Troy University Quality Enhancement Plan 2009

Creating a Culture of Reading

Prepared for the
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
On-site review April 21-23, 2009

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.
-Frederick Douglass

While today’s traditional-age college student comes to the campus with greater experience in media than in reading—from text messaging to Internet-based gaming, reading remains the fundamental skill that promotes learning and critical thinking. “Whatever the benefits of newer electronic media, they provide no measurable substitute for the intellectual and personal development initiated and sustained by frequent reading,” notes Dana Gioia, chairman for the National Endowment for the Arts. While non-traditional students may not be as technologically savvy or as media-grounded as traditional-age students, they too exhibit a reading deficit for a variety of reasons.

The Information Age has come to describe the early part of the twenty-first century. With so much information available from a multitude of sources, more and more attention is given to equipping students with the critical skills necessary to develop lifelong learning skills—finding, analyzing and using information. Fundamental to accessing information, however, is the ability to read. It is apparent that reading is crucial to the success of college students across disciplines and in both undergraduate and graduate studies.

To this end, Troy University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), “Creating a Culture of Reading,” focuses on strengthening student literacy and learning by setting high expectations for reading and by supporting new initiatives that will enable students to become better readers. Specifically, Troy University’s QEP will build upon its current pilot program of a First-Year Common Reading Initiative, by expanding its use with courses within the institution’s general studies program and by including all campuses of the University. Additionally, the QEP will involve students with The New York Times Readership Program, structured service-learning activities focused on reading, and a
Major Field Reading Initiative. Authors will be brought to the University’s campuses as part of creating a more visible culture of reading. Faculty and staff will be given professional development opportunities and training so that they can more ably assist students to become better readers. Finally, to create more reading-friendly spaces on the University’s campuses, the QEP will provide funding for internal grants to create reading nooks where students can read as well as exchange ideas about what they are reading.

The QEP supports the University’s mission to promote discovery and exploration of knowledge and its application to life-long success.

_Troy University is a public institution of a network of campuses throughout Alabama and worldwide. International in scope, Troy University provides a variety of educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels for a diverse student body in traditional, non traditional, and emerging formats. Academic programs are supported by a variety of student services which promote the welfare of the individual student. Troy University’s dedicated faculty and staff promote discovery and exploration of knowledge and its application to life-long success through effective teaching, service, creative partnerships, scholarship and research._

*(Troy University Mission Statement, Adopted by the Troy University Board of Trustees, April 2004)*

A signature component of the QEP, the Common Reading Initiative (CRI) will be implemented initially with first-year students throughout Troy University and during the course of the five-year plan, will be expanded to include students in their second years of study. These two years of the CRI will be delivered through TROY 1101 orientation classes as well as through selected courses in the general studies curriculum. Ultimately, all academic majors within each of the five colleges will participate in a Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI). Specific methods of implementation and assessment for the MFRI will involve the leadership of Troy University’s five college deans as well as the University’s faculty. It is anticipated that some colleges (Business, for example) might choose to read a single text while other colleges, with more internal diversity (such as Arts and Sciences), might select discipline-specific texts for their students.
In addition to the Common Reading Initiative, *The New York Times* Readership Program, the second major component of the QEP, will begin on the Troy and Dothan campuses and over the course of the plan, will be added to University campuses at Phenix City and Montgomery as well as to the institution’s sites and offerings within its Global Campus and eCampus.

Student learning results from the enhanced reading culture are critical to the success of the QEP, and to demonstrate this accomplishment, stated student learning outcome objectives have been identified and will be directly and indirectly assessed.

The development of the QEP has been an endeavor that has brought together University-wide constituencies and stakeholders. From the earliest meetings, where the ideas to enhance the University’s reading culture were germinated, the QEP has provoked widespread excitement, energy, and discussion. Focus groups comprised of students, faculty and staff helped crystallize the foundational elements of the plan. Faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni and community leaders have served on committees to develop ways to implement, evaluate and communicate the plan to the University’s groups at large. The Academic Steering Committee, comprised of the academic leadership of the University (deans, associate provosts, campus vice chancellors), the Faculty Council (now Faculty Senate), and the Student Government Association all received briefings about the plan and responded with great support. The senior administrative leadership; including the Chancellor, his Senior Vice Chancellors, and the University’s Board of Trustees; have enthusiastically endorsed the plan and committed the financial resources necessary for its execution.
In its requirements for the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan, SACS notes the following:

**Principles of Accreditation for Quality Enhancement 2.12**
The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capacity for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement (Quality Enhancement Plan).

In the pages which follow, Troy University details that in the development of its proposed Quality Enhancement Plan, the University

1. has engaged in a broad-based process, based on institutional assessment, which led to the emergence of key issues, including the need for an enhancement of student learning through greater reading skills;
2. has focused its proposed plan on measurable student learning outcomes which, individually and collectively, support the mission of the University;
3. demonstrates and documents that it has the institutional capacity for initiating, implementing and completing this plan, including the assignment of budget resources;
4. documents the broad-based involvement of University constituencies and stakeholders in the development and proposed implementation of the plan; and
5. has identified specific goals, with measurable outcomes and specific direct and indirect measurements to assess the plan.

Troy University’s Quality Enhancement Plan for Creating a Culture of Reading is delineated in this document. It is the strong belief of the University that the creation of such a culture will result in student success, which can be measured while students pursue their studies at the University and which will be immeasurable in the years after their graduation.
II. DESCRIPTION: CREATING A CULTURE OF READING-
PROCESS AND IDENTIFICATION OF TOPICS

The reading of all good books is indeed like a conversation with the noblest men of past centuries who were the authors of them, nay a carefully studied conversation, in which they reveal to us none but the best of their thoughts.”
-Rene Descartes (1596 - 1650)

From its inception in 1887 as Troy Normal School, Troy University has grown into a world-wide institution serving students globally and gaining a reputation for innovation and accessibility. The University prides itself on its commitment to know each student individually. Through the personal contact that results from that commitment, we are acutely aware of the strengths, weaknesses, needs and aspirations of our students. The administration, faculty, and staff of Troy University work continuously to evaluate and ensure the appropriateness of our academic offerings, as well as the structures and supports our students need to achieve success in college. By choosing to focus on Creating a Culture of Reading as our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), we have selected an initiative that will address a significant issue in contemporary higher education—the need for students to be more enthusiastic, critical and skilled readers. Through incorporation into the curriculum and into the culture of Troy University, this focus on reading will directly support the highest levels of learning. Our overarching goal for the QEP is to establish an environment of high expectations in reading processes and applications. Through this initiative, we intend to promote reading and discussion, foster integrated learning, support classroom instruction, and encourage student participation in campus, civic, and service-learning activities.

We propose to achieve these purposes during a clearly articulated, five-year project designed around a Common Reading Initiative (CRI), a Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI), a newspaper readership program, service-learning opportunities, professional development training sessions for faculty and staff, and the physical settings
for promoting reading on our campuses. To reach our ultimate goal, we have identified the following project objectives:

- to incorporate *The New York Times* into entry-level coursework
- to expand the University’s Common Reading Initiative
- to implement a Major Field Reading Initiative
- to create reading nooks to encourage and enhance the reading experiences
- to establish service-learning placements based upon reading results
- to provide professional development to assist faculty in supporting reading initiatives

The QEP has been designed to expand over the course of the five-year plan, moving from first-year classes into the University’s general studies program and then into upper-division coursework housed in the University’s colleges and majors. As the plan is implemented across its five years, all University campuses (including Global Campus/eCampus) will participate in the signature elements of the QEP: the Common Reading Initiative and *The New York Times* Readership Program.

The campus at Troy, Ala., serves approximately 6,000 students. The QEP has been designed to “filter up” over the five-year plan, with expansion into upper division coursework after the first two years of implementation. In addition, all campuses will participate in the Common Reading Initiative, the Major Field Reading Initiative, and other campuses will elect to incorporate *The New York Times* into selected coursework.

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

The QEP aligns with two of the University’s ongoing strategic initiatives that form the basis of the University’s institutional effectiveness cycle. The progress of work toward completing goals related to strategic initiatives are reported to and assessed annually by the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness. One initia-
Strategic Initiative One: Student Centeredness

In its basic form, a student-centered culture designs all aspects of learning, service delivery, and support to meet the needs of students. These needs include a safe, healthy learning environment that nurtures students' personal growth, co-curricular activities that increase their learning in a number of dimensions, administrative procedures that help them to obtain a high-quality education, personal experiences that lead to feeling "connected" to the campus community, and service-learning opportunities that develop them as responsible citizens.

Strategic Initiative Two: Quality Academic Programs

Academic programs engage students in a teaching and learning covenant of knowledge and values derived from the mission and goals of the institution and tenets of different fields of study. Faculty dedication to this philosophy qualifies them as members of the Troy University corps of instruction. The hallmark of this corps is teaching excellence. Troy University and its faculty are focused on continuous quality improvement of each program and academic support service. Over the next five years, attention will be paid to enhancing teaching effectiveness, strengthening current programs, and building new programs to meet the need of a diverse and growing student population.

CREATING A CULTURE OF READING – A DEFINITION

“A university should be a place of light, liberty, and learning,” said Benjamin Disraeli, British statesman and author. Through its QEP, Troy University seeks to create such a place, more specifically, a culture, as it refers to the “development, improvement, or refinement of the intellect, emotions, interests, manners and tastes” (Webster’s New World Dictionary: Third College Edition). Creating a Culture of Reading will require the involvement and participation of the entire University community as students will be asked to read more, faculty will be asked to be more strategic in incorporating reading assignments into their courses, staff will be asked to join with fac-
ulty in leading discussion sessions and promoting the culture of reading across the University, and community leaders will be asked to support service-learning projects.

The next five academic years will be exciting and innovative as reading becomes one of the hallmarks of the University’s culture. Students will be better informed, more participatory in classes, more thoughtful in discussions, more critical in analyses, and more global in their world views. Intensive reading will broaden students’ horizons and take them beyond themselves to be more engaged in reading with other students, individuals and groups. Ultimately, as students enhance their awareness of civic and global issues, they will be encouraged to apply what they have read to local, national and global issues.

Defining what it means to be a liberally educated person, William Cronon, in “Only Connect . . . : The Goals of a Liberal Education” in The American Scholar, recognizes 10 characteristics of people whom he sees as embodying the values of a liberal education. One of these characteristics is the habit of reading:

They read and they understand. This too is ridiculously simple to say but very difficult to achieve because there are so many ways of reading in our world. Educated people can appreciate not only the front page of The New York Times but also the arts section, the sports section, the business section, the science section, and the editorials. They can gain insight from not only THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and the Review of Books but also from Scientific America, the Economist, the National Enquirer, Vogue, and Reader’s Digest. They can enjoy John Milton and John Grisham (p. 76).

Troy University’s QEP is designed to provide broad and rich reading experiences that will contribute to the liberal education of our students.
III. DESIRED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Overall, what impact do we expect this culture to have on our institution’s environment, student behavior, attitude, and values?

_A book is the most effective weapon against intolerance and ignorance._

_Lyndon Baines Johnson_

Creating a Culture of Reading will involve several components: the Common Reading Initiative (CRI), the Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI), _The New York Times_ Readership Program, service-learning placements, reading nooks, and faculty and staff development. In relation to these components, the University anticipates that the following benefits will be derived:

- Improvement in students’ reading and critical thinking skills
- Increased participation in reading beyond course assignments
- More positive attitudes toward reading
- Widespread participation in discussion groups, panel discussions, theater and debate activities to engage students in campus activities and to improve their communication skills
- Participation in service-learning and civic engagement opportunities related to reading
- Tutoring for students who lack basic reading skills
- Faculty development geared toward training instructors to incorporate reading and vocabulary skills and service-learning methodologies into their courses
- An appreciation for life-long learning
These broad goals are reflected in 10 specific and measurable student learning outcomes that the QEP will address. These are:

1. Improving students’ ability to interpret the meaning of key terms in their readings.
2. Improving students’ ability to make appropriate inferences in reading materials.
3. Improving students’ ability to recognize assumptions in reading materials.
4. Improving students’ ability to infer and interpret a relationship between variables in reading materials.
5. Improving students’ ability to draw valid conclusions based on the information presented in reading materials.
6. Improving students’ ability to compare and contrast theories and concepts in reading materials.
7. Improving students’ ability to summarize information they read.
8. Improving students’ ability to synthesize concepts and information.
9. Increasing students’ participation in service-learning projects that involve reading.
10. Increasing students’ investment in time in reading for pleasure and for academic purposes.

Detailed information on how these 10 student learning outcomes will be assessed is provided in the assessment plan in this report.
IV. DOCUMENTATION OF BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

“Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers.”
-Harry S. Truman

The groundwork for the QEP was laid by the First-Year Task Force, the forerunner of the First-Year Advisory Board. Established in September 2003 by Dr. John Schmidt, then Vice Chancellor for Student Services, the Task Force had as its primary focus the improvement of first-year learning and student engagement that would lead to persistence and retention. Among the goals accomplished by the task force were the development of the University’s creed; the establishment of the Odyssey New Student Convocation (supported by first-year retention literature and the findings which show that students and new faculty want to engage and bond with their new academic home); the establishment of learning communities (START); the Common Reading Initiative, which requires all entering students to read a designated book prior to their arrival on the Troy campus; and the creation of a student success center to blend into one central location testing and assessment, academic advising and student development, academic tutoring, and career planning.

Upon recommendation of the Task Force, the Chancellor created a Dean of First-Year Studies position in June 2006, and the position was filled in August 2007. Contained in a draft entitled “Dean of First-Year Studies: Tasks and Responsibilities” are the following recommendations:

- Use the first-year program to strengthen the foundation of first-year courses as the Quality Enhancement Plan
- Related to the above, work with faculty who teach first-year courses (designated committee with students) to prepare an institutional philosophy
for the first-year experience, i.e. learn, lead, grow and excel in a student-centered setting). Such philosophy is to be routed via Council of Deans.

After several years of hard work and research into current trends and best practices, and because the purposes of first-year studies and the QEP were so strongly intertwined, the First-Year Task Force transitioned into the First-Year Advisory Board to support the Dean of First-Year Studies and began to function as a sounding board for the University’s QEP. (A listing of First-Year Task Force members is found in Appendix A.)

**BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION - FIRST-YEAR ADVISORY BOARD**

1. Ms. Eleanor Lee, Dean, First-Year Studies, Chair
2. Dr. Maryjo Cochran, Dean, College of Communication and Fine Arts
3. Dr. John Dew, Associate Vice Chancellor, Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness
4. Dr. Hal Fulmer, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
5. Dr. Ed Pappanastos, Assistant Professor, Business Programs
6. Dr. Bill Richardson, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
7. Ms. Teresa Rodgers, Director, Student Development/Counseling
8. Ms. Donna Schubert, Associate Professor, School of Journalism
9. Dr. Bryant Shaw, Professor, History
10. Mr. Buddy Starling, Dean, Admissions/Enrollment Management
11. Dr. Lance Tatum, Dean, College of Education
12. Ms. Barbara Patterson, Director, Student Involvement and Leadership
13. Mr. Herbert Reeves, Dean, Student Services
FACULTY, STAFF INVOLVEMENT CONSIDERING THE NEW YORK TIMES

In addition to the work of the First-Year Task Force, a group of faculty and staff met with a representative from The New York Times in September 2007 to discuss the possibility of implementing The New York Times on the Troy campus. Those in attendance included William Nathan Alexander, Assistant Professor of History; Tim Buckner, Assistant Professor of History; Bryant Shaw, Professor of History; Herbert Reeves, Dean of Student Services; Amanda Diggs, Assistant Professor of Speech and Theater; Hal Fulmer, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Richard Nokes, Assistant Professor of English; Henry Stewart, Dean of Library Services; Steven Taylor, Associate Professor of Political Science; Steven Padgett, Professor of Journalism; and Eleanor Lee, Dean, First-Year Studies. The discussions that transpired led to the decision to incorporate a newspaper partnership into the QEP, as a means of enhancing the reading initiative.

BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION - FOCUS GROUPS

In early 2008, the First-Year Advisory Board conducted a series of focus group sessions to request ideas for the QEP from students, faculty, staff and administrators. The office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness conducted the meetings, which were organized by Dean Eleanor Lee. The four different focus groups produced a wide variety of ideas. (A complete listing of all ideas generated by the focus groups can be found in Appendix B). The ideas generated by faculty members tended to be broad in concept, while student ideas focused on changes that would impact a specific class. Upon review of the ideas generated from all the focus groups, the First-Year Advisory Board further observed that some ideas were not directly related to improving student learning. Others focused on improving support processes related to...
student learning, but would not lend themselves to direct measurement that might indicate actual improvement in student learning outcomes.

The members of the First-Year Advisory Board noticed that one idea emerged that would relate to all the ideas recommended: The need to improve reading. The faculty group had identified the possibility of embracing reading as a way to help students develop a global perspective. (See Groups A, B, and C below)

**GROUP A**
- Reading - a way to develop a global perspective
- Civic engagement/informed reading
- Improve reading/writing skills
- Reading program
- Improve reading ability/vocabulary
- Skills: reading, writing, critical thinking, and math
- Build on first-year reading experience
- Reactivate the reading center
- Involve international students in reading
- Enhance learning/retention of basic information

**GROUP B**
- What do we expect in terms of being global citizens
- Measure change in worldview
- Geographic literacy/knowledge
- Listening, civility - understanding arguments
- U.S. travel - going to NYC/SF etc.

**GROUP C**
- Shift from a teaching environment to a learning environment
- Help students think about the attributes of being a university scholar
- Civil Rights focus—Montgomery resources—small groups/quest
- Orient students to study abroad
- Look at skill building in terms of improving employability
- Provide course support on research
- Clarify what we want students to learn

The University staff recommended some type of reading program, while administrators identified the need to stress fundamental skills such as reading. An analysis of the three groups above suggested that the ideas in Group A directly mention reading; those in Group B, while not mentioning reading directly, suggest the benefits from a
focus on reading; and those in Group C are indirect changes that would occur with a focus on reading.

As the First-Year Advisory Board began to discuss the idea of a QEP that might focus on reading, enthusiasm in the group increased. The Board began to evaluate the recommendations and realized that a QEP focused on reading could become a capstone project for Troy University that would link three key efforts that the University had addressed previously with varying levels of success: a common book experience, a newspaper partnership, and a service-learning initiative driven by broad reading assignments. A fourth element would be a professional development sequence designed to assist faculty and staff in supporting the other three key efforts.

During the process of focus groups and Advisory Board meetings, the concept of a developing culture of readers began to take shape. Group members agreed that such an initiative had significant potential to enhance student learning and engagement, and Creating a Culture of Reading emerged as the overriding theme for Troy University’s QEP. To confirm the need for such a project, the First-Year Advisory Board consulted the University’s office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE). Personnel from IRPE reviewed both national and institutional data and identified several salient points regarding Troy University students. On a national level, two items from the 2007 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) were particularly notable:

- Reading, beyond classroom assignments, is at the bottom of the list of activities for incoming college freshmen in the United States.
- The majority of incoming freshmen are not in the habit of evaluating the quality and reliability of the information they receive.
In reviewing data specific to Troy University, IRPE identified the following information:

- Troy University students’ mean scores were just below the national mean score in reading and critical thinking in our 2007 data from the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency.
- 51% of Troy University’s students fell slightly below the national average in reading in the Fall 2007 Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP).
- 45% of Troy University’s students fell slightly below the national average in critical thinking in the Fall 2007 MAPP.
- 53% of Troy University’s first-year students reported spending less than 10 hours per week studying, reading or engaging in other academic activities, according to the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement.

With these data in mind, the First-Year Advisory Board believed it would be appropriate to test the idea of Creating a Culture of Reading with the broader University community. The Dean of First-Year Studies, Eleanor Lee, met with the leaders of the Student Government Association and shared the proposal for the QEP, which the student leaders strongly endorsed. Dean Lee also took the concept to the Faculty Council, where it was met with enthusiastic support. The proposal was then reviewed by the Academic Steering Committee that included all of the deans and the vice chancellors responsible for all of Troy University’s teaching locations in Alabama, throughout the United States, and in foreign locations. The Academic Steering Committee also gave the proposal strong support.

The proposal for the QEP was presented by Dean Lee to over 150 participants from all parts of Troy University that attended the Troy University 2008 Leadership Con-
ference in Panama City, Fla., on May 22-23, 2008. A preliminary plan, including a ten-
tative budget and timeline, was prepared for review with the Chancellor, Dr. Jack Haw-
kins, who supported the proposal and recommended that it be presented to the Board
of Trustees for approval. On July 21, 2008, Dean Lee went before the Troy University
Board of Trustees and presented the concept for the QEP. The Board gave the plan its
enthusiastic endorsement. On July 28-30, 2008, Dean Lee and Dr. John Dew attended
the SACS Summer Institute in Orlando, Fla., to learn best practices from other institu-
tions regarding the development of a QEP.

BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION - QEP IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

With the endorsement of students, faculty, administrators, senior leadership,
and the Board of Trustees, the next step was to establish a QEP steering committee
(implementation team) that would bring broad representation to the specific planning
and deployment of the QEP. While the First-Year Advisory Board would continue to of-
fer advice regarding the QEP, it had other duties upon which to focus. The new QEP
Implementation Team, held its first meeting on August 18, 2008. The team includes
representatives from faculty, staff, students and the community. The team was struc-
tured to ensure the involvement of representatives from across the University’s many
locations, including the eCampus, as shown in the following chart:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, Nathan</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazzell, Mark</td>
<td>Superintendent, Troy County Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty, Fred</td>
<td>Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Montgomery Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belsches, Alan</td>
<td>Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Dothan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookout, James</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckner, Tim</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochran, Maryjo</td>
<td>Dean, College of Communications and Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dew, John</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dye, Judy</td>
<td>Retired Professor, College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felton-Smith, Linda</td>
<td>Superintendent, Troy City Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster, Michael</td>
<td>Web Architect, Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretwell, Cherie</td>
<td>Chair/Professor, School of Business, Phenix City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulmer, Hal</td>
<td>Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gearhart, Deb</td>
<td>Director, eCampus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gouge, Sandi</td>
<td>Associate Vice Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkins, Jack, Jr.</td>
<td>Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard-Shaughnessy, Candice</td>
<td>Interim Chair, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology and Health Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, Eleanor</td>
<td>Dean, First-Year Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlofsky, Mike</td>
<td>Professor, English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parker, Marian</td>
<td>Director, Instructional Support Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parr, Tim</td>
<td>President, SGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roach, Ed</td>
<td>Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost</td>
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<td>Starling, Buddy</td>
<td>Dean, Admissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schmurr-Stewart, Darlene</td>
<td>Dean, International Programs</td>
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<td>Stewart, Henry</td>
<td>Dean, Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tatum, Lance</td>
<td>Dean, Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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</table>
The organizational structure delineating responsibility for implementation of the QEP is presented graphically below:
BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION - MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

On July 21, 2008, the QEP Marketing and Publicity Committee was organized to include the Dean of the College of Communication and Fine Arts, the Dean of the College of Education, the Dean of Enrollment Management, a Web Architect, the SGA President, and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communication as the chair. The committee held its first meeting on August 6, 2008, to develop its purpose, goals, phases and potential key actions for Creating a Culture of Reading. At that meeting, potential campaign slogans, icons, and activities were created. This listing of ideas was presented and a lengthy discussion held at the August 18 QEP Implementation Team meeting, specifically on the proposed plan to phase in the initiative through five stages.

After this meeting, the committee came up with questions for future direction to be answered at the September meeting. Also in September, two focus groups were held in classes (one class was for new students only and one was for new and returning students) on possible slogans/names for a reading promotion campaign. One class chose iRead as the first choice and the other class chose NEED2READ as its first choice. After the September meeting, clear direction was given on the process for approval of campaign slogan, phases, budget, and write-up for the QEP. The committee met again on October 22, 2008, to finalize the 54 marketing activity ideas including the recommendation for a collaborative campaign slogan, weREAD. On October 27, the committee presented the marketing ideas generated to the QEP Implementation Team for inclusion in the QEP. (See Appendix C)
Once the Quality Enhancement Plan team focused on Creating a Culture of Reading and crafted a definition, much consideration was given to how to best achieve the desired outcomes. A trend on university campuses nationwide, common reading initiatives encourage students to read more, to discuss what they’ve read with faculty and other students, and to be more engaged in activities related to reading. The QEP at Troy University will include the First-Year Common Reading Initiative (CRI) for incoming freshmen. *The New York Times* Readership Program is designed to accomplish the outcome of expanding students’ worldviews and providing an efferent purpose for reading, as opposed to the Common Reading Initiative’s aesthetic purpose. To expand the QEP beyond the first-year experience and maximize the value of *The New York Times* Readership Program, a Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI) will be implemented for students enrolled in major-specific coursework.

The service-learning component of the QEP raises the initiative to an even higher level of student involvement—one that will allow students to apply their reading to real-world situations. To enhance implementation of each of these elements, the QEP includes a professional development initiative to train faculty and staff to maximize the reading and service components. Reading nooks will be established around the campus to encourage individual reading, group analysis, and discussion of the common reader and major field readers. Finally, a clear assessment plan will provide for reflection upon the processes of the five-year QEP and revision as necessary. Troy’s QEP offers six major components—the Common Reading Initiative, the Major Field Reading Initiative, *The New York Times* Readership Program, a service-learning program, a pro-
fessional development sequence, established reading nooks, and a well-articulated as-

The expanded reading assignments with The New York Times Readership Pro-
gram, the Common Reading Initiative, and the Major Field Reading Initiative are ex-
pected to directly impact the QEP’s student learning outcomes related to the interpreta-
tion of meaning and making appropriate reference for reading materials. The expan-
sion of reading assignments, coupled with increased engagement with faculty in critical
discussion of these reading assignments, is expected to directly impact the student
learning outcomes dealing with recognizing assumptions in reading materials, inferring
and interpreting relationships between variables and drawing conclusions, comparing
and contrasting theories and concepts in reading materials, summarizing information,
and synthesizing concepts and information.

The participation in service-learning projects will impact the student learning
outcome related to service-learning. All of the components collectively are expected to
impact the student learning outcome regarding the investment of student time in read-
ing.

Details regarding the assessment of the student learning outcomes are included
in the section on assessment of student learning outcomes.

A. COMMON READING INITIATIVE (CRI)

One component of the QEP is Troy University’s First-Year Common Reading
Initiative (CRI). Presently, the CRI is a pilot program for first-year students new to the
University. Students are asked to read a common book the summer before entering
the University. The goals of the initiative for first-year students are to promote reading
and discussion, foster integrated learning, and support classroom instruction. Once the
focus of the QEP was chosen, it seemed only natural that the CRI’s pilot, with its em-
phasis on reading, would be further explored and developed as a potential segment of the plan. In addition to reading the book, students will be provided opportunities to engage with the book through theater productions, lectures, panel discussions, author visits, essay contests, and classroom assignments.

The CRI pilot program was implemented on the Troy campus during Fall Semester 2007. A book selection committee solicited recommendations (see Appendix D), and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy was chosen as the inaugural book for the CRI pilot. All incoming first-year students were asked to read the book before the start of classes on August 15, 2007. At the annual training seminar for instructors of the freshman orientation course, TROY 1101, an English professor discussed possible topics for discussion of *The Road*. The seminar was open to faculty, staff and students who wished to attend. It was decided that students would receive credit through the orientation class for participating in activities related to the book. Additionally, first-year courses in English, history and biology integrated the book into the coursework.

During the two days prior to the start of school, discussion sessions, led by faculty, staff, and students, were held throughout the campus for first-year students new to the University. During the first week in September, a panel discussion was held in the Claudia Crosby Theater on the Troy campus. The panel included faculty from biology, English, and ethics as well as the Dean of First-Year Studies. The 700+ seat theater was nearly full. Considering the attendance at the discussion sessions, panel discussion, and the interest and involvement of faculty and staff, the first year pilot of the Common Reading Initiative was deemed successful. (See Appendix E for examples of course activities designed to incorporate the common reader.)
The 2008-2009 common book, *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines, was selected in early April 2008. The Dean of First-Year Studies, on behalf of the selection committee, presented a written justification and a copy of the book to the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, members of the First-Year Advisory Board, and other faculty and staff. An announcement was sent to the University community (see Appendix F). Feedback from the community was very positive. Campus-wide discussion groups were again established, with attendance exceeding 400. In addition, the theater department presented six sold-out performances of the stage version of *A Lesson Before Dying* to capacity audiences. English classes incorporated the novel into reading and writing assignments. One of the discussion group sessions was videotaped and shown on TrojanVision, and the video version was made available to students for viewing. Conclusively, with feedback from the pilot program indicating a strong need for increasing reading activities among students, it was wisely considered that a Common Reading Initiative would be a critical component of the QEP.

**B. NEW YORK TIMES READERSHIP PROGRAM**

As a component of Creating a Culture of Reading, *The New York Times* Readership Program is, according to the advertising literature, “one of the most in-depth and informative resources available....” Moreover, Troy University will join more than 2,000 faculty requiring *The New York Times* in the classroom, representing more than 1,400 colleges and universities. Complimentary resources included with the subscriptions include:

- *The New York Times* speakers
- Faculty workshops
- Complementary copies to requiring faculty
- Support for campus contests and activities
• Curriculum guides

• The New York Times college website

Information literature from The New York Times gives examples of possible assignments from various courses:

• Sociology: Compare articles from The New York Times to other media perspectives—The Wall Street Journal, international news outlets, the Internet, and broadcast media.

• Political Science: Students are assigned articles and asked to interpret the theme, overall significance and connection to course texts.

• English, Speech, and Journalism: Students in freshman English course are required to prepare six one-page responses to something occurring in the newspaper.

C. MAJOR FIELD READING INITIATIVE (MFRI)

To extend the Common Reading Initiative (CRI) beyond first-year students and the University’s general studies program, a component of the QEP will feature a Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI). The MFRI expands the University’s culture of reading into the five academic colleges and provides a common reading program for disciplinary majors. Through the leadership of the college deans and their faculty, one or more texts will be selected annually to be read by students in their major fields. In conjunction with the director of the QEP, each dean will work within his/her college to determine the book(s) will be read. It is assumed that some colleges, particularly those that tend toward more homogeneity, may select a single reader for all majors within the college (for example, the College of Business). Other colleges, of a more diverse nature (such as Arts and Sciences), may choose to use several readers and divide these along disciplinary or macro-disciplinary lines (English, history, math or liberal arts, the
social sciences, the natural sciences, etc). The incorporation of the Major Field Reading Initiative will follow a pattern of use similar to the CRI used by first-year students. Faculty will determine how they want to make use of the selected text in their specific courses. Students will be assessed by faculty at the class level with broader assessment summaries (disciplines, majors, colleges) provided by each dean with support from the director of the QEP and the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness. Specific matrices of assessment for each college will be developed under the leadership of each dean in consultation with the director of the QEP.

D. SERVICE-LEARNING

A report by the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) notes that the decline in reading among teenagers and adult Americans has national consequences. Literary readers are more likely than non-readers to participate in arts activity (visiting museums, attending plays and musicals, for example), civic activity (serving communities, volunteering, doing charity work [as do readers of general books]), and voting (to read). Therefore, the service-learning component of Troy University’s culture of reading will provide students with opportunities to broaden and diversify their reading, empathize with others in life situations different from their own, and enhance their self-identities.

This practice blends well with the growing commitment of universities across the country to get students to engage their communities beyond the classroom. By reading The New York Times, students will be able to identify global and national issues discussed within their courses and place them into a real-world context. Through creating a service-learning component to the QEP, students will apply the concepts they have read in The New York Times and discussed in class to local community needs, expanding critical thinking skills, enhancing classroom instruction, and offering hands-on educational experiences beyond the University.
On one level, service-learning activities will focus on students reading to others or helping others to improve their reading skills. Several opportunities present themselves within and outside of the University community. Students can engage in reading-related service-learning, such as reading to children in local elementary schools, discussing reading in high schools, reading books on the University’s radio station, and reading for the blind. Given the Troy campus’ large international student population, students can volunteer to read with international students who are experiencing difficulty with the English language. Additionally, students can help students with weak skills to improve their reading levels.

In addition to one-on-one reading assistance, Troy University’s partnership with *The New York Times* offers a comprehensive set of source materials for courses across the curriculum. Courses will be designed around a particular theme/subject and will use *The New York Times* to identify global or national issues relevant to that theme for discussion and potential for local application. Service-learning opportunities will be set up by faculty members in consultation with the University, and students will complete a prearranged amount of time with the local institution.

The sites for service-learning placements will vary depending upon the focus of the course. In most cases, the sites will be schools, community organizations, nonprofit groups, state or local government offices and agencies, and church-based associations. Many student groups, departments and faculty at Troy University already have existing relationships with some of these groups and other nearby institutions, such as local school systems. Various state government offices and the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, for instance, could serve as excellent sites for service-learning students. Placements might take the form of internships, in which students actively engage in the work of the organization, or they may involve shadowing an assigned men-
tor to observe how theoretical problems discovered in class are dealt with in practice. In order for placements to meet the criteria for service-learning, the work performed must be directly connected to the content and goals of the course. Additionally, these placements will be paired with other forms of active learning, particularly some type of structured reflection—usually a journal or paper—in which students integrate classroom instruction with what they have encountered during their placement (Colby, et al.). The superintendents of the Troy City Schools and Pike County School System serve on the QEP Implementation Team to work with the University on the service-learning component.

**E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Central to the professional development component of the QEP is training in using supplemental texts, specifically the common reader, the major field reader, and *The New York Times*, in general studies coursework and in upper division content area courses. As a result of this training, University personnel will be able to provide course-embedded academic supports to students, as suggested by Cushman (2007). To ensure that each element of the QEP is implemented effectively and with fidelity, training must be provided for the faculty and staff responsible for designing lessons, activities and experiential placements. A sample professional development series includes workshop sessions for instructors of developmental, entry-level, and upper division coursework. Because strategic efforts to improve reading and critical thinking skills are frequently overlooked in college-level instructional delivery, the offerings include several pedagogical sessions designed to assist those instructors who do not have formal teacher training.
Each workshop follows the same basic procedure, which includes these elements:

1. Learning objectives
2. Introduction of the strategy
3. Research-based rationale
4. Sample application in at least two content areas
5. Printed materials summarizing the strategy, along with tips for implementation and assessment

A sequence of professional development sessions is offered and additional training will be made available if project personnel and faculty identify other instructional delivery needs. (See Appendix G for a description of sample professional development sessions.)

F. READING NOOKS

The casual observer on college campuses will notice that comfortable and quiet reading and study areas are sought after by students. At Troy University, swings, benches and coffee shop tables are consistently in demand. As part of the QEP, we propose to establish seating areas on all campuses designed specifically to engage students in reading and reflection. We have included in the QEP budget funds that academic departments can solicit to furnish reading nooks in their buildings and the surrounding grounds. We believe that these dedicated areas will provide a welcoming environment for our QEP and will nurture the reading culture we intend to develop.
VI. LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature.
If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.
Maya Angelou

Launching the QEP in the first year of college is strongly supported by research, especially in the pursuit of goals for entering college freshmen. Because a strong foundation is crucial to students’ success in college, many colleges and universities have strategically organized the first year to generate maximum success for students.

Much of what now constitutes “the first-year experience” in U.S. higher education are programs and activities that have the following overall research-based objectives:

- Increasing student-to-student interaction
- Increasing faculty-to-student interaction, especially out of class
- Increasing student involvement and time on campus
- Linking the curriculum and the co-curriculum
- Increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement
- Assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college (Barefoot, 2000)

Each year, the incoming freshman class at any public university represents a wide range of abilities, interests and backgrounds. To bring structure and direction to the first-year experience and to create an environment that supports young adults’ critical need for belonging (Maslow, 1943), universities design and implement initiatives targeting both engagement and academic achievement. Toward that end, the Quality Enhancement Plan at Troy University, Creating a Culture of Reading, has been developed to promote reading and discussion, foster integrated learning, support classroom
instruction, and encourage participation in campus, civic and service-learning activities. Troy University’s First-Year Studies Program, under the direction of the Dean of First-Year Studies, will oversee implementation of all elements of the QEP: the Common Reading Initiative (CRI), *The New York Times* Readership Program, the Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI), the service-learning projects, and the professional development sequence that will train faculty and staff to maximize the effects of the experiences.

The QEP addresses a growing concern among educators. Stotsky (2006) points out that not only have the reading skills of American adults declined from 1992 to 2003, but literacy skills among college graduates have also declined (“Whose Literacy”). The selection of a reading initiative resulted in part from a review of new-student indicators reporting that 53% of first-year students at Troy University spend less than 10 hours a week studying, reading, or engaging in other academic activities (NSSE Institutional Report, 2007). One of the goals of the QEP is to improve students’ critical reading and critical thinking skills. To become a critical reader, one must go beyond the printed facts. To illustrate: “A non-critical reader might read a history book to learn the facts of the situation or to discover an accepted interpretation of those events. A critical reader might read the same work to appreciate how a particular perspective on the events and a particular selection of facts can lead to particular understanding” (Kurland 2000). Indeed, a primary consideration in the selection of the QEP topic, Creating a Culture of Reading, for Troy University was the acknowledgement that the mean score of a sample of Troy University students in reading and critical thinking was below the national mean (College Assessment of Academic Proficiency, 2007). Data from the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (2007) indicate that 51% fell below the national av-
verage in reading and 45% in critical thinking. Through the QEP, we intend to address this weakness.

Another consideration in the selection of the Common Reading Initiative is the fact that 62% of Troy University students are from families in which the parents either never attended or never completed college. As college entrance requirements become more egalitarian, the issues surrounding persistence and successful completion become more complicated. High-risk populations, including first-generation students, are ushered into higher education under the same expectations as those for whom college success is statistically more likely. Any student’s opportunity for success depends heavily upon being able to maneuver the intricacies of life away from home; if the student is unprepared, either academically or socially, the chances for success can be diminished. As Clydesdale (2007) illustrates in *The First Year Out*, the need to fit in and manage independent living is greater, at least in the beginning, than the desire to embrace the intellectual opportunities that the college experience attempts to offer. By creating discussion groups, we intend to create an environment at Troy University that blends social and academic pursuits.

Current research indicates that low income, first-generation college students are far less likely to persist (Ishitani, 2003) and graduate (Ishitani, 2006). Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993) support the assertion that parental educational attainment is a fairly equivalent measure to socioeconomic status; campus populations with high first-generation representation reflect lower reading proficiency than those with lower percentages of first-generation college students. One purpose of this initiative is to evaluate the efficacy of the Common Reading Initiative to improve the learning process, thus enhancing engagement, persistence, and ultimately completion. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
acknowledges that while institutions of higher education are limited in overcoming new students’ educational weaknesses, promising practices can be found that increase student engagement and success. While student engagement is not a silver bullet, finding ways to get students to take part in the right kinds of activities helps to level the playing field, especially for those from low-income family backgrounds and others who have been historically underserved, and increases the odds that they will complete their programs of study and enjoy the intellectual and monetary gains associated with the completion of a baccalaureate degree (NSSE, 2006).

The review of literature that follows supports the concept of Troy University’s QEP, Creating a Culture of Reading.

**QEP TO PROMOTE READING AND DISCUSSION**

Laufgraben (2006) and Twiton (2007) acknowledge that the research on common reading initiatives is not extensive, but characteristics of effective programs can be gleaned from the limited extant research. The QEP at Troy University will employ a social approach to an intellectual challenge, with the expectation of increased persistence among different groups of students. While the obvious intent is to engage students in face-to-face conversations about literature and current events, a secondary purpose is to determine the extent to which the students who participate are more likely to persist in their studies. Cushman (2007) suggests that the confidence and academic support that accompany a campus-wide reading initiative can enhance persistence and completion. The literature reviewed for the QEP is grounded in social learning theory, which has dominated literacy research for nearly two decades (Dressman, 2007). Empirical evidence from related projects supports Bandura’s (1986) notion that learning is a social practice that relies on “constant interaction between the person, the environment, and behavior” (Casazza & Silverman, 1996). The activities planned to support Troy Uni-
versity’s Common Reading Initiative, centered each year on a title identified by the University’s selection committee, have been designed with this social interaction clearly in mind.

Exposure to a variety of reading materials has been found to signal reading maturity, according to Smith (1996). As a companion to the common reader, newspapers specifically address immediate events and track ongoing trends, information critical to deep understanding of history, political science, science and business. Gardner and Sullivan (1999) articulate the value of implementing a newspaper reading initiative in the college classroom; including supporting the liberal arts education goals of mastery of reading, critical thinking, and analytical and synthesis skills. The first-year student, in particular, is identified as being vulnerable in terms of personal empowerment; they must, the authors say, “be able to find, evaluate, and communicate information independently” (para. 24). Furthermore, the processes of classroom discussion and debate that emerge from reading newspapers help develop students’ competence in making choices.

Implementation of the QEP at Troy University will depend upon the collaborative nature of social learning, as instructors incorporate the discussion of related text from the common reader and The New York Times into their coursework. Ironically, research indicates that a social, collaborative approach to reading is essential in developing independent readers. The scaffolding from modeled reading to group reading to independent reading is seen as central to assisting students as they master progressively more complex texts (Johnson, Freedman, and Thomas, 2008).

**QEP TO FOSTER INTEGRATED LEARNING**

The purpose of integrated learning, according to Leavitt (2006), is “to push students to achieve higher levels of synthesis and integration in their study of new mate-
rial” (p. 2). Through news articles, editorials, and features to which all students have access, instructors will be better able to concentrate on a single topic for investigation from a variety of perspectives. Although scheduling can be problematic in designing collaborative coursework (all students in a project should be enrolled in the same two or three participating sections), such an endeavor holds the potential to enhance learning, engagement and degree completion. Kenny (1998) encourages the removal of territorial and scheduling barriers to offer courses that take advantage of the expertise of instructors representing a variety of disciplines.

In an effort to teach students to apply knowledge across curricular areas, Troy University has begun to implement integrated learning courses, or interdisciplinary studies. Reading assignments that evolve from the Common Reading Initiative will enhance the goal of approaching the natural, human, and social sciences from a variety of academic perspectives.

QEP TO SUPPORT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

In the October 8, 2004, issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, Mindich notes the decline of newspaper readership among college students:

In 1972, 46% of college-age Americans read a newspaper every day. Today, it’s only 21%, according to research by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research’s General Social Survey. . . . While many point to new media as the best hope for rekindling interest in news, only 11% of 18-24 year-olds list news as a major reason for logging on. The Internet is a great source of news for some, but for most it is a great way of avoiding the news, to be used for e-mail, instant messages, and other personal information.

Newspapers are part of a low-cost, immediate solution to the dilemma of expensive, incomplete, or outdated textbooks in almost any content area and “go a long way toward overcoming [undergraduates’] woeful ignorance of global and local affairs” (Knowlton, 1999). Engagement is a significant part of the reason students are more likely to see relevance in newspapers than in textbooks (Hobbs, 2005). Besser
and Stone (1999) conducted a survey to determine students’ opinions of the characteristics of an effective textbook; their findings indicated that “all the most helpful traits named are found in good newspapers, and good newspapers disdain all of the most negative traits.”

Penn State University has made *The New York Times, USA Today, and The Reading (PA) Eagle* available to every Penn student since 2000, an expansion of its 1997 initiative that provided newspapers to all students living in residence halls. The incorporation of newspapers into classroom instruction has resulted in an increased student awareness of current events, the connection between those events and their content areas, and subsequently of the content areas and their lives (Mysliwiec, Shibley, & Dunbar, 2003-2004). Other colleges, including the University of Arizona (Willerton, 1999), the College of Charleston (Van Liere, 1999), Howard University (Wilson, 1999), and the University of Wisconsin (Canon, 1999), report using *The New York Times* as an instructional supplement or as a substitute for a textbook in a variety of disciplines with positive results in the areas of self-reported student engagement and learning.

Access to supplemental reading materials alone, however, is insufficient to accomplish the goals of the QEP. The reading demands at the college level are different from those in the high school classroom. Historically, approaches to addressing this issue have taken a circuitous path. Ryan and Glenn (2007) describe the route as beginning with the acknowledgement of a need to help entering freshmen make the transition from reading for information to reading for appreciation and synthesis. From this determination came the freshman orientation course. Soon, however, other issues seeped into the curriculum, as administrators realized that first-year students also needed instruction in living independently, making wise decisions, finding their way around a
campus, and managing a program of study. Eventually, the orientation course had little to do with reading, and administrators were loath to add another non-credit requirement or to add another hour to general studies. Reading problems and their solutions were forced out of the orientation courses to make room for “the history of the home institution, group community-building, library usage and topics such as personal values and relationships, sexual and alcohol-drug awareness, managing money and more recently, diversity awareness” (83-84).

The complexities of reading at the college level demand more than an overview of process. Content areas have different expectations of their students and varying approaches to text; mathematics generally relies upon what Rosenblatt (1978) identifies as the efferent stance, literature an aesthetic one. Instructors in the various fields of study should understand this concept, and they should be prepared to provide effective and engaging lesson delivery, including clear direction in reading the required texts and in incorporating supplemental readings effectively into the curriculum. Troy University’s QEP, Creating a Culture of Reading, proposes a reading initiative that includes both efferent text, provided through The New York Times, and aesthetic text, the annual common reader and, in subsequent years, content-specific titles. An important element of the QEP is professional development designed to train instructors in general studies and content area courses to identify, select, and incorporate supplemental readings to extend student understanding. College instructors are content specialists, not usually trained in pedagogy. Unless the incoming freshman has been adequately prepared for the difference, expectations for engaged learning, critical thinking, and responsible participation might not be met.

Because the terminal degree—not teaching credentials—in a field of study is the primary requirement for employment as faculty in post-secondary education, col-
lege-level instructors generally have little or no formal training in the processes of effective teaching. White (2006) acknowledges a serious gap in instructional delivery on college campuses:

...I had lectured about biochemistry for more than a decade and a half before I learned about Bloom’s taxonomy and Piaget’s developmental stages. ...I realized that even now, I and virtually every one of my university faculty colleagues would not be certified to teach in the public schools, yet our teaching credentials at the college level go unchallenged as we carry on pretty much in ignorance of educational theory. ... I suspect that most educators would like their students to function at the higher three Bloom levels [analysis, synthesis, and evaluation]. However, in practice, students do not get much opportunity to develop these talents. When I roam the halls of various campuses and look at the examinations posted on bulletin boards, I am troubled by the many multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions I see for large introductory science classes. These questions rarely rise above the comprehension level. This perception, based on Bloom’s taxonomy, suggests a disconnection between instructors’ abstract hopes and their actual expectations. (384)

This lack of awareness of the basics of education theory and practice exacerbates the problem of bridging the gap between knowledge/comprehension and analysis/synthesis expectations. A position statement from the National Council of Teachers of English (2004) challenges instructors not only to recognize the abilities students possess in managing the language, but also to be prepared to demonstrate for students how literacy demands vary from one academic discipline to another. The transactional reading theory of Rosenblatt postulates that when a reader meets a text, background knowledge, attitudes, and ability levels all combine to make the transaction different for every reader. To guide young college students effectively through their first-year coursework, instructors should be familiar with the concept of “stance” in reading, either efferent or aesthetic. The QEP will address the needs of the reader through targeted, sequential and ongoing professional development.
QEP TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS, CIVIC AND SERVICE-LEARNING INITIATIVES

Writing in 1916, educational reformer John Dewey warned of “the standing danger that the material of formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of the schools, isolated from the subject matter of life-experience.” The final element of the QEP, to encourage participation in campus, civic, and service-learning initiatives, will help prevent that isolation. Eyler and Giles (1999) describe the service-learning experience as “more likely to be personally meaningful to participants and to generate emotional consequences, to challenge values as well as ideas, and hence to support social, emotional, and cognitive learning and development” (n.p.). The benefits of service-learning experiences, as identified by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, include the following:

- They (service learning experiences) are positive, meaningful and real to the participants.
- They involve cooperative rather than competitive experiences and thus promote skills associated with teamwork and community involvement and citizenship.
- They address complex problems in complex settings rather than simplified problems in isolation.
- They offer opportunities to engage in problem-solving by requiring participants to gain knowledge of the specific context of their service-learning activity and community challenges, rather than only to draw upon generalized or abstract knowledge such as might come from a textbook. As a result, service-learning offers powerful opportunities to acquire the habits of critical thinking; i.e. the ability to identify the most important questions or issues within a real-world situation.
• They promote deeper learning because the results are immediate and un-contrived. There are no "right answers" in the back of the book.

• As a consequence of this immediacy of experience, service-learning is more likely to be personally meaningful to participants and to generate emotional consequences, to challenge values as well as ideas, and hence to support social, emotional and cognitive learning and development (“What is service-learning?”, n.p.).

Seider (2007) underscores the role of reading in clarifying community needs and translating that knowledge into service-learning experiences. This awareness of need builds a foundation that naturally draws students to community service projects. The New York Times partnership, in particular, will serve as the impetus for increased student participation. By incorporating current news articles into content area courses, faculty will be in a better position to broaden students’ knowledge of and appreciation for issues that affect their world. The participation element of the QEP proposes to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge for Troy University students and to solidify the life-long commitment to learning and an appreciation for their fields of study that we hope to instill. An extension of that knowledge and appreciation will be action in the support of a meaningful cause.

A logical first step to service-learning that evolves from our QEP involves reading to K-12 students. Local schools in the Troy area have traditionally allowed pre-service teaching candidates and student organizations to tutor individuals or groups in reading and test preparation; currently several University classes have embedded requirements to complete these experiences. While tutoring and mentoring elementary, middle, and high school students is an obvious and purposeful opportunity, Clark (2002) stresses the potential of nonschool venues, such as youth athletic organizations
and community centers, as sites for literacy training and practice to “expand our con-
ceptions of literacies such that the social aspects of literacy are taken up, recognized,
and valued” (p. 295). The QEP will encourage further expansion of our traditional tutor-
ing programs into a much broader application, “…a form of experiential education in
which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together
with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and de-
velopment” (Jacoby 5).

Service-learning courses incorporate community-based service into the course
requirements, allowing students to apply theories presented in the classroom into prac-
tice. Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold (2007) address the importance of delibera-
tion in establishing students’ understanding of service-learning and in creating opportu-
nities; furthermore, they caution against “drive-by” volunteerism that does little or noth-
ing to improve literacy skills or imbue the tutor/mentor with a lasting sense of purpose.
Colleges must craft specific and demanding service-learning experiences that are tied
to academic objectives; only then will students truly synthesize knowledge and its appli-
cation in the world (Harward, 2007). To ensure that the experiences are meaningful,
faculty members at Troy University will receive professional development training,
based upon recommendations of the National Commission on Service Learning, in
identifying and developing service-learning opportunities that extend course content
into real-world applications. To be most effective, the experiences should show a clear
connection between the course standards and the service. Students should be actively
involved in determining the needs of the community and designing the placements. The
experiences should provide reciprocal benefits for the both the community and the stu-
dent participants. The professional development training will be designed to assist fac-
culty in any subject area create appropriate service-learning experiences. Furthermore,
we will ensure that the experiences are thoughtfully embedded into the course curricula as meaningful and integral elements, not added arbitrarily or as volunteer credit.

Questions guiding the organization of service-learning courses, as recommended by Campus Compact, include the following:

- **Engagement**: Does the service component meet a public good? How do you know this? Has the community been consulted? How? How have campus-community boundaries been negotiated and how will they be crossed?

- **Reflection**: Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?

- **Reciprocity**: Is reciprocity evident in the service component? How? Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in the service-learning functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients.

- **Public Dissemination**: Is service work presented to the public or made an opportunity for the community to enter into a public dialogue? For example: Do oral histories students collect return to the community in some public form? Is the data students collect on the saturation of toxins in the local river made public? How? To whose advantage? (Service-learning syllabi, 2007, n.p.)

Longitudinal data collected and analyzed by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reflect increases in colleges’ first-year studies initiatives and persistence rates among their participants. Troxel and Cutright (2008) encourage greater emphasis on connecting retention initiatives to challenging social and academic pursuits. We anticipate that our decision to implement the Common Reading Initiative employing *The New York*
Times will help our first-year students realize “a broadening of horizons, an awareness of a larger, more significant world of trends, events, and subjects of interest to an educated person” (Secor, 1999, para. 13).

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Writing in 1976, Dressel noted that the assessment of student learning in academic programs developed in the 1960s with early conversations regarding the needs and problems of evaluation in higher education. By 1989, Nichols reported that the assessment of student learning outcomes was “already a significant movement in higher education” (ix). Also in 1989, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association introduced a formal assessment initiative in its first *Statement on Assessment and Student Academic Achievement*, noting that “assessing student achievement is a critical component of evaluating overall institutional effectiveness” (Lopez 29).

Contemporary writers have done much to define the assessment methodologies that are relevant to this Quality Enhancement Plan. The National Research Council (2001) has clearly established the need for the use of multiple types of measures for the effective assessment of student learning, stating that “[N]o single test score can be considered a definitive measure of a student’s competence. Multiple measures enhance the validity and fairness of the inferences drawn by giving students various ways and opportunities to demonstrate their competence” (253). Assessment experts in higher education have likewise advised researchers to “build an array of assessment measures” in order to more fully understand student learning outcomes (Walvoord, 2004).

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003) classifies assessment as occurring at three levels within the higher educational institution. Assessment of academic success related to student learning outcomes can occur at the individual
course level, the academic program level, and the overall institutional level. Writers on assessment of student learning typically divide assessment of student learning into two broad categories. Formative assessment refers to an investigation of “learning along the progression of students’ studies,” while summative assessment refers to “learning at the end of their studies” (Maki, 2004, p. 89). Formative assessment, according to Angelo (1993), often focuses more on how students are learning than on what they have learned.

Assessment methods are likewise divided into two categories. Direct measures are those that “prompt students to represent or demonstrate their learning or produce work so that observers can assess how well student’s texts or responses fit institutional or program-level expectations.” Indirect measures “capture students’ perceptions of their learning and the educational environment that supports that learning, such as access to and the quality of services, programs, or educational offerings that support their learning” (Maki, 2004, p. 88). Maki (2004) further notes that “historically, standardized instruments, such as objective tests, have served as the primary direct method to assess student learning. Content or disciplinary experts identify the standard content, knowledge, and tasks that students should know and be able to perform” (p. 114).

Walvoord (2004) observes that “a national standardized exam is a direct measure that places the goals, performance, criteria, and evaluation with an external source, not the instructor.” “The advantage,” according to Walvoord, “is that you have a national standard against which to measure your own students.” In addition to the use of a national standardized exam, this QEP will use what Walvoord describes as “course-embedded assignments and tests” that individual faculty members will develop and implement in their specific courses as an additional approach to direct measurement of student learning.
A wide variety of these course-embedded assignments are available for faculty to use, depending on the individual faculty member’s preferences. Directed paraphrasing; concept maps; invented dialogues; one-sentence summaries; content, form and function outlines; defining features matrixes; categorizing grids; one-minute papers; and focus listing, along with the more traditional approach of including questions in a test or examination, are all options for course-embedded assignments that are available for direct measure of student learning (Angelo, 1993).

Indirect measures, such as data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), will be used to capture students’ perceptions regarding their learning activities that relate to reading. Questions from the NSSE will examine activities related to reading among the “clusters of effective educational practice” identified in the research upon which the NSSE is based (Kuh, 2005).
During year one, 2009-2010, the Common Reading Initiative (CRI) will move from its current state as a pilot program to full implementation, and *The New York Times* Readership Program will begin. All entering first-year students at all Troy University locations will be required to read a common book, to attend discussion sessions related to the book, and to engage in other activities related to the culture of the book. The first-year studies Web page is a vehicle for linking all locations with the activities related to the book (http://troy.troy.edu/firstyearstudies/index.html). Credit for engagement with the book will be awarded through the University orientation course, TROY 1101. In addition to the general interaction with the book through the TROY 1101 course, students will also engage with the book through other first-year introductory courses in the general studies curriculum, including English, history, science, art and music, and other appropriate courses.

*The New York Times* will also be used in courses—initially in first-year courses on the Troy and Dothan campuses—in which instructors have applied for student subscriptions. (See Appendix H for instructor proposal form.) To address the service-learning component, a survey will be developed and distributed to ascertain the extent to which service-learning opportunities already exist at the University. Results will be reviewed and analyzed by the QEP Implementation Team. Direct and indirect assessment will be ongoing. The first proposals for reading nooks will be considered and funded as appropriate. Faculty development activities will be arranged.

The second year of implementation, 2010-2011, will involve the expansion of the Common Reading Initiative to include all courses in the general studies curriculum at the 1000 and 2000 levels and increased participation in *The New York Times* Read-
ership Program, which will move beyond Troy and Dothan to include the Montgomery campus and eCampus. Service-learning activities will be planned, and courses with service-learning components will be developed or enriched as information is gathered from the survey of 2009. Assessment will be processed; professional development activities will be made available; and reading nook proposals will be accepted and funded.

As the QEP progresses to year three, 2011-2012, a Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI) will be implemented. Those major fields of study located in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education will be included. Students whose majors are located in these colleges will be asked to read a common book selected by faculty under the leadership of the dean of the college. This reader will be incorporated in the course as determined within the colleges. Additionally, *The New York Times* Readership Program will expand to the Global Campus and Phenix City campus. The Common Reading Initiative, service-learning activities, professional development, reading nooks, and assessment will continue as planned.

In year four, 2012-2013, the Major Field Reading Initiative will expand to include majors in the College of Communication and Fine Arts and the Sorrell College of Business. Students whose majors are located in these colleges will be asked to read a common book selected by faculty under the leadership of the dean of the college. This reader will be incorporated in the course as determined within the colleges. At this point, *The New York Times* Readership Program will have been implemented system-wide, including Troy, Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City, and Global Campus (including eCampus). The Common Reading Initiative, service-learning activities, professional development, reading nooks, and assessment will continue as planned.
During the fifth and final year of the QEP’s implementation, 2013-2014, the Major Field Reading Initiative will expand to include majors in the College of Health and Human Services. The Common Reading Initiative, service-learning activities, professional development, reading nooks, and assessment will continue as planned. The final report will be prepared for submission to SACS-COC during the fall of 2014.
A. BUDGET

Troy University will provide funding to support The New York Times Readership Program, an author’s lecture series, professional development activities for faculty and staff, proposals for facility enhancements to encourage reading (furniture to create reading nooks, for example), and other related activities. These funds will need to be committed from fall 2009 through spring 2014. The budget includes new appropriations and in-kind contributions.

New Funding

The New York Times Readership Program

A great portion of the budget, 60%, will be devoted to The New York Times Readership Program. The cost of this activity will be greatly returned in value to student learning.

Author to Campus

Exposing students to professional authors is an important goal of the QEP and for this reason $25,000-30,000 per year has been set aside for this endeavor. The total funding amount for author visits is $135,000 or 17% of the new budget appropriations.

Publicity and Marketing

The total budget amount for this activity is $50,250 with more designated each of the first three years than the last two. Marketing funds represent 6% of the total new funding.
Professional Development

The funds for this area cover the cost of providing on-campus training seminars to faculty and staff on incorporating reading skills strategies into courses and programs. Assistance may be available also to enable faculty to attend reading-related conferences. Funding for this activity is $78,000 or 10% of the budget.

Reading Nooks

Annually, the Quality Enhancement Plan provides for five reading nooks at up to $2,000 each to be granted through proposals submitted by departments or units interested in creating reading areas. It has been suggested that this activity might prove to be interesting to alumni and friends of the University who wish to fund a reading nook and dedicate it as they wish. Although this component represents 6% of the funding, its importance to the QEP is significant.

In-Kind Funding

Assessment

Assessment of student learning outcomes is a major component of the QEP. To this end, the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) will spend $65,000 each year to purchase Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) surveys and $40,000 per year to administer them. Consequently, the annual contribution from IRPE will be a total of $105,000 per year for the five-year implementation period.

Coordinator of Learning Initiatives

This position will be responsible for developing and coordinating a service-learning program for the University, including specific activities related to the Quality Enhancement Plan’s focus on reading and in the coordination and dissemination of information regarding the development of service-learning courses.
### BUDGET CHARTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Cost Per Week</th>
<th>Number of Subscriptions</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Campus</td>
<td>.45 X 5 = $2.25 (paper)</td>
<td>1,500 (paper)</td>
<td>10 wks per semester, 20 wks per year (not including summer)</td>
<td>$67,500</td>
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<td>Dothan Campus</td>
<td>.35 X 5 = $1.75 (online)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500 (paper)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCampus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Campus</td>
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<td>1,700 (paper)</td>
<td>10 wks per semester, 20 wks per year (not including summer)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dothan Campus</td>
<td>.35 X 5 = $1.75 (online)</td>
<td>500 (online)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCampus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Campus</td>
<td>.45 X 5 = $2.25 (paper)</td>
<td>1,800 (paper)</td>
<td>10 wks per semester, 20 wks per year (not including summer)</td>
<td>98,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dothan Campus</td>
<td>.35 X 5 = $1.75 (online)</td>
<td>500 (online)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>eCampus, Global College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy, Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City, eCampus, and Global College</td>
<td>.45 X 5 = $2.25 (paper)</td>
<td>1,800 (paper)</td>
<td>10 wks per semester, 20 wks per year (not including summer)</td>
<td>105,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.35 X 5 = $1.75 (online)</td>
<td>700 (online)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 5</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy, Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City, eCampus, and Global College</td>
<td>.45 X 5 = $2.25 (paper)</td>
<td>1,800 (paper)</td>
<td>10 wks per semester, 20 wks per year (not including summer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>.35 X 5 = $1.75 (online)</td>
<td>800 (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>$467,500</td>
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</table>

### NEW FUNDING

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<tr>
<th>Year #</th>
<th>NYT</th>
<th>Author to Campus</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
<th>Reading Nooks</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>16,000</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>87,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>98,500</td>
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<td>16,000</td>
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<td>159,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>105,500</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>160,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>164,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>467,500</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>50,250</td>
<td>78,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>$780,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IN-KIND FUNDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year #</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Coordinator of Learning Initiatives</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>$147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>147,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>212,500</td>
<td>737,500</td>
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</table>

In-Kind Funding

### TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Funding</td>
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<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Funding</td>
<td>737,500</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$1,518,250.00</td>
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</table>
# B. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Person/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Common Reading Initiative (CRI) will move from its pilot phase to full implementation. The CRI Book Selection Committee will have selected the book and informed the faculty, staff and student body by April 2009. (See Appendix I for sample written justification for selection.)</td>
<td>QEP Director and Book Selection Committee of Common Reading Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The New York Times</em> Readership Program will include the Troy and Dothan campuses.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected first-year courses will use <em>The NYT</em> in classes. Copies will be made available for general student use as well, using the following procedure: The University will purchase 1,500 subscriptions (paper) of <em>The NYT</em>. Faculty wishing to use <em>The NYT</em> will apply, giving number needed and justification for usage. The subscriptions will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on the quality of the justification for usage. A selected number of copies of <em>The NYT</em> will be placed in the library for general student usage.</td>
<td>QEP Director, QEP Contact for the Dothan Campus, Student Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A survey to ascertain the extent to which service-learning opportunities exist at the University will be developed, distributed and analyzed during the Fall Semester 2009.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives, Service-Learning Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning opportunities for students to read to individual students and groups will be arranged and scheduled during the Summer Semester 2009 for the upcoming academic year.</td>
<td>Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA); QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development activities will be offered to faculty and staff.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for reading nooks will be submitted and funded as appropriate.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author visit</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Responsible Person/Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CRI Book Selection Committee will have selected the book and informed the faculty, staff and student body by April 2010.</td>
<td>QEP Director and Book Selection Committee of Common Reading Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The New York Times</em> Readership Program will expand to include eCampus and the Montgomery campus.*</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected first-year courses will use <em>The NYT</em> in classes. Copies will be made available for general student use as well, using the following procedure: The University will purchase 2,000 subscriptions (paper and online) to <em>The NYT</em> for the Troy, Dothan, Montgomery and eCampus. Faculty wishing to use <em>The NYT</em> will apply, giving number needed and justification for usage. The subscriptions will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on the quality of the justification for usage. A selected number of copies of <em>The NYT</em> will be placed in the library for general student usage.</td>
<td>QEP Director; Contacts for the Dothan Campus, eCampus, and Montgomery Campus; Student Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning opportunities for students to read to individual students and groups will be arranged and scheduled during the Summer Semester 2010 for the upcoming academic year.</td>
<td>Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA); Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for reading nooks will be submitted and funded as appropriate.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author visit</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
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</table>
## Year 3 – 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Person/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Common Reading Initiative will continue for the students during their first and second years of study.</td>
<td>QEP Director and Selection Book Committee of Common Reading Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI) will be implemented in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. The major field reader will be selected by faculty teaching in the major field under the direction of the dean of the college.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dean of the College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The New York Times</em> Readership Program will expand to include the Global Campus and Phenix City.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Selected first-year courses will use *The NYT* in classes. Copies will be made available for general student use as well using the following procedure:  
The University will purchase 2,300 subscriptions (paper and online) to *The NYT* for locations at Troy, Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City, eCampus and Global Campus. Faculty wishing to use *The NYT* will apply, giving number needed and justification for usage. The subscriptions will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on the quality of the justification for usage. A selected number of copies of *The NYT* will be placed in the library for general student usage. | QEP Director; Contacts for the Dothan Campus, Montgomery Campus, eCampus, Global Campus, and Phenix City Campus; Student Assistants |
<p>| Service-learning opportunities for students to read to individual students and groups will be arranged and scheduled during the Summer Semester 2011 for the upcoming academic year. | QEP Director, Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA) |
| Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.                  | Office of IRPE and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team                    |
| Professional development activities will be offered to faculty and staff. | QEP Director                                                                                 |
| Proposal for reading nooks will be submitted and funded as appropriate.  | QEP Director                                                                                 |
| Author visit                                                             | QEP Director                                                                                 |
| Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.                  | Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Person/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Common Reading Initiative will continue for the students in their</td>
<td>QEP Director and Book Selection Committee of Common Reading Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first and second year of study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI) will be implemented in the</td>
<td>QEP Director, Dean of the College Communication and Fine Arts and the Sorrell College of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Communication and Fine Arts and the Sorrell College of Business.</td>
<td>Business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At this point, <em>The New York Times</em> Readership Program will have been</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implemented system-wide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected first-year courses will use <em>The NYT</em> in classes. Copies will</td>
<td>QEP Director, QEP Coordinator for the Dothan Campus, Montgomery Campus, eCampus, Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be made available for general student use as well, using the following</td>
<td>Campus, and Phenix City Campus, Student Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedure: The University will purchase 2,500 subscriptions (paper and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>online) to <em>The NYT</em>. Faculty wishing to use <em>The NYT</em> will apply,</td>
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<tr>
<td>giving number needed and justification for usage. The subscriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the quality of the justification for usage. A selected number of copies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of <em>The NYT</em> will be placed in the library for general student usage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning opportunities for students to read to individual</td>
<td>QEP Director, Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students and groups will be arranged and scheduled during the Summer</td>
<td>(TBA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2012 for the upcoming academic year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development activities will be offered to faculty and</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for reading nooks will be submitted and funded as</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author visit</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Year 5 – 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Person/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Common Reading Initiative will continue for the students in their first and second year of study.</td>
<td>QEP Director and Book Selection Committee of Common Reading Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Major Field Reading Initiative (MFRI) will be implemented in the College of Health and Human Services.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At this point, <em>The New York Times</em> Readership Program will have been implemented system-wide.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Contacts for the Dothan Campus, Montgomery Campus, eCampus, