

EXHIBIT 2.12

**Response Report
to the
Visiting Committee**

**Quality Enhancement Plan
- Revised -**

On-Site Visit: March 21-23, 2006

**Prepared for
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of Liberty University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is “*to improve graduate student writing.*” The process of deciding on and developing the QEP focus involved discussions across the entire campus community—faculty, staff, students, and administration—over an extended period of time. That process revealed a concern about student writing skills in general, and graduate student writing skills in particular.

The Quality Enhancement Plan begins with an overview of the University’s institutional characteristics, mission, and goals, along with the institutional commitment to the QEP. It then uses research—both internal and external to the University—to demonstrate the legitimacy of this concern with respect to graduate student writing and, ultimately, the feasibility of making that concern the focus for the QEP.

The QEP is a five-year plan that involves two primary objectives. The first targets graduate students directly with the aim of improving their writing; the second focuses on support for graduate faculty as they assess and assist students in their writing. These two objectives—along with the corollary learning outcomes, intervention and assessment strategies—are presented in Chapters II and IV. Concomitantly, Chapter III outlines the five support strategies determined to be necessary for successful implementation of the QEP.

The implementation plan for the QEP is presented in five phases, one phase for each of the next five years. A detailed chart describes the strategies, assessment, and evaluation plan for each year. This is followed by a presentation of the QEP

Management Plan and Budget, including the personnel and institutional support for implementing the Plan.

PREFACE

Institutional Characteristics

The motto of Liberty University, “Knowledge Aflame,” summarizes the mission of the school, energizing its students’ intellectual and spiritual interests. Since its founding in 1971, Liberty has seen impressive growth in the size and diversity of the student body and corresponding growth in the faculty, campus, facilities, and fiscal resources. Liberty is now the largest distinctively evangelical Christian college of its type in the world.

Liberty University is a private, independent, comprehensive institution, in the tradition of evangelical institutions of higher education. It was initially accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 1980. The University offers 56 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and awards associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees.

The student population for the 2005-2006 academic year totaled 9,477 resident and 12,355 distance learning students representing all 50 states, U.S. possessions, and 72 foreign countries, as well as Armed Forces personnel serving in the U.S. and abroad. The student body is 52% male and 48% female. Racial composition is 73.1% White, 14.2% African-American, 4% International, 3.2% Hispanic, 3.1% Asian-American, 0.7% American Indian/Alaskan, 0.2% Native Hawaiian, 0.2% Puerto Rican, 0.2% Mexican American, and 5.1% undeclared.

Applicants for admission to Liberty University are considered without regard to race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, or disability. Admission policies for undergraduates are selective based on high school transcripts, standardized test scores, and grade point average (GPA); a general college preparatory program with diploma is required, and the GED is accepted. Graduate admissions policies and selection standards are appropriate for each individual program.

Liberty University offers five undergraduate degrees in 41 disciplines, eight master's degrees, two first-professional degrees, two post-master's degrees, and three doctoral degrees. The institution also has one diploma program.

Institutional Mission and Goals

Philosophy of Education

Liberty University is a Christian academic community in the tradition of evangelical institutions of higher education. As such, Liberty continues the philosophy of education which first gave rise to the University, summarized in the following propositions:

God, the infinite source of all things, has shown us truth through Scripture, nature, history, and, above all, in Christ.

Persons are spiritual, rational, moral, social and physical, created in the image of God. They are, therefore, able to know and to value themselves and other persons, the universe, and God.

Education as the process of teaching and learning involves the whole person, developing the knowledge, values, and skills that enable the individual to change freely. Thus, it occurs most effectively when both instructor and student are properly related to God and each other through Christ.

Mission

To develop Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact tomorrow's world.

The mission is carried out for resident students through a rigorous academic program and structured social environment. It is carried out for external students in a comparable academic program but without the structure of the resident community.

Goals

In support of its Philosophy and Mission, Liberty University seeks to provide its students with intellectual and cultural pursuits that:

1. Contribute to a knowledge and understanding of other cultures and of international events.
2. Promote an understanding of the Western tradition and the diverse elements of American cultural history, especially the importance of the individual in maintaining democratic and free market processes.
3. Foster university level competencies in writing, speaking, reading, appreciation of the arts, analytical reasoning, computer literacy, and research.
4. Enhance graduate level knowledge and skills, particularly in the areas of individual research and scholarship.

5. Convey the different ways of acquiring knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.
6. Enable them to engage in a major field of study built on a solid foundation in the liberal arts.
7. Explore the moral dimensions and ethical implications in the disciplines offered by the University.
8. Assist in developing competence and determination in their approach to their vocation, including encouragement in choosing and following their vocation as a calling to glorify God, fulfilling the Great Commission, and doing the will of God through all of life.
9. Promote the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian values in order that there might be a maturing of spiritual, intellectual, social and physical behavior.
10. Cultivate a sensitivity to the needs of others and a commitment to the betterment of humanity.
11. Encourage a commitment to the Christian life, one of active communication of the Christian faith, personal integrity, and social responsibility which, as it is lived out, leads people to Jesus Christ as the Lord of the universe and their own personal Savior.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 7, 2006

Institutional Commitment to the QEP

Board of Trustees Approval

On June 27, 2006, the Executive Committee of the University's Board of Trustees reviewed the revised focus statement and approved the modification to the original plan.

Budget Commitment

At the annual meeting on March 7, 2006, the Board of Trustees approved the budget proposal that was included in the original QEP document. Subsequent evaluations of the projected budgetary needs for the implementation and on-going

development of the revised QEP indicate that there was no need to modify the original budget request.

Administrative and Faculty Initiatives

Director of QEP—Administration approved the position of Director of the QEP in late March 2006. The Director has been given the responsibility and authority to complete the tasks as presented in the QEP Implementation Plan. In addition to the writing of this plan, the QEP Director has a direct reporting relationship to the Provost. Additionally, the QEP Director provides updates on the plan to the Executive Vice-President/COO. This has enabled him to keep abreast of the prioritization of budget allocations and administrative decisions for the QEP in a direct manner.

Graduate Writing Center—Funding for the Graduate Writing Center (GWC) was a significant statement of commitment to the QEP by the University, especially in light of other significant building and student growth initiatives. The search for the Director of the GWC has been completed; additionally, renovation of the Campus North facility is well-underway and on schedule for an August completion date.

Faculty Training Initiatives—Liberty University has committed to funding the training of faculty in the area of writing skills and the assessment of writing. Prior to this initiative, most all training has been conducted by in-house faculty.

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

“Of all those arts in which the wise excel, Nature’s chief masterpiece is writing well.”

—Duke of Buckinghamshire Sheffield

Introduction

The focus of Liberty University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is *“to improve graduate student writing.”* The process of developing the QEP was both participatory and iterative (i.e. evolving). The participatory nature of the process is evidenced by the fact that development of the QEP involved the entire campus community including the Board of Trustees, the University Cabinet, the Deans’ Council, and other administration, along with faculty, staff, and students. Concomitantly, the process was iterative in that choosing a topic or focus for the QEP emerged over an extended period of time as the various stakeholders met, discussed, and brainstormed about what particular issue or area of student learning merited the extensive resources and focused attention the QEP would necessitate.

As this document will demonstrate, there emerged a concern about student writing skills in general—and graduate student writing skills in particular. Research—both internal and external to the University—substantiated the legitimacy of this concern and ultimately, the viability of graduate student writing as a focus for the QEP was justified. The need for a concerted effort to improve graduate student writing was deemed consistent with the University’s stated mission: “to develop Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact tomorrow’s world” and

with one of its core goals of “foster[ing] university level competencies in writing.” This chapter will demonstrate that the QEP focus is particularly appropriate because it addresses needs of graduate programs in general, and those at Liberty University in particular, that have been identified as critical to student success.

Background to the Problem

The Challenge of Graduate Student Writing

A survey of the current literature on undergraduate and graduate writing skills confirms that the challenges Liberty University faces with its graduate students’ writing skills are common to graduate programs across the country. Specifically, the literature indicates that even skilled graduate students often lack a basic understanding of the conventions of academic or professional writing.

Lundell (1996), for example, a teacher of basic writing at the University of Minnesota, notes how she sees her position as a graduate student and that of her basic or developmental writing students as similar, in that both groups have much to learn about “talking the talk” before they can be full members of their respective major programs of study or their chosen professions. Just as graduate students frequently need instruction in the language of their chosen profession, they also demonstrate deficient grammar and punctuation skills. These problems are compounded by the fact that graduate students are no less free from “poor writing habits, chronic procrastination and writing apprehension” than their undergraduate counterparts (Bloom, 1981, as cited by Nielsen & Rocco, 2002, p. 309). In fact, research (Jackson, Nelson, Heggins, Baatz & Schuh, 1999; Rose &

McClafferty, 2001) suggests that student writing can only be markedly improved with a sweeping, multi-part plan that focuses energy on many stages of the educational process.

Moreover, while it is true that graduate students demonstrate many of the same writing errors that plague less advanced students (Bloom, as cited in Nielson & Rocco, 2002), nevertheless their needs are specific. The sorts of research and writing these students do, for example, are often sustained, substantial, nuanced, and deeply complex, and are thus harder to manage than many undergraduate writing tasks. Therefore, training in writing for graduate students must be targeted to meet these specific needs (Biggs, Lai, Tang, & Lavelle, 1999, pp. 296-297). Then too, graduate student writers

face new problems, such as organizing much larger texts than hitherto, and they need a greater knowledge of academic discourse conventions. Their needs are both more focused and more instrumental than those of undergraduates, and therefore the sort of help they need in their writing is likely to be different from the usual kind given to undergraduates (Biggs, Lai, Tang, & Lavelle, 1999, pp. 296-297).

Historically, graduate programs have done little to address these specific needs. As a result, students are often left on their own to figure out how to do graduate-level writing. As Berquist (1983) argues, even a superior undergraduate education could only do so much to prepare students for graduate school because original, scholarly writing is seldom stressed in lower-level courses. Indeed, many students are not introduced to scholarly writing at all in their earlier (i.e. undergraduate) academic career. According to Sternberg (1990), scholarly writing is neglected because memorizing and regurgitating information is valued in undergraduate education, whereas discovery and judgment skills are prized much later in graduate school. Not surprisingly, then, graduate students often demonstrate deep anxiety about the process of writing:

Students had more confidence in their writing ability as undergraduates than as graduate students, partly because of constraints placed on graduate papers. This is due in part to the perception that graduate writing is more difficult; papers begin to become less focused in theme and structure, with less flexibility to create within the confines of courses. Another factor is time constraints on busy graduate students, most of whom juggle the demands of a full-time job, family and social lives with being a student....Even those who rated themselves higher as graduate students attributed it to maturity and practice rather than to perceived growth in writing ability (Nielsen & Rocco, 2002, p. 312).

This lack of confidence translates into poor quality work:

Writing-anxious students tend to submit research proposals that are under-developed, shorter, less clearly written, and that contain more grammatical and typographical errors. Apparently, the complex, novel, rigid, and compulsory nature of research proposals appear to induce writing anxiety in some students, which, in turn, reduces their quality. Also, writing anxiety undermines the student's ability to think cohesively enough to write effectively (Onwuegbuzie, 1998, p. 590).

If graduate students are to learn to write more effectively, then active steps must be taken to help them make the transition from undergraduate to graduate-level writing. First, in light of the fact that “few graduate programs teach scholarly writing, and little professional input or support for effective graduate writing exists” (Rose & McClafferty, 2001), institutions must begin to think of writing as a skill that can and should be taught in graduate school. Students must be taught not only the particulars of the publication process (Jackson, Nelson, Heggins, Baatz & Schuh, 1999) but also the whole complex of skills that constitutes “the scholarly writing process” (Shaw, 1999). This training should be multi-faceted, and must work toward three goals: (1) achieving competence in the technical aspects of writing (grammar, punctuation, etc.); (2) demonstrating skills necessary to organize and present substantial data, complex thought, and original arguments; and (3) professionalizing students' writing.

To summarize, universities must focus on encouraging writing as part of the curriculum, not only to give their students practice and thus increase their competency, but also to help students to become more familiar with the interactive nature of the writing process. This process should, in turn, decrease the anxiety students feel when they present their work and ultimately create scholars ready to pass on these skills to the next generation of doctoral students (Witt, 1995, as cited in Nielson & Rocco, 2002).

The Challenge of Graduate Student Writing at Liberty University

Liberty University's graduate students—much like students in graduate programs across the country discussed in the literature—demonstrate a need for training in professional writing. Compounding this need is the fact that the writing skills of many of Liberty's incoming graduate students exhibit deficiencies, especially in relation to basic competencies such as grammar, syntax, and clarity.

In an effort to document this need for writing skills training, an in-house writing assessment—developed and scored by faculty in the School of Communication—was given to Liberty's first-year residential graduate students late in 2005. The assessment, which utilized an on-demand writing prompt, had some inherent weaknesses: notably, it provided only a sample that was, at best, a snapshot in time and did not approximate “real writing.” Nevertheless, the assessment did provide some evidence that, on average, Liberty's first year residential graduate students needed writing skills training in areas including (but not limited to) organizational structure, clarity of content, and grammatical or mechanical errors.

Interestingly, the results of the in-house assessment were validated in January 2006, when the same group of students was given a nationally normed assessment, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) as a means of gathering baseline data for the QEP. Though normed against sophomore undergraduates, this assessment was chosen because, unlike the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the CAAP emphasizes writing skills in particular. As mentioned, the CAAP confirmed the results of the in-house writing assessment, with Liberty's first year graduate students scoring in the 61st percentile among *undergraduates* on the CAAP writing assessment (see Appendix A).

The assessment results of both the CAAP and the in-house measure came as no surprise to members of the graduate faculty since they have for some time expressed concern over various aspects of their students' writing abilities. The University's seminary faculty, for example, reported discussions that revealed the need for writing courses with attention to writing skills and style instruction. Concomitantly, Liberty's Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation (hereafter referred to as GCRE) discussed and voted to develop a "course for graduate students entering any LU program [that] will cover fundamentals for research and may include explicit information on . . . plagiarism" (GCRE Minutes, May 9, 2005).

As a means of providing anecdotal, secondary supporting data of the problem, a graduate faculty survey was conducted in November 2005 to obtain the overall views of the graduate faculty and their thoughts on the writing skills of their students (see Appendix B). Not surprisingly, the results of this survey confirmed what had been

suspected: the vast majority of graduate faculty who responded to the survey were unsatisfied with respect to the scholarly and discipline-specific syntactical writing skills of their students (see Appendix C). Almost universally, faculty noted a lack of critical thinking skills among students, as well as deficiencies in the technical aspects of their students' writing, such as organization, APA and MLA style, grammar, and punctuation. Like their colleagues nationwide, Liberty's graduate faculty lament their "students' declining ability to write [,] . . . to explore issues with depth and complexity, to organize material in a coherent manner with full development and detail, and to write with control over diction, syntactic variety, and transition" (White, quoted in Alter & Adkins, 2001, p. 493).

