

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

A DISCIPLINE-BASED APPROACH TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**Prepared by the QEP Planning Committee and
the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment
Texas A&M University-Kingsville**

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Executive Summary

The Texas A&M University-Kingsville Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) provides a way to marshal ideas and resources toward specific improvements in undergraduate education, and to demonstrate to SACS our plan and resolve to do so. The goal of the QEP is *to improve student success through discipline-based engagement*. For this purpose *student success* is understood to mean that undergraduates can demonstrate mastery of general education and major field curricula, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, civic awareness and ethical responsibility, and preparedness to engage in continued learning after graduation.

Many poorly prepared students are admitted to Texas A&M-Kingsville, where mean entrance exam scores fall on the low end of the range for open-admission universities. Once here, students responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate relatively low levels of engagement in such activities as integrating ideas or information from various sources, preparing for class, and completing field experiences or study abroad. Our students also assign low ratings to coursework emphasis on analyzing basic elements of an idea and on applying theories to practical problems. Of great concern is the low rating our freshmen assign to their overall first-year college experience. Responding to weaknesses in engagement identified by our students may help the institution overcome its troubling rates of retention and graduation.

The QEP advocates and supports the development, delivery, and assessment of course-based processes of civic, professional, and research engagement. Resources and administrative support will be provided to faculty members participating in the QEP. The former QEP Planning Committee assumed a new role as the QEP Advisory Committee working with the QEP Director. Proposals for newly developed courses or modifications of existing courses were sought. Based on recommendations from college deans, the Director and Advisory Committee selected one *QEP engagement course* for a pilot project enacted Spring Semester 2005. Plans call for additional courses to be designated as QEP engagement courses in subsequent semesters.

Assessment of learner outcomes related to these courses will be conducted at course, major, and institutional levels, under the direction of the Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Assessment. Much of the assessment will be accomplished using existing planning and evaluation processes. In addition, each course designated as a QEP engagement course will conform to a course-specific assessment plan. In response to assessment findings, the QEP and its designated courses will be modified as deemed appropriate.

1 Introduction

1.1 What is a QEP?

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) sets forth Core Requirements for accreditation for colleges and universities (Commission on Colleges 2004). Core Requirement 2.12 states, “The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.” The need for planning and evaluation processes that result in continuing improvement are specified within another SACS Core Requirement (i.e., 2.5). In the spirit of continuing improvement, Texas A&M University-Kingsville recognizes that the QEP

provides a way to marshal ideas and resources toward specific improvements in undergraduate education, and to demonstrate our institutional commitment to do so. The QEP for Texas A&M University-Kingsville is a focused initiative intended to change the instructional models for specific courses, and to assess the impact of the new models on student learning. Initially, only a few undergraduate courses will be designated as *QEP engagement courses*. The number of courses so designated will increase with time, according to interest among faculty members.

1.2 Selecting Goals for the QEP

A 20-member Planning Committee (Table 1) was appointed in August 2003 to develop the QEP for Texas A&M University-Kingsville. The committee consisted of faculty and staff members from units across the university and a representative from the local community.

Table 1. Members of the Texas A&M University-Kingsville QEP Planning Committee.

Name	Affiliation
Chair: Tim Fulbright	Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute
Liaison: Frank Ureno	Enrollment Management
Irmin Allner	Jernigan Library
Noel Archambeault	Music Department
Dianne Brown	Life Services and Wellness
Scott Campbell	Mathematics Department
Michael Daniel	College of Education
Gail Dantzker	Institutional Planning and Assessment
Robert Diersing	College of Business Administration
Dean Ferguson	Faculty Senate
Joe Henkel	Kleberg First National Bank
Fidel Hernandez	Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute
Gladys Hines	University College
Ronald Hy	College of Arts and Sciences
Thomas Jackson	Student Affairs
Robert McLauchlan	Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
Rafael Perez-Ballesterro	Biology Department
Garry Ross	Texas A&M-Kingsville System Center-San Antonio
Carol Tipton	Library/Media Services
Janis Van Buren	Human Sciences Department

The general concept selected for the QEP by the Texas A&M-Kingsville SACS Leadership Committee was *enhancing student success*. Members of the QEP Planning Committee met monthly during September through December 2003 to identify potential QEP goals in harmony with that concept. The Committee reviewed previous recommendations regarding issues and actions to enhance student success at the University. The Committee drew much guidance from the report of the 2010 Task Force (DeYoung 2000). The 2010 Task Force developed recommendations to increase the academic ranking of the University. Input to the task force was provided through a campus forum and a web-based survey.

Initially the Committee selected ten potential QEP goals, many of which paralleled recommendations of the 2010 Task Force: 1) ensure that students have the opportunity to be

involved, to develop leadership skills, and to develop a personal and professional code of ethics, 2) provide the highest quality of teaching and learning in all academic programs by developing a culture of learning and providing an environment that is conducive to learning, 3) ensure that all students have opportunities for experiential or problem-based learning and research activities to help develop cognitive, interpersonal, and creative thinking skills that are relevant to life and the workplace, 4) enhance the graduate student experience, 5) develop technology-fluent students and faculty who understand and critically use technology effectively to improve learning and teaching, 6) develop information-literate students who can communicate effectively, 7) ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop critical-thinking skills and recognize the need for and have the ability to engage in life-long learning, 8) enhance student success by strengthening freshman entrance requirements while providing access to higher education, 9) foster an ethnically and culturally diverse environment that promotes understanding, appreciation, and tolerance of other cultures, and 10) increase effectiveness of programs and services that support student, faculty, staff, and administrator success.

These ten potential goals were posted on a website from 23 January to 26 February 2004. Administrators, faculty, students, alumni, staff, and the public were invited to comment and to rank goals according to priority and importance. Links were placed on the main website of the University and on the Library, Alumni Association, and Accreditation websites. Mass e-mails were sent to all administrators, faculty, staff, and students asking them to respond to the survey. An article about the online survey was published in the campus newspaper.

Most of the 224 respondents to the online survey were undergraduates (36%) or faculty members (23%) (Fig. 1). The three highest ranked goals were *learning environment*, *critical thinking*, and *experiential learning and research* (Table 2). Ranking based on importance followed the same pattern as ranking based on priority.

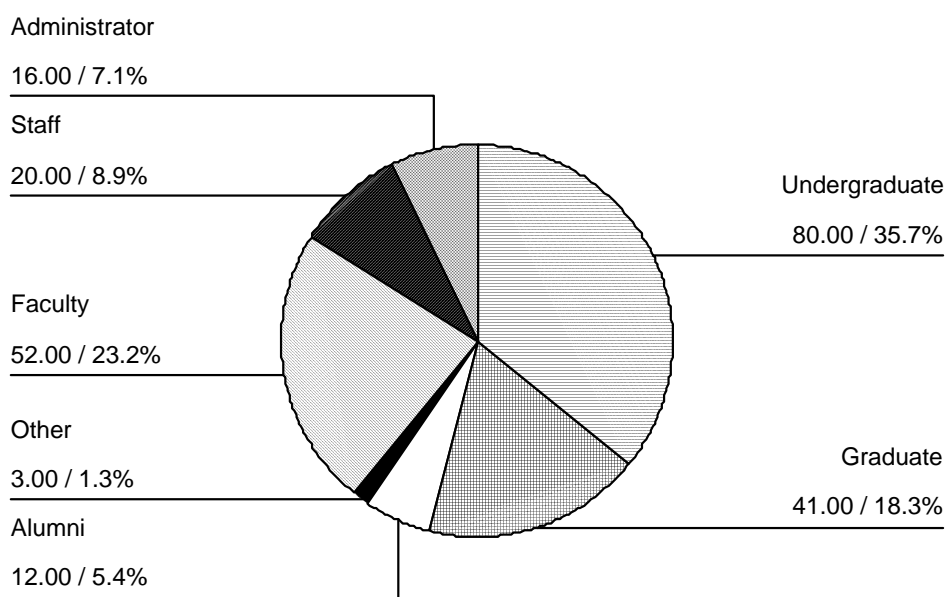


Fig. 1. Respondents to the online survey of 10 potential goals for the QEP, 23 January – 26 February 2004.

Table 2. Priority ranking from the checklist in the online survey of potential goals for the QEP. High priority = 5, low = 1.

Potential Goals	Responses	Mean Priority	Std. Dev.
Learning Environment	219	4.53	0.76
Critical Thinking	214	4.46	0.83
Experiential Learning & Research	216	4.43	0.83
Literacy & Communication	220	4.40	0.86
Technology-rich Environment	219	4.33	0.94
Quality of Campus Life	218	4.33	0.97
Leadership & Ethics	219	4.33	0.86
Graduate Student Experience	214	4.20	1.00
Access & Success	213	4.00	1.04
Diversity	213	3.96	1.22

The Committee selected two of the top three goals from the online survey for emphasis in the QEP. The goals selected were (1) providing the highest quality of teaching and learning in all academic programs by developing a culture of learning [*learning environment*] and (2) providing an environment that is conducive to learning and ensures that all students have opportunities for problem-based learning and research activities to help develop cognitive, interpersonal, and creative thinking skills that are relevant to life and the workplace [*experiential learning*]. Ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and recognize the need for and have the ability to engage in life-long learning was ranked second in the online survey, but the committee, after further discussion, felt that elements of this goal could be incorporated into the other two goals. The goals of improving the learning environment and experiential learning were seen by the committee as acting synergistically to enhance student success because the former most strongly affects freshmen and sophomores and the later impacts mainly juniors and seniors. Both goals act to improve student success, one by improving the quality of teaching and one by enabling students to learn how to apply what they have been taught. Elements of these goals were recommended in the 2010 Task Force Report.

To elicit input on a draft of QEP goals, the Committee presented the tentative goals to faculty in a 19 April 2004 lunch meeting sponsored by the Center for Teaching Effectiveness. Participants were generally supportive of the goals. On 21 April 2004, the Committee sponsored a university-wide forum, inviting all members of the university community to offer input. Thirty-six persons attended the forum, including administrators, faculty members, staff members, undergraduate students, and graduate students. Topics discussed at the forum were varied, but many referred to needed improvements in the overall learning environment.

In reviewing current literature on student success, the Committee identified a strong link between student success and student engagement. Several authors (Kuh et al. 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, Astin 1993) find that greater student engagement increases the chances of succeeding in higher education. The National Survey of Student Engagement assesses the extent to which students are engaged in sound educational practices and what they gain from their college experience (Kuh 2001). Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2003),

Boyle (2004), and the Office of Institutional Research were used to further refine the goals and objectives of the QEP, and to address specific problem areas at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Through the confluence of current findings in the literature and the input derived from various forums, the Committee ultimately identified *student engagement* as the preferred mechanism to bring about improved student learning and success. They concluded that learning environment, critical thinking, and problem-based learning and research would be most effectively improved by developing processes for civic, professional, and research engagement.

1.3 Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

Some notable strengths of Texas A&M University-Kingsville are outlined below.

- The university is geographically positioned to serve a region experiencing population growth and economic need.
- With 60 % of the student body identified as Hispanic, Texas A&M-Kingsville is designated as a Hispanic-serving institution. This designation creates access to special funding programs for education and research.
- Texas A&M-Kingsville is transitioning to a doctoral-granting university, and extramural funding is increasing commensurately.
- Student enrollment in Texas A&M-Kingsville is gradually increasing (Fig. 2), primarily because of increases in Hispanic student enrollment (Office of Institutional Research, Texas A&M University Kingsville 2004a).

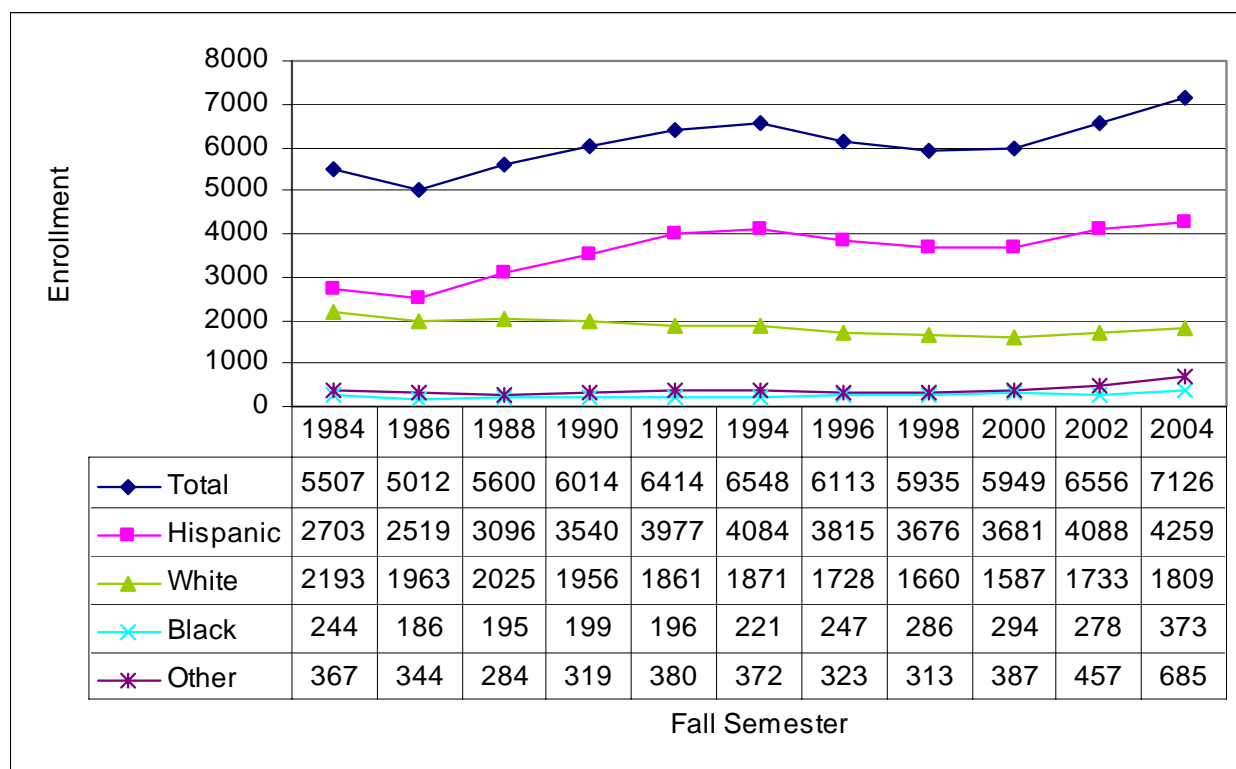


Fig. 2. Student enrollment (headcount) at Texas A&M-Kingsville, total and by ethnicity.

Major challenges or weaknesses besetting programs at Texas A&M-Kingsville are listed below and are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

- Demographic factors, especially rapid population growth and widespread poverty challenge the educational resources of the area.
- High school students entering Texas A&M-Kingsville are poorly prepared for college.
- Texas A&M-Kingsville is not the first choice of high school seniors in south Texas.
- Texas A&M-Kingsville freshmen rate their education experience unfavorably compared to students from comparable institutions.
- Graduation and retention rates are low at Texas A&M-Kingsville.
- By several measures of academic engagement Texas A&M-Kingsville students rated poorly on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) compared to students from the Texas A&M University System as a whole, students from doctoral intensive universities collectively, or students from the entire population of NSSE respondents.

Texas A&M Kingsville students are primarily from south Texas (ACT 2003). Regional demographics form the basis of the institution's academic niche. Population growth rates in some counties of south Texas are among the highest in the state, while other counties in the region experience only modest growth (Fig. 3) (Texas Health and Human Services Commission 2004). The regional population growth and poverty rates (Fig. 4) reinforce the need for the university to improve the economic and general well being of the region's citizens.

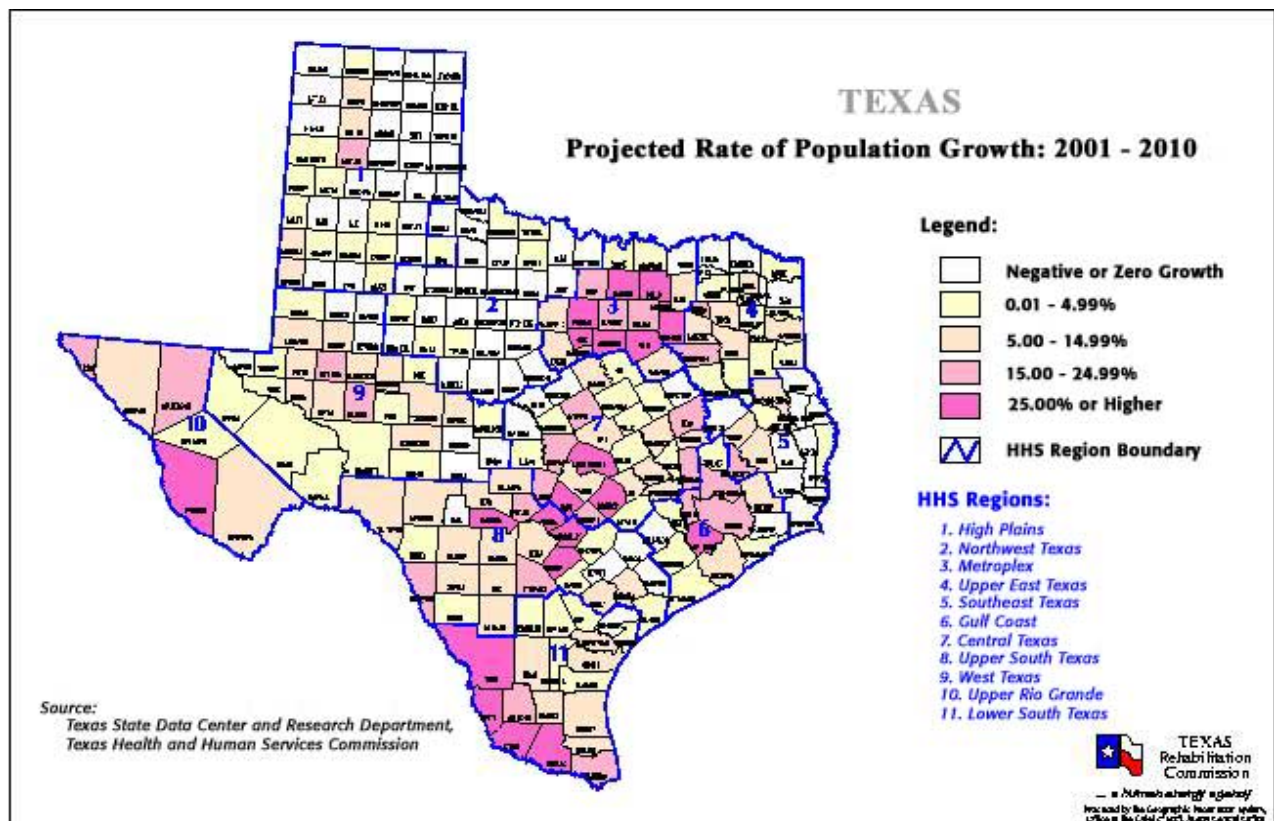


Fig. 3. Projected rates of population growth in Texas counties, 2001-2010.

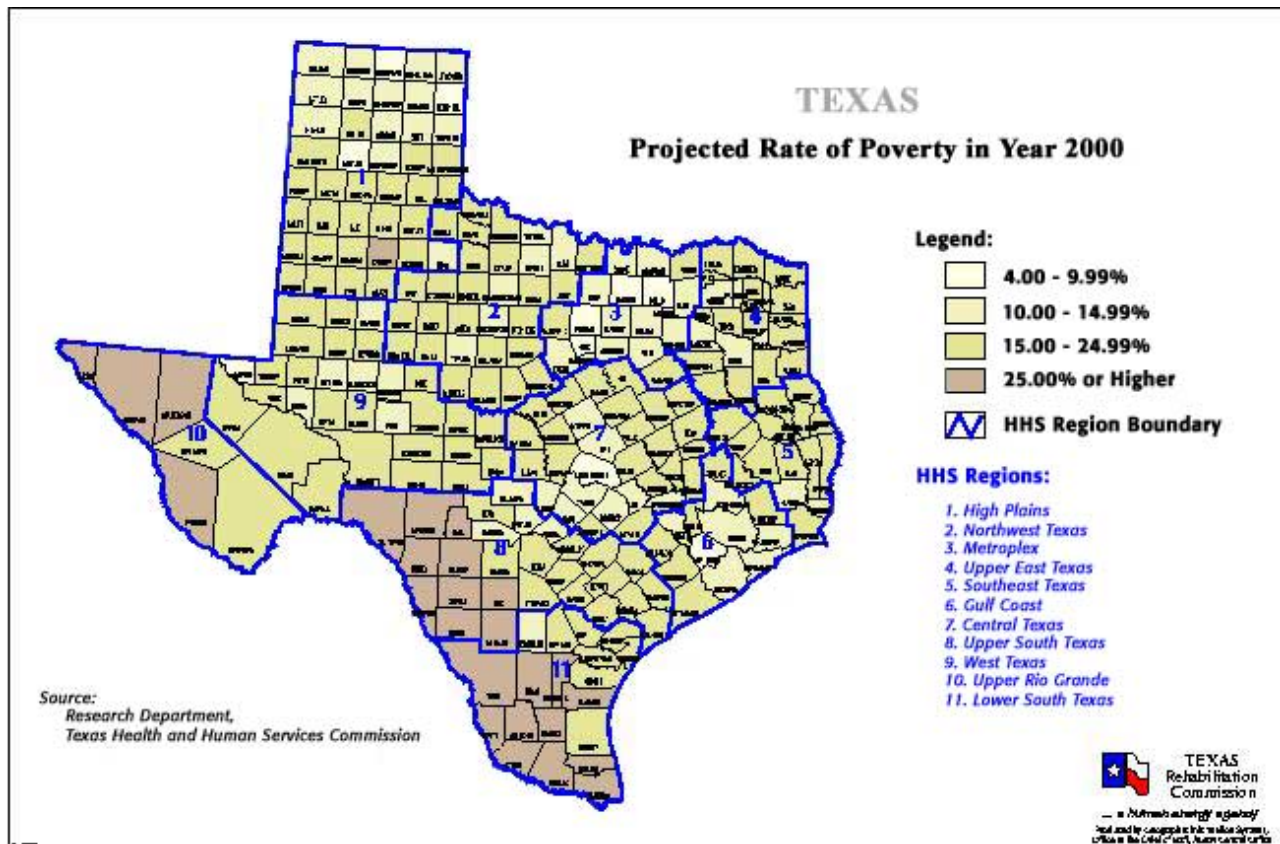


Fig. 4. Poverty rates in Texas counties, 2000.

Students graduating from south Texas high schools and entering Texas A&M-Kingsville are poorly prepared for university work. Typical ACT scores of admitted students range from 17 to 20 for universities with open admission, and from 20 to 23 for schools with traditional admission standards (ACT 2003). During the 2003-2004 academic year, the average composite ACT score of students enrolled at Texas A&M-Kingsville was 17.9 compared to a national average of 21.7 (ACT 2003). Thus, the average ACT score of Texas A&M-Kingsville students is on the low end of open admissions universities. Admitted Texas A&M-Kingsville students averaged 16.8 in English compared to a national average of 21.2.

Lack of preparedness among entering first year students at Texas A&M-Kingsville was highlighted by the 2010 Task Force (DeYoung 2000). The Task Force recommended increasing admission standards to better prepare students to think critically and creatively, and to make sound decisions. The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved changes in the admission requirements of Texas A&M-Kingsville. Changes include encouraging high schools to provide recommended curriculum that includes 4 English credits, 3 math credits, 3 science credits, and 3.5 credits in social sciences. Students who do not meet the recommended curriculum may still be admitted to the university pending approval of the Admissions Review Committee. Students graduating in the top 10% of their class have no minimum test score requirements, while students in the next 15% of their class need an ACT score of 18 or an SAT score of 850. Average ACT scores from rural feeder high schools in south Texas drop as low as 14.8, and some students in the top 10% of their graduating classes have ACT scores below 18

(ACT 2003). The admission policy regarding students in the top 10% of their classes may dampen the effectiveness of the new admission requirements, which take effect in Fall of 2005.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville is not the first college choice of graduating high school seniors in south Texas. Of the high school students requesting their ACT scores sent to Texas A&M-Kingsville, only 24% listed Texas A&M-Kingsville as their first choice, and 50% listed Texas A&M-Kingsville as their 3rd – 6th choice (ACT 2003). Of the high school students requesting that their ACT scores be sent to both Texas A&M-Kingsville and University of Texas at Pan American, 50% listed the latter university as their first choice. The educational experiences of students who attend Texas A&M-Kingsville fall short of their expectations. Fewer undergraduate and graduate students rank Texas A&M-Kingsville as a “good” university when they graduate than when they are admitted (Office of Institutional Research, Texas A&M University-Kingsville 2004b).

Low rates of graduation and retention at Texas A&M-Kingsville hinder student success. Six-year graduation rates ranged from 22.3 to 26.6% during the past four years (Office of Institutional Research, Texas A&M University-Kingsville 2004c). Lack of preparation for university work during high school and dissatisfaction with the university once they arrive contribute to high attrition rates and low graduation rates. The retention rate of first-year students has fluctuated during the past eleven years with an average of 56.5% (Boyle 2004). First-year student retention rates have varied from 61.1% in 2000 to 51% in 2004 (Office of Institutional Research, Texas A&M University-Kingsville 2004a). Of students leaving Texas A&M-Kingsville after the first year, 59% leave for personal reasons. Of new students attending Texas A&M-Kingsville, 20% intend to transfer to another institution (Office of Institutional Research, Texas A&M University-Kingsville 2004a). Some first-year students may lack motivation and commitment to succeed in college, as shown by infrequent class attendance. “Student motivation is the number one predictor of retention,” according to Fraser (2004).

Students may not be retained if they are not committed to the processes of academic and social engagement at the institution of first enrollment (Kuh 2003, Fraser 2004). If engagement is important to student retention and success, the question becomes, “why are we not doing more than we are?” The NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement 2003) provides some insight into the problem.

In the 2003 survey, Texas A&M-Kingsville students rated some aspects of their educational experience much lower than did students from three reference populations: Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) as a whole, doctoral intensive (DI) institutions collectively, and the entire population of NSSE respondents. Table 3 indicates those items for which freshmen and seniors at Texas A&M-Kingsville assigned lower mean ratings than students from each of the three reference populations. Of particular concern is the over-arching perception of quality addressed in the question, “How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?” In response to this question Texas A&M-Kingsville freshmen assigned a lower rating than all three reference populations.

An appreciation of the complexities of student engagement requires the consideration of those aspects of the educational experience to which Texas A&M-Kingsville freshmen and seniors assign higher ratings than do populations of TAMUS, DI, and NSSE students. Those items are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Freshman and senior responses to NSSE, 2003. Items listed are those for which Texas A&M-Kingsville student responses were uniformly higher or lower than all three reference populations. Differences between at least one reference population and Texas A&M-Kingsville are significant ($P < 0.05$) for both freshmen and seniors unless noted.

<p>TAMUK freshman and senior ratings lower than reference groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of including diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments • Frequency of having serious conversations with students who are very different from the respondent • Frequency of using an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment • Frequency of using email to communicate with instructors • Frequency of working on papers or projects that required integrating ideas or information from various sources • Number of assigned books read • Number of 5- to 19-page reports written • Hours spent preparing for class • Completion of or having plans to complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, clinical assignment, or study abroad • Institutional emphasis on spending significant amounts of time studying • Institutional emphasis on using computers in academic work[†] • Coursework emphasis on analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory • Coursework emphasis on synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships • Coursework emphasis on applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations[‡]
<p>TAMUK freshman and senior ratings higher than reference groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of preparing two or more drafts of a paper or assignment • Frequency of working with other students on projects during class • Frequency of discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class[‡] • Hours spent providing care for dependents

[†]Differences were significant for seniors but not freshmen.

[‡]Differences were significant for freshmen but not seniors.

Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2003) may help us better understand our students' perceptions of their experience at Texas A&M-Kingsville. Ehrlich (2004) affirms that the NSSE gives a good picture of how much students are really learning. Also, Kuh (2003) indicates that the NSSE is an important tool in determining whether student behavior and institutional practices are headed in the right direction. Indeed, some items on the survey indicate improvements at Texas A&M-Kingsville since the previous survey (National Survey of Student Engagement 2001). Notable improvements were seen in frequency of freshmen discussing ideas with faculty members outside of class, and quality of relationships with faculty members as reported by seniors. However, from 2001 to 2003 the mean freshmen rating at Texas A&M-Kingsville declined sharply for two important items:

- Coursework emphasis on analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Coursework emphasis on applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.

Boyle (2004) concluded that a focused strategy to keep students who earn good grades in the matriculation process is warranted. To ensure high academic standards, the 2010 Task force recommended encouraging "student practices such as writing term papers of 20 pages or longer, rewriting a paper several times, discussing ideas from readings or classes with a professor

outside of class, working with a faculty member on a research project, and applying theories to practical problems and new situations” (DeYoung 2000).

Activities directed at strengthening the areas identified as weak in the National Survey of Student Engagement (2003) and the 2010 document may lead to increased student commitment to the process of academic and social engagement at Texas A&M-Kingsville. This, in turn, may result in increased student learning and student success (Kuh 2003, Fraser 2004). This emerges as the hypothesis of the QEP.

1.4 Institutional Goals and Objectives

The goal of increasing student commitment to the processes of academic engagement, retention, and student success are embodied in state-wide and university strategic plans. *Closing the Gaps by 2015* was adopted in October 2000 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board with support of educational, business, and political communities in the State (Texas Higher Education Board 2000). The plan is directed at closing educational gaps in Texas and between Texas and other states. The plan goal is to close the gaps in student participation, success, excellence, and research. Strategies for *Closing the Gaps (in student success) by 2015* include increasing the number of students participating in higher education, increasing student retention and success, strengthening graduate programs, strengthening research capabilities, and increasing technology capacity of universities in the state (Texas Higher Education Board 2000).

Since the mid-1990s, institutional effectiveness planning and reporting has been practiced at Texas A&M-Kingsville. These activities resulted in the development of the University-level Strategic Plan (Texas A&M University-Kingsville 1999). Also flowing from these processes are Institutional Effectiveness Plans at all levels of the University. These plans, submitted annually, include goals, objectives, assessment measures, and results from all levels of the University in support of the overall Strategic Plan. During the development process for the current Strategic Plan, the university retained elements of earlier strategic planning that served the institution well, such as open hearings on planning and budgeting. However, the process evolved and emphasis was placed on planning and reporting at college and department levels.

The Report of the 2010 Task Force and the University Strategic Plan, developed by the Council for Assessment and Planning, identified common university goals. The goals of Texas A&M University-Kingsville as stated in the current Strategic Plan are to:

- Create a learner-centered environment
- Provide innovative, broad-based instructional programs of superior quality
- Support research, scholarship, and creative activities
- Provide public service activities in south Texas
- Enhance opportunities for faculty and staff development
- Foster a spirit of community and collegiality among faculty, staff, and students, and
- Promote and develop regional, national, and international collaborations.

Similarly, the eight key areas identified by the 2010 Task Force are summarized as follows:

- Ensure academic programs of high-quality
- Strengthen entrance requirements
- Expand graduate programs

- Develop strong connections between athletic and academic programs
- Enhance student services
- Promote and facilitate faculty development
- Build financial support for the university, and
- Develop effective marketing for the university.

Increased student commitment to the process of academic engagement is a logical extension of the Texas A&M-Kingsville strategic plan and the 2010 Task Force key areas. Student engagement is an integral part of developing a learner-centered environment. Faculty development is an essential part of the plan to involve faculty in the civic, professional, and research engagement of our students.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Concepts of Student Success and Engagement

Student success includes mastering the general education curriculum and basics of a discipline; acquiring skills to be successful in life, such as developing abilities in critical thinking; integrative and synthesizing thinking and problem solving skills; life-long learning; and demonstrating civic awareness and responsibility.

Allen (2001) states “The intersection between student engagement and student success, measured not only by retention and graduation, but also by competitive job recruitment, plans for lifelong learning initiatives, alumni financial contribution, and other hallmarks of having had a positive college experience, remains a subject well worth our reflection, research, and reevaluation.” Furthermore, Allen (2001) states that educators have broadened the sense of academic engagement beyond simple seriousness of purpose to behaviors such as studying more productively, reading to gain an understanding of a subject, discussing issues with peers, participating in study groups, conducting research, proposing independent studies, and participating in special academic programs such as study abroad.

The academic environment can be made more supportive of student success by increasing academic standards, providing hands-on learning and research experiences, interacting with students, improving quality of campus life, and increasing access to technological tools. Chances of succeeding in higher education and impact of education on leadership development, self-confidence, self-esteem, and appreciation for the college experience increases with increasing engagement of students in their education (Kuh et al. 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, Astin 1993).

The need for student involvement is a recurring theme within the well known “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering and Gamson 1987) and the many papers spawned by that work. Chickering and Ehrmann (1997) suggest implementation of techniques such as apprentice-like activities, practice research, and product-design exercises. Similarly, in his summary of ways to improve student learning, Ewell (1997) recommends internships, service learning, research, problem solving, and apprenticeships with faculty members. He states that the brain’s activity is directly proportional to its engagement, and that maximum learning occurs when learners are confronted with specific and identifiable

problems they wish to solve. Student engagement is the most important factor in quality student learning, based on an analysis of longitudinal data by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991).

Academic engagement at the course level, three types of which are described below, might be described by pedagogical methods or discipline-based categories of endeavor. Curriculum reform to include engagement will require budgetary provisions for faculty development (Frye 1999). Texas A&M University-Kingsville recognizes this budgetary need with regard to a successful QEP and will provide accordingly.

2.2 Civic Engagement

Use of the term *civic engagement* in educational literature has increased in frequency. Civic engagement is “people’s connections with the life of their communities, not only with politics” (Putnam 1995). “An engaged campus is one that is consciously committed to reinvigorating the democratic spirit and community engagement in all aspects of campus life: students, faculty, staff, and the institution itself” (Campus Compact 2001). Proactively participating and making meaningful connections with faculty contribute to development of good citizenship among college students while and invest in the long-term welfare of the larger society (Sax 2000).

Universities should support civic engagement, given the decline in participation in community activities (Campus Compact 2001). For many reasons Americans are less engaged in activities of their communities than they were a generation ago (Putnam 1995). Education boosts civic engagement and educated people tend to be joiners and trusters. They also read more newspapers, which Putnam (1995) associates with having higher social capital. Ehrlich (2000) states that level of education correlates positively to participation in civic affairs. Astin and Sax (1998) find that student academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility are substantially enhanced during the undergraduate years through service participation. These various findings suggest that educational programs promoting civic engagement will complement the Texas A&M-Kingsville mission, “to develop well-rounded leaders and critical thinkers who can solve problems in an increasingly complex, dynamic and global society.”

The more time students spend on volunteer work, the greater the likelihood of exhibiting growth in several areas related to civic engagement (Cress et al. 2001). These areas include civic responsibility, comprehension of personal and social values, and awareness of multicultural and community issues. Students performing volunteer work also worked to promote understanding across racial and social groups. Students who formed the habit of involvement in college were those most likely to be involved in their communities after college (Sax 2000). Students’ civic engagement correlates to stronger commitment to helping others, greater service to their communities, racial understanding, participation in volunteer work, and willingness to work for non-profit organizations.

The literature supports the QEP hypothesis that increased engagement will lead to increased student success. Researchers note that civic engagement enhances student learning (Astin and Sax 1998, Cress et al. 2001). Specific enhancements included grade point average, general knowledge and knowledge in their field or discipline, seeking an advanced degree, and time devoted to studying and contact with faculty. Numerous other benefits were noted,

including enhancement of students' self-confidence and leadership abilities. Astin and Sax (1998) state, "Service learning represents a powerful vehicle for enhancing student development during the undergraduate years while simultaneously fulfilling a basic institutional mission of providing service to the community."

Authors recognize the value of course-based civic engagement and service. Astin and Sax (1998) find that the majority of service has been performed through student affairs or student activities; and only 29% of students performed service as part of a course. Yet, course-based service promotes a stronger sense of civic responsibility in students than do co-curricular or independently conducted service activities (Sax 2000). According to Ostrander (2002) four dimensions of civic engagement are: student learning-centered, curriculum transformation, community-defined priorities, and knowledge production.

Improving the extent and effectiveness of civic engagement at a university may require a seismic shift in norms and practices. According to the University of Maryland's Engaged Campus Team (2004), "The engaged campus encourages partnerships and fosters a culture of civic engagement." An institution should be aware that civic engagement cannot be conducted in isolation from teaching and research. Also, engagement must draw upon institutional strengths and requires investment in infrastructure, faculty development, and organizational change (Campus Compact 2001). Because the involvement of faculty in student engagement is critically important, a facet of the cultural change towards an engaged campus will likely be a shift in promotion, tenure, and hiring norms (Checkoway 1997). The QEP for Texas A&M-Kingsville initiates a change in the norms and practices of the university.

2.3 Research Engagement

Renewed emphasis should be placed on a point strongly made by John Dewey almost a century ago: Learning is based on discovery guided by mentoring rather than on the transmission of information. Inherent in inquiry-based/problem-based-learning is an element of reciprocity, i.e., faculty can learn from students as students are learning from faculty. Rarely do important ideas come fully-developed from the brain of a single individual. Most of us work from the grounding provided by our predecessors, and very few of us are not stimulated by the observations and criticisms of our peers (Boyer Commission 1998). One of the functions of a university is to provide the context in which ideas can be most productively developed. Thus, reports from the Boyer Commission and the National Research Council recommend that universities make research-based learning the standard with all students being encouraged to pursue independent research as early as is practical in their education (Boyer Commission 1998).

The term *experiential learning* is sometimes used to describe the sort of learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting (Brookfield 1983, Infed 2002). Thus, experiential learning involves a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied, rather than merely talking or reading about the phenomena. Institutions sponsor this form of learning and use it in training programs for professions such as social work and teaching, and also in field study programs including the sciences.

Research in one sense involves the discovery of knowledge that is not heretofore known. In this sense, a student performing research may enjoy the satisfaction of contributing to the body of knowledge in a discipline. In another sense, research involves the discovery of

knowledge that while known to a subset of the population is not known to the student. In the second sense, any student writing a report from encyclopedic sources is involved in research. The benefits that accrue to the student from participating in research can be expected to hinge upon the nature of the research.

One special case of research that lends itself well to the classroom is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). Rather than seeking to contribute to the body of knowledge in a discipline, this type of research normally seeks specific applications of known principles. Therefore, PBL refers to a learning environment in which the problem drives the learning (McMaster University not dated, Woods 1996). A problem is posed so that students discover that they need new knowledge before they can solve the problem, i.e., the solution requires research. Examples of problem-based learning environments include original research, case studies, guided design, engineering design projects, and the medical school model (Woods 1996).

- Research: an individual, perhaps with guidance from a faculty supervisor, diligently gathers data to resolve a dilemma or unknown. The search starts with the need to find an unknown. For example, find a chemical that will cause a specified cellular response in a specified plant species.
- Case Study: a situation or case is posed. The task is to resolve a situation. For example, does the balance sheet of Widget Company suggest that the company will prosper, or go bankrupt?
- Guided Design: a case is posed. Small groups work cooperatively through a structured problem solving strategy to decide a course of action. The activities are structured ahead of time. At the end of each activity, the instructor gives feedback to each group before it can proceed with the next activity. For example, undergraduate educational psychology students at a private university were assigned to small groups to discuss how they could apply important psychological principles to teaching-learning projects (Peterson and Miller 2004).
- Engineering Design Project: engineering students are given a product to build or create. For example, design a plant to produce 20,000 metric tons per year of aspirin.
- Creative Design Work: Student gallery of his/her art, or recital of his/her music.
- Medical School Model: health situation is posed. For example, diagnose the problem of a 23 year old unemployed truck driver, complaining of a recent onset of double vision and headaches.

A given PBL model may be best suited to a particular class size. In the business school case study, the tutor is a Socratic facilitator of the problem solving processes used by a group of 60 to 100 to solve the case. In the medical school model, the tutor is a facilitating presence used as needed by a group of 5 to 9 to solve the case. In the engineering colleges, where opportunities for research and design PBL activities abound (Kauser et al. 2001), broad consensus exists that undergraduate research is an important component of the engineering curriculum (Ataai et al. 1997, Passos and Carpenter 1999, Saacks-Giguette and Lang 1999, and Veléz-Reyes et al. 1999). Hands-on research experiences can work to better prepare students for graduate school, and perhaps equally important, to motivate them to continue beyond the bachelor's level (May 1997, Saacks-Giguette and Lang 1999). In this regard, programs that encourage students to pursue graduate degrees in engineering are especially important given trends showing a decline in the number of science and engineering graduate students (NSF 1998, Olsen 1998).

As a partner in the Foundation Coalition, Texas A&M-Kingsville found that with a PBL-type environment (i.e., integrated curriculum, cooperative/active learning, appropriate technology, and formative/summative assessment), that retention and GPA for First Year

Integrated Engineering Curriculum (FYIEC) students is better, as compared to matched groups of traditional first-year engineering students (Al-Holou et al. 1998). In addition, FYIEC students outperformed traditional students in the number of math, science, and engineering hours earned in their first year. FYIEC students made faster progress towards graduation. Similar results were found with other FYIEC schools as well as across the Engineering Education Coalitions.

Zydney et al. (2002) surveyed alumni to assess the impact of undergraduate research experience in engineering at the University of Delaware. Alumni with undergraduate research experience indicated that this experience was either “very important” or “extremely important,” with a greater perceived benefit for those students participating in research for a longer time. These alumni reported significantly greater enhancement of important cognitive and personal skills, including the ability to speak effectively, understand scientific findings, know literature that is of merit in the field, analyze literature critically, and possess clear career goals.

Lopatto (2003) asked faculty and students about the benefits to students of an undergraduate research experience. Both students and faculty ranked clarifying career plans, learning a topic in depth, and developing research and laboratory skills highly. One difference between faculty and student responses was that faculty rated developing oral and written communication skills as one of the top benefits, whereas students did not. Interestingly, Lopatto (2003) noted that student responses indicated a stronger emphasis, relative to faculty responses, about the benefits derived from a good student/mentor relationship.

Seymour (2003) interviewed 76 research-engaged undergraduate students from eight science disciplines at four liberal arts colleges. The student comments were overwhelmingly positive with 91% of student statements referring to gains they had made. The top two reported gains were described in the report as “personal/professional gains” and “thinking and working like a scientist” gains. Within the personal/professional gains category, three-quarters of the student statements referred to their increased confidence to “work as a scientist.” The “thinking and working like a scientist” category included statements about gains in the ability to apply knowledge and skills, gains in understanding the scientific process and the process of research, and general gains in science knowledge and understanding. Follow-up work has the potential to describe in detail the links between specific program goals, activities, and outcomes.

A summary of the benefits that undergraduate students might expect from research engagement indicates a relation between research engagement and student success. Anticipated benefits include:

- Increased confidence and ability to “do science” and to solve case study and exploratory development/design problems
- Gains in critical thinking
- Acquisition of specific technical and communication skills
- Clarification of major and career path
- Development of close relationships with faculty
- Increased understanding of the nature of scientific knowledge.

Benefits accrue to stakeholders other than students. For example, mentors for research or problem-based learners may experience greater collegiality and productivity. The institution may enjoy an improved public image and increased enrollment. Cooperating community entities such as private industries may find that the workforce has increased interest in and preparation for graduate education and for life-long learning.

2.4 Professional Engagement

While civic and research engagement have received much attention in the past decade or so, much interest remains in what may be termed “professional engagement” through disciplinary course-based work. The concept that student engagement is the most important factor in quality student learning (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991) applies to professional engagement as it does to civic and research engagement. Some disciplines such as education and engineering have long relied on actual, field-based experiences – such as the traditional observation/participation/student teaching cycle in teacher preparation, and the practicum, co-op, and/or internship in engineering. Fine and performing arts students must undergo the experience of preparing and publicly presenting works of art or performances, with critical review, as parts of their educational processes. In these areas, professional engagement as a factor in student success is no new idea; and it is a genuine professional experience.

Sometimes termed “experiential learning” (although distinguished from receipt of college credit based on informal learning or life experience, also sometimes referred to as “experiential learning”), professional engagement is the sort of learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting (Brookfield 1983, Infed 2002). Some aspects of Problem Based Learning, discussed on the foregoing section, may be seen to be as much a matter of professional engagement as research engagement, depending on how the problem and the environment.

Astin (1993) notes that participation in internships, a very direct form of professional engagement, correlates positively to measures of student success such as job skills, GPA, graduation with honors, and completion of the bachelor’s degree. Ewell and Jones (1996) further remark that good practice in higher education suggests that classroom learning should be augmented with opportunities to apply what has been learned and that internship experiences should be formally related to classroom work.

Intern or co-op opportunities are rarely available to students outside a few disciplines, and not to all students even within those disciplines (Ewell and Jones 1996). The New Hampshire Forum on Higher Education Intern Project (Knowledge Institute 2003) identified several impediments to students taking advantage of internships, outside the lack of internship in some academic disciplines:

- Expense of or inability to obtain transportation to and housing at internship site
- Disruption of students’ programs of study in full-time internships
- Unpaid internships
- Exploitation of interns

Internship logistics may pose special challenges for some Texas A&M-Kingsville students because of their reliance on financial aid, and because of the geographic isolation of the campus. Therefore, the incorporation of professional engagement activities into courses in the major discipline appears to be a more viable and manageable method for providing some of the benefits of internship or co-op opportunities to students, while avoiding many of the limitations on students’ ability to participate. While the effects of professional engagement will depend on many factors and may vary by discipline, Texas A&M-Kingsville wishes to make this engagement an integral part of the QEP and test the hypothesis that professional engagement through undergraduate coursework will have a positive impact on student success.

Not only can students expect to benefit from engagement, but so can institutions. Writing about internships specifically, but with application to this form of professional engagement as well, the Office of Academic Internships at Brigham Young University (2004) notes

Aside from monetary funding and expenditures, universities and departments run on a different economic system called curriculum currency. As specific programs are strengthened through pedagogies that distinguish them from other programs, the education better prepares the students making them more competitive. Students then obtain the higher quality of jobs, which raises the reputation and credibility of the university. As the university's graduates obtain greater success, it has the potential to recruit more competitive students leading to a repeat of the cycle on an even higher playing field. Internships help the university, students, and department increase their curriculum currency, a value untouched by monetary funding.

Through the QEP, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is exploring alternative pedagogies that may help increase its curriculum currency, to the benefit of its students, faculty and staff, as well as to the region and state it serves.

3 Status of Engagement at Texas A&M University-Kingsville

A survey completed by department chairs in Spring Semester 2004 identified problem-based learning and experiential-learning activities currently incorporated into the various academic programs at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Among the 25 undergraduate programs for which responses were received, the most frequently reported engagement activities were case studies (56%), guided labs (36%), and research (32%). Only 24% reported that students complete internships as part of their programs, and only 12% reported addressing real-world problems in their curricula. Among the 22 graduate programs for which responses were received, research was the most common engagement activity, with 68% reportedly using this process. Case studies were used by a sizeable minority of programs (41%) as were labs (39%). About 14% of programs reportedly used internships in graduate programs. Other engagement activities used in select undergraduate and graduate programs at Texas A&M-Kingsville are student-teaching experiences, artistic or musical performances, guided design problems, and field trips.

In October 2004, two courses had been selected for the pilot program of *QEP engagement courses*. In December 2004, the instructor for one of the selected courses resigned unexpectedly. The remaining course (see Section 5.4) is being implemented in Spring Semester 2005.

4 Goal and Objectives of the QEP

4.1 Goal of the QEP

The Texas A&M-Kingsville QEP is entitled “A Discipline-Based Approach to Student Engagement.” The overall goal of the QEP is to *Improve Student Success through Discipline-based Engagement*.

Student Success at Texas A&M-Kingsville is understood to mean that undergraduates demonstrate mastery of the following, at levels appropriate to the baccalaureate degree:

- General education curricula
- Major field curricula
- Critical-thinking skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Civic awareness and ethical responsibility
- Preparedness to engage in continued learning after graduation.

Each of these areas of mastery lends itself to subordinate goals to be developed on a course-specific basis for the QEP.

Engagement, for the purposes of the QEP, is understood to mean diligent and meaningful participation in civic, professional, or research activities. *Discipline-based engagement* denotes engagement occurring in specially designated QEP courses consistent with the expertise and discipline of the instructor.

4.2 Objectives of the QEP

Objectives of the Texas A&M-Kingsville QEP are to (1) *provide and evaluate discipline-based civic, professional, or research engagement courses*, and (2) *provide faculty development in support of student engagement*.

The goal is directly linked to the goals of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, i.e., increasing student commitment to the processes of academic engagement, retention, and success. The objectives address weaknesses identified in the National Survey of Student Engagement (2003). The goal and objectives support the Texas A&M-Kingsville mission “to develop well-rounded leaders and critical thinkers who can solve problems in an increasingly complex, dynamic and global society.” Additionally, they address goals of the Texas A&M-Kingsville Strategic Plan and 2010 Task Force, specifically for creating a learner-centered environment, providing innovative broad-based instructional programs of superior quality, supporting research, scholarship, and creative activities, providing public service activities in south Texas, and enhancing opportunities for faculty development.

Objective 1: *Provide and evaluate discipline-based civic, professional, or research engagement courses.*

Strategy 1.1: *Develop QEP engagement courses.* The faculty bears the primary responsibility for achievement of Objective 1. Participation in engagement courses will be by mutual consent of faculty members and the University. All engagement schemes or processes designated as constituents of the QEP would be

course-based; however, the activities need not be confined to the traditional classroom. Some engagement processes may already be substantially operating within existing courses, perhaps requiring only refinement of assessment measures or statements of intended learner outcomes; whereas other engagement processes may require entirely new courses or new approaches to existing courses. To encourage creative contributions to the QEP, the University will extend great latitude regarding the design of engagement activities.

Strategy 1.2: *As appropriate, incorporate those activities or experiences identified as weak in the National Survey of Student Engagement (2003).* To this end, QEP engagement courses may involve one or more activities such as:

- Including diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments
- Using electronic media to discuss or complete an assignment
- Working on papers or projects that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Reading assigned books and preparing for class
- Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Completing a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, clinical assignment, or study abroad.

Strategy 1.3: *Evaluate learner outcomes from QEP engagement courses.*

Intended learner outcomes of the QEP engagement courses will be clearly defined and actual outcomes will be closely monitored. Analysis of the outcomes will be used to assess the effectiveness of each course and the impact of the course on student success. Results will be used to improve engagement processes.

Objective 2: *Provide for faculty development in support of student engagement.*

Strategy 2.1: *Provide travel funds to faculty.* Faculty members participating in the QEP will be encouraged to attend conferences related to their teaching involvement. Funds will be provided to defray travel costs for the conferences.

Strategy 2.2: *Provide release time to faculty.* Participating faculty members may be eligible for release time. The need for and feasibility of providing release time will be determined on a case-by-case basis. As a guideline, ¼ release time for one semester may be offered for the development of a QEP engagement course.

Strategy 2.3: *Provide operating funds.* Participating faculty members will have access to operating funds to support their student engagement processes. The funds will also defray costs of faculty recognition events or honoraria.

5 Implementation Plan

5.1 Leadership

Dr. Duane Gardiner is the Director of the QEP. Dr. Gardiner reports to Dr. Gail Dantzker, Executive Director for Institutional Planning and Assessment. In September 2004, the individuals who had comprised the QEP Planning Committee relinquished that role and accepted the role as members of the QEP Advisory Committee. This new Committee works with the Director in planning, and implementing the QEP. As Director, Dr. Gardiner directly oversees development, implementation, and assessment of the QEP. The Director also assists faculty in developing courses that involve student engagement. Dr. Dantzker developed the evaluation plan for the QEP and works closely with faculty in developing assessment tools for courses involving student engagement.

5.2 Selection Process

Information will be continually posted on the QEP website: <http://qep.oir.tamuk.edu>. In Spring Semesters, the Director will issue a call for proposals for QEP engagement courses to be offered the following academic year. Each brief proposal should detail (1) the engagement activity and course involved, (2) the timeline during which the course will be developed and implemented, (3) the individuals responsible, (4) the resources needed, (4) the intended student learning outcomes, and (5) the assessment measures to be used. Each proposal will be submitted by the author to his or her academic dean. Deans will recommend approval of those proposals they find acceptable, and will forward recommended proposals to the QEP Director.

The Director will distribute copies of proposals to the Advisory Committee Chair, who will then call a meeting of the Committee. The Director, in consultation with the Committee will select courses for designation as QEP engagement courses. Decisions may be based on such parameters as enthusiasm and credentials of the submitter, likelihood of success, appropriateness of the proposal in relation to the QEP objectives, sustainability of the engagement activities beyond the initial year, and willingness of the participants to cooperate with the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment in rigorously assessing outcomes from the course. A proposed course may be offered during one or more semesters of the academic year, as deemed appropriate. Funding requests will be negotiated as necessary during the selection process.

5.3 Timelines

Summer 2004

- The University hired a QEP Director.
- The QEP Planning Committee met with the Dean's Council to solicit help from the deans in selecting faculty members to participate in the QEP Pilot Project.

Fall 2004

- The QEP Planning Committee transitioned into the QEP Advisory Committee.
- The University committed budgetary support to the QEP.
- The Director presented a Noon Seminar on engagement, and met with various colleges at their request to discuss the evolving QEP and to encourage participation.

- The Deans instructed faculty members desiring to participate in the QEP Pilot Project to submit proposals.
- The Deans forwarded recommended proposals to the Director.
- The Director, in consultation with Advisory Committee, selected engagement courses to include in the QEP Pilot Project. Two courses were selected; one was later withdrawn when the instructor resigned.
- The Director and Advisory Committee submitted the draft QEP to the Texas A&M-Kingsville SACS Leadership Committee.
- The QEP website became operational.

Spring 2005

- The Pilot Project began with one QEP engagement course.
- Detailed assessment plans for QEP project outcomes will be completed.
- The Director and SACS Leadership Committee revised the QEP and formulated questions for the SACS On-Site Peer Review Committee.
- The SACS Leadership Committee will submit the QEP to SACS On-Site Peer Review Committee no later than February 28.
- The Director issued a call for proposals for Academic Year 2005-2006.
- The Director issued follow-up notices of the call for proposals, and held a QEP proposal-development workshop.
- Proposals are due to Deans no later than March 1.
- Deans will forward recommended proposals to the Director no later than March 15.
- The Director, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will select QEP engagement courses for the upcoming year no later than April 1.

Fall 2005

- Additional courses will be added to the QEP by the processes outlined previously.
- The QEP Director will review and report measures of student success.

Spring 2006

- Additional courses will be added to the QEP by the processes developed previously.
- A recognition event will honor faculty participants for their engagement activities.

Fall 2006

- The Director will add, drop, modify, or maintain QEP courses as necessary.
- The Director will review and report measures of student success.

Spring 2007

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.
- A recognition event will honor faculty participants for their engagement activities.

Fall 2007

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.

Spring 2008

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.

Fall 2008

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.
- The Director will begin preparation of the Impact Report.

Spring 2009

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.
- The Director will complete the Impact Report.

Fall 2009

- The University will continue to implement the QEP.
- The University will submit the Impact Report to SACS.

5.4 Pilot Course

On 25 October 2004, the QEP Director and Advisory Committee selected two proposals for pilot courses to be offered Spring Semester 2005. These are the first courses to be designated as *QEP engagement courses*. The courses selected were Introduction to Social Work and Jazz Band I. Introduction to Social Work was withdrawn from the project when the instructor unexpectedly resigned from the University.

Jazz Band I (MUSI 3131) is taught by Paul Hageman, Professor of Music. Students will receive sectional training from consultants having performance expertise beyond that available on the department faculty. Students will participate in a concert and two jazz festivals—one local and one out of state. Students are expected to improve their skills and performance quality through their participation in this course. Dr. Hageman was awarded \$13,530 for consultant fees and student travel. See Appendices A and B for the original proposal and the detailed assessment plan for this course.

6 Assessment Plan**6.1 QEP Assessment Overview**

As noted previously, the QEP at Texas A&M-Kingsville is aimed at increasing undergraduate student success through civic, research, and professional engagement. Also noted previously, *student success*, for the purpose of the QEP, is understood to mean that undergraduates demonstrate mastery of the following, at levels appropriate to the baccalaureate degree:

- 1) General education curricula
- 2) Major field curricula
- 3) Critical-thinking skills
- 4) Problem-solving skills
- 5) Civic awareness and ethical responsibility
- 6) Preparedness to engage in continued learning after graduation.

The working hypotheses about student engagement to be tested through implementation and assessment via the University's QEP can be stated, in broad terms, as follow:

Undergraduate students who engage in discipline-based professional, civic or research activities will be more successful in mastering and transferring knowledge and skills from the general education curriculum, as identified through activities associated with item 1 and 3 in the definition of *student success* outlined above.

Undergraduate students who engage in discipline-based professional, civic or research activities will be more successful in their majors, as identified through activities associated with items 2 and 3 in the definition of *student success*.

Undergraduate students who engage in discipline-based civic activities will be more likely to demonstrate civic awareness and responsibility, as identified through activities associated with item 5 in the definition of *student success*.

Undergraduate students who engage in discipline-based professional, civic or research activities will be more likely to engage in continuing learning activities and transfer of learning as identified through activities associated with item 5 in the definition of *student success*.

The university community recognizes that these are expansive and important areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes mastery. Some outcomes may be assessed at the end of a single semester through a single course. Assessment of other outcomes may require continued cohort tracking for a number of years. Nevertheless, if course-based engagement activities have positive impacts on student outcomes, as the literature suggests they might, supporting and studying student engagement processes as a QEP project is deemed worthwhile for Texas A&M-Kingsville. The institution has therefore committed to launch the project and study the outcomes thereof. The institution also intends to report outcomes, not only internally or to the Commission on Colleges, but also to other peer and professional groups through articles and presentations.

Some aspects of student success can be assessed or measured quite directly, whereas others are not so directly measurable. Where student accomplishment cannot be directly measured, performance indicators (Ewell and Jones 1996) will be identified and used as proxies for accomplishment at the institutional level as well as at the college, department, field of study, and degree levels.

Texas A&M-Kingsville has ongoing programs and processes for assessing student success at multiple levels. The assessment plan for the QEP is organized to identify, track, report on, and use the reported outcomes at each level of the organizational hierarchy for continued improvement in student outcomes. The organizational and reporting hierarchy of the University, from highest to lowest, it is as follows.

- University level: the University as a whole
- College level: Agriculture & Human Sciences, Arts & Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Pharmacy, and University College (for developmental instruction and undeclared majors)
- Department level: may include multiple related programs (e.g., Department of Psychology and Sociology)
- Program level: a single discipline (e.g., Psychology within the Department of Psychology and Sociology)

- Major by award level: baccalaureate, professional, or graduate degrees within each major
- Individual course level.

Assessment of engagement activities for the QEP is integrated with the institution's ongoing process already in place, using as many of the same measures, collection times, and analyses as possible. This is intended to avoid unnecessary duplication of work for faculty, chairs and deans. Therefore, discussion of assessment of the QEP includes a review of current assessment methods and how assessment of the QEP fits into or is derived from those. Instances are specified in which new assessments of student success are necessary for the QEP. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assessing outcomes of the QEP in terms of student success are possible and appropriate (Babbie 1983; Greene 1994; Tachakkori & Teddlie 1998).

Initially, the effects of the QEP on student success will be assessed on individual students, the basic unit for the study. Effects on individual students and on cohorts of students will be aggregated for reporting at the course, program or major, and institution levels. Care will be taken to maintain confidentiality of student records and outcomes. Reports will be aggregated to at least the course level or cohort level after students exit the QEP engagement course.

Assessment and evaluation are intended to be primarily formative in nature. However, because of the exploratory nature of the University's QEP, there are no guarantees that every engagement activity will have the desired effect. Part of the role of the ongoing assessment of outcomes will be to identify any student engagement activity that has a negative or negligible impact or appears to be using inordinate amounts of resources for the impact gained. Efforts will be made to improve any course-based engagement activities that are obviously unsuccessful or have negligible returns. In the absence of evidence of improvement of student engagement and student outcomes, the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee may choose to withdraw support from institutional resources to any particular course or section. To that extent, some evaluations may be summative.

6.2 Institution-Level Assessment of Student Success

Texas A&M-Kingsville uses various indicators of student success aggregated to the institution level. Table 4 provides examples of externally mandated institutional performance measures. These well established success indicators will serve as the basis for institution-level assessment of student success resulting from implementation of course-based student engagement activities through the QEP. They serve as a framework for establishing baseline measures as well as providing opportunities for comparisons with peer institutions.

The overall effect of adding course-level student engagement activities is expected to be cumulative to the institutional level and beyond, as illustrated in Figure 5. That is, as students experience greater engagement with coursework in their majors, it is expected that they will become more successful students in their majors, utilize transferred knowledge, persist, graduate, and be successful following graduation. Measures taken at different points in the college careers of students who have been successfully engaged with their education, their major, and this University through QEP engagement activities are expected to show cumulative improvement as students move from entry to exit.

Table 4. Externally mandated student performance indicators used at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Performance Indicator	Description	Reported To
Graduation Rate	2-, 4-, 5- and 6-Year Rates, for all students, and separately for Hispanic, Black, White, and Other students, as well as by first-generation college students, athletes, financial aid recipients, first-time/full-time degree-seeking freshmen, in-transfer students	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability System, Institutional Effectiveness Report to the Texas Legislative Budget Board, Texas A&M University System Performance Measures, IPEDS
Number of Awards Earned	Reported for all students, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, and separately at each level for Black, Native American, and Hispanic students	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability System
Licensure or Certification Exam Passage Rates	Reported for all programs where applicable (e.g., teaching, engineering)	Texas A&M University System Performance Measures, specialized professional accreditors
Retention or Persistence Rate	Fall-to-fall retention rate of entering undergraduates (variously reported as first-time-in-college, first-time/full-time degree-seeking, by race/ethnicity, financial aid, athletes, students requiring developmental education at entry, in-transfer students)	Texas A&M University System Performance Measures, Texas Legislative Budget Board,
Course Completion	% of Semester Credit Hours completed	Texas Legislative Budget Board,
Certification Rate for Teacher Education Graduates	% of undergraduates from teacher education program certified prior to or within 12 months following graduation	Texas Legislative Budget Board
State Licensure Exam Pass Rate of Engineering Graduates	% of undergraduates from engineering program certified prior to or within 12 months following graduation	Texas Legislative Budget Board
State Licensure Exam Pass Rate of Pharmacy Graduates	% of undergraduates from pharmacy program certified prior to or within 12 months following graduation	Texas Legislative Budget Board
Completion of Developmental Education Requirements	Numbers of students who complete annually	Texas Legislative Budget Board

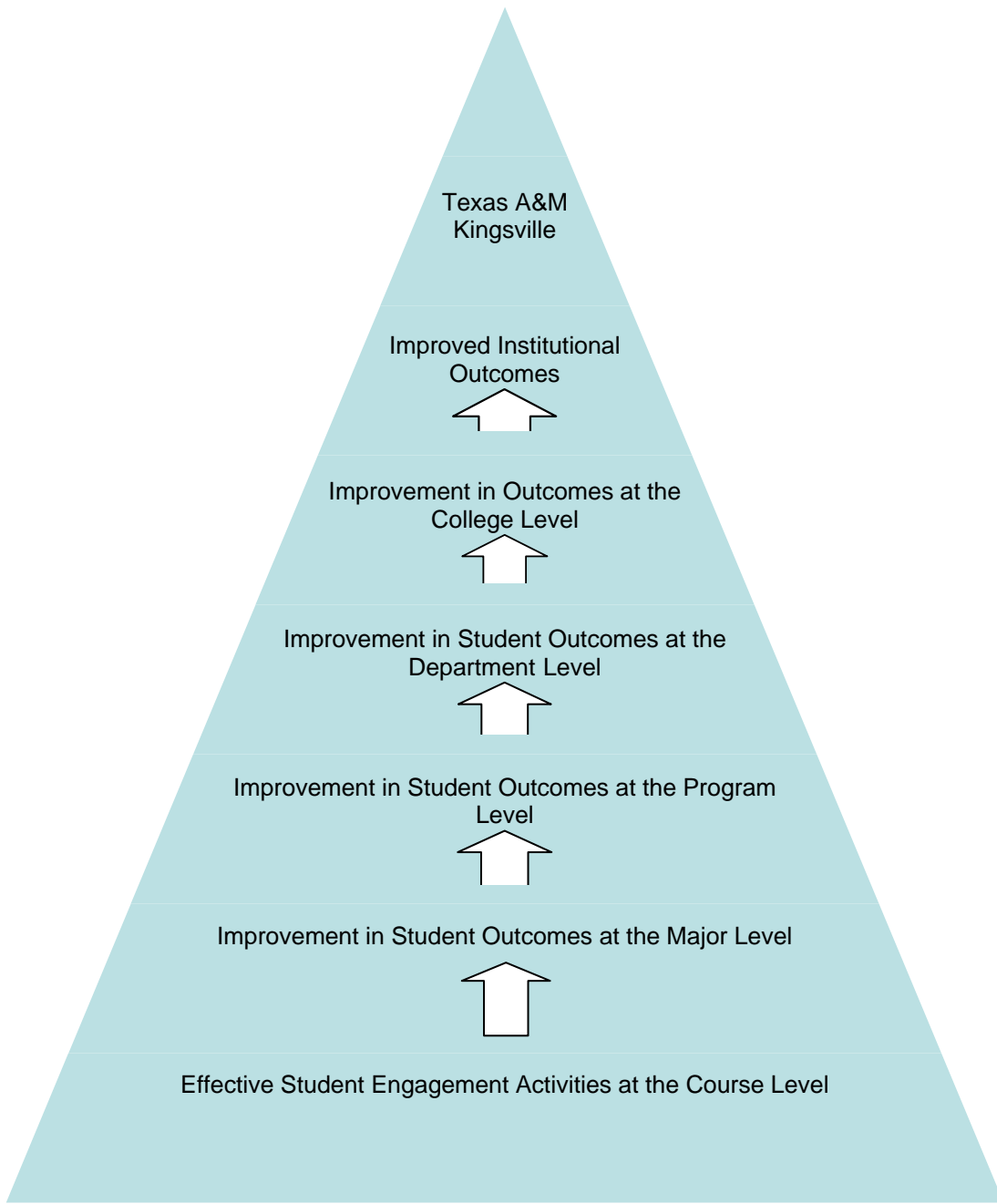


Fig. 5. Anticipated cumulative effect of course-based engagement activities on student outcomes at all levels.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville has in place an institutional research program that captures, analyzes and reports data to assist in gauging student engagement and success. This program includes, among other assessment methods: exit surveys of graduates, student self-assessments of satisfaction and learning, student learning outcomes reported at the course level and by major and award level, assessment of the general education core curriculum, and the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) as a measure of student engagement.

The institution expects that increased student engagement resulting from participation in QEP courses will have positive, incremental effects on institutional performance indicators. The following would be taken as evidence of improvement in overall student success.

- Higher course grades and GPAs
- Increased retention in the major
- Increased retention in the university
- Increased graduation rates
- Decreased time to degree attainment
- Improved results on exit assessments
- Higher rates of licensure and certification
- Higher levels of student satisfaction on self assessments
- Higher levels of engagement as reported on NSSE
- Improved mastery of general education core curriculum content
- Greater articulation of the general education core with the content of major field
- Improved transfer of knowledge and skills from the general education core courses to courses in the major field.

The QEP is expected to impact at least some of the indicators of student success listed in Table 5. The list is extensive and optimistic because the institution maintains high expectations and a strong desire for success. Texas A&M-Kingsville views the QEP as a learning opportunity for the student participants, but also for the faculty, staff and administrators. However, the anticipated effects from engagement activities are only those that might be inferred from the findings in the literature. Therefore, a wide net is being thrown to capture and identify results. As time goes by and the types of results that may be expected become more evident, the assessment areas, tools, and processes will undergo continuous refinement.

The institution recognizes that some approaches to student engagement in the major area courses may not prove to be productive and that there may be unintended consequences – positive or negative – resulting from implementation of the QEP. The ongoing collection and analysis of data and feedback about short-term and long-term outcomes should identify emergent trends or effects that are beyond the expected. In the event that results are not positive or are not as expected, the engagement plan and process and the assessment plan and process will be revisited and altered as necessary.

Because not all courses are expected to have engagement activities and, thus, all students will not necessarily experience them, a naturally occurring sorting process which will group students into multiple treatment, single treatment, and no treatment groups is expected to occur, facilitating assessment of difference in outcomes. The university intends to be cautious in attributing cause and effect. Nevertheless, detectable trends at the institution level should become evident in the next five years if they are occurring, in time for the 5-year report to SACS.

Table 5. Description of indicators of student success potentially impacted by the QEP.

Indicator	Measure	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Unit
Retention in Major	a. Within a major, a greater percentage of students participating in one or more QEP engagement course in the major will be retained in the major compared to those not participating in a QEP course.	Student Information System	Each long semester	Office of Institutional Research (OIR)
	b. Students changing majors after participating in one or more QEP engagement course indicate that the engagement activities influenced their decision to change majors.	Survey research and/or personal interviews	Each long semester	OIR and major-area faculty
Retention in University	a. A greater percentage of students participating in QEP engagement courses will be retained at the university from term-to-term and from fall-to-fall compared to those not participating in a QEP course.	Student Information System	Each long semester	OIR
GPA	a. Students participating in QEP engagement courses will earn a higher mean term GPA than students not participating.	Student Information System	Each long semester	OIR
	b. Students participating in QEP engagement courses will earn a higher mean term GPA than students earned during the baseline period.	Student Information System	Each long semester	OIR
Graduation	Student cohorts participating in QEP engagement courses in their major will graduate at a higher rate than the university mean.	Student Information System	Each semester	OIR
Time to Graduation	Student cohorts participating in QEP engagement courses in their major will graduate in a shorter time than the university mean.	Student Information System	Each semester	OIR
Engagement	Students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will indicate greater satisfaction with their overall college experience than do students who didn't participate.	National Survey of Student Engagement	Annually	OIR

Indicator	Measure	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Unit
Exit Assessments	a. In major areas using assessments of student learning (e.g., major field tests, capstone courses, senior seminars) at or near graduation, students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will receive higher ratings in academic areas than students who did not participate.	Departmental / Program Records Student Information System Reports of Results	Each long semester	Department / Program OIR
	b. At graduation, students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will indicate higher levels of satisfaction with their major area experience than students who did not participate.	Graduating Senior Surveys	Each long semester	OIR
	c. Non-returning students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will indicate greater likelihood of returning to complete their degree than students who did not participate.	Non-returning Student Follow-up Interviews	Each long semester	OIR
Satisfaction	Students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will indicate a greater average overall satisfaction with their academic experience than do students who did not participate.	Student Satisfaction Survey	Annually	OIR
Effect of Multiple Engagement Experiences	a. Students who participated in multiple QEP engagement experiences will be more positive, on average, than other students on any of the foregoing measures.	All reports and studies	Annually	OIR
	b. Students who participated in multiple QEP engagement experiences will be more positive, on average, than students participating in only a single QEP engagement experience on any of the foregoing measures.	All reports and studies	Annually	OIR

Indicator	Measure	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Unit
Licensure and Certification Success	a. Students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will score higher on licensure or certification exams for their professions than the average for students who did not participate.	Official reports from examining or licensure agencies	As reports are made available from testing agencies	Department / program
	b. Students who participated in one or more QEP engagement course will successfully pass licensure or certification exams for their professions in fewer attempts than the average for students who didn't participate.	Official reports from examining or licensure agencies	As reports are made available from testing agencies	Department / program
	c. Students who participated in one ore more QEP engagement course will pass licensure or certification exams for their professions at higher rates than the average for students who did not participate.	Official reports from examining or licensure agencies	As reports are made available from testing agencies	Department/ program

Participation in QEP engagement activities is expected to improve student outcomes in the majors, and also to facilitate transfer of competencies from the general education core curriculum to use in major area curricula. General education assessment at Texas A&M-Kingsville is mandated by the State of Texas and by SACS. The University General Education Committee developed a set of general education objectives based on those developed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 1998. These objectives as published in the 2004-2006 Undergraduate Catalog (Texas A&M University-Kingsville 2004) are listed below.

- An ability to comprehend and articulate effectively in written English.
- An ability to reason analytically and demonstrate basic mathematical skills and knowledge.
- An ability to understand the history, nature, methods and limits of science and of the major impacts and influences of science and technology on contemporary society.
- An ability to interpret, evaluate and appreciate works of human culture and express aesthetic or creative insights about the human condition.
- An ability to evaluate contemporary societal and ethical issues, problems and values with a sense of balance between self-concern and public responsibility.
- An ability to use oral communications effectively, and to improve the ability to evaluate messages and employ critical thinking.
- An ability to use the computer effectively as a tool both in the student's major discipline and throughout their academic and life experiences.

- An ability to appreciate and practice healthy lifestyles through an understanding of the human body, and the development of lifetime physical fitness and activity skills.

Evidence of successful utilization or enhancement of these abilities in the QEP engagement activities will be sought. Given that these competencies may be manifested quite differently by students in different disciplines or courses within a discipline, evidence regarding them will be collected and reported on a course-wise basis.

6.3 Department-Level Assessment of Student Success

Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Reports

For more than a decade, Texas A&M-Kingsville has had in place a systematic, institution-wide process for planned improvement in institutional effectiveness, implementation of plans, collection and analysis of resulting data, and use of outcomes for continued improvements as warranted. As a part of this process, each academic department has an Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Plan, and reports annually on the results of its implementation and on changes made resulting from assessment outcomes. Each of these IE plans contains statements of student learning outcomes (SLOs) that the department intends to address, track, and report in a continuous quality improvement effort. Examples of IE planning and reporting materials may be located online at the website for the Council on Assessment and Planning (<http://cap.tamuk.edu>). The actual IE reports are currently available only to internal users; however, abbreviated versions of the reports are presented in an annual open hearing via PowerPoint, then posted under the heading “Reports” on the Council on Assessment and Planning website.

The IE reporting cycle at Texas A&M-Kingsville is a multi-year process that involves the following activities.

- Reporting on the outcomes measured the prior academic year obtained from implementing that year’s IE Plan
- Implementing the current academic year’s IE Plan
- Devising the IE Plan for the subsequent academic year and preparing any associated resource requests for that year
- Considering IE intentions and initiatives for two and three years hence, and estimating budgetary needs for that biennium

By these processes, faculty, staff and administrators are encouraged to undertake initiatives that may require longer than a single year to accomplish and to anticipate and request resources needed well in advance. University decision-makers are provided with timely data about outcomes – especially student outcomes – and plans for improvement prior to budgeting decisions. The forward-looking stance of the QEP in aiming at improved student success through increased course-based engagement activities in academic majors accords well with the IE process as practiced at Texas A&M-Kingsville. The IE process appears to be well suited for continued planning and reporting of results at the departmental level.

The Council on Assessment and Planning, in cooperation with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), the Director of the QEP, and the Executive Director for Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPA), will continue to review IE reports from departments and other units, and

issue annual reports of outcomes, including SLOs. The OIR will assist with data collection, analysis, and maintenance of data and reports in an archival format for future comparisons and meta-analysis. The Director of the QEP and the Executive Director, IPA, will assist departments in developing appropriate SLOs and devising means for collecting data about them.

Program-Level Assessment of Student Success

At Texas A&M-Kingsville programs are distinguished from departments. Therefore program-level assessment is conducted separately from department-level assessment. In some areas of the university, a regular cycle of program review has been maintained since 1985. In others, systematic program review is a development of the past few years. All programs are currently reviewed on a 5-year cycle (Table 6). As part of program review, impact on student outcomes is evaluated. Improvement in the program-level SLOs at the end of the 5-year QEP implementation cycle is expected. The Office of Institutional Research will actively collect new data and maintain archived baseline data to assist in documenting progress in SLOs as each program comes up for review.

The Undergraduate Academic Program Review Guidelines (Texas A&M University-Kingsville Academic Affairs 2004) outline procedures for the review and for the response to the review. The Undergraduate Program Review Standing Committee evaluates the performance of a given program and provides recommendations for improving a program when their implementation would enhance a program's ability to achieve its stated mission. As appropriate, the department or other program overseer writes a "plan of action" in response to the review. The program administrator is expected to submit a progress report annually until all recommended actions have been implemented and all problems have been rectified. The department in which the program resides is expected to address program deficiencies in the department IE Plan.

Table 6. Five-year undergraduate program review cycle, grouped by college.

2001-02	2003-04 continued
Civil Engineering	Art
Computer Science	English
Electrical Engineering	History
Mechanical Engineering	Music
	Performance
Biology	
Political Science	Computer Information Systems
Theatre Arts	Finance
	International Business Administration
Accounting	Management
Business Administration	
Marketing	2004-05
	Chemical Engineering
2002-03	Industrial Engineering
Agriculture Science	Industrial Technology
Animal Science	Natural Gas Engineering
Human Science	
Restaurant & Food Services	Physics
	Spanish
Chemistry	
Communications	Kinesiology
Geography	Health
Geology	
Mathematics	2005-06
	Plant & Soil Science
Interdisciplinary Studies	
	Anthropology
2003-04	Communication Science & Disorders
Agribusiness	Criminology
Range & Wildlife Management	Psychology
	Sociology
	Social Work

Major-Level Assessment of Student Success

The faculty working within a given major has identified general learning objectives and intended SLOs for each award level for that major. These SLOs are assessed and reported annually. The exact formats, areas, and methods of assessment vary according to discipline.

The engagement activities conducted in each QEP engagement course will be somewhat unique. Therefore, the assessment measures applied to engagement courses, over and above those measures used universally across the university, will be established on a course-by-course basis. The faculty members involved in the courses will provide the content area expertise, and assessment experts will collaborate with the faculty members to devise assessment plans for individual QEP engagement courses that are both meaningful and doable.

While the assessment plan for each course will be somewhat different from that of another course, there are some common understandings about indicators for student success across undergraduate major fields. Increased student engagement as the QEP is implemented is expected to lead to improvements in such areas as:

- content mastery and fulfillment of SLOs for the major
- retention in the major
- time to degree
- graduation rate
- capstone experience success
- obtaining first employment or admission to graduate school
- pass rate on licensure examinations
- scores on GRE or similar tests.

Many assessment measures can be used to evaluate student success in mastering content area knowledge and skills appropriate for a major. Some examples include major-area knowledge, skill, or attitudinal pre- and post-testing or field tests, exit exams, portfolio development, and normed tests such as the Fundamentals of Engineering examination or the TExES examination for teacher candidates. However, the outcome indicators and the examples for assessing SLOs cited above should not be taken as either mandated or exclusive of all others. Identifying intended SLOs is the proper task of the content area faculty, in consultation with graduate educators, business and industry, discipline-related professional organizations, specialized accreditors or agencies, or other appropriate sources of professional or peer input.

Assessment of SLOs may be either quantitative, qualitative, or of mixed methodology. Triangulation through multiple measures is encouraged. The web site for major by award-level SLOs is linked to that of the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment (<http://ipa.oir.tamuk.edu/>).

Results from the QEP may not meet expectations or unexpected outcomes may result from the QEP. The involvement of the Office of Institutional Research as impartial collectors and analysts of data will be a key check in ensuring that expectations do not color judgments about outcomes.

Course-Level Assessment of Student Success

We anticipate that students who are deeply involved in a course offering meaningful civic, research, or professional engagement will likely experience increased acquisition, transfer and synthesis of knowledge, as well as greater enthusiasm for their studies, leading ultimately to greater levels of overall success.

Assessment of student success at the course level occurs in two primary ways--use of course grades as outcomes and as predictors of subsequent outcomes, and use of course-embedded assessments of student knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Although course grades are not complete indicators of student mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes intended in a course, they are summarizing indicators. For example, a course grade of "C" does not reveal what a student knows or learned in a course, it does reveal that the

student demonstrated mastery with some degree of sufficiency in the expert opinion of the instructor. In this sense course grades represent one of many possible measures of student learning.

Furthermore, course grades might serve as predictors for competency transfer to successive courses using the same competencies. If course grades are earned and based on accomplishment of student learning outcomes at predetermined levels or standards, then they should be good predictors for future course grades in course sequences. That is, a specific grade in Course X should be a good predictor of student success as measured by course grade in Course Y, if Course X is a prerequisite for Course Y.

At Texas A&M-Kingsville course grades are monitored each semester and are maintained by the Office of Institutional Research. Examples of uses of course grades as assessment measures for the QEP are itemized below.

- Within a given QEP engagement course, a higher mean course grade will be earned by students who participate in engagement activities as compared with the mean course grade for students who do not participate in engagement activities.
- Within a given QEP engagement course, a higher mean course grade will be earned by all students enrolled in the course as compared with the mean course grade for students taking the course during the two years prior to the QEP (baseline period).
- The grades for students who participate in QEP engagement courses will be predictors of their success in sequential courses.
- For students who participated in QEP engagement courses, average grades for the next course in a sequence will be higher than for those students taking the course during the two years prior to the QEP (baseline period).

Course-embedded assessments are the primary measures of the value of course-based engagement activities. Course-embedded assessments include tests, performances, papers, presentations, experiments, etc. that are normally part of a course, and collectively form the basis for students' grades in the course. Such assessments also provide comparisons to baseline data. Furthermore, course-embedded assessments provide truly fine-grained data about the extent to which students have mastered knowledge, skills and attitudes. These assessment tools are the most sensitive measures of what occurs in a course and the only tools solely in the hands of individual faculty members teaching the QEP engagement courses.

When faculty members teaching sections of a particular course can agree on course content, implementation of engagement activities, and methods of SLO assessment, course-embedded assessments will be excellent tools. In instances where faculty members teaching the various sections of a course cannot agree on these principles and employ idiosyncratic approaches to course content, engagement activities, or assessment of student learning, then course-embedded assessment will be of little value for testing effects of engagement among courses. While this concern does not apply to the pilot course, it may arise as the QEP expands. If so, such issues may precipitate healthy discussions among faculty members.

Course-embedded assessment data is not centrally collected and not necessarily accessible to institutional researchers. Therefore the value of course-embedded assessment depends on individual faculty members' documentation, analysis, and reporting for each assessment measure. Even though these assessments potentially provide the best course-based

information about the effects of course-based engagement, until Texas A&M-Kingsville is certain that they will be managed well the intention is to supplement course-embedded assessment with less fine-grained, but easily obtained, information such as course grades.

Course-based engagement activities will be piloted in one course in Spring Semester 2005, with the number of courses or course sections utilizing this teaching/learning concept expanding thereafter as warranted and desired by faculty. Results of SLOs for courses will be tracked and reported for all students, and separately for those students participating in the engagement activities and those not participating. This should provide opportunity to distinguish between general improvement or change and that attributable to the engagement activities.

Each discipline has its own set of SLOs. Table 7 compares general SLOs for a Bachelor of Music degree, and specific SLOs for the pilot course, MUSI 3131, Jazz Band I.

Table 7. Bachelor of Music program-level intended SLOs as compared to specific intended SLOs for the pilot course MUSI 3131.

Program-level SLO	MUSI 3131 SLO
Students will display proficiency and mastery on their major instrument or voice.	Sight-reading skills improvement Rehearsal abilities improvement Make discerning performance critiques Improved musical performance skills Synthesis of information and experiences leading to improvements
Students will be adequately prepared for a career as a professional musician.	Attend and critique live performances by professional musicians Participate in clinics and master classes conducted by professional musicians Explore aspects of life of professional musician as opposed to life as instructor of music in schools, leading to informed career path decisions

The specific assessment plan for the pilot course is presented in Appendix B. The plan will be reviewed regularly with the expectation that review will lead to revision and improvement. As envisioned, the plans, implementation processes, reporting processes, and intended outcomes of student engagement through the QEP will be subject to continued review and revision as part of the institution's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

6.4 Reporting Effects of QEP Engagement Activities on Student Success

The entire student engagement project is expected to be assessed regularly, and scheduled reports of outcomes from the QEP will be routinely issued to the University community. Assessment and reporting of student outcomes is conceptualized primarily as formative evaluation aimed at continuous quality improvement.

Some results of the QEP will be course-based outcomes that can be completed, evaluated, and reported during or shortly after the semester in which they occur. Other anticipated outcomes (e.g., retention in major and success in mastering major area student learning outcomes, graduation rates, success rates in obtaining first employment or entering graduate school) will require longer to develop. For this reason each student will be tracked until leaving the University. Some reports will become available after the end of the first semester of implementation of the QEP, whereas others will be added as each student or group of students moves through the University. Some of the students participating in the QEP pilot project in Spring Semester of 2005 will presumably complete the baccalaureate degree at Texas A&M-Kingsville during the first five years of QEP implementation, allowing for exit assessment and follow-up after graduation. Annual reports will be prepared and compiled, culminating in a summarizing five-year report prepared in academic year 2009-10.

Course-Based Tracking and Reporting

Most course-level student learning outcomes related to QEP engagement activities must be tracked for individual students by the course instructor. Faculty associated with student engagement activities will not report individual student data as part of the QEP process, but rather will report on aggregated outcomes for a section or group of sections as a whole. Reports of results from course-level work should be available from instructors within six weeks of the end of the term.

The Director of the QEP, with support from the Office of Institutional Research, will assist individual faculty members in developing and using databases and assessment tools, and assist as necessary with the analysis and interpretation of data. In addition, the Office of Institutional Research will archive data and maintain it, as well as conduct meta-analyses and longitudinal studies, and prepare annual and fifth-year reports.

Major-Based Reporting

Reports on outcomes in the majors will be principally prepared by the Director of the QEP and the Office of Institutional Research, with input from major area faculty and the Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Assessment. Because these reports will involve cohort tracking over periods of years and because they will require linking major-level data with institutional databases and student records, they are expected to be annual reports requiring institutional research expertise. Records will be archived and maintained by the Office of Institutional Research, and meta-analyses performed as appropriate.

College-Based Reporting

Initially, student engagement activities per the QEP will not be expected of every major area in each college. Formally assessed student engagement activities will be piloted in the first year. Results will be examined and used for further improvement in both student outcomes and in implementation of the QEP itself. Increased implementation of course-based student engagement activities in the disciplines is planned for successive years until institutional involvement is maximized. Therefore in the first year or so, participation in any college will not be sufficiently widespread to warrant aggregation and reporting at the college level. However when more general participation occurs it should become possible to identify performance indicators, set standards, and report at the college level.

Institution-Based Reporting

Institutional-level reporting will be managed by the Director of the QEP and the Office of Institutional Research, with input from major area faculty and the Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Assessment. Because these reports will involve cohort tracking over periods of years and because they will require linking major level data with institutional databases and student records, they are expected to be annual reports requiring institutional research expertise. Data will be archived and maintained to provide baseline information and the basis for meta-analysis, longitudinal studies, and annual and fifth-year reports.

A Cautionary Note on Assessment and its Uses in this Project

Planning, implementing, and assessing professional, civic, and research engagement activities in major-area courses is new to this institution. The process is planned to begin on a small scale with one pilot course in Spring Semester 2005 and to grow across academic disciplines over the next several years. Review of the literature does not suggest how rapidly interest in fostering student success through course-based student engagement might spread throughout the faculty. Neither is there clear evidence to be used in estimating how early effects of engagement activities might be evident in student outcomes or how long the effects may last. A single data point will not likely be sufficiently dramatic to warrant broad generalizations. Identifying clear trends may take several semesters or years.

Because of the exploratory nature of the QEP at Texas A&M-Kingsville, assessment events will occur frequently and with a more fine-grained approach than might be necessary if more were known about the effects of student engagement in professional, research and civic activities through major-area courses. As the institution learns more about the effects of student engagement and how to identify them, it may become possible to “paint with a broader brush” in assessment. Further, the necessity of accumulating sufficient data to identify trends suggests that care be taken in recommending major changes in courses, student engagement practices, or assessment practices as a result of preliminary findings.

The QEP at Texas A&M-Kingsville is venturing into hypothesis testing (see pp. 24-25 for working hypotheses) with regard to the effects of course-based student engagement. Obviously, the institution hopes to avoid Type I error so that benefits to students can be achieved and identified. However, Type II error is also possible, given the multiplicity of variables potentially affecting any given student outcome in higher education. There are limited controls

on who may register in any given course with activities relating to the QEP and virtually no way to control multiple factors at work on any given student or group of students outside the QEP course. Therefore, the institution has no *a priori* expectation that any particular assessment measure will be a strong indicator. Triangulation among multiple measures should provide greater power. Multiple measures will be used extensively until better evidence has been accumulated from this project to guide conclusions about the working hypotheses.

7 Budget

Most of the resources needed to implementation the QEP will come from annual allocations from the University budget that are specifically earmarked for the QEP, including funding for the QEP Director and partial funding for the Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Assessment. In addition, several individuals have contributed and will continue to contribute time and professional services toward the implementation of the QEP. Some of the funding for these individuals comes from sources other than those specifically allocated to the QEP. These individuals include college deans who support faculty participation in the QEP, QEP Planning Committee members who devoted time to designing and initiating the plan, and QEP Advisory Committee members who advise the QEP Director.

The University provides funds to support course-level operating costs and University-level survey instruments. In general funding support for a given QEP course will be one-time only, rather than recurring with successive offerings of the course. Funding is allocated to support student travel to engagement functions and faculty travel to conferences related to student engagement. Release time for faculty developing QEP engagement courses will be allocated as deemed appropriate, examining needs, impacts, and available funding on a case-by-case basis. At the Director's discretion, funds may be provided to support a wide range of specific engagement activities. The faculty is encouraged to submit grant proposals for external funds in support of continuing QEP efforts. The University will provide funding to recognize faculty for their involvement in the QEP. Annual budgetary allocations for the QEP are itemized below.

Year 1 (2004-05)	Salaries	
	Director	\$61,628
	Assessment Officer	10,667
	Faculty release time	15,000
	Travel	10,000
	Operating	
	Course support	3,000
	Recognition	3,000
	Surveys	<u>10,000</u>
	Total	\$113,295

Year 2 (2005-06)	Salaries	
	Director	\$63,487
	Assessment Officer	10,987
	Faculty release time	30,000
	Travel	10,000
	Operating	
	Course support	5,000
	Recognition	5,000
	Surveys	<u>15,000</u>
	Total	\$139,474
Year 3 (2006-07)	Salaries	
	Director	\$40,000
	Assessment Officer	11,317
	Faculty release time	35,000
	Travel	15,000
	Operating	
	Course support	5,000
	Recognition	5,000
	Surveys	<u>15,000</u>
	Total	\$126,317
Year 4 (2007-08)	Salaries	
	Director	\$40,000
	Assessment Officer	11,656
	Faculty release time	35,000
	Travel	15,000
	Operating	
	Course support	5,000
	Recognition	5,000
	Surveys	<u>15,000</u>
	Total	\$126,656
Year 5 (2008-09)	Salaries	
	Director	\$40,000
	Assessment Officer	12,006
	Faculty release time	35,000
	Travel	15,000
	Operating	
	Course support	5,000
	Recognition	5,000
	Surveys	15,000
	Total	\$127,006
Years 1 through 5	Grand Total	\$632,748

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Appendix

Appendix A

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN COURSE PROPOSAL

MUSI 3131-001 Jazz Band I
Paul Hageman, Professor
MWF - 1:00-1:50, Mu 106

BACKGROUND

In 2004, based upon performances submitted from 2003, Jazz Band I won the Big Band category in the DownBeat magazine 27th Annual Student Music Awards. Jazz Band I was selected based upon a "blind" audition recording reviewed by a panel of professional jazz musicians and educators. University jazz bands from throughout the United States and Canada entered the competition in which TAMUK won top honors.

Most of the students who participated in Jazz Band I when it won the award have now graduated. Our goal is to continue to work with the new members of Jazz Band I to elevate their playing to a level that will be competitive for the DownBeat award again in the near future.

PROPOSAL

The course, MUSI 3131-001: Jazz Band I, is an ensemble course that constitutes the ensemble, Jazz Band I. The proposal for this course involves professional engagement activities involving the area of jazz music. The goal of the proposal is to engage the students in Jazz Band I by exposing them to the jazz music profession through involvement with professional jazz musicians and national jazz venue experiences. We would seek ways to expose our students to events and musicians that would enhance their learning, motivation, musical abilities, and professional understanding of jazz music. Through these professional engagement activities, students may enhance their abilities as musicians and educators and become interested in professional careers as jazz musicians and educators. Furthermore, by participating in these professional engagement activities, we hope to elevate the quality of the performing ability of these students to the highest possible level.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Jazz Ensemble Rehearsals: These rehearsals will occur three times a week on MWF, from 1:00 to 1:50. Effective rehearsal techniques will be stressed with respect to the professional preparation of jazz music.
2. Jazz Sectional Rehearsals: Students will be required to hold sectional rehearsals once a week outside of class time to work on the music. The students will be responsible for scheduling and rehearsing the music within their individual sections: Saxes, Trumpets, Trombones, and Rhythm Section.
3. Jazz Sight-Reading Concert: One of the most important skills a jazz musician can possess is the ability to sight-read with proficiency. This is a skill that is stressed daily in our jazz program. Our goal in producing this concert is to place the students in a "true life" situation whereby they are asked to perform music at sight in a live concert. We will assess their abilities and improvement in abilities based upon their sight-reading skills demonstrated in rehearsals.

We will then compare the students' initial abilities to their performance on this concert and evaluate their progress and determine where more work is needed.

4. 38th Annual TAMUK Jazz Festival: The TAMUK Jazz Festival provides an excellent venue for our students to perform in a professional setting as the featured, premiere group of the event. Also, our students get the opportunity to hear 25 to 30 high school and junior high school jazz bands perform over the two-day festival. Additionally, the festival presents a world-class jazz musician who rehearses and performs with Jazz Band I. The experience of performing with a professional jazz musician is an amazing learning experience that is a "once in a lifetime" event for many students. They learn about professionalism, musicianship, jazz pedagogy, and performance practices by working and performing with a "real" professional, jazz musician. The professional jazz musician also presents a clinic to our students explaining how they do what they do. Additionally, our students get the opportunity to interact and "hang out" with the jazz musician. The students learn so much through these experiences and are always energized and motivated by the events of the festival.

5. UNC Greeley Jazz Festival: The University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival is the largest non-competitive jazz festival in the United States. The festival features over 300 high school and university jazz groups who perform over a three-day period to receive comments and critiques from some of the finest jazz musicians and educators in the country. Each evening of the festival, concerts are presented by some of the finest professional jazz musicians in the world. During the day, these same jazz musicians and many others, present clinics and workshops to festival participants covering a multitude of topics related to the performance of jazz music. Attending this festival will be an excellent opportunity for our students to hear and learn from other university jazz bands and to compare their abilities to other students from throughout the United States.

6. Guest Clinicians: Currently, our instrumental jazz program is run by Paul Hageman and James Warth whose combined expertises are in the areas of the wind instruments. Also, Randy Fluman, our percussion teacher works with the drummers in the jazz bands. We are in need of having some experts in the rhythm section area come to TAMUK and work with our students, specifically on the following instruments: jazz piano, jazz guitar, and jazz bass. Our proposal is to hire three local professional jazz musicians on piano, guitar, and bass to come to campus three to five times during the semester to work with the students who play those instruments and offer more in-depth, comprehensive information on how to play those instruments at a higher, professional level.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

Through the professional engagement activities listed above, students will display qualitative growth in the following abilities:

1. Students will improve their sight-reading skills.
2. Students will improve their rehearsal abilities through comprehensive rehearsals in both sectional rehearsals and large ensemble rehearsals.
3. Students will experience performances by both high school and university jazz bands and will learn to critique and discern the quality of the performances they hear.

4. Students will experience performances by professional jazz musicians in a live setting.
5. Students will learn pedagogical information by attending clinics given by professional jazz musicians.
6. Rhythm section students will gain more in-depth, specific information on how to improve on their respective instruments.
7. Based upon all of the above experiences, students will synthesize the information and experiences which will be reflected in a higher-quality level of performances by Jazz Band I.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

1. Careful scrutiny of recordings of all concerts performed during the semester to determine qualitative improvement.
2. Comments and critiques given by jazz adjudicators at the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival.
3. Motivation level of the students based upon experiences throughout the semester.
4. Improvement in the rhythm section as evidenced in rehearsals and performances.
5. Results of the DownBeat 29th Annual Student Music Awards Competitions. (Results will be announced in the Spring semester, 2006.)

RESOURCE REQUEST

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Jazz Ensemble Rehearsals: | No resources needed. |
| 2. | Jazz Sectional Rehearsals: | No resources needed. |
| 3. | Jazz Sight-Reading Concert: | No resources needed. |
| 4. | 38th Annual TAMUK Jazz Festival: | Student Service Fees |
| 5. | UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival: | \$11,280 |
| | The jazz band would use some of the money it earned at the jazz festival to pay for some of the trip. Resources needed to cover expenses: | |
| | Airfare to Denver, Colorado: ($360 \times 20 = \$7200$) | |
| | Motel Rooms for three nights: ($6 \text{ rooms} \times \$60 \times 3 \text{ nights} = \$1,080$) | |
| | Meals for students: ($20 \times \$25 \text{ per day} \times 4 \text{ days} = \$2,000$) | |
| | Tickets to main event concerts: ($20 \times \$20 \times 2 \text{ concerts} = \800) | |
| | Entry Fee: \$200 | |
| 6. | Three rhythm section professionals:
(\$750 x 3 musicians) | \$2250 |
| | TOTAL RESOURCE REQUEST: | \$13,530 |

Appendix B

Assessment Plan for MUSI 3131

**Quality Enhancement Plan for Pilot Course: MUSI 3131-001 Jazz Band I –
Professional Engagement Activities
Spring 2005
Paul Hageman, Professor**

Jazz Band I is one of three jazz bands, in a sequence related to players' ability. Admission to any of the Jazz Bands (I, II, or III) is competitive and by audition. Jazz Band I is the highest level at TAMU-K and players aspire to be in Jazz Band I. Therefore, enhancements to Jazz Band I are likely not only to have positive effects on students in that band, but also with students in Jazz Bands II and III, encouraging them to perform at a higher level and win a seat in Jazz Band I. In addition, students from Jazz Bands II and III will be encouraged/required to sit-in on sessions with master musicians. Thus, the professional quality enhancement program applied to Jazz Band I has more far-reaching effects than to outcomes for students in the single class and may engage students well beyond those in the targeted course.

Assessment and evaluations of the effects of the quality enhancement plan (QEP) will principally be carried out with respect to Jazz Band I and the students performing in it. However, collateral effects with students in Jazz Bands II and III may be emergent from this approach. Scanning the learning outcomes of students in the lower two bands and assessment of those appearing to be emergent from the QEP in Jazz Band I will also be undertaken.

Our working hypotheses for QEP outcomes in this pilot course are:

- Exposure to and involvement with professional jazz musicians and the best of high school and college jazz ensembles will improve students'
 - Engagement and motivation
 - in this course
 - in other courses taken concurrently and subsequently
 - learning outcomes,
 - in this course
 - in students' subsequent academic careers
 - musical abilities,
 - in this course
 - in other courses taken concurrently and subsequently
 - in performances while in college
 - professional understanding and performance of jazz music
 - in this course
 - in collegiate performances
 - in professional performances.
- For students pursuing the instrumental teaching major in music, an additional result of such exposure may be improved teaching and preparation of junior high and high school students to play jazz music.

Baseline data from: Historical data available from SIS or departmental datasets; Fall 2004 Jazz Bash and performances thereafter.

**Professional Engagement Activities, Assessment, and Measures for Success:
Short-term Assessment**

1. Jazz Ensemble Rehearsals, MWF 1:00 – 1:50 (the actual class meetings)
 - a. Student musicians are prepared for ensemble playing
 - i. Ensemble playing will continuously improve throughout Spring 2005, in the expert opinion of the instructor
 - ii. Sections are well-rehearsed, as evidenced by diminished in-class section review and critique by the instructor

2. Jazz Sectional Rehearsals
 - a. Each section (Saxes, Trumpets, Trombones and Rhythm) hold at least one independent rehearsal each week, scheduled and conducted by students outside class time, to learn and improve music
 - i. Sign-in sheets will be maintained to document rehearsal attendance
 1. No member of any section will miss more than one rehearsal
 - ii. Instructors will provide weekly, written reviews and critiques of each section's strengths and weaknesses to members of each section
 1. Section reviews and critiques indicate continuous improvement over the course of the semester
 2. Ensemble playing will continuously improve, as evidenced in professional recordings, according to expert review of recordings
 - b. Guest clinicians conduct QEP master classes with Jazz Band I's piano, guitar, and bass players to improve professional expertise in rhythm section's musicians
 - i. Sign-in sheets will be maintained to document attendance at master classes.
 1. 100% of all members of Jazz Band I's rhythm section will attend 100% of QEP master classes
 2. 90% of Jazz Band II and III's rhythm sections members will attend 100% of QEP master classes
 3. 100% of all contracted QEP master classes will be held

- ii. Guest clinicians identify areas of weakness that can be remediated in the context of the contracted master classes and focus each class on an area or areas of remediation to improve musicianship in the context of Jazz Band I
 - 1. Jazz Band I's jazz piano, guitar and bass playing will be critiqued by both its director and the guest clinicians after the first master class and results shared with student musicians
 - 2. Jazz Band I's jazz piano, guitar and bass playing will be critiqued by both its director and the guest clinicians following the last QEP master class and results shared with students
 - a. In the professional opinions of the instructor and the guest clinician, Jazz Band I pianist, guitarist and bassist will demonstrably improve from first to last QEP master class
 - b. In the opinion of each individual student in the Jazz Band I rhythm section, her/his musicianship will have improved in specific, identifiable and demonstrable ways as a result of the QEP master classes (journal)
- iii. Jazz Band I's pianist, guitarist, and bassist from the Spring Semester will improve
 - 1. successfully defend challenges to their positions in Jazz Band I in the following semester
 - 2. Jazz Band I's rhythm section in Spring 2005 will be able to rehearse and play with Maynard Ferguson band without special coaching or modification in the arrangement
- iv. Jazz Band II and III's rhythm musicians will also be required to attend clinicians' master classes
 - 1. Sign-in sheets will be maintained to document attendance at master classes
- v. Jazz Band II and III's pianist, guitarist, and bassist from the Spring Semester will improve
 - 1. successfully challenge for positions in Jazz Band I in the following semester

3. Jazz Sight-Reading Concert

- a. On-sight playing by Jazz Band I's members better than adequate in the opinions of expert reviewers

- b. On-sight playing by Jazz Band II and III's members adequate in the opinions of expert reviewers
4. 38th Annual TAMU-K Jazz Festival with Maynard Ferguson
- a. Attend clinic by prominent professional jazz musician
 - i. 100% of Jazz Band I, II and III members attend clinic
 - ii. Jazz Band I members prepare brief description of new or improved insights they gained as result of attending clinic (journal)
 - b. Rehearsal with prominent professional jazz musicians
 - i. Jazz Band I members will engage in successful professional rehearsal without any evident problems requiring special coaching or modification in the arrangement
 - c. Perform with prominent professional jazz musicians
 - i. Jazz Band I members will perform with professional musicians without any evident problems
 - d. Performance professionally recorded
 - i. Professional recording of performance prepared
 - ii. Comparison by instructor and panel drawn from knowledgeable faculty of prior recordings of Spring 05 Jazz Band I performances, if any exist, to determine improvement resulting from QEP activities
 - e. Hear and critique up to 30 high school and junior high school bands
 - i. Each member of Jazz Band I will critique 2 high school bands' performances, using the standard judging form. 80% of the student critiques of each band, overall, will fall into the same general placement area as do those of the judges.
 - ii. Each Jazz Band I member will compare/contrast the 2 high school bands s/he judged and present an argument for which of the 2 was better in his/her opinion, using the standard judging form and a brief written paper
5. University of Northern Colorado Greeley Jazz Festival
- a. Jazz Band I students gain clearer perception of themselves as jazz musicians
 - i. Prepare self-rating prior to attending UNC Greeley Jazz Festival [*"I don't feel I am where I should be in terms of. . ."; "I feel that I am better than most jazz musicians in terms of. . ."*] (*"My experiences*

as a jazz musician lead me to believe that I am fully engaged in my musical education”; “My experiences as a jazz musician lead me to believe that I am well prepared for my profession.”]

- ii. Prepare self-rating after attending UNC Greeley Jazz Festival
 - iii. Upon return to campus, students compare self-ratings and identify areas in need of improvement, as well as those in which they see themselves as being better than average based on what they experienced in Colorado. (journal)
 - iv. Instructor will review self-ratings and analysis by students and provide feedback about his perceptions of the accuracy of students' self-ratings of areas of strength and weakness and their plans for improvement.
- b. Hear and critique selection of performances from over 300 high school and university jazz groups
- c.
- i. Each member of Jazz Band I will critique 2 college bands' performances, using the standard judging form. 80% of the student critiques of each band, overall, will fall into the same general placement area as do those of the judges.
- d. Attend evening performances by expert jazz musicians and critique performances and compare critiques of expert jazz musicians
- i. Concert performance critiques are prepared by each member of Jazz Band I for comparison and discussion among members of the band, with guidance and input from instructors and guest clinicians as appropriate
- e. Perform and receive critical review of performance from expert jazz musicians, with Jazz Band I's performance professionally recorded
- i. Jazz Band I will perform and a professional recording will be made of the recording
 - 1. Compare with TAMU-K Jazz Festival recording, and any others available, of Jazz Band I and identify areas of improvement as a result of QEP activities
 - 2. Review, analyze and plan improvement using the expert criticism of the UNC-Greeley festival reviewers
 - ii. Prior to performing, each member of Jazz Band I will prepare a self-critique on the performance piece(s) for both her/his own playing and that of the band as a whole (journal)
 - iii. After the professional critiques or reviews are received, Jazz Band I students will compare/contrast their self-evaluation and their evaluation of the band as a whole with those of the professionals,

note any differences, and discuss their perceptions of the accuracy of and reasons behind any observed differences in the evaluations

- f. Attend jazz clinics and workshops
 - i. Each member of Jazz Band I will prepare an itinerary of workshops and clinics, based on identified areas of interest or weaknesses in musicianship to be remedied from pre-attendance self-evaluations, along with input from instructors and the guest clinicians involved in the QEP activities
 - ii. Each member of Jazz Band I will identify a specific group of skills or knowledge s/he has improved or intends to work on improving as a result of attending the clinics and workshops.
 - iii. Follow-up one year later will be conducted with Jazz Band I members to assess whether they have improved in at least one area of musicianship as a result of attending the jazz clinics and workshops in Greeley.
6. Down Beat 29th Annual Student Music Awards Competition
- a. Submission of the Greeley recording to the Down Beat Competition
 - b. Placement in the top 3 in the Down Beat Competition (will be announced in 2006)
7. During the Spring Semester 2005, each member of Jazz Band I will maintain a journal. This journal should be a record of the following sorts of things, among any others the student feels should be chronicled:
- a. Satisfaction with his/her performance in the Ensemble Rehearsals (MWF classes) and reflection on what went well and any problems encountered during each ensemble rehearsal, along with ideas for improvement
 - b. Satisfaction with her/his performance in Sectional Rehearsals and reflection on what went well and any problems encountered during each section rehearsal, along with ideas for improvement
 - c. Each individual or smaller group rehearsal outside ensemble or section rehearsals (if any) and his/her satisfaction with performance, reflection on what went well, and what still needs work, along with ideas for improvement
 - d. Attendance at each master class, along with strengths and weaknesses identified and remediation plan
 - e. Reaction to the Jazz Sight-Reading Concert (satisfaction with performance, reflection on what went well, and what still needs work, along with ideas for improvement)

- f. Reaction to the TAMUK Jazz Festival
 - i. satisfaction with performance, reflection on what went well, and what still needs work, along with ideas for improvement
 - ii. reflection on interaction with the professional jazz musicians
- g. Reaction to the UNC Greeley Jazz Festival
 - i. satisfaction with performance, reflection on what went well, and what still needs work, along with ideas for improvement
 - ii. new knowledge or skills learned or introduced to at the festival
 - iii. reflection on interactions with professional jazz musicians
 - iv. reflection on interaction with musicians from other colleges and universities
 - v. Self-assessment at the end of the term of the effect of the QEP activities on his/her engagement with this course, music as a major, and choice of career in music
 - vi. Self-assessment at the end of the term of the effect of the QEP activities on her/his other courses this semester.

**Professional Engagement Activities, Assessment, and Measures for Success:
Transfer of Engagement Assessment**

- 1. Other music courses
 - a. Spring 2005
 - i. Grades in other music courses taken concurrently with Jazz Band I in Spring 2005 will all be a B or better
 - ii. Student journals (students in Jazz Band I or I – III) will indicate that knowledge or skills gained as a result of QEP activities were incorporated into or influenced their performance in other music courses.
 - b. After Spring 2005
 - i. Thereafter until graduation with the baccalaureate degree, grades in all other music courses will be a B or better for students participating in the QEP activities associated with Jazz Band I in Spring 2005
- 2. Gen ed completion
 - a. Students who are highly professionally engaged in their major field are likely to be eager to graduate and/or to immerse themselves in the major area courses. Therefore, we expect to see any remaining general

education core requirements promptly completed by Jazz Band I QEP participants.

- i. Transcript evaluation will indicate that all members of Jazz Band I who participate in the QEP activities in Spring 2005 either will have completed all of the general education core requirements prior to that term, or will complete them as rapidly as possible in the long semesters thereafter.
3. Success in courses other than music or part of the general education core and in majors other than music
 - a. Engagement and success in the QEP course may lead students to recognize their potential to be successful in other areas of study, help them recognize that better preparation leads to greater success, and motivate them to apply the principles, time-management skills, and self-discipline they have learned in Jazz Band I to other academic areas.
 - i. Average term GPA for music students having participated in the Jazz Band I QEP activities will equal or exceed the average term GPA of all students not having engaged in QEP activities.
 - ii. In follow-up activities (e.g., surveys, interviews), students who participate in QEP activities during Spring 2005 will indicate that the motivational effects of the QEP professional engagement experience transferred to other academic activities and provide descriptions of such transfers.
4. Professional activities or employment
 - a. Students who are highly professionally engaged in their major field and participants in the QEP activities are likely to
 - i. Have increased participation in music educator or jazz musician professional organizations. Evidence will be requested directly from students of such participation.
 - ii. Have increased opportunities to play professionally or with professionals while still enrolled in undergraduate studies. Evidence will be requested directly from students about such activities.
5. Overall self-assessment of engagement via the NSSE
 - a. Students participating in the QEP activities associated with Jazz Band I during Spring 2005 will show an overall pattern of greater engagement on the NSSE than other students not engaged in QEP courses.

**Professional Engagement Activities, Assessment, and Measures for Success:
Long-Term Assessment**

1. Persistence

- a. Students who are highly professionally engaged in their major field are likely to persist in their educations.
 - i. 100% of students who engage in Jazz Band I QEP activities during Spring 2005 will be in continuous enrollment at TAMU-K for every long semester thereafter until graduating.

2. Shorter time to degree

- a. Highly engaged and motivated students are likely to be enrolled fulltime and continuously, as well as to be successful in their coursework on the first attempt.
 - i. Time-to-degree, as measured in average number of semesters of enrollment, will be less for students engaging in QEP activities in Spring 2005 than for all other undergraduate students enrolled at the university during that same semester.

3. Degree Completion

- a. Highly engaged and motivated students are likely to complete their degrees.
 - i. The overall graduation rate for the cohort of students engaging in Jazz Band I QEP activities in Spring 2005 will be greater than that of the graduation rate of all students not engaged in QEP activities at TAMU-K during that same semester or thereafter.

4. Employment following Degree Completion

- a. Well-prepared and highly motivated individuals are likely to have no difficulty finding employment at or immediately after graduation.
 - i. 100% of Jazz Band I students who participate in QEP activities in Spring 2005 who are seeking employment will obtain suitable employment in their field before or within three months following graduation with the baccalaureate degree.
- b. Well-prepared and highly motivated individuals are likely to be successful in their professions and to maintain employment.
 - i. 100% of Jazz Band I students who participate in QEP activities in Spring 2005 who obtain suitable employment in their field will still be working in their field at 1, 3 and 5 years following completion of the baccalaureate degree, unless they have entered graduate school as fulltime students.

5. Graduate education

- a. Well-prepared and highly motivated individuals who successfully complete the baccalaureate degree are likely to be admitted to at least one of the top three graduate schools of their choice.
 - i. 100% of the Jazz Band I graduates who participate in QEP activities in Spring 2005 who apply to graduate school within five years of graduation will be admitted to one of the top three graduate schools to which they apply.

6. Continued activities in music following graduation

- a. Students who participated in the QEP engagement activities as members of Jazz Band I in Spring 2005 are likely to continue to be active in music following completion of their baccalaureate degrees.
 - i. Music majors are employed in music
 - 1. Music teachers
 - 2. Professional musicians
 - ii. All participants in the engagement activities of Jazz Band I during Spring 2005 continue to make music following completion of the baccalaureate.
 - 1. Continued playing of own instrument(s)
 - 2. Play (professionally or nonprofessionally) with others

7. Excellence in jr/high school jazz band production, as evidenced in competition.

- a. Students who participated in the QEP engagement activities as members of Jazz Band I in Spring 2005 and who become junior or senior high school band instructors following completion of the baccalaureate produce excellent school bands, within 5 years of becoming director, as evidenced by UIL or other competitions.