Studies Core Committee Learning Outcomes Assessment, will ensure a range of "in-house" evaluation mechanisms. To provide a measure that also allows comparisons with national data, students will take the ACT measure of Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAPP) at the end of their freshman year and again at the end of their sophomore year to evaluate their progress in the areas of reading, writing, critical thinking, mathematics, and basic science. The Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) provides direct and indirect measures of student attitudes; where appropriate, such as assessing students' desire to finish college and their attitude toward educators, the CSI will be used as a direct measure. The University has collected CSI data in UNV 101 courses on more than 1100 freshmen from 2004 to the present and will collect more data from the AWA Pilot Project control group of students for drawing comparisons between students under AWA management and those not. The CSI is also discussed below as an indirect measure.

Description of Indirect Measures

The CSI will be used also as an indirect, self-reported measure of student attitudes and engagement in learning. Several learning outcomes associated with Educational Goal 1 are categorized on the CSI, including "Academic Motivation" (study habits, verbal confidence, math and science confidence), "Dropout Proneness," "Receptivity to Institutional Help," and "Receptivity" (to academic assistance, personal counseling, and career counseling). Under the QEP, **the CSI will be administered twice**, once during their first AWA 101 class to establish a baseline of initial student attitudes, and a second time at the end of the summer portion of the program to ascertain changes over the summer session. **AWA 101, the hub course for all new freshmen**, requires that students write an autobiography, which instructors compare with the results of the CSI to glean more specific information and acquire deeper insight into the attitudes of their students. The e-portfolio that integrates the student's learning experiences in their courses with support and student life/resident life services will be an additional measure of their academic engagement. Course evaluations conducted by the University provide self-reported information on student's perception of their attendance and hours per week spent studying. Course grades and retention of students from freshman through the end of the sophomore year will provide the final two indirect measures for gauging the success of the QEP in achieving the three AWA Educational Goals.

In addition to the aforementioned assessments, the National Survey of Student Engagement will be used to measure student engagement with their education. The University has administered and collected data from NSSE surveys in 2003, 2004, and 2007, and will continue to do so. The NSSE is given in the spring, which will allow

comparisons between freshman students who participated in classes under the QEP with those who did not. The expectation is that students in QEP-designated courses will report more positive results in areas such as "Academic and Intellectual Experiences," "Reading and Writing," "Time Usage," and "Academic Advising" than do freshmen not in such classes.

Evaluating the Success of the AWA QEP

This section includes two critical elements of the KSU Quality Enhancement Plan: **specific actions for achieving the learning outcomes** (Table 8) and a **calendar for assessment indicators related to those actions** (Appendix V). The primary measure of success for the Academics with Attitude project depends upon meeting the learning outcomes associated with the three educational goals. As explained above in Section IV: Desired Learning Outcomes, the percentiles and percentages that quantify changes in student attitudes, behavior, skills, and knowledge are based upon a reasonable expectation of improvement, given the profiles of our students, when compared to past assessments. In some cases where past assessment data is sparse or unavailable, such as students following through on referrals to support services, attendance at out-of-class functions, or participation in activities sponsored by Residence Life or Student Life, behaviors that we consider important in developing a proper academic attitude among students, the learning outcomes are presently based upon what we consider a reasonable expectation of performance. An analysis in late spring of 2009 of the data collected from the QEP pilot study will provide useful baseline information. As the AWA QEP progresses through the years, a data pool for assessment of those areas will be developed.

The secondary measure of success of the AWA project is an improvement in the retention of students from the freshman through the sophomore year compared to students who have not participated in the project. The expectation is a 20 percent comparative improvement. Although this is a broad and indirect measure that does not indicate specifically what students have learned, we believe the correlation between retention and achievement of the AWA educational goals is strong.

The three AWA Educational Goals, Associated Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Measures are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: *Academics with Attitude Educational Goals, Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Measures.*

<p>Educational Goal 1: AWA Perspectives (Awareness) Students recognize and understand effective habits for academic and personal success. Students advancing to college-level study recognize and integrate the positive, constructive changes in personal and academic awareness that developmental education experiences, knowledge, and skills provide for academic success.</p>		
<p>Learning Outcome (from Section IV)</p>	<p>Supporting Direct Measures</p>	<p>Supporting Indirect Measures</p>

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1.1A. Students will improve study habits		Primary: CSI Secondary: KSU course evaluation item #6, NSSE item #9a
1.1B. Students will develop an increased desire to finish college		Primary: CSI Secondary: UNV 101 student autobiographies
1.1C. Students will increase their academic confidence in reading, writing, public speaking, math, and		Primary: CSI Secondary: UNV 101 student autobiographies; e-portfolio assessment
1.2A. Students will attend each class	Faculty records of attendance	KSU course evaluation item #3
1.2B. Students will attend course-related out-of-class functions (e.g., field trips and convocations)	Faculty records of attendance	NSSE
1.2C. Students will submit assignments by specified due dates	Faculty grade book records	
1.2D. Students will attend faculty/professional staff referrals to academic support services	Records of appropriate student service	CSI ("Receptivity Scales"); support unit surveys; 20 percent improvement in retention
1.3A. Students will participate in AWA-program activities sponsored by Residence Life, Student Life, and First Year Experience	Records of appropriate student service	CSI ("Receptivity Scales" and "General Coping Scales"); support unit surveys; 20 percent improvement in retention
1.3B. Students will attend to referrals to personal health services	Records of appropriate health service	CSI ("Receptivity Scales"); support unit surveys; 20 percent improvement in retention

<p>Educational Goal 2: AWA Engagement (Skills) Students practice an interdisciplinary acquisition of basic skills. Students advancing to college level study demonstrate effective and appropriate practice of basic academic skills necessary to support college-level academic success. Through inquiry-based teaching and learning, students will be able to read a variety of texts, write an essay based upon an arguable thesis and supporting evidence, solve mathematical problems, and practice scientific inquiry.</p>		
Learning Outcome	Supporting Direct Measures	Supporting Indirect Measures

QEP REPORT 02-02-2009 Kentucky State University

2.1A. Students will read at the appropriate grade level	a score of at least 70 percent task success on standard readability indices; departmental reading surveys; Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)	Student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention between freshman and sophomore year
2.1B. Students will write at the appropriate grade level	departmental two-part exit exam; CAAP	e-portfolio assessment; student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention between freshman and sophomore year
2.1C. Students will perform basic mathematical manipulations and solve basic mathematical problems and practice scientific inquiry at the appropriate grade level	departmental exit exam; CAAP	Student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention between freshman and sophomore year

Educational Goal 3: AWA Scholarly Community (Knowledge)

Students perform as viable college students and probable college graduates.

Students who advance to and participate in college-level study demonstrate that they have achieved—and model to others—the critical behaviors and cognitive engagement needed to utilize the curricular experiences offered at a liberal arts institution.

Learning Outcome	Supporting Direct Measures	Supporting Indirect Measures
3.1A. Students will communicate accurately and effectively through writing	English Department exit exam; Liberal Studies Core Committee Learning Outcomes Assessment; CAAP	Student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention at end of sophomore year
3.1B. Students will think critically and analytically	English Department exit exam; Liberal Studies Core Committee Learning Outcomes Assessment; CAAP	Students grades; 20 percent improvement in retention at end of sophomore year
3.1C. Students will read with comprehension at the college entry level.	English Department exit exam; Liberal Studies Core Committee Learning Outcomes Assessment; CAAP	Student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention at end of sophomore year
3.1D. Students will use the methods of mathematical and scientific inquiry successfully	CAAP	Student grades; 20 percent improvement in retention at end of sophomore year

A convenient summary of the assessment process for the QEP is found in Appendix V.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

(See Appendix I for references)

Benefits of the QEP to Students

Student Engagement

Colleges and universities across the nation have been developing a spectrum of offerings designed to help developmental and non-developmental college freshman make the kinds of connections that encourage persistence, retention, and academic success. Vincent Tinto (1997), Terry O'Banion (1997), K. Patricia Cross (1999), John and Suanne Roueche (1999), Hunter Boylan (1999, 2002, 2004), Robert McCabe (2000, 2003), and Ted Marchese (2000) have been in the front ranks of educators and educational research specialists who point out that student retention and academic success require more than cognitive growth and the acquisition of basic skills. These experts agree that to overcome the obstacles students face daily in attending college, students must be engaged in the collegiate experience. They must form two critical connections: (1) they must make social and affective connections, that is, they must see themselves as part of a learning community; and (2) they must make experiential connections, that is, they must feel that they are making progress toward achieving their personal goals.

The National Study of Developmental Education reports that 75 percent of students who pass the highest level developmental courses and enter regular college-credit-bearing courses pass them. But more than 30 percent of students who enroll in developmental courses do not finish them to move into regular college classes (Hoyt, 1999). Hunter Boylan (1999) concludes that those students leave for several reasons:

- They never acquire the skills necessary to pass developmental courses.
- They become bored from or discouraged by having to take developmental courses; attrition rates, particularly in developmental mathematics classes can reach 90 percent.
- Personal and family problems interfere with attendance.
- They use up their financial aid by taking developmental courses and fall into increasing levels of debt.

Other factors, Boylan suggests, work against persistence, retention, and academic success as well, which are typical among KSU students:

- Low income, which requires them to work while attending college.
- Unfamiliarity with academic culture, environment, and requirements for success.
- Unfamiliarity with the processes of developing critical thinking.
- Inability to take responsibility of their own learning, or the lack of knowledge of how to do so.

- Little or no acquaintance with scholarly habits of thought and expression.
- Uninformed about what being a college student means; that it is not merely the accumulation and memorization of vast quantities of information.
- Lack of awareness of how best to apply information gleaned from course work.

It is clear that non-cognitive, attitudinal factors play a crucial role in student engagement in and persistence through a program of postsecondary study. Interconnected with this enterprise are the experiences and aspirations that students bring to college as well as those who develop during the course of enrollment and matriculation. A recent ACT policy report on *The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention* found that "non-academic factors of academic-related skills, academic self-confidence, academic goals, institutional commitment, social support, certain contextual influences (institutional selectivity and financial support), and social involvement all had a positive relationship to retention" (ACT, 2004). In other words, students were more successful when these elements of a supportive environment were not ignored. Nine non-academic factors were identified:

- Academic goals
- Achievement motivation
- Academic self-confidence
- Academic related skills
- Contextual factors
- General self-concept
- Institutional commitment
- Social support
- Social involvement

As previously noted in section III (pp. 20-21), a majority of the KSU faculty who teach classes in the liberal studies core curriculum noted that "poor student attitudes toward education," their "lack of motivation," and "peers who have priorities other than an education" were detracting from the educational mission of the institution. The *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE, 2006) found that student engagement is positively correlated to grades and persistence between the first and second year of college. The findings also showed that students less prepared academically or from historically under-represented groups benefit from engagement in educationally purposeful activities even more than other students (cited in Redden, 2006, p. 3).

The Center for Studies in Higher Education points to the importance of monitoring and responding to demographic subgroup differences and their impact on engagement. Further recommendations include making it a priority to "get to know students, their needs, aspirations, and motivations; and engaging students in self-assessment and peer assessment so that the focus is increasingly on their responsibility for becoming and remaining engaged in the learning process" (pp. 13-14). The QEP is designed to address such engagement issues. Each student's AWA 101 instructor will continue to serve as his or her advisor through the freshman year. Each AWA instructor will benefit by working in consultation with professional advisors hired by the University.

Through engaging students in a systematic support network of AWA 101 instructors who have a teaching and advising role, students will develop positive attitudes that lead to productive behaviors that promote academic success. These behaviors would include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Strong commitment to the goal of graduation
- Realistic view of academic expectations
- High self-efficacy
- Feelings of self-worth
- Internal "locus-of-control"
- Willingness to seek help
- Adaptation to change (e.g. personal growth and development)
- Application of time management principles
- Willingness to address areas of weakness
- Willingness to work with other students (e.g. peer mentors, group study)
- Positive view toward educators and respect for the academic community

Student engagement binds students to each other and to the institution and promotes positive attitudes related to meaningful learning activities.

Faculty and Staff Engagement

Student engagement is also faculty and staff engagement: a pledge between students and faculty/staff that implies mutual trust, understanding, and responsibilities. The attitude implicit in this statement is recognition among all stakeholders on campus that social, political, and economic factors in our contemporary society continuously impact and change the profile of young people and the ways they learn, and that the KSU community must respond differently. Our academic community must be ready to adapt to the new ways that our young participate in life and learning and adopt changes that will foster learning.

Faculty Attitude

A professor with attitude engages students in learning through engaged teaching.

"Attitude" encompasses the faculty's commitment to positive, constructive methods of teaching that improve students' engagement in learning.

Faculty must lead the change. The current 18-year-old student arriving on KSU's campus learns best through teamwork, experiential learning, structure, and technology. Faculty need to recognize that our new generation of student learners is more accustomed to technological media and personal and social interaction through it than previous generations. In addition, educators like Howard Gardner have shown that there are multiple intelligences that exist in student populations and that emphasis on one or

two (often the linguistic and logical-mathematical) to the exclusion of others can impede student learning. Faculty members acknowledge differences in learning styles by planning and implementing teaching strategies to meet this challenge. Faculty understand as well that the current scholar model is that of the mobile, collaborative researcher engaged in the world laboratory and encourage that attitude in their students. Faculty *attitude* embraces engagement in teaching through methods and strategies that *work* with our students. Faculty members, particularly in developmental classes

- Understand the usefulness of teamwork, a necessary skill in the emerging workplace, and utilize short informational sessions punctuated by collaborative exercises in the classroom to replace long lectures and keep students attentive to lesson objectives.
- Apply disciplinary content through relevant experiential learning, carefully planning and assessing students' knowledge and performance, to enable students to see the practical application of abstract information.
- Use technology as a teaching tool to communicate assignments, to convey important course content, and to guide student research.
- Create consistent structure, both of course content and related learning experiences. Through clear objectives and appropriate assessments faculty provide reliable course outlines and calendars.

All these methods represent a professor with attitude. To meet that goal, the University will provide in-service workshops for faculty development.

Staff Attitude

Likewise, Kuh et al. note the important role of staff in helping to promote positive student attitudes:

Every type of institutional agent makes important contributions to student success, including those staff members at all levels of the institution who implement many of the student support initiatives as well as those whose small gestures on a daily basis affirm and support students . . . staff members who go out of their way to make students feel "special" are institutional treasures and merit being treated as such. (2005, p. 296)

Positive student attitudes that contribute to academic persistence and success are reinforced by a campus culture that values student, staff, and faculty attitudes toward campus engagement and best practices for creating an environment that inspires student learning and development.

Building a Community of Learners: Best Practices

Students who are placed in developmental classes often become discouraged at the length of time it will take them to begin their college-level courses. Without that remedial work, however, they are unlikely to succeed and complete college. At KSU the start of the AWA project in the summer will give such students the opportunity to get a head start by taking two development courses and the required University Orientation

class before they are admitted for the fall semester. Boylan (2004), Dolores Perin (2001), and Vincent Tinto (2007) point out that when it comes to improving students' learning skills, one size does not fit all. Boylan cites Parker Palmer, who notes that university faculty members ". . . always apply the same solution to whatever problems they confront . . . it's called *addacourse*. If students have trouble writing, we add a writing course; if they have trouble thinking, they add a critical thinking course" (p. 2). Boylan admits that developmental students, particularly those who place in the bottom half of developmental courses, most likely need the structure and organization imposed by a 16-week course. On the other hand, he, along with Tinto and Perin, note that developmental courses alone are not an adequate solution to the needs of students. Perin (2001) points out that while a large number of students need the kind of intensive practice on basic skills, the problem is that ". . . the content of [such] instruction cannot usually be perceived by students as meaningful and immediately applicable" (p. 56). She adds that research indicates that

. . . for instruction in basic reading, writing, and math skills to be effective, it must be seen by the students as serving a larger purpose, related to the accomplishment of specific job, educational, and family goals. . . . It is likely that when students are asked to engage in academic learning not clearly connected with their longer-term goals, they lose motivation, and stop attending (p. 56).

Boylan and Tinto advocate developing and coordinating tutorial assistance in labs devoted to reading, writing, and mathematics, with freshman seminars and learning communities that emphasize collaborative learning. In accord with that recommendation, KSU students in QEP-designated developmental courses will be required to participate in two additional "lab" hours of supplemental instruction each week for each developmental course in which they are enrolled. Each cohort of 15 students will also benefit by having a trained student Supplemental Instructor live with them in the residence hall as part of their learning community. The Supplemental Instructors (SI), who are an important part of the KSU AWA plan, are students with at least sophomore status and at least a 3.0 in the subject tutored and a 2.8 cumulative GPA who attend all class sessions of at least one section of a course (e.g. MAT 095, ENG 088). They must have completed with a grade of B or higher ENG 101, 102, and 211 (or higher literature course), or MAT 115 and 120 or 125, or BIO 101 and 111 or 112, or CHE 109. The SI's are trained initially by the ACE certified SI facilitator, and they receive further training through faculty and Instructional Counselors assigned to the project. The SI's attend and take notes for assigned course lectures, labs, and tutorials; provide learning assistance at labs and tutorials; and assess and record student attendance. SI's model the appropriate attitudes, habits, and level of academic achievement that will encourage academic success for the QEP students.

Freshman Seminars: AWA 101/Advising

Throughout the 20th century, many colleges and universities have provided some type of orientation to new incoming students. In the 1970s John Gardner pioneered the "Freshman Seminar" concept to provide a more comprehensive approach to the needs of first-year college students (Gardner & Jewler, 1992). As an integral part of the First

Year Experience, the “Freshman Seminar” explored issues in college life and the requirements and expectations of college attendance, facilitated adjustment to college life, and contributed to student retention.

At KSU the freshman seminar is UNV 101: University Orientation (or MUS 103 for music majors or HON 103 for honors program students), a 3-credit course required of all new freshman. Our QEP will offer AWA 101 (Academics with Attitude Orientation) as a specialized summer orientation course designed for students enrolled in the program. It requires that the University employ an adequate number of instructors who, whenever possible, are *regular* faculty or staff, not adjuncts (unlike UNV 101), to both teach and advise the new students, thereby facilitating greater collaboration among students, their instructors, and peer mentors, both inside and outside the classroom. The intention is also to have closer coordination between the AWA 101 faculty and the faculty of the developmental classes in which the students are also enrolled, so that the attitudes and behaviors associated with academic activities of those courses can be reinforced in AWA 101. Student engagement doesn't just happen by accident. De Sousa writes that “Academic advisors can play an integral role in promoting student success by assisting students in ways that encourage them to engage in the right kinds of activities, inside and outside the classroom” (cited in Rinck, 2006, p. 3). The combined role of AWA 101 instructor/first-year advisor is intended to maximize this influence on student attitudes and related behaviors to an extent far greater than happens in UNV 101. The pre-professional portfolio required of all AWA 101 students will incorporate writing pieces reflective of the learning outcomes relevant to the QEP. These activities reflect Tinto's (2007) principles for student learning that consist of

- High and clear expectations for student achievement
- Academic and social support
- Frequent feedback about learning
- Active involvement with other students, faculty, and staff
- Relevant learning

While numbers can be instructive, we cannot treat students like numbers. Retention experts advise that student experiences should be based on where the group you are serving is “now.” That is important advice, but complex to implement without proper data. All students are curious; they can be assisted to find their niche and community connection when the focus is on the individual student. Gardner, Upcraft and Barefoot (2007) emphasize the importance of developing “academic advising that is tailored to the specific needs of an institution and its students, and focused on helping students succeed academically” (p. 519). The QEP will use a variety of sources (e.g. ACT scores for appropriate course placement, the College Student Inventory, institutional surveys, and questionnaires) to determine student characteristics and needs, set priorities among these areas of need, identify available resources, and implement a formal, comprehensive plan for each student. The cross-divisional cooperation cited in the Student Success and Retention Plan will be utilized to coordinate a systematic and comprehensive campaign for student success, with AWA 101 at its hub. **[Link to Final Draft-Student Success Taskforce Report_pp3-4.pdf]** The College Student Inventory, administered in AWA 101 during the first week of class,

will provide data to gauge students' 1) Academic Motivation, 2) Social Motivation, 3) General Coping Ability, 4) Receptivity to Support Services, and 5) Initial Impressions. The CSI also reports specific recommendations to begin meeting students' complex needs by helping to relate their needs to specific forms of assistance and present the issue of assistance as a set of clear alternatives that can be readily evaluated and compared. Students can be encouraged to become conscious of both their positive and negative attitudes, determine whether the attitude is helpful, and realize how they can change a negative attitude to a positive. Dembo and Seli (2004) report that "Efficacy beliefs are important predictors of student motivation and self-regulated behaviors." The process for change includes:

- Self-observation and evaluation
- Goal setting and strategic planning
- Strategy-implementation and monitoring
- Strategic-outcome monitoring

Examples of potential action statements range from getting help with study habits, to discussing family problems with a counselor, to getting help in meeting new friends, to discussing the job market for college graduates.

Astin, Korn, and Green note that "academic advising is probably the principal tool for helping students get involved in their studies. Involvement, in turn, is probably one of the key elements in student achievement and retention" (cited in Gaither, p. 13). Furthermore, Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement or "the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience" (p.11) rests solidly on a foundation of academic and social integration into the academic community. Chickering's student development theory also informs the process as students develop "intellectual, physical, and social (interpersonal) competence" (Clarkson, p. 3, 2006). His research describes seven vectors of development, including 1) Developing competence, 2) Managing emotions, 3) Moving through autonomy toward interdependence, 4) Developing mature interpersonal relationships, 5) Establishing identity, 6) Developing purpose, and 7) Developing integrity. Through comprehensive support, students can build a foundation of success. Also related to student development are the basic needs which Maslow speaks of in his theory of human motivation: 1) Physiological needs, 2) Safety, 3) Belongingness and Love, 4) Esteem, and 5) Self-Actualization. Schlossberg's (1989) theory of mattering also informs this project by showing the importance of students moving from a sense of marginality to mattering. The mechanisms proposed by the QEP will serve to personalize the academic experience by helping new students develop the sense of belonging to a community where they find involvement and importance. John Gardner, Executive Director for the Policy Center on the First Year of College, has said, "Long after students have left college, the one thing they tend to remember from their college experience is the gift of self" (2007, p. 2).

Learning Communities and Collaborative Learning

Extensive research, particularly the work of Tinto (1997), has shown that membership in one or more college communities is a critical factor in student development and retention. For most college students, a campus learning community

will be the only academic community they will ever experience. Students learn not only content in such a community, but also how to learn. Faculty members not only teach, but also help students make connections to the content of all academic disciplines in the community. They, in effect, to borrow a sports metaphor, are "learning coaches" as well as teachers. According to Tinto's (1997) research, collaborative learning contributes to greater mastery of subject matter, higher course grades, and higher persistence rates, especially for developmental and other at-risk students.

What a "learning community" is, however, differs from one institutional context to another. Dr. Shirley M. Hord, Scholar Emerita with the Southwest Educational Development Board (SEDL), writes that "In education circles the term *learning community* has become commonplace" and is being "used to mean any number of things, such as extending classroom practice into the community; bringing community personnel into the school to enhance the curriculum and learning tasks for students; or engaging students, teachers, and administrators in learning." What is meant by "learning community" in the KSU QEP fits a model described by the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education. According to the Center, there are three general types of learning communities: Student Cohorts/Integrative Seminar; Linked Courses/Course Clusters; and Coordinated Study. Of those, KSU's QEP learning communities are reflective of the "Linked Courses/Course Clusters" type in that they involve two or more classes linked by content which a cohort of students takes together. KSU adds to that type by forming a living/learning community in which the community of students also lives together in the same residence hall. Based on the literature, students involved in learning communities become more intellectually mature and responsible for their own learning and develop the capacity to care about the learning of their peers. Learning communities have been shown to increase student retention and academic achievement, increase student involvement and motivation, and improve students' time to degree completion. **(Link to <http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/lcfaq.htm.pdf>)** Through the KSU QEP learning communities, students will be helped to develop the proper attitude toward academics. The learning communities will emphasize learning through the developmental curriculum and help to support the gateway courses, reinforce punctuality, improve class attendance, instill a sense of belonging to a community of scholars, and strengthen students' commitment to complete a college degree.

KSU's QEP forms its learning communities through block scheduling cohorts of students (ideally 15 students per cohort), coordinating their housing on campus with the Office of Residence Life so that they will be in the same wing or on the same floor, and assigning them a live-in student Supplemental Instructor, trained by the Academic Center for Excellence, who typically will attend at least one of their classes. The Office of the Registrar will work with the Director of the QEP and the QEP Implementation Committee to ensure that the cohorts/learning communities of students remain together as they move through developmental and gateway classes. The University has successfully block-scheduled all new entering freshmen for the past four years; the QEP extends it for students participating in the program for three additional semesters and adds the coordination with the Office of Residence Life.

Block scheduling of students in a cohort not only allows the formation of a learning community, it permits faculty who have a particular cohort of students to work as an educational and mentoring team. Since they will have the same students in their classes, the faculty team is expected to collaborate in the development of their syllabi to

permit integration and cross-fertilization of concepts and methods among the courses. The QEP also calls upon the faculty to (1) coordinate and integrate class assignments with social and cultural enrichment activities planned by the Office of Student Life, thereby providing students ample opportunities to engage in experiential learning, and (2) build into their courses regular collaborative sessions between their students and the staff of the Academic Center for Excellence, which provides tutorial and other academic support services for students.

Frontloading the First-Year Experience

This Quality Enhancement Plan recognizes the unique role of higher education in helping students to realize their potential. Students too frequently fail for reasons other than academic ability. These reasons concern issues such as (1) poor attendance, participation, and homework completion (taking self-responsibility for learning), (2) nonacademic problems (e.g. daycare, transportation, financial aid, and personal problems), (3) disruptive behavior, or (4) mental stress (e.g. depression, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal thoughts). As the retention experts Levitz and Noel state, "To make the freshman connection, institutions must adopt the concept of 'front loading': putting the strongest, most student-centered people, programs, and services in the freshman year. We must put freshmen in direct contact with the institutional resources that are most effective in promoting personal, social, and academic adjustment." This plan affirms the responsibility of the University to understand our students as they develop understandings of self and positive attitudes within a supportive academic environment. The proposal complements the University's mission, Liberal Studies objectives, and strategic plan for enrollment growth with simultaneous growth in student success, retention, and graduation. With a focus on first-year students, the QEP will work in collaboration with overall University efforts to guide new students successfully through their period of transition and adjustments to campus life.

VII. ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Actions to Benefit Students and the University

Through an emphasis on collaboration among faculty, academic support services, and student support services, the QEP personalizes the college experience for the first-year students in need of extensive developmental coursework, personal growth and development, and acclimation to the academic environment. It promotes holistic student development into the second year as well while continuing to relate activities and services to classroom performance. Cultural and social enrichment activities, including those arranged through collaboration with the Office of Student Life, provide an experiential-based learning curriculum and a basis for student projects that open a new world of learning experiences to the participants.

The benefits of the AWA project to the University community will be significant. The AWA project will demonstrate to the faculty the benefits of the collaborative teaching model used in the program and the benefits which accrue when student support services are fully integrated with academic programs. It will be a guide and source of motivation