Focusing on the Challenge of Graduate Student Writing at Liberty University

In April 2006, at the direction of the QEP Steering Committee (QEPSC), the QEP Director coordinated 12 focus groups of graduate faculty (a total of 101 participants) and 15 focus groups of graduate students (a total of 102 participants). The purpose of these focus groups was to garner input from graduate students and faculty alike on how to address the problem of graduate student writing at Liberty. The students and faculty were selected from each graduate program, with 28.3% of the potential students and 74.6% of the potential faculty participating on a voluntary basis (see Appendix D). The focus group questions covered the areas of student needs, faculty needs, and the role of a writing center (see Appendix E for interview protocol and other pertinent focus group information).

Graduate students in all disciplines asked for more graduate writing training, especially in relation to research skills and resources, the use of documentation style, the “look” of graduate student writing in general, and the use of technical vocabulary specific to their fields. Some students even suggested that various paper templates might be distributed to help writers who lack confidence in or an understanding of employing proper format when drafting a paper.

Almost all students asked that faculty be more explicit as to their expectations for written assignments, and that those expectations be more standardized across departments and disciplines. Additionally, students in all disciplines asked for more time, feedback, and engagement from faculty; in particular, they desired more help in editing their work and accessing a variety of model papers in their fields. Graduate nursing students asked for more cooperative writing in the form of peer reviewing. Students in the School of Communication asked that faculty be given more time to write on their own so that they could demonstrate their mastery of good writing. They requested, in effect, that faculty have access to the same resources available to students. In addition, students in all focus groups who were familiar with the idea of a writing center requested that it work with all types and levels of student writers in all stages of the writing process.

Graduate faculty across the disciplines at Liberty identified specific strategies that would assist them in teaching students the techniques for improving their writing and requested specific training toward that end. Some expressed a desire for training in the development of rubrics and the use of Internet resources such as Turnitin.com. Seminary faculty expressed needs such as access to materials on teaching writing and continual

updates on library resources. Faculty in the Center for Counseling and Family Studies remarked that they would like to incorporate more instruction in writing into their courses, but given the demanding faculty-to-student ratio, doing so would require training in grading techniques and other pedagogical tools to streamline the process of teaching writing. Similarly, the graduate faculty in nursing stated they would benefit from assistance in teaching students the value of revision, using such strategies as peer editing. Finally, faculty members in the Integrated Learning Resources Center (ILRC) made the point that teaching faculty need time to do research of their own so that they model the best techniques of scholarly writing and research. Faculty in all programs were enthusiastic about the potential of a Graduate Writing Center, as one of many tools to accomplish the desired goal of improving graduate student writing.

Summary

Viewed in total, this is an especially appropriate time to initiate this Plan to improve graduate student writing at Liberty University, for two primary reasons. First, the University has recently added a limited number of doctoral programs where writing skills are essential to the dissertation process and future publications. It is expected that an emphasis on writing skills should assist students in becoming more successful in their graduate programs, with the corollary result of higher academic performance.

Second, recent growth in the LU student body has also necessitated a corresponding increase in the size of the faculty, and many of these new faculty members are well prepared to teach, evaluate, and improve graduate student writing. The University has grown by 129% since the fall of 2000. The residential program grew by

65%, and the distance learning program has grown by 224%. Similarly, the faculty has grown from 294 full- and part-time faculty in 2002-03 to 499 in 2005-06, a nearly 70% increase. Many of these new faculty members hold terminal degrees from research institutions where publication is not only encouraged but mandated. These professors bring to the LU community two expectations: (1) that students will write, and (2) that they will ultimately present what they write to the larger research community. In light of the cultural shift that the presence of these well-trained faculty members has created, the current Liberty University faculty is not only enthusiastic about the goals of the QEP but also eager to execute them.

CHAPTER II: THE PLAN

“I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I write and I understand.”

—Chinese Proverb

In order to achieve the goal of improving graduate student writing, a viable strategy that directly and intentionally targets the problem had to be crafted. Toward that end, the QEP Steering Committee, in concert with members of the faculty, administration, and the graduate student body, developed a Graduate Writing Program that consists of two primary objectives (see Appendix F: QEP Planning Grid).

Overview of the Plan

Purpose: *To improve graduate student writing*

Primary Objectives

- Implement curricular and administrative strategies to improve graduate student writing
- Support faculty in improving graduate student writing

Chapters II and IV address the two primary objectives in detail. More precisely, these chapters identify the specific learning outcomes and present the intervention and assessment strategies. Concomitantly, Chapter III outlines the support strategies necessary for the successful implementation of the Plan. These support strategies include:

- Develop and provide a management plan that identifies key personnel necessary for implementation of the Plan

- Secure adequate financial resources for implementation of the Plan
- Establish a timeline for implementation of the Plan
- Institute ongoing communication networks regarding the Plan
- Articulate a process of ongoing assessment and, as needed, revision of the Plan

The QEP is a five-year plan that will initially target residential graduate students¹ with a view toward developing a successful model that can be tailored for every academic program at Liberty. The goal of the QEP is two-fold. First, it will result in residential graduate students achieving the learning outcomes detailed below. Secondly, it will address faculty development in the areas of assessing the writing skills of their students and assisting students in enhancing those skills. The primary objectives will be achieved through intervention strategies and defined by specific learning outcomes.

Student-Related Learning Outcomes

In order to *improve* graduate student writing, quality writing for graduate students must be defined and operationalized. As discussed in Chapter I, graduate level writing achieves three distinct competencies: technical correctness, structural and conceptual sophistication, and professional and stylistic mastery. Toward that end, the QEP Steering Committee, in concert with leadership from the residential graduate programs, established the following six student learning outcomes that, when achieved, will characterize improved graduate student writing at Liberty University. These student learning outcomes are divided into two categories: one for graduate students who have been tested and determined to be *developmental* writers and five for *all* graduate students.

¹ The one exception is the School of Law; for explanation, see Appendix G

Learning Outcome One for *Developmental* Graduate Students

1. *The student will demonstrate basic writing skills by:*
 - Choosing, restricting, organizing, and supporting a writing topic and/or thesis.
 - Writing to a specific audience, using correct and appropriate word choices.
 - Writing for a clear purpose.
 - Writing in the selected discipline's overall style, as evidenced in professional journals.
 - Writing sentences that are clear, concise, and technically correct.
 - Revising and editing through more than one draft.

Learning Outcomes Two through Six for *All* Graduate Students

2. *The student will demonstrate higher level writing skills using logic (induction and deduction) in analysis and argumentation.*
3. *The student will demonstrate proper research skills and documentation specific to his discipline by:*
 - Integrating sources accurately and effectively.
 - Using discipline-specific documentation (APA, MLA, Turabian).
4. *The student will be able to write with clarity by:*
 - Using syntax, terminology, and technical language appropriate to the selected discipline's overall style.
 - Writing in the forms and genres of writing required by each discipline, such as conference papers and research articles.
 - Demonstrating writing skills sufficient to fulfill the writing requirements of each academic program, such as a graduate-level thesis.
5. *The student will attest to greater confidence in his writing ability.*
6. *The student will self-report that he/she is better prepared and has more confidence for future writing tasks.*

Intervention Strategies for Developmental Graduate Students

Required Course: Introduction to Graduate Writing

Learning Outcome One is for developmental graduate students and addresses basic competency in the elements of good writing common to all disciplines, including proper grammar, punctuation, topic selection, organization, etc. This outcome assumes that correctness can best be achieved through process-based writing, including drafting and revision. To ensure that all students begin their graduate work with a core set of skills, the Plan includes the development of a course that is required of all graduate students in their first semester of graduate study at Liberty, *Introduction to Graduate Writing*.

As envisioned by those involved in the QEP planning process, this course is:

(1) A first step. Although no single class can magically “fix” the writing problems of graduate students, this class represents a serious effort to begin to diagnose, name, and teach solutions to problems common to graduate students at all levels. As Alter and Adkins (2001) state, “Students appear unable to explore issues with depth and complexity, to organize material in a coherent manner with full development and detail, and to write with control over diction, syntactic variety, and transition” (p.493). They make the additional point that improving students’ writing skills is the responsibility of educators and that in order for a writing intervention to succeed it must have the backing of professors at every level. Accordingly, at Liberty University, *Introduction to Graduate Writing* will serve as a *first step* in improving graduate students’ writing skills.

However, for this Plan to be successful, it will require reinforcement in classrooms across all graduate programs.

(2) A specific intervention. Not all Liberty graduate students need instruction in the technical aspects of writing, such as those the *Introduction to Graduate Writing* course is designed to address. The course will, therefore, be available for credit by examination, much like developmental foreign language or math classes. On the first day of this class, all students will be given an objective exam that will measure their ability to fulfill Learning Outcome One (targeted for Developmental Graduate Students). Students who achieve a “pass” grade on this exam will be given credit for completing *Introduction to Graduate Writing*. They will subsequently be enrolled in the second course, *Writing in the Discipline*. This screening will have the additional benefit of allowing the instructor of *Introduction to Graduate Writing* to focus the class completely on developmental skills in accordance with the needs of his or her students.

(3) A safety net. This course will assure base-level competency in writing skills that all graduate students ought to possess—and indeed, *must* possess if they are to accomplish the forms of writing required in graduate study and the professional and academic worlds. Student success in this course will be further supported by the resources provided by the Graduate Writing Center.

Development of this course will occur in Phases I and II of the Implementation Plan (see pages 45 – 47); additionally, a number of strategies are already in place that will directly contribute to this outcome. In addition to advising students about the goals

and strategies of the QEP at all stages, *Introduction to Graduate Writing* will have the following elements:

(1) Writing Software: Students will be trained to use the resources the University already provides with greater acumen and, as necessary, will also be trained in the use of specific writing software. For instance, students will learn how to use the writing-feedback functions of Microsoft Word; in addition they will be trained as needed in the use of bibliographic/reference software. Furthermore, when appropriate, the course will make use of resources such as Blackboard®, already used widely within the University. A Blackboard®-based version of this course may eventually become standard as the QEP expands its base to serve distance-learning students. Since software is in constant development, the QEP planners do not want to dictate exactly which software this course will employ at this time; however, the use of technology in the writing process will be an important element.

(2) Rubrics for Assessment: As the student focus groups suggested repeatedly, faculty members need to make their writing expectations clear *before* students submit their first major assignment. This course will rely on the use of rubric-based grading to do just that. Not only do rubrics often externalize a set of unstated assumptions on which faculty base grades, but they also make the subjective process of writing and evaluation more objective. (For an example of a sample rubric, see Appendix H.)

(3) An Exit Exam: This course will be graded pass/fail. However, in order to pass the course students must successfully complete an exit exam that will objectively test all the learning outcomes detailed in this section of the QEP. The planners of the

QEP anticipate that this exam should not be difficult for students to pass provided they attend class throughout the term; complete all in-class drills, assignments, and activities; and aim consistently to improve their writing skills through use of the take-home assignments given them. This will be a highly interactive course that not only presents information to students, but allows them to draft papers multiple times and to receive feedback from faculty and their peers on their revisions. However, should a student fail the exit examination in *Introduction to Graduate Writing*, he or she must repeat the class in order to enroll in *Writing in the Discipline* and other courses for his degree program.

The main content of the course will naturally focus on achieving the outcome by whatever means necessary, including grammar drills, punctuation exercises, drafting and redrafting, and continual practice in writing. Students who successfully complete *Introduction to Graduate Writing* should find their academic experience at Liberty University enhanced, along with their ability to succeed in their chosen professions.

Intervention Strategies for All Graduate Students

Required Course: Writing in the Discipline

Upon successful completion of *Introduction to Graduate Writing*, either by testing out or by achieving a “pass” grade in the course, students will enroll in a second new writing course, *Writing in the Discipline*, tailored by each program. *Writing in the Discipline* assumes competency in basic writing skills; therefore, the content of the course will focus on beginning the process of professionalizing graduate students’ writing in their specific discipline as described in the literature.

Learning Outcomes Two through Four are designed to directly address the skills necessary to equip students to write within their disciplines. For example, Learning Outcome Two: *The student will demonstrate higher level writing skills using logic (induction and deduction) in analysis and argumentation*, draws attention to the need in graduate-level writing for students to demonstrate not just proper technical skills, but also advanced, organized thought processes. To that end, *Writing in the Discipline* will focus on the use of in-depth logic in developing and sustaining original research, arguments, and presentations. Learning Outcome Three: *The student will demonstrate proper research skills and documentation specific to his discipline*, requires that students learn discipline-specific strategies to find, integrate, and cite sources at a level appropriate to graduate writing. Finally, Learning Outcome Four: *The student will write with clarity*, requires students to express their thoughts in ways that are clear in form and content according to the conventions of their chosen disciplines. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to use discipline-specific technical terminology and be prepared to write within the basic forms and genres of writing demanded by their profession and academic units at Liberty University.

Unlike *Introduction to Graduate Writing*, this course cannot be completed by examination and will vary across disciplines as previously mentioned. For instance, the Counseling program may choose to teach this class as a cohort-model, Blackboard®-based course or as a lab attached to an existing course, while the Department of Communication Studies may envision this as a traditional, residential course. Indeed, some departments are already teaching or developing courses that will meet the criteria of this course, and as such, with review and oversight by the QEP Director and/or relevant

Graduate Writing Center personnel, these already extant courses may be renamed so as to show comparability with the *Writing in the Discipline* course. Academic units such as the Seminary that do not have a version of this course already in existence may rely on the GWC and QEP Director to help them develop and implement a version of this course consistent with the learning outcomes.

Finally, Learning Outcome Five: *The student will attest to greater confidence in his writing ability* and Learning Outcome Six: *The student will self-report that he/she is better prepared and has more confidence for future writing tasks* address the expectation of the QEPSC and others involved in the planning process that students completing *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline* will approach the tasks presented to them in graduate school and later in professional work with more confidence. As mentioned in Chapter I, building the confidence of students is a key step to enabling successful graduate writing.

Although critical to the Plan, these two courses alone are not sufficient to guarantee that graduate students' writing will improve. Thus, this Plan also incorporates measures for creating a culture of professional writing at Liberty University, one in which writing is not only encouraged but expected, and one which provides writing support to students and faculty alike.

Creating a Culture of Professional Writing

In addition to the interventions outlined above, all residential graduate programs must begin to emphasize and promote graduate-level writing in an effort to create and maintain a culture that values professional, scholarly writing. Some of these changes will

be implemented on an institutional level, under the direction of the Provost. Others will be implemented departmentally, as skilled faculty present ideas for integrating, evaluating, and encouraging writing in graduate coursework to their peers in workshops and department meetings. Still others will take place in individual classrooms, as faculty members seek to introduce or increase the use of strategies for teaching writing such as peer review and feedback models.

The ways these changes affect faculty will be discussed later in this chapter. For students, however, these changes will take two main forms (NOTE—for a description of related action strategies, see Implementation Plan Tables 1-5, pages 45—51):

(1) Increased Communication: Not only must the QEP Director and faculty clearly express the stated objectives of the QEP, they must also create venues for dialog about student writing outside of those provided within the required courses. In addition, this effort requires the University to create, sponsor, and promote venues in which graduate writing can be displayed. In fact, there are already some such resources in place at Liberty University, such as the Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation (GCRE) annual poster session, in-house conferences on topics such as Christianity and Literature, workshops on research and professional writing, and thesis symposia in various departments. At this point, however, the resources that exist are limited, and faculty and students alike are generally uninformed about the research and writing activities of their colleagues in other departments.

(2) Course Changes: The content and form of some existing courses must change in order to integrate strategies critical to the QEP objectives. Courses that do not

currently contain serious writing and discipline-specific research components must incorporate them. Faculty must also reinforce the information presented in *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline* as they offer feedback to students on their writing, as they hold students responsible for conforming to the generic standards of their professions, and as they encourage students to submit their research to larger venues such as national conferences or peer-reviewed journals. In addition, faculty must provide students with adequate feedback on their written work, either by using rubrics in evaluating papers or by providing extended commentary on drafts. The University will ensure that members of the faculty have adequate resources to introduce these new strategies.

Utilizing New Learning Strategies

In addition to the introduction of a department-wide or individualized rubric in graduate coursework, the QEP also aims to improve graduate student writing by teaching faculty to integrate peer review into their existing courses. Cullum (2000) describes the way in which writing center-inspired pedagogy can benefit graduate students: the same techniques that tutors in writing centers use to help struggling composition students can be used by graduate students reading each other's writing with very good results. These techniques include writing conferences, draft commentary, and peer-centered writing workshops.

Another version of this may be the Writing Process Feedback (WPF) model, which Mullen (2001) describes. This model consists of several steps, all of which are designed to help students write with the goal of publication in mind. Students approach

class early on with a research topic in mind. The student will then share this topic with his classmates, and then throughout the term, continue sharing his work—paragraphs, partial drafts, full drafts, and finally finished papers (p. 121). According to Mullen, “Writing support from the instructor and one’s peers can give students help with the main conceptualization of their paper, particularly identifying and focusing the research question or problem” (p.123). In these ways, in-class activities will reinforce the lessons that *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline* aim to teach.

Student Workshops

Once operational, the Graduate Writing Center (GWC) in conjunction with the Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation (GCRE), Center for University Excellence (CUE), and Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) will provide a number of workshops for students that will review, refine, and ultimately improve their writing skills. Topics for these workshops will include “University Resources” and will feature faculty from the professional library staff demonstrating Liberty’s library databases and faculty from the GWC explaining the writing resources the GWC offers to all students. Other workshops will focus on any area related to writing skills from the basic to the professional. Early in their graduate careers, for instance, some students will benefit from signing up for a workshop on plagiarism, while others may find that they periodically may need a refresher course on how to use some marks of punctuation or a particular citation format. Others may find that they need training on explaining technical information in a way that is engaging, lively, and comprehensible—an advanced skill. Some workshops may focus on basic or advanced research skills in a

particular discipline (e.g., “The Electronic Card Catalog,” “Online Archives” or “Using the Vatican’s Website for Theological Research”).

Still other academic units may find that they wish to supplement the work of *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline* by offering even more in-depth publication training. Heinrich, Neese, Rogers, and Facente (2004) describe a version of how such a workshop would be structured. Day I of the workshop, which happens the next-to-last semester of a student’s final year, focuses on the nuts and bolts of writing (what sorts of topics work, what sort of research is good, and which topics should be submitted to which journals). Day II, which happens just before graduation, focuses on peer editing works in progress. On the last day, students begin to compose a query letter in which they will pitch their articles in progress to journals of their choice.

Similarly, Cargill (2004) envisions a workshop that will bring together researchers working on a similar problem or topic with an established scholar who has published in the field. Topics covered will be discipline-specific but should deal with both the nuts and bolts of the writing process and the demands (or politics) of the publication market in that particular discipline. Ideally students will be able to bring their own research problems to the table ahead of time, which suggests that such a workshop might be better suited to advanced graduate students. Students will, in addition, present their work to their peers, who will provide knowledgeable feedback to help the student revise the article for publication.

In their totality, the changes the QEP outlines will reframe graduate student culture at Liberty University. Further, the QEP demonstrates the University’s

commitment to producing graduate students who are prepared to enter the workplace as fully competent professionals capable of producing and presenting original work in a scholarly fashion.

Faculty-Related Learning Outcomes

Administrative changes and direct student interventions alone cannot accomplish the aspirations of this Plan. Much of the work must be done by faculty members, as they learn and implement new pedagogical strategies designed to improve graduate student writing. Among current faculty, a number of strategies designed to teach practical skills to integrate and manage student writing in graduate courses will be implemented. It is expected not only that these strategies will inform faculty concerning the practical considerations that apply when teaching graduate students to write more effectively, but also that as these strategies are implemented, the visibility of writing and research in the LU community will increase. In turn, the increased visibility of scholarly activity should create a desire among less productive faculty members to improve their own writing skills in order to turn those skills into presentations, publications, and, most importantly, better pedagogy.

As with any multi-faceted plan, success can only be assured if the faculty understand the Plan, are trained in its key components, use the resources it develops, and integrate appropriate changes in their own courses. To that end, Liberty University has had and will continue to conduct orientation sessions to share information with faculty concerning the QEP. The goals of these sessions are that faculty will understand:

- The purpose and goals of the QEP

- The administrative structure of the QEP
- The role of the Graduate Writing Center (GWC)
- The role of faculty in each program to ensure the success of the QEP

A part of these orientation sessions will be the introduction of four faculty-related learning outcomes for improving graduate student writing. These outcomes were developed based on faculty and department chair input.

The faculty will:

1. *Write measurable learning outcomes for graduate writing in their courses.*
2. *Select assessment strategies that will measure graduate writing skills.*
3. *Develop or rewrite learning outcomes that will reflect graduate level writing for the graduate degree programs.*
4. *Implement writing components in their respective courses that will reflect the new or improved learning outcomes.*

Every syllabus at Liberty University requires a statement of learning outcomes. Learning Outcomes One and Three above anticipate that faculty will do the following in relation to the learning outcomes they already have in their syllabi: (1) review them to ensure they are measurable; (2) explore ways to integrate writing into these learning outcomes; and (3) make adjustments in the course to reflect the revised learning outcomes. The workshop entitled “Writing Measurable Learning Outcomes” is already required of all Liberty faculty. This workshop will be modified in content to correspond with the goals of the Plan. It is anticipated that the learning outcomes faculty integrate into individual classes will also be integrated into their departments at the program level (see Outcome Three above).

Outcomes Two and Four involve the integration and assessment of writing in graduate courses. In order to achieve these outcomes, faculty will be instructed in a number of new strategies for the classroom. The interventions detailed below will assist faculty in employing new strategies, including those involving revisions and additions to current faculty development protocols.

Intervention Strategies for Achieving Faculty-Related Learning Outcomes

Faculty Development

Departments across the University will share the responsibility of designing and offering a variety of workshops to help faculty develop, hone, and perfect their own research and writing skills. Some workshops offered may parallel certain of the student workshops described above. For example, as indicated in the focus groups discussed earlier, a number of faculty expressed the need for refresher courses in various aspects of writing, including citation and documentation formatting. Others mentioned that they would benefit from a refresher course explaining the resources offered by the Integrated Learning Resource Center (ILRC).

Given the limited number of Liberty faculty members engaged in research and publication, it seems logical that many would need to be reintroduced to the process of scholarly publication. Some of these workshops will be offered in a general format, while others may be discipline-specific.

Finally, some workshops will need to be more theoretical in nature. As indicated by comments from the focus groups, many of Liberty faculty members believe that writing consists primarily of technical skills—grammar, punctuation, diction, and

citation. Although an increasing number of faculty members realize the importance of critical thinking and originality in graduate-level writing, relatively few made reference to it. This suggests that faculty need to become familiar with current trends in writing pedagogy – trends focused much more on original thought and content than on the easily learned technical aspects of writing. Workshops on topics such as “Writing across the Curriculum” will emphasize the skills that define good writing across disciplines. Once the faculty begin to share a common set of assumptions about writing, they can begin to teach it in a more unified—and thus more effective—manner.

Full-time faculty are required to attend at least ten workshops during the school year. In addition, some discipline-specific workshops are given during department meetings, at which faculty attendance is already required. Workshops will include basic topics such as “Assignment Development” that address the need to integrate writing into their courses in ways that demonstrate clear, consistent standards and that effectively utilize best practices across the curriculum such as peer reviewing and multi-stage revision.

Current faculty members will also need training in evaluative strategies for writing. For instance, a workshop on a topic such as “Writing Rubrics” would introduce faculty to concrete strategies to aid them in evaluating their students’ writing against an objective set of standards. While some administrative units such as School of Education already have detailed grading rubrics for graduate-level writing, others will need to develop grading rubrics specific to their discipline. Individual faculty members will be trained in writing rubrics that reflect their own values as educators.

On the basis of comments made in faculty focus groups in April 2006, it is likely that faculty will appreciate workshops offered on topics such as time management. Integrating writing in a course that was previously examination-based will increase the grading load. Therefore it will be important for the University to find ways that offset the time commitment made by faculty. Training in rubrics will be helpful, as will workshops or tutorials on the use of helpful technological resources such as Turnitin.com, library resources, and even shortcuts such as the “macro” and “track changes” functions in Microsoft Word. In addition, experienced teachers of writing will share other evaluative strategies that are good for students and faculty alike. For instance, compositionists know that correcting grammar in every sentence of a paper renders the student a passive learner, inviting him simply to plug in corrections without understanding. Using strategies such as correcting one paragraph only, marking sentences with errors but not marking the specific error, or underlining errors but not specifying a correction make grading quicker and increase student involvement with the revision process.

While LU faculty will surely benefit from the information presented in these workshops, tutorials, and other resources, perhaps the most important effect of offering these workshops will be the increased communication among faculty within a program as they gather to discuss strategies for teaching writing.

The same strategies employed by current graduate faculty members can also be implemented to an even greater degree among newly hired faculty. In addition to the Faculty Orientation workshops for all faculty, new faculty members are required to participate in workshops designed especially for them. One of those workshops is

“Preparing to Teach Your First Class.” This workshop strongly encourages new faculty members to create measurable learning outcomes and assignments that emphasize writing skills in their syllabi. Indeed, it is much easier to integrate a new strategy into a course that will be taught for the first time by a new professor than it is to change a course that has been taught the same way for years. Since LU plans to hire approximately 60 new faculty members for the 2006-2007 academic year, these workshops should have a significant impact rather quickly.

Creating a Culture of Professional Writing

Paralleling the student learning outcomes above, faculty learning outcomes related to the creation of a writing culture at Liberty University will involve (1) increased communication and (2) course changes.

(1) Increased Communication: The workshops discussed above will increase the visibility of writing at LU and ease communication of new teaching strategies. Similarly, as faculty contribute to the development, sponsorship, and promotion of venues for graduate research, they also enhance the profile of writing across disciplines. This may involve informing students about the University’s annual poster session; it may also involve passing on a call for papers from a professional journal and then helping a student draft, revise, and submit a paper.

(2) Course Changes: As discussed above, faculty will spearhead the University’s effort to improve graduate student writing by requiring writing and research in core courses, and giving detailed feedback in the form of rubric-based evaluation or written comments. Similarly, although it is a goal of the QEP that students be prepared to

produce discipline-specific writing, those involved in planning the QEP recognize that transitioning to academic writing is a long and often rocky road. Faculty will, therefore, need to provide model papers that allow students to see what constitutes good writing at the graduate level—they will thus be able to take as their models both student projects and finished essays in journals.

Implementing the Plan: The Graduate Writing Center

An integral part of Liberty University’s QEP is the establishment of a Graduate Writing Center (GWC) to serve as one tool in the achievement of all the student and faculty learning outcomes described above. The GWC will serve alongside University departments assisting in implementing the QEP at every level. At this point, the University has employed Dr. Emily Heady as Director for the GWC. The Director will assume responsibility for designing, implementing, and maintaining the daily functions of the GWC. The material presented in this section thus represents a plan that the GWC Director will revise, mold, and implement as she deems appropriate. Nevertheless, since these ideas are the result of many hours of focus group meetings, research, and one-on-one conversations with writing center personnel at other universities, those engaged in planning the QEP are confident that these ideas represent at least an outline of the functions the GWC will serve. In fact, the University has already allocated significant attention (in the form of time, energy, and personnel) and resources (both monetary and spatial) to the development and operation of the GWC. In doing so, Liberty University plans to avoid the sense that the GWC is the University’s “poor cousin” (Wahlstrom, 1999, p. 98).

Beginning in the fall of 2005, members of faculty and administration at Liberty began to research the components required for a successful writing center. This research included inquiry into secondary sources on writing centers, in-depth discussions with writing center personnel at Indiana University and perusal of their operating budget, training manuals, and operating procedures, and a survey of the staffing demographics of and services offered by a number of leading writing centers across the country. In June 2006, representatives from LU—including the QEP Director—visited Indiana University’s residential writing center, Writing Tutorial Services (WTS) and Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) to gain a deeper understanding of the way residential and computer-based writing centers function. As a result of this research, Liberty University has developed a plan for implementing a GWC that is expected to be helpful to students and faculty alike and that will be supportive of both the University’s mission and the QEP goals.

The GWC will be administered by a Director and Assistant Director who will be members of the LU teaching faculty and will enjoy a relatively large degree of autonomy. The respect and independence granted the Center staff will help them to avoid the common feeling that they are, as Grimm (1999) puts it, “very much aware of what sorts of writing and teaching of writing goes [sic] on in their University . . . yet regularly reminded that they are in service roles, marginalized and excluded from decisions that have direct impact on their work (p. 14).”

According to the position posting in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Liberty’s Graduate Writing Center Director should “hold a Ph. D. in composition/rhetoric

or English, have experience in the teaching of writing and in writing program administration, and have a record of scholarly activity. The Director will be responsible for faculty development, leading assessment, training tutors for writing conferences, developing close relationships with various graduate programs and faculty, and for providing leadership for curricular change in a dynamic, growing evangelical Christian environment.” In addition to teaching one course per semester, it is expected that the Director will develop, supervise, and publicize GWC operations, including tutor-training procedures and workshops of interest to graduate faculty. The Director will work closely with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), and other academic centers that train and provide resources for faculty development at the University. Finally, the Director will assess the effectiveness of the GWC and provide updates to the QEP director.

Other staff will be hired by the Director, including the Assistant Director, who will manage the day-to-day operations of the GWC to include training and scheduling tutors, supervising tutoring sessions, conducting workshops in writing-related skills, and, as necessary, conducting tutorials in classes across the University. The tutors in the writing center will be hired on an as-needed basis.

The GWC Director, Assistant Director, and possibly other staff will write a statement of the purpose and goals of the GWC, taking into account the initial mission of the GWC as it has been formulated for this QEP: *to support, promote, and enhance discipline-specific/graduate-level appropriate writing in all University graduate programs.*

As suggested earlier, the GWC will exist as an autonomous University department, not as an outgrowth of another department or academic unit. This distinction is important due to the planning assumption that individual graduate programs and/or departments have the best knowledge of their students' needs and their standards of professional writing and should therefore be given the freedom to develop the programs that they deem most appropriate. Although the GWC will assist departments in developing discipline- and format-specific training techniques as needed and may provide templates by which this training can be tailored to meet the needs of specific departments, the services offered by the GWC will address those issues common to all graduate programs.

Based on planning to date, the GWC will offer a number of services that both students and faculty may use and faculty members recommend. In-depth, individualized tutorials will be available to students and faculty at all stages in the writing process. A student may visit the GWC for grammar or citation help, tutoring in strategies such as pre-writing or drafting, consultation about the structure of a paper, and/or assistance with higher level skills such as style, tone, and advanced critical thinking. While the GWC will certainly serve the needs of ESL, developmental, and less advanced writers, its tutors will also be available to more advanced writers who wish to polish their skills. For instance, a faculty member engaged in research may want a tutor in the GWC to read his work in order to see if its style can be improved, or to identify various grammatical or stylistic tics. In addition, the GWC will contain a range of resources on writing—style manuals, textbooks, software, and other resources that are available to students and faculty who wish to use them.

Ideally, staff members from the GWC will be available to make presentations in various classes across the University. For instance, if a faculty member is not comfortable with his or her ability to teach on topics such as citation or plagiarism, a staff person from the GWC could make classroom presentations by invitation. Beyond the classroom instruction provided, this collaboration would have two supplementary benefits. First, it would familiarize students and faculty alike with the individualized services offered by the GWC, as well as give the GWC a face. Second, if a number of faculty members in a department utilize the GWC to teach these topics, the way these faculty members understand and explain topics such as citation should tend to standardize across the discipline. As graduate students in focus groups universally agreed, increased standardization among members of the department in these areas is the key to decreasing anxiety about the writing process.

In conjunction with the Center for University Excellence and other support units already engaged in faculty training at Liberty, the GWC will also offer a number of services to faculty. In addition to refresher courses on the technical aspects of writing, as mentioned earlier, the GWC will share in developing workshops on topics such as rubric writing, peer editing, grading strategies, and so on. These workshops will contribute not just to the development of specific pedagogical skills but also serve to increase communication among faculty members. The intent is that increased communication will lead to increased adoption of the strategies shared as well as increasing standardization in the faculty's assessment of writing skills. In all relevant workshops, the GWC will define writing as a complex of skills involving not just grammar and citation but also critical thinking, organization, and originality—the hallmarks of scholarly writing.

In addition to teaching faculty time-saving strategies related to the assessment of students' writing, the GWC will also bear some of the burden the QEP imposes on faculty members' time in other ways. For instance, the GWC can assist members of departments in developing the curricula for *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline* by providing templates and serving as a liaison between various departments as they design these courses. Secondly, the GWC will assist faculty in improving the writing of students who have tested at the developmental level and/or need assistance due to their status as international students from non-English speaking countries. Since it may take an extended period of time to explain to an international student the proper use of articles in the English language, it is much more likely that this will happen if it is a task assigned to tutors in the GWC instead of to faculty members, who only have a limited number of office hours per week. Similarly, since some students' writing problems are hard to diagnose, the expertise of the tutors and administrative staff may be more appropriate than that of a faculty member in, for instance, the seminary. For example, what may look like 75 individual grammatical errors may be traceable to the fact that the student does not properly understand subordination rules—something a faculty member may or may not be equipped to diagnose but a problem that tutors should be able to ferret out easily. The GWC, then, will ideally help improve graduate student writing on a level that is both particular and global. Not only can it help to fix a student's tendency to use comma splices, but it can equip faculty to teach writing more effectively in their courses.

Finally, the GWC could reduce the level of student anxiety about writing, something that, as the sources discussed in Chapter One suggest, contributes greatly to

the success of student writing. Students and faculty benefit from increasingly standardized—across both the University and the departments—understandings of what good writing is. Similarly, as faculty are taught to emphasize certain universals about writing—that grammar and content both matter, that original thinking is integral to graduate study, that good writing is an outgrowth of good thinking—then students will have a better understanding of quality writing at the graduate level.

CHAPTER III: IMPLEMENTATION

“Finally, one just has to shut up, sit down, and write”

—Natalie Goldberg

In Chapters I and II, the challenges this QEP seeks to address were explained, as were the intervention strategies that will address those challenges. This chapter presents the logistical backbone that will support and structure the intervention strategies described in Chapter II, and assessment strategies described in Chapter IV.

Management Plan

Personnel

The individual responsible for the oversight is the QEP Director. Additionally, the QEP Director will oversee the Graduate Writing Center and coordinate its interaction with the graduate programs, as they seek to fulfill the expected outcomes of the QEP.

Early in the QEP planning process, the QEP planning team established a set of expectations, qualifications, and responsibilities for each of the key administrative positions related to implementation of the QEP. Committee recommendations for the QEP Director were that the individual should have an earned doctorate and be eligible to teach at the graduate level. Additionally, it was decided that he/she should possess leadership, administrative, and interpersonal skills and, if possible, have experience in

assessment. The ongoing responsibilities of the Director were established to include the following:

- Assure that the strategies, assessment, and evaluation of the QEP are implemented according to the stated timeline.
- Serve as an active member of the QEP Steering Committee.
- Chair any and all committees related to the implementation of the QEP.
- Make recommendations to the Provost concerning hiring a Director for the Graduate Writing Center.
- Manage the QEP Budget.
- Provide leadership to the personnel, offices, and staff involved in the implementation of the QEP.
- Monitor the progress of the QEP on a regular basis and providing updates to the Provost and Steering Committee.
- Post progress reports to the QEP website.
- Conduct yearly reviews and propose changes to the QEP based on analysis and evaluation.
- Meet with the Steering Committee every spring to discuss the yearly review.
- Prepare an annual report for the Provost.
- Prepare annual updates and the 5-year update to the Commission on Colleges in the year 2010.

The Provost appointed Dr. Fred Milacci as QEP Director in March 2006. His educational and professional background includes:

- A strong background in research (both quantitative and qualitative).
- Advanced degrees (Masters and Doctorate) from a Research I institution.
- Post-doctoral work in research and statistics.

- Founding director of Liberty University’s Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation.
- Extensive teaching experience at the graduate level.
- Significant experience in (and reputation for) group leadership and team building.
- 25 years experience in leadership and administration (as a senior pastor).
- In-depth involvement in the QEP process.

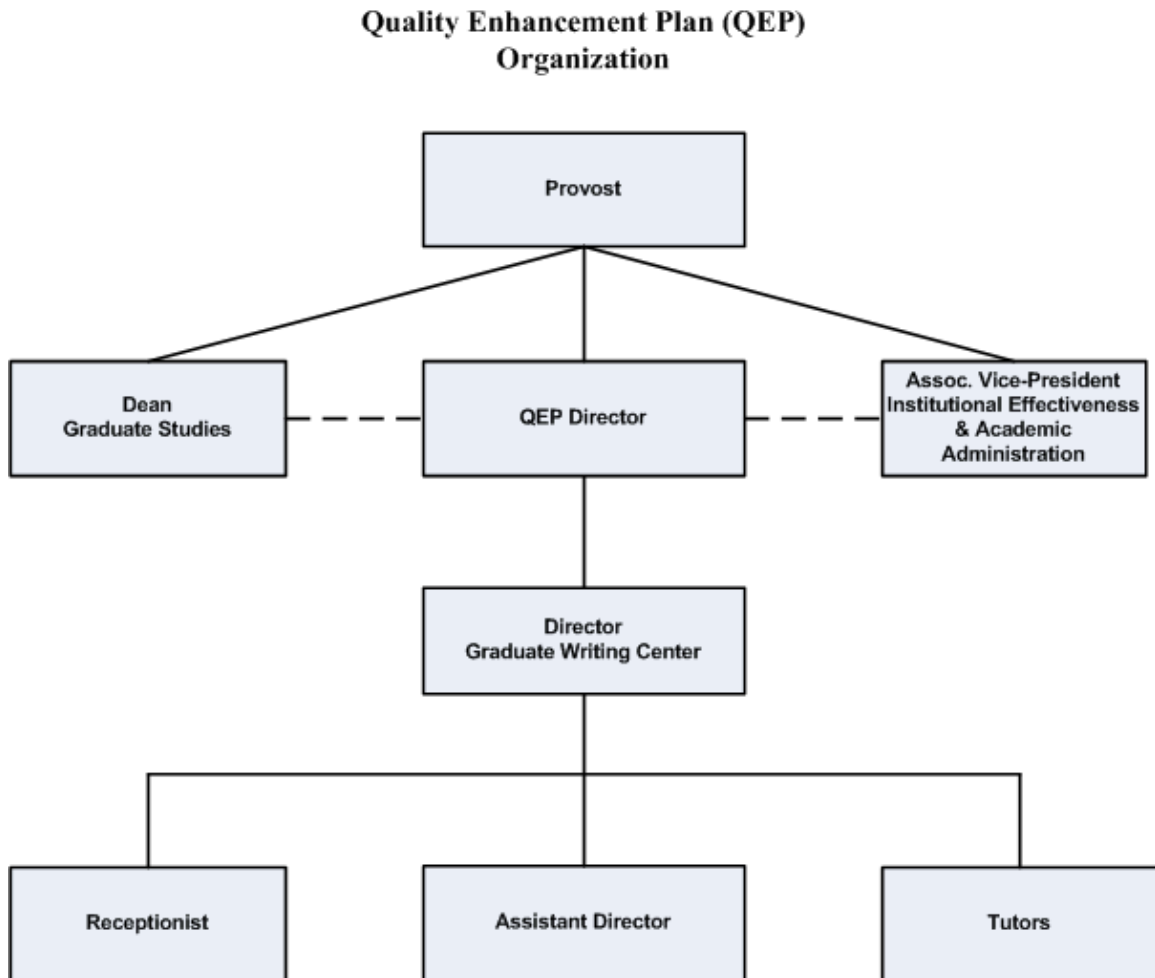
Additionally, the Provost named a QEP Steering Committee (QEPSC) that includes, in addition to himself, the University’s Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, the Vice Provost for Distance Learning and Graduate Studies, the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Administration, the QEP Director, the Vice President for Administration, the Chair of the English Department, the Dean of the Seminary, and faculty representatives from the Graduate Counseling Program. This Committee acts in a broad advisory capacity, providing oversight, feedback, and recommendations to the QEP Director throughout the five years of the plan. The QEP Director monitors and evaluates the progress of the QEP and will provide periodic updates to the QEPSC, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees. Further, an annual review of the QEP will include recommendations as to changes and revisions to the Plan based on assessment and evaluation of the strategies used to enhance the writing skills of graduate students.

In the initial planning stages, the QEP Planning Team also outlined a set of expectations for the Director of the Graduate Writing Center. In addition to the qualifications detailed in Chapter II, the committee discussed the fact that this person

should have an earned doctorate in an area related to writing and composition and have experience teaching writing courses at the college level. Since this Plan is oriented toward graduate students, the requirement was added that he/she meet the qualifications to teach at the graduate level. Moreover, this person should possess leadership, administrative, and interpersonal skills. Experience in working with a writing center would be beneficial but is not required. The GWC Director's primary responsibilities are to:

- Develop procedures for implementing all aspects of the Graduate Writing Center.
- Supervise and publicize Center operations.
- Prepare a training program for the tutors.
- Hire staff and tutors as needed.
- Train and manage the staff and tutors.
- Develop tutorial services for faculty and students.
- Develop and conduct workshops for faculty and students in the enhancement of the writing skills of graduate students.
- Coordinate with various academic centers and units to provide specific training to faculty and students.
- Assess Center services.
- Teach one writing class per semester.
- Provide regular updates to the QEP Director.

Organizational Chart for the Graduate Writing Center



2006 Actions

During Phase One of the Implementation Plan, the QEP Director has worked and will continue to work directly with the Center for University Excellence (CUE) and the Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation (GCRE) to provide workshops to train the faculty on enhancing the writing skills of graduate students through their curriculum. These workshops, as discussed in Chapter II, deal with topics such as rubric writing,

format-specific citation, drafting, peer reviewing, time-saving practices for assessing written assignments, and other pedagogical techniques necessary to integrate writing more fully into the graduate curricula. As necessary, the Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE) provides training to the faculty on the use of the University's online Blackboard® template, to be utilized extensively for the early intervention graduate writing courses (*Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline*) and for submission of online papers for peer editing and review by faculty members.

Future Actions

In Phase Two through Phase Five of the Implementation Plan, the Director of the QEP will oversee the development and institution of the workshops and training for both the faculty and students. The CUE, the GCRE, and other academic centers that support faculty development will assist the Director in selecting and recruiting for the training as needed. During this time the QEP Director will monitor the progress of training and implementation of the GWC. The timeline for the management activities can be found in Tables 1-5 - *QEP Implementation Plan* (pages 45—51).

Financial Plan

The following budget allocates sufficient resources to staff all the necessary management and support positions. In addition, it provides generous funding for development of the GWC. Other financial needs such as stipends for external speakers, photocopying costs for handouts associated with faculty workshops, and other needs can be met by other academic centers or units which already have budgets in place that can support these activities.

QEP Budget

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
QEP Director (Stipend)*	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Faculty Development	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

Graduate Writing Center

Staff Salaries & Benefits					
GWC Director	54,000	56,160	58,406	60,742	63,171
GWC Assistant Director	42,000	43,680	45,427	47,244	49,133
GWC Receptionist	21,600	22,464	23,362	24,296	25,267
Graduate Assistantships (Tutors) (4)	44,000	44,000	(2) 66,000	66,000	66,000

Assessment

Testing Supplies	3,570	3,920	4,909	4,909	12,272
Administration Fees	350	350	350	350	875

Equipment

Printer/Copy machine	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Computers (3)	3,255		(2) 2,170		
Phones (3)	570		(2) 380		
Phone Drops (3)	825		(2) 550		
Desks (7)	3,500		(2) 1,000		
Chairs (7 desk chairs, 4 regular chairs)	1,100		(4) 400		
Book Shelves (4)	500				

Supplies & Expenses

Office Supplies	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,800	4,000
Printing	4,000	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,500
Travel (Staff to conferences)	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Outside Speakers	4,000	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,000

Initial Set-up - Remodeling Space

7,000

Total 218,470 206,774 240,654 242,541 256,418

*This individual also has a faculty appointment, and receives compensation for that appointment. The stipend is added to the faculty salary.

Additionally, it should be noted that more than 760 square feet of space have been allocated for the Graduate Writing Center at Campus North of the University, and construction has begun on this project. This is an ideal location, as many of the University's graduate programs are housed at this location. The space will include a separate room for tutoring cubicles, a receptionist's desk, and an office space for both the Writing Center Director and Assistant Director. Additional space will be included to provide storage space for books and other learning materials.

Timeline

The timeline for the overall implementation of the QEP is described in Tables 1-5, including a phase for each year of the Implementation Plan through 2010. Each table has seven primary categories and is inclusive of all the strategies mentioned in the Plan. It is important to note that implementation will first occur with residential graduate programs. Upon assessment of the success of the QEP strategies on these programs, it is expected that the Plan will then expand to all graduate programs, residential and distance, by fall of 2009.

As mentioned above, the QEP timeline has begun, with the appointment of personnel who will remain involved with it throughout its duration. Also, the QEP Steering Committee will provide advice to the QEP Director during all phases of the implementation.

Several elements of this timeline are ongoing from Phase #1; others will become ongoing as they are implemented. For example, an annual report and update with recommendations will be compiled by the QEP Director and presented to the QEP

Steering Committee, Provost, and Board of Trustees. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will also assist with curriculum review, assessment, and evaluation of the QEP on an ongoing basis. After the first year of implementation, the Graduate Writing Center will become more involved in the Plan’s ongoing action strategies. Until then, due to the time involved in developing the Graduate Writing Center, the Center for University Excellence, and the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE) will assume the task of training faculty to improve graduate students’ writing.

In the year 2010, there will be a thorough evaluation of the QEP by the QEP Director, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the QEP Steering Committee, and the Provost. At that time, additional strategies may be added based on the assessment and evaluation of the Plan.

Table 1: QEP Implementation Plan—2006 Action Items – Phase #1		
	Spring/Summer 2006	Fall 2006
Implementation of the QEP	-Finalize and approve QEP -Appoint QEP Director -Appoint QEP Steering Committee	-QEP Steering Committee oversees writing and initial implementation of the Plan -QEP Director monitors progress of Plan
Graduate Writing Center	- Construct the GWC (Graduate Writing Center) -Conduct nationwide search for GWC Director -Tours of Graduate Writing Centers at Indiana University and Purdue University.	-Develop graduate writing center proposal -Employ a Director for the Writing Center -Develop procedures for training employees -Furnish facilities
Faculty Development	-CUE (Center for University Excellence) and GCRE (Graduate Center for Research and Evaluation) begin to develop workshops in congruence with learning outcomes	-CAFE (Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence) begins to develop & implement faculty training in Blackboard® discussion strategies -IE (Institutional Effectiveness) begins to develop and conduct faculty workshops on peer reviewing, writing rubrics, writing evaluation, and faculty writing skills

Table 1: QEP Implementation Plan—2006 Action Items – Phase #1		
	Spring/Summer 2006	Fall 2006
		-CAFE, IE, CUE (Center for University Excellence) and GWC begin to develop a curriculum for writing, including training in writing measurable learning outcomes, developing appropriate assignments, evaluation of drafts, evaluation of final papers, constructing rubrics, and course embedded techniques -GCRE establishes a committee for faculty development in writing for research
Student Development		-Faculty begin to integrate new techniques into the curriculum and courses to enhance writing
Curriculum Review	-IE sets up a process for curriculum review specific to writing skills	-IE conducts assessment/program reviews specific to writing skills -Feedback from IE then provided back to the departments -Committee formulated to develop Introduction to Graduate Writing course -Committee established to develop the basic template for Professional Writing course
Assessment	-Conduct 1 st Pre-test (CAAP) to gather baseline data on LU graduate students -Finalize planning for assessment of the QEP	-IE and other units fine tune the logistics for pre-test/post-test and remedial activities -IE and individual graduate departments develop formative/summative assessments within each discipline that assess the learning outcomes that have been developed and/or rewritten
Evaluation	-Finalize planning of evaluation/analysis process	-Post information on QEP to QEP website

Table 2: QEP Implementation Plan—Future Actions – Phase #2		
	Spring/Summer 2007	Fall 2007
Implementation of the QEP	-QEP Director monitors progress of Plan	-QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan
Graduate Writing Center	-Employ administrative assistant and graduate assistants -Develop and start implementing curriculum with residential graduate students	- Conduct writing skills workshops for students -Continue implementing curriculum with residential students & faculty

Table 2: QEP Implementation Plan—Future Actions – Phase #2		
	Spring/Summer 2007	Fall 2007
Faculty Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -IE conducts 2nd phase of workshops in coordination with the Graduate Writing Center -CAFE continues to train faculty in Blackboard® discussion strategies -GWC will begin to train faculty in identifying students who need services of the Writing Center -CAFE, IE, GCRE, and GWC develop a curriculum for writing, including training in writing measurable learning outcomes, developing appropriate assignments, evaluation of drafts, evaluation of final papers, constructing rubrics, and course embedded techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC trains faculty on preparing writing rubrics to use in entry level classes -GWC continues to train faculty on ways to enhance writing in their classes as well as enhance critical thinking skills -GWC & CAFE continue offering workshops to train faculty in writing improvement ideas/strategies
Student Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tutors are available in the GWC to assist students -GWC begins implementing its curriculum with residential graduate students -Faculty continue to integrate new techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty begin to integrate new techniques into their curriculum -GWC conducts writing skills workshops for students -Tutors continue to be available to students
Curriculum Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Graduate programs provide their plans for enhancing writing skills in their curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement Introduction to Graduate Writing Course -Implement Professional Writing Course
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct assessment of students' learning outcomes as described in the QEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct assessment of incoming residential graduate students using CAAP
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct evaluation of QEP -Analyze data -Draft annual report -Report and meet with QEP Steering committee -Report QEP progress to Provost -Post annual report to QEP website 	

Table 3: QEP Implementation Plan- Future Actions – Phase #3		
	Spring/Summer 2008	Fall 2008
Implementation of the QEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan -Make revisions to the plan based on data analysis and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan

Table 3: QEP Implementation Plan- Future Actions – Phase #3		
	Spring/Summer 2008	Fall 2008
Graduate Writing Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop and offer writing center tutorials for students and faculty -Expand/revise Graduate Writing I and II as needed -Continue offering the workshops and training for faculty and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Offer consultation services for graduate students and faculty -Continue offering workshops and training for faculty and students -Continue offering courses that cover basic documentation styles for disciplines -Continue offering writing center tutorials for students and faculty
Faculty Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC offers faculty workshops and/or brown bag lunches addressing higher level writing skills -GWC offers a writing center tutorial for faculty -IE teaches faculty assessment skills in subjective assignments -All workshops to train faculty continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC and IE begin to think through how to implement strategies learned to the distance learning students -Continue all prior workshops and activities
Student Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty continue to add strategies for improving writing in their classes -GWC offers writing tutorials for students -GWC offers consultation services for students -GWC continues to conduct writing skills workshops for students -Tutors continue to be available to the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The GCRE continue to sponsor annual poster sessions to display graduate work - GWC offers a specific course or tutorial that covers basic documentation styles for that discipline -Faculty continue to add new strategies -GWC continues to conduct writing skills workshops for students -Tutors continue to be available to the students
Curriculum Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise Introduction to Graduate Writing and Professional Writing Courses as needed and determined from assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Department conducts a program review -Evaluate success of strategies implemented in the curriculum -Implement or revise a specific class or tutorial for one of the entrance level graduate courses in specific graduate programs as needed
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct assessment of learning outcomes -Administer first post-test (CAAP) -Document improvements within each discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct assessment of first-year students -IE develops peer and self-assessment surveys -Continued development of the research design and assessment of the components of the design -Continued formative/summative assessment with reports to IE

Table 3: QEP Implementation Plan- Future Actions – Phase #3		
	Spring/Summer 2008	Fall 2008
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct midpoint review and planning process based on analysis and evaluation of data from years 1 & 2 -Report and meet with QEP Steering Committee -Draft annual report -Report QEP progress and proposed changes in Plan to Provost -Post annual report to QEP website 	

Table 4: QEP Implementation Plan – Future Actions - Phase #4		
	Spring/Summer 2009	Fall 2009
Implementation of the QEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan -Make revisions in QEP upon evaluating the data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan
Graduate Writing Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan to expand services to distance learning students -Continue to offer all services and workshops to both faculty and students -Add staff as needed to service the distance learning students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand services to distance learning students -Continue to offer all services and workshops to both faculty and students
Faculty Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC continues to offer services and workshops to faculty -GWC develops online tutorials for adjunct faculty working with distance learning students. -New advanced workshops may be added based on evaluation of needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC continues to offer services and workshops to faculty (resident and adjunct)
Student Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty continue to use a writing rubric in entry-level classes -GWC services available to distance learning students -Online tutorials available to distance learning students -GWC continues to offer services and workshops to residential students -Faculty continue to integrate critical thinking skills and writing skills into their classes -Faculty continue to integrate peer interaction and faculty to student interaction into their classes -Faculty continue to integrate peer reviews into their curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -GWC services and workshops available to both residential and distance learning students -Faculty continue to integrate critical thinking skills and writing skills into their classes -Faculty continue to integrate peer interaction and faculty to student interaction into their classes -Faculty continue to integrate peer reviews into their curriculum -Faculty continue to use a writing rubric in entry level classes - The GCRE continues to sponsor annual poster sessions to display graduate work

Table 4: QEP Implementation Plan – Future Actions - Phase #4		
	Spring/Summer 2009	Fall 2009
	-The GCRE continues to sponsor annual poster sessions to display graduate work	
Curriculum Review	-Feedback will be provided from IE on the program reviews	-Conduct program review -Evaluate success of strategies implemented in the curriculum
Assessment	-Conduct first post-test assessment of student learning	-Conduct assessment of first-year students
Evaluation	-Conduct evaluation of QEP -Analyze data -Draft annual report -Report and meet with QEP Steering committee -Report QEP progress to Provost -Post annual report to QEP website	

Table 5: QEP Implementation Plan – Future Actions - Phase #5		
	Spring/Summer 2010	Fall 2010
Implementation of the QEP	-QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan -Make revisions in QEP upon evaluating the data	-QEP Director monitors progress of the Plan -QEP Director drafts the SACS 5-year report for QEP
Graduate Writing Center	-Continue to service both distance learning and residential students -Continue to offer all services and workshops to both faculty and students	-Continue to service both distance learning and residential students -Continue to offer all services and workshops to both faculty and students
Faculty Development	-GWC continues to offer services and workshops to faculty (resident and adjunct)	-GWC continues to offer services and workshops to faculty (resident and adjunct)
Student Development	- Faculty continue to use strategies to improve graduate student writing -GWC services and workshops available to both residential and distance learning students -The GCRE continues to sponsor annual poster sessions to display graduate work	-GWC services and workshops available to both residential and distance learning students -The GCRE continues to sponsor annual poster sessions to display graduate work -Faculty continue to develop strategies to improve graduate student writing
Curriculum Review	-Feedback provided from IE on the program reviews	-Program review -Evaluate success of strategies implemented in the curriculum
Assessment	-Conduct assessment of student learning -Feedback provided to the departments as needed	-Conduct assessment of first-year students

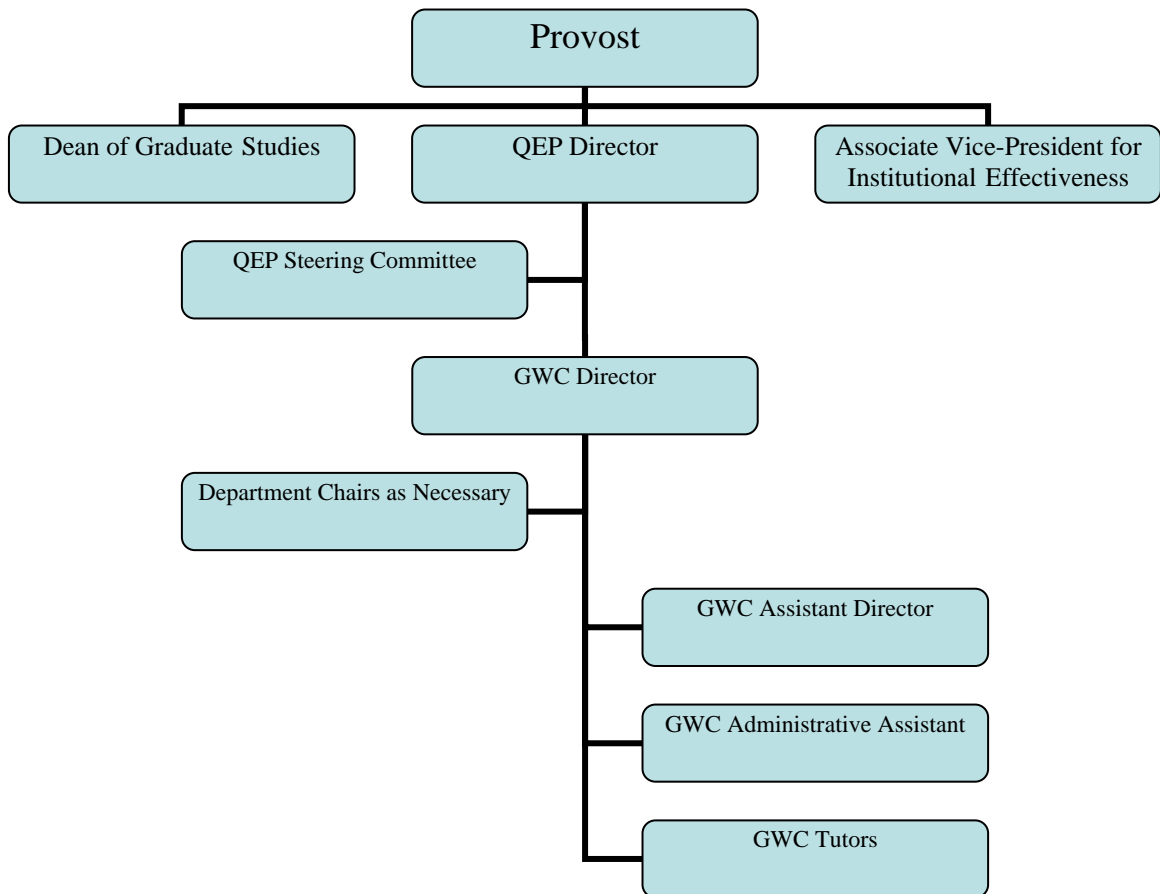
Table 5: QEP Implementation Plan – Future Actions - Phase #5		
	Spring/Summer 2010	Fall 2010
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct evaluation of QEP -Analyze data -Draft annual report -Report and meet with QEP Steering committee -Report QEP progress to Provost -Post annual report to QEP website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct evaluation of QEP -Analyze data -Draft annual report -Draft SACS 5-year report for QEP -Meet with QEP Steering committee to prepare SACS report -Report QEP progress to Provost

Communication

Communication among Members of the Administration

Chart I on the following page describes the chain of communication among the primary administrative personnel involved in the QEP. All links in this chain will communicate formally and informally through e-mail and face-to-face contact. In addition, there will be a number of other means by which these key personnel will communicate. The Dean of Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Administration will communicate their involvement with QEP initiatives in annual reports to the QEP Director and the Provost. The QEP Director will submit an annual report with recommendations for improvement to the Board of Trustees, Provost, and the QEP Steering Committee. Similarly, the GWC Director will summarize the progress and needs of the GWC in an annual report to the QEP Director. In addition, all changes to the Plan will be posted on the QEP website accessible to all members of the University community.

Chart I: Communication among Members of the Administration

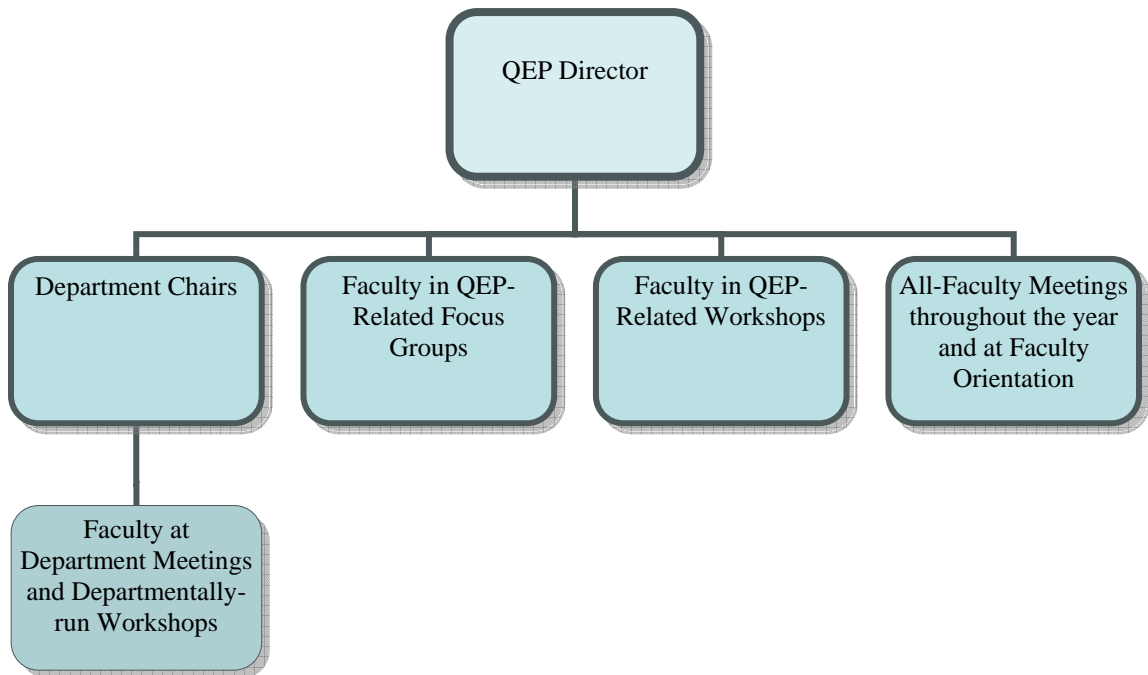


Communication between Administration and Faculty

In addition to communication of the goals and strategies of the QEP to the whole University on the designated website, key personnel, and especially the QEP Director, will address the entire faculty on the progress of the Plan at faculty meetings throughout the year. In addition, the QEP Director and other key personnel will solicit faculty ideas, concerns, and questions in QEP-Related focus groups, workshops, and as necessary throughout the year. As individual departments implement programmatic changes

consistent with the Plan, department chairs will report their faculty members' comments to the Director.

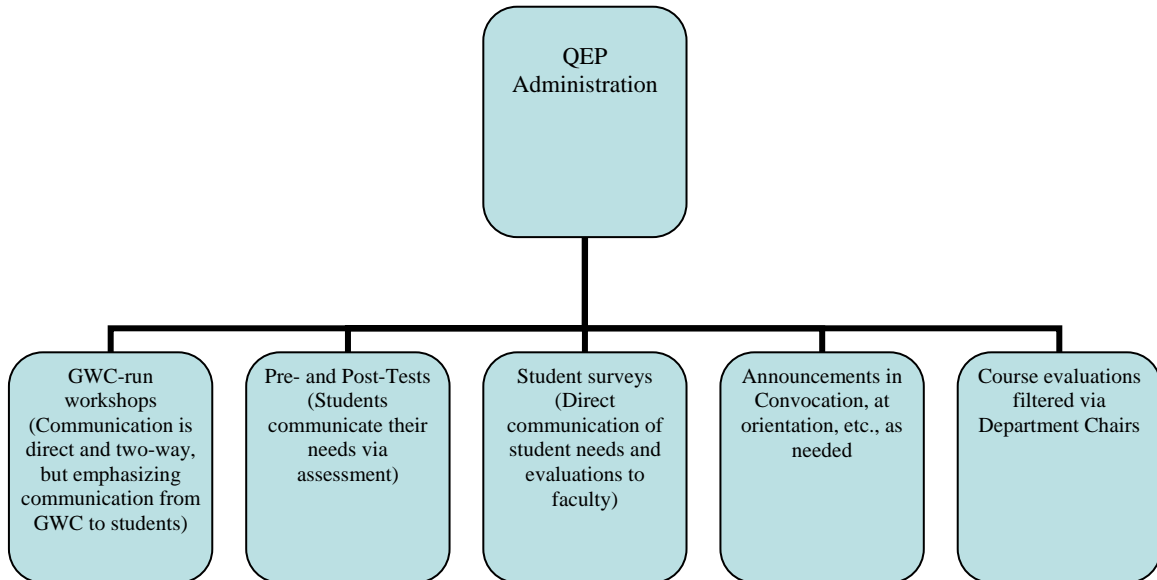
Chart II: Communication between Administration and Faculty



Communication between Administration and Students

This plan includes numerous opportunities for the QEP Administration and students to share their understandings of the QEP. Early on, most communication will be *to* students *from* various administrative officials, including the QEP Director, the Director of the GWC, Department Chairs, and others. As the Plan unfolds, however, there will be more two-way communication, especially as assessment of the QEP action strategies begins and the Director and QEP Steering Committee begin to refine the action strategies, assessment measures, and other aspects of the Plan.

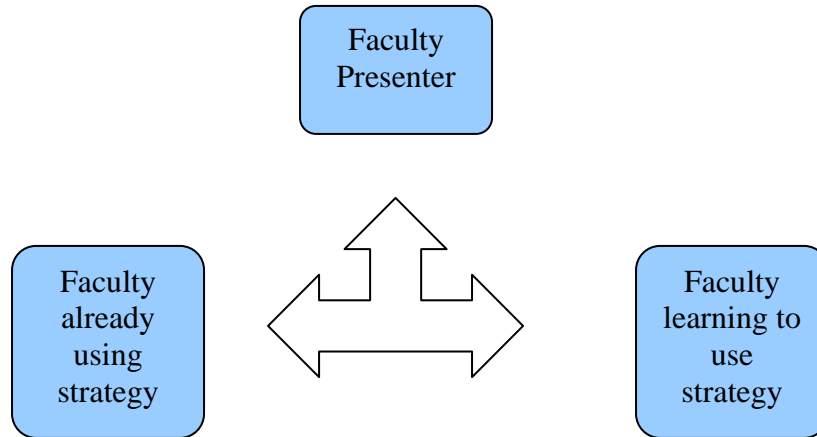
Chart III: Communication between Administration and Students



Communication among Faculty: Departmental Workshops/Brown Bags

This action strategy allows faculty members to have the benefit of workshop-style training from peers in their discipline. For instance, if a faculty member has expertise in a particular software program useful in the evaluation of writing, that faculty member can share his or her expertise with colleagues. This collaboration allows people unfamiliar with certain learning and teaching strategies to learn in a safe, familiar environment. Secondly, it allows the training to be much more discipline-specific. Some of these workshops and brown bags may happen outside of mandatory meetings, while others will occur during department meetings. Observations from these interchanges will be communicated to the QEP Director and other relevant personnel.

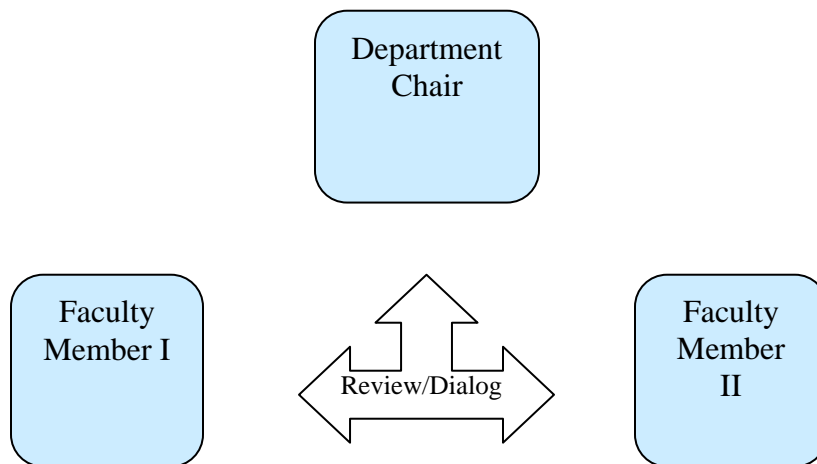
Chart IVa: Communication among Faculty: Departmental Workshops/Brown Bags



Communication Among Faculty: Departmental Assessment

Teaching reviews by deans, chairpersons, and peers are already part of the portfolio process that LU faculty must complete every three years. In addition, department chairs request copies of their instructors' evaluations for review. All of these existing strategies could include attention to writing-related concerns in graduate courses.

Chart IVb: Communication Among Faculty: Departmental Assessment



Communication between Faculty and Students

Faculty and students have several methods of interfacing—classroom time, e-mail, phone, office hours, comments on assignments, and evaluations. Some methods of communication obviously involve the faculty member as the primary authority (grading, for instance); others, however, grant power to the student (evaluations) or view communication as a useful interchange between two scholars in a field (class discussion, comments on work, etc.). Other methods of pedagogy integrated by the QEP, such as evaluative rubrics and in-depth written feedback on assignments, are also forms of communication, for they make the instructor’s expectations clear to the students. Finally, faculty employing these strategies will use students’ writing as a form of communication—a way in which students directly or indirectly communicate their needs, weaknesses, expectations, and plans for improvement.

Chart Va: Two-Way Dialog

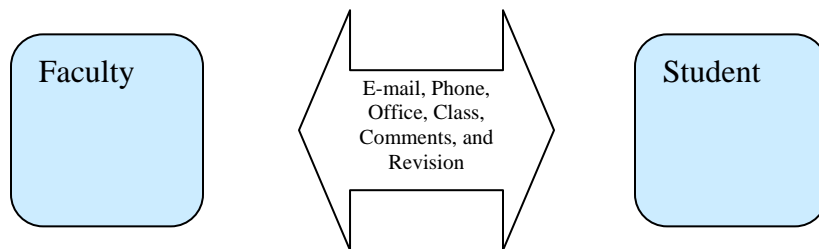


Chart Vb: Faculty-Student Communication

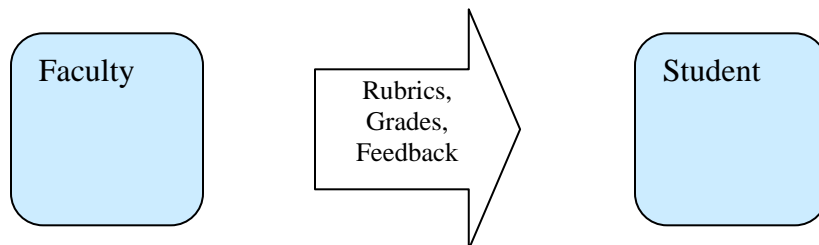
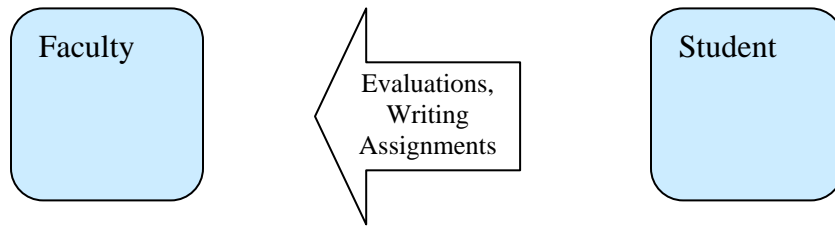


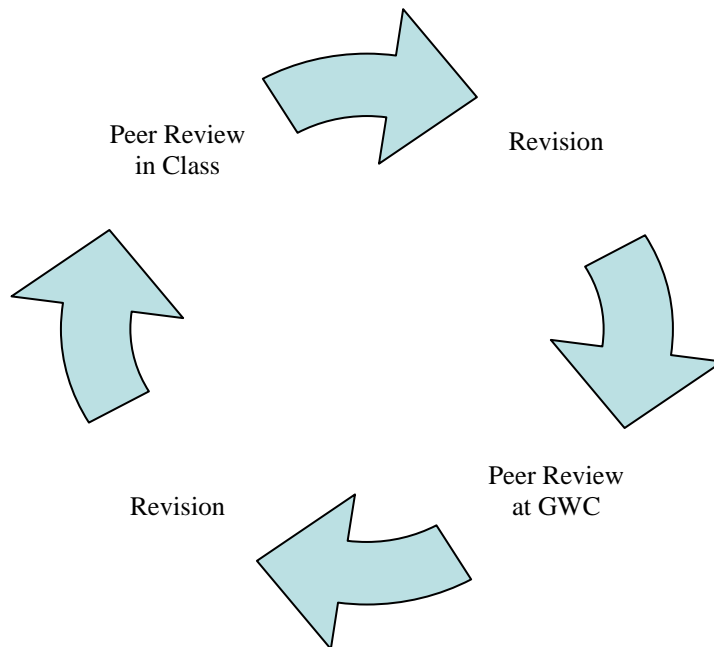
Chart Vc: Student-Faculty Communication



Communication among Students

Ideally, communication among students about writing will happen both in the classroom and at the GWC, where student tutors will do much of the work. In class, students whose teachers are using strategies such as peer review and rubric-based evaluation will find themselves reviewing their classmates' writing and revising their own work based on comments they receive. Similarly, tutoring at the GWC will help students revise based on the comments they receive in a session.

Chart VI: Communication among Students



Ongoing Assessment

Like any good plan, in order for the QEP to accomplish its intended goal, it must be the focus of constant assessment and revision. The primary responsibility for overseeing and ensuring this regular assessment/revision process rests with the QEP Director (described in the management plan section, above). More precisely, the Director will be responsible for monitoring and adjusting the implementation time line, overseeing the gathering of assessment data, evaluating the results, and recommending whatever modifications to the Plan are deemed necessary in light of those results.

It is understood, however, that while the Director will bear the *primary* responsibility for the ongoing assessment of the QEP, he/she will not bear *sole* responsibility for the success of the effort. Ultimately, it will be up to the Provost to ensure that substantive assessment of the Plan is on-going. It is, therefore, essential that those tasked with overseeing the Plan communicate with each other on a regular basis.

CHAPTER IV: EVALUATION

“Finally, one just has to shut up, sit down, and write”

—Natalie Goldberg

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies outlined in this document, the anticipated outcomes must be assessed. This final chapter details the expectations the planners hold for the success of the QEP as well as the evaluation measures to be used in assessing the anticipated outcomes.

Expected Outcomes

Developmental Students: It is expected that developmental graduate students will show significant improvement² in relation to all the sub-categories of skills that comprise basic writing, including technical correctness, thesis and topic development, writing for an audience and purpose, etc. Students will demonstrate this improvement in a number of ways, including improved post-test scores (when compared with pre-test data) on the writing skills assessment test, conformity to standards measured in grading rubrics, passing scores on the *Introduction to Graduate Writing* Exit Examination, and satisfaction surveys.

All Graduate Students: It is expected that all graduate students will improve their graduate-level writing skills, including research, higher level logical processes, and

² See definition of “significant improvement” in the “Research Design” section of this chapter.

clarity. It is expected as well that graduate students will report that they are more confident in their writing abilities and more prepared for future writing tasks—a step that, as focus groups and research outlined in Chapter I suggest, is key to writing success. These results will be assessed through methods similar to those outlined for developmental graduate students. Qualitative evidence may also be used to evaluate graduate students’ writing skills, as the QEP Director convenes focus groups to discuss improvements in or challenges still facing graduate students. It is anticipated as well that student success will speak for itself—a higher number of students presenting papers at conferences, publishing, and engaging in other professional activities will attest to the fact that the QEP has indeed begun to create a culture of graduate writing.

Faculty: It is expected that faculty will learn pedagogical and evaluative strategies that enable them to teach writing more effectively in their courses. The faculty will be assessed using focus group data, self-report surveys, analysis of syllabi (use of rubrics; kinds of assignments), and peer analysis.

Research Design

Overview

In January 2006, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) conducted an assessment of Liberty University’s first-year residential graduate students’ writing skills. More specifically, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) writing test was employed as a means of collecting pilot data (n = 114, see Appendix A) that was used for the following purposes:

- To assess the scope of need for the QEP

- To provide initial baseline data upon which the effectiveness of the QEP can be evaluated
- To provide empirical evidence of the extent to which graduate writing improves without intervention, concomitantly providing a better means of assessing the quality of the proposed intervention strategies.

Additionally, these data serve several secondary functions, such as assisting in streamlining data collection procedures and identifying potential logistical problems with the assessment protocol in the future. Also, qualitative examination of the patterns in the CAAP writing scores should provide additional insight into the writing needs of Liberty graduate students. This information, in turn, will help inform the construction of the proposed early intervention graduate writing courses (i.e. *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline*).

Beyond analysis of the learning outcomes, the QEP further requires that over the next five years, students' writing progress be tracked via the CAAP Writing Skills and Writing Essay Tests. The plan to meet these goals is as follows:

1. **Pre-test:** Beginning fall of 2007, all first-year residential graduate students (except for students in the School of Law; see Appendix G) will be required to take the CAAP Writing Skills and Writing Essay Tests.
2. **Post-test:** Following a pre-test/post-test design, a randomly selected group of the pre-test students, in their final semester of study, will retake the CAAP test. The first such post-test is scheduled for the spring of 2008.

3. **Student Survey Instrument:** A student survey instrument will be used to help assess a number of variables at post-test. These will include (but are not limited to):
 - Student motivation
 - Student utilization of writing resources
 - Student satisfaction with writing resources
 - Graduate program/area of study
4. **Secondary Data:** The Writing Skills Opinion Survey for the Graduate Faculty (see Appendix B) will be administered in the spring of 2008. This survey, initially administered in November 2005, may be enhanced or modified based on faculty focus groups held in early 2006.

Measure

The CAAP was designed to measure the academic progress and abilities of college students. It was specifically created with adequate reliability and validity to help institutions measure differential performance comparisons of students in skill areas such as writing, reading, and mathematics. For the purposes of this study, only the scores measuring student writing skills will be utilized.

The CAAP was normed and standardized on a large sample of college students (>35,000) and has demonstrated adequate internal reliability (KR20=.92). It has also demonstrated modest concurrent validity when anchored to GPA and modest predictive validity. The CAAP has also displayed some validity for measuring academic change over time in college student samples. This is an important psychometric characteristic as

the interest here is not to compare Liberty's students to national norms but to demonstrate writing skills improvement.

Plan of Analysis

The data collected in both the pre-test and post-test phase will be analyzed in several ways. First, using a one-way ANCOVA, the magnitude of change in students' writing scores from pre-test to post-test after controlling for differences in pre-test scores will be examined. Gain scores for students will also be calculated by subtracting pre-test from post-test scores. The magnitude of change will be classified into one of four categories: no change, small change, medium change, and large change. No change will be demonstrated by students who do not improve their scores by at least .5 standard deviations. Small change will be demonstrated for students who change between .5 and 1.25 standard deviations (in the positive direction, of course). Medium gain will be demonstrated for students who change between 1.26 and 1.99 standard deviations, and large change will be represented by those students who change more than 2.0 standard deviations. The percentage of students that fall into each of the four categories will be reported.

To examine the question of whether the developmental courses help to improve student writing, a one-way ANCOVA will be conducted on post-test scores, using pre-test CAAP scores, undergraduate GPA, and student motivation (as assessed by the student survey) as covariates. Significant F's will be followed with planned comparisons. It is expected that the largest differences will be seen between the development group and the comparison group.

Additional Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Exit Examination: On the first day of *Introduction to Graduate Writing*, all graduate students will be given an objective examination designed to test their competency in the six basic writing skills listed under Learning Outcome One for Developmental Graduate Students. Students who achieve a passing score on this exam will move to *Writing in the Discipline* and will fulfill the standards for competency established herein. Students who do not achieve a passing score will continue in *Introduction to Graduate Writing*. At the end of the course, they will again be required to take this exit examination. It is expected that most, if not all, students enrolled in the class will then be able to pass this examination, thereby demonstrating competency in basic writing skills.

Student Satisfaction Surveys: As part of the University's annual assessment day activities, graduate students will participate in satisfaction surveys designed to give the QEP Director feedback on the adjustments that should be made to the Plan. These surveys will come in several forms: multiple-choice questions, open-ended written questions, questions appended to course evaluations, and focus groups. In addition, individual departments will assess the effectiveness of their own writing-related activities and will report their results to the QEP Director via the Curricular Assessment Plan update which is due on September 15 of each year.

Rubric-based Evaluation: As mentioned throughout this document, a key component of successfully implementing Liberty University's QEP is the development

and use of rubric-based evaluation. Rubrics will be introduced and utilized in both of the required writing courses, *Introduction to Graduate Writing* and *Writing in the Discipline*, as a means of substantively assessing the courses' learning outcomes. Then too, not only will rubrics give students increased feedback in relation to their own writing, they will also serve as a means of assessing student writing improvement.

Assessment of Faculty Learning Outcomes

While student learning outcomes are easily measurable via the use of a reliable pre- and post-testing instrument, rubrics, and surveys, outcomes as reflected in faculty members' pedagogy are harder to measure. Therefore, this QEP proposes several evaluation instruments.

Satisfaction/Opinion Surveys: Liberty University faculty are evaluated in April of each year by means of a survey generated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The survey includes questions on the effectiveness of their chairperson, communication within the department, library resources, etc. Questions about this Plan's goals and strategies will be added to this survey beginning in April 2007. Also, a University intranet site for the faculty and staff features an electronic mini-survey section that is often used for planning and evaluative purposes. This intranet site can be used for a question such as "Do you use rubrics in your courses?" to generate a snapshot response for immediate interventions. Finally, some assessment instruments or strategies may need to be developed by the QEP Director, the GWC, or the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in response to specific needs for data collection and assessment.

Workshop Attendance: At each workshop offered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness or any other unit at Liberty, faculty in attendance sign in and then verify their attendance later on in the “My History” section of the University’s Professional Development Portal. This strategy will continue to offer detailed information about how many and which faculty members attend the writing workshops.

Syllabus Review: Those involved in planning the QEP are aware that offering survey data and attending workshops do not guarantee that faculty will implement new strategies in their classrooms. Furthermore, the planners are aware of the high value faculty place on their right to teach classes as they see fit—a basic expression of academic freedom. As such, faculty assessment must implement mechanisms to assure faculty participation while respecting faculty’s expertise and independence. One mechanism is a periodic syllabus review by the QEP Director and Office of Institutional Effectiveness to evaluate faculty implementation of the QEP strategies, and, as necessary, to suggest appropriate adjustments.

Benefits to the University

The planners anticipate great improvement in writing across Liberty’s resident graduate programs. Not only will the establishment of the GWC, the two new courses, and the faculty development initiatives discussed in Chapter II vastly increase the resources available to students and faculty interested in writing more skillfully, but this increase in resources will in turn contribute to a culture where writing and research are valued across the Liberty University curriculum. This increase in visibility should create motivation among students and faculty alike, and they should respond to this new culture

with greater enthusiasm for and skill in their writing. Therefore, it is anticipated that this initiative will enhance the University's research profile.

As dialog related to the teaching and processes of writing increases among LU faculty and students in the coming months, it is anticipated that an atmosphere more conducive to professional and scholarly writing will emerge on campus. In department meetings, for instance, honest communication about the effectiveness of rubrics will provide the chairperson with the anecdotal data he or she needs to develop additional related workshops in the future. These workshops will have as an important aim better teaching. Similarly, as faculty together discuss the challenges of large teaching and grading loads, strategies should emerge to cope effectively with the increased work that integrating writing into the curriculum will involve. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the best test of whether the QEP has succeeded will be the writing the University's graduate students produce.

The QEP represents the collective effort of faculty, administration, staff, and students from across the University. Ultimately, however, the QEP is not just a plan that must be accomplished; it represents a significant investment for greater excellence in student learning. With that in mind, Liberty University looks forward to the years ahead, and an educational journey just as exhilarating as the ultimate destination.

Appendix A

CAAP Testing Report

CAAP Testing Report

In January 2006, the CAAP Writing Skills and Writing Essay Tests were administered to the first year graduate students. These students were identified as having entered a resident graduate program (law school students exempted) in Fall 2005 or Spring 2006. Table 1 shows the breakdown of this selected group.

Program	Potential Number	Number Who Took Writing Skills Test	Number Who Took Writing Essay Test
Counseling	79	37	38
Communication Studies	9	1	1
Nursing	20	16	16
Religious Studies	11	6	6
Seminary	119	54	53

Of the 114 students who took the test, 84 were full-time students, while 30 were part-time. The mean score on the Writing Skills test was 61.6 on a 40 to 80 scale, and the mean score on the Writing Essay Test was 3.5 on a scale from 1 to 6.

Table 2 identifies by major the number and percentage of students who fall below the national mean on the Writing Skills Test. Of those students tested, 25% fell below the national norm or 61.6%. The tests are nationally normed against sophomore undergraduates.

Program	Number Who Took Writing Skills Test	Number Below the National Mean	Percentage Below the National Mean
Counseling	37	9	24
Communication Studies	1	0	0
Nursing	16	0	0
Religious Studies	6	1	6
Seminary	54	20	37

Table 3 shows the comparison of the LU graduate students with the national scores on the Writing Skills Test and its sub-categories, as well as the Writing Essay test.

Table 3—Percentage Below the Mean				
	Writing Skills Mean	Mechanics/Usage	Rhetorical	Essay
LU Students	61.6	15.8	15.9	3.5
National Norm	64.3	17.1	17.2	3.2

This analysis of the results of the writing tests has established a baseline score from which future improvement in the writing skills of graduate students can be identified. By using this test at the matriculation of the graduate students and then administering it as a post-test at the end of their programs, it will serve as one assessment strategy in determining if the interventions of the classroom and Graduate Writing Center have been effective.

This analysis also validates the in-house writing prompt that was administered to the graduate students in December 2005 and the faculty perception survey that was administered at the same time.

Appendix B

Writing Skills Opinion Survey Graduate Faculty

Appendix C

Graduate Writing Skills Opinion Survey Results

Graduate Writing Skills Opinion Survey Results

In November 2005, a Graduate Writing Skills Opinion Survey was administered via the web to 110 graduate faculty. Of that number, 73 responded. The survey was composed of six objective questions that required a likert scale response. The seventh question asked for a written response giving specific improvements needed.

The quantitative analysis of the data collected shows that there were very few outliers. The first four questions, which were deliberately placed on the survey to show a development from basic grammar skills to the scholarly level of writing, show a decrease in scholarly ability as students moved from question one through question four. This would seem to indicate that the faculty members were increasingly discouraged as the questions moved toward the scholarly and discipline-specific syntactical writing skills.

Forty-nine of the 73 respondents answered question seven, which was open-ended. The results showed a 51% focus on grammar skills, 55% focus on writing style and research skills, and 43% focus on critical thinking.

The qualitative analysis of the data presented the following concerns and questions for further research:

1. What is the real need—grammar skills, critical thinking, syntax, research skills? Or is a focus not necessary?
2. Are the faculty members aware of their responsibility in the development of these skills, or are they expecting the skill-building to come from outside of the discipline or from an undergraduate education?

It would seem that more precise questions and focus groups with the faculty members need to be administered. In the meantime, the learning outcomes for the QEP will need to be broad and cover all aspects of the writing process. Other goals of the QEP should include training for the faculty members in teaching or enhancing the writing skills within a graduate classroom setting or in the assignments given.

Appendix D

Focus Group Demographics

Focus Group Demographics

School	Dept.	Faculty	#	Student	#	Date	Hours	Minutes	Location	Facilitator
Business	MBA	Faculty	11			4/10/2006		57	Conference Room	Satterlee
Arts & Sciences	Center for Counseling & Family Studies	Faculty	8			4/10/2006	1	30	CN 2410	Garzon
Arts & Sciences	Center for Counseling & Family Studies			Student	6	4/13/2006	1	30	Café - LaHaye SC	Hinson
Arts & Sciences	Center for Counseling & Family Studies			Student	7	4/18/2006	1	15	CN 2418	Hinson
Communication	Communication Studies	Faculty	13			4/20/2006	1	30	Conference Room	Kramer
Communication	Communication Studies			Student	21	4/12/2006	1	15	CN 2412	Mullen
Education	Graduate Education	Faculty	11			4/18/2006		45	TE 117, Conference Area	Watson
Education	Graduate Education			Student	7	4/21/2006		30	TE 133, Carwile Seminar Room	Watson
Communication	English	Faculty	10			4/12/2006	1	30	Conference Room	Harris
ILRC		Faculty	7			4/12/2006	1	30	DH 2197	Smith
ILRC		Faculty	7			4/18/2006	1	30	DH 2197	Smith
Law		Faculty	10			4/13/2006		40	Executive Conference Room	Lindevaldsen
Law				Student	8	4/14/2006	1	40	Student Services Center	Lindevaldsen
Law				Student	4	4/15/2006	1		Student Services Center	Lindevaldsen
Law				Student	8	4/17/2006		35	Student Services Center	Lindevaldsen
Law				Student	5	4/20/2006		55	Student Services Center	Lindevaldsen
Seminary		Faculty	2			4/12/2006		30	CN 2410	Percer/Smith
Seminary		Faculty	7			4/25/2006	1		CN 2534	Percer/Smith
Seminary				Student	3	4/19/2006	1		CN 2534	Percer/Smith
Seminary				Student	6	4/25/2006	1		CN 2534	Percer/Smith
Seminary				Student	2	4/28/2006	1		CN 2410	Percer/Smith
Arts & Sciences	Nursing	Faculty	5			4/11/2006		55	DH 2107	Spear
Arts & Sciences	Nursing			Student	9	4/13/2006		54	DH 2096	Spear

Liberty University®
Quality Enhancement Plan – Revised

School	Dept.	Faculty	#	Student	#	Date	Hours	Minutes	Location	Facilitator
Arts & Sciences	Nursing			Student	5	4/20/2006		45	DH 2096	Spear
Religion	Philosophy/Theology/Apologetics/ Church History			Student	3	4/11/2006	1	30	RH 104	Martin
Religion	Philosophy/Theology/Apologetics/ Church History			Student	8	4/19/2006		50	RH 114	Martin
Religion	Philosophy/Theology/Apologetics/ Church History	Faculty	10			4/17/2006	1	5	RH 108	Martin
			101		102		16	781		
								13.02	hours	

RECAP: 8 Participating Divisions: Arts & Sciences, Business, Communication, Education, Law, Religion, Seminary, and ILRC
101 Faculty - 12 meetings
102 Students - 15 meetings
Total time spent: 29.02 hours

Appendix E

Logistical Information for Focus Group Facilitators

Logistical Information for Focus Group Facilitators

Suggested Outline of the Process

1. Welcome/thank participants for attending
2. Introductions—(as needed) of facilitator and participants
3. Explain purpose of the session (read introductory statement?)
4. Stress the importance of the QEP to all stakeholders including:
 - a. The university at large and reaffirmation
 - b. Graduate students (and ultimately all students)
 - c. Faculty
5. Lay out “ground rules” for the session (such as):
 - a. This is a collaborative effort; everyone has a voice;
 - b. All opinions are valuable and therefore will be considered;
 - c. The value of/need for “brainstorming;”
 - d. Other items?
6. Ask questions in the order they are listed on the interview guide (this ensures continuity of all data collected)
7. Listen carefully for key words, concepts, etcetera that you could use as probes (jumping off points) for more in-depth discussion
8. Invite participants to continue dialoguing via email, etc., post-session
9. Thank them again for their participation

Create/Maintain a Safe Learning Environment

1. Have chairs in a circle with facilitator sitting with participants
2. Have someone else take notes so participants feel they have your full, undivided attention
3. Try and avoid having a few individuals “control” the meeting/discussion
4. Provide affirmation of both people and ideas
5. Respect participants as subjects of their own lives and learning

6. Invite comments on the process

Things You Will Need

1. An open mind and an attentive ear
2. White board, markers, and erasers
3. Someone (other than the facilitator) to write ideas/concepts/etc. on the white board
4. A session transcriber/recorder—someone who will take detailed (preferably electronic) notes of the session (administrative assistant?); or if possible, tape record the session
5. Food for students
6. Other items?

Department/School: _____ Date: _____

QEP Faculty Focus Group Interview Guide

Introduction: Liberty University is in the process of developing viable strategies for implementing our university's QEP. A significant part of that process is garnering what we see to be valuable input from you, the faculty. Specifically, we are looking for your help in three distinct areas relating to *improving graduate student writing* (the focus of the QEP): 1). student needs; 2). faculty needs; and 3). the role of a writing center. Thanks in advance for your candid responses!

Purpose: The purpose of Liberty University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to "*improve graduate student writing.*"

1. Student Needs:
 - a. Based on your experience, what do you see as some of the greatest needs for improvement in your students' writing skills? (Please be specific)
 - b. What are some strategies, ideas, etc., you have found implemented and found successful in your classroom for improving students' writing skills?

2. Faculty Needs:
 - a. What information do you feel you need in order to better assist your students in improving their writing skills?
 - b. What type of skills do you feel you need in order to better assist your students in improving their writing skills?
 - c. What type of training (i.e. seminars, professional development, etc.) do you think would be most beneficial in better assisting your students in improving their writing skills?

3. Role of a Writing Center
 - a. How do you think a writing center might help address the student needs you identified in section 1 (above)?
 - b. How do you think a writing center might aid you as a faculty member in assisting students in improving writing skills as identified in section 2?
 - c. What are your expectations/hopes for a writing center?

Wrap up: Is there anything else related to improving graduate student writing you can think of and/or would like to add?

QEP Graduate Student Focus Group Interview Guide

Introduction: Liberty University is in the process of developing viable strategies for implementing our university's QEP. A significant part of that process is garnering what we see to be valuable input from graduate students who will be directly affected by the QEP. Specifically, we are looking for your help in three distinct areas relating to *improving graduate student writing* (the focus of the QEP): 1). student needs; 2). faculty needs; and 3). the role of a writing center. Thanks in advance for your candid responses!

Purpose: The purpose of Liberty University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to "*improve graduate student writing.*"

1. Student Needs:
 - a. What are some of the things you have struggled with in relation to writing in your graduate studies?
 - b. What are some of the differences you see between your undergraduate and graduate work in regards to writing (i.e faculty expectations, etc.)?
 - c. What do you see as some of the greatest needs for improvement in your writing skills as a graduate student? (Please be specific); probes:
 - i. Grammar
 - ii. Syntax
 - iii. Style/format (i.e. APA, Turabian, MLA, etc.)
 - iv. Clarity
 - d. Have you ever sought out or received assistance for writing? If so, what kind of help did you get and how effective do you think it was?
2. Faculty Needs:
 - a. Thinking about some of the challenges you identified in section 1 (above), how can teachers better assist you with improving your writing skills?
3. Role of a Writing Center
 - a. How do you think a writing center might help address your writing-related needs, as identified in section 1 (above)?
 - b. How do you think a writing center might aid teachers in assisting you with improving your writing skills, as identified in section 2?
 - c. Have you ever heard/accessed the services of a writing center?
 - d. What are your expectations/hopes for a writing center?

Wrap up: Is there anything else related to improving graduate student writing you can think of and/or would like to add?

Facilitator(s): _____ Number of Participants: _____

Faculty Facilitator List

1. Victor Hinson—CCFS
2. Fernando Garzon—CCFS
3. Leo Percer—LTS
4. Fred Smith—LTS
5. Ed Martin—SOR
6. Scott Watson—SOE
7. Hila Spear—Nursing
8. Bill Mullen and/or Cecil Kramer—COMS
9. Brian Satterlee—Business
10. Mark Harris and/or Brenda Ayres—English Department
11. Rena Lindevaldsen—Law School
12. Greg Smith (or some other representative)—ILRC

Appendix F

QEP Planning Grid

QEP Planning Grid

Goals/Student Outcomes (Plan)	Intervention (Do)	Assessment (Check)	Change (Act)
I. Primary Goal/Objective: Implement Curricular and Administrative Strategies to Improve Graduate Student Writing			
<p><i>Improve Graduate Student Writing</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Learning Outcomes for Developmental Graduate Students</i></p> <p>1. <u>The student will be able to demonstrate basic writing skills by:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Choosing, restricting, organizing, and supporting a writing topic and/or thesis.</i> b. <i>Writing to a specific audience, using correct and appropriate word choices.</i> c. <i>Writing for a clear purpose.</i> d. <i>Writing in the selected discipline's overall style, as evidenced in professional journals.</i> e. <i>Writing sentences that are clear, concise, and technically correct.</i> f. <i>Revising and editing through more than one draft.</i> 	<p><i>Student Intervention strategies (how to improve...)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Developmental Graduate Students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early Intervention Strategies— Course: Introduction to graduate writing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Add writing software as component b. Exit exam for diagnostic advisement c. Add rubrics for assessment d. Communicate QEP e. Teach software 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Assessment of Student Interventions</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Developmental Graduate Students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CAAP/In-house writing assessment tool 2. Student satisfaction surveys 3. Exit Exam 4. Rubric-based evaluation 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Learning Outcomes for All Graduate Students</i></p> <p>2. <u>The student will be able to demonstrate higher level writing skills using logic (induction and deduction) in analysis and argumentation.</u></p> <p>3. <u>The student will be able to demonstrate proper research skills</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Intervention Strategies For All Graduate Students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early Intervention Strategies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Writing in the Disciplines course 2. Creating a Culture of Professional Writing 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Assessment of Interventions For All Graduate Students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CAAP/In-house writing assessment tool 2. Student satisfaction surveys 3. Pre-test/Post-test 	

Goals/Student Outcomes (Plan)	Intervention (Do)	Assessment (Check)	Change (Act)
<p><u>and documentation specific to his discipline by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Integrating sources accurately and effectively.</i> b. <i>Using discipline-specific documentation (APA, MLA, Turabian).</i> <p>4. <u>The student will be able to write with clarity by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Using syntax, terminology, and technical language appropriate to the selected discipline's overall style.</i> b. <i>Writing in the forms and genres of writing required by each discipline, such as conference papers and research articles.</i> c. <i>Demonstrating writing skills sufficient to fulfill the writing requirements of each academic program, such as a graduate-level thesis.</i> <p>5. <u>The student will attest to greater confidence in his writing ability.</u></p> <p>6. <u>The student will self-report that he/she is better prepared and has more confidence for future writing tasks.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communicate QEP b. Develop feedback-based model for writing c. Require writing assignments in core courses d. Build in discipline/format specific research component in introductory/core courses e. Develop and sponsor venues (such as poster session) for showcasing graduate student research <p>3. Add writing rubric for assessment purposes</p> <p>4. Utilize peer review for select writing assignments</p> <p>5. Offer workshops for students on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Available resources (through the ILRC, on-line, etc.) b. Writing skills c. Research skills d. Formatting/style e. Plagiarism f. Writing for publication (in general and discipline specific) 	<p>4. Rubric-based evaluation</p>	

Goals/Student Outcomes (Plan)	Intervention (Do)	Assessment (Check)	Change (Act)
II. Primary Goal/Objective: Support Faculty in Improving Graduate Student Writing			
<p><i>Facilitate Faculty in improving graduate student writing through faculty development</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faculty Learning Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faculty will be able to write measurable learning outcomes for graduate writing in their courses. 2. Faculty will be able to select assessment strategies that will measure graduate writing skills. 3. Faculty will be able to develop or rewrite learning outcomes that will reflect graduate level writing for the graduate degree programs. 4. Faculty will be able to implement writing components in their respective courses that will reflect the new or improved learning outcomes 	<p><i>Faculty Intervention strategies (what type/how to provide faculty development)</i>¹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide various faculty training/development workshops <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On rubric writing b. On time-saving techniques for assessing written assignments c. Development and utilization of peer evaluation pedagogies d. Writing for publication (in general and discipline specific) e. Writing across the curriculum f. Available resources (in ILRC, on-line, writing software, etc.) 2. Create a Culture of Professional Writing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Substantive feedback to students on written assignments b. Use writing rubrics for assessing student written assignments c. Provide models of written assignments 	<p><i>Assessment of Faculty Development</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Satisfaction/opinion surveys 2. Attendance at workshops 3. Periodic review of syllabi 	

Appendix G

The School of Law and the QEP

The School of Law and the QEP

Given that the School of Law (SOL) has already received provisional approval from the American Bar Association (ABA) and needs to continue in that process to receive full accreditation, this Plan largely allows them to continue training and assessing writing as they have done thus far. Indeed, the SOL's writing assessment process closely resembles the process laid out in this plan, in that it involves pre- and post-testing and interventions that include many of the strategies this QEP aims to teach. For the 2006-07 academic year, the SOL's assessment plans are as follows:

- During orientation, prior to any instruction on legal writing, the School of Law will have the students complete a written assignment. It will require them to read three cases, which the School of Law will go over before the writing assignment, and then to explain in 2-3 pages how they would decide a hypothetical case. They will be asked to use the three cases as support for their conclusion. The School of Law will use that writing sample to assess incoming abilities in grammar, punctuation, syntax, analytical thinking, paragraph cohesion, etc.—the learning outcomes this QEP designates for Developmental Graduate Students.
- Based on the writing assignment described above, the School of Law will identify those students who need significant additional assistance in basic writing skills.

- The School of Law plans to offer workshops early in the semester, which students who need significant assistance will be strongly encouraged to attend. Those workshops will offer opportunities for writing.
- Students also will be encouraged to utilize the services of the School of Law's Office of Academic Support. There, students can schedule one-on-one meetings with a skilled tutor who has helped many students improve their basic writing skills and analytical thinking.
- Writing intervention occurs in the classroom as well. During the course of the semester, law students will write several drafts leading up to a final paper. The drafts will be completed in smaller sections, with opportunities for one-on-one comments from the faculty. The School of Law will then be able to use the final written product at the end of the first semester as a comparison to their incoming abilities.
- The second semester also requires a written paper. The School of Law will follow a similar format, with multiple drafts covering small sections of the paper at a time. One-on-one meetings with faculty are required. The School of Law uses simplified grading rubrics for their students' papers, which also helps track student improvement.

Appendix H

Sample Writing Assessment Scoring Rubric

Sample Writing Assessment Scoring Rubric

-6-

- An unusually strong control over form and content
- Precisely worded explanation of quotation's meaning
- Essay thoroughly and logically developed
- Provides a sophisticated response using personal experiences and/or the experiences of a literary character to show truth or falsehood of quotation

-5-

- The communication is clear
- Strong control of form and content
- Language is apt and precise
- Sound explanation of quotation's meaning
- Takes a clear stand on truth or falsehood of quotation and provides apt supporting examples

-4-

- The communication is mostly clear
- Displays competence in organization and style
- Discernable structure
- Attempts to explain the meaning of quotation but language vague or imprecise
- May contain surface errors that affect the essay's readability
- Discernable stand on truth or falsehood of quotation taken but support weak

-3-

- The communication is somewhat clear
- Structure is unclear or inconsistent
- Makes only a reference to the meaning of the quotation
- May have several glaring errors that affect the essay's readability
- No clear stand taken on truth or falsehood of the quotation. Support largely or completely missing

-2-

- The communication is unclear
- Misunderstands the quotation's meaning
- May have many glaring errors that undermine the essay's readability
- No clear structure or purposeful direction evident
- Provides no explanation of how life experiences and/or experience(s) of a literary character show truth or falsehood of the quotation

-1-

- The communication is difficult if not impossible to decipher
- No explanation of the quotation's meaning
- Has many glaring errors that undermine the essay's readability
- No sense of topic

-0-

Off-topic response

Appendix I

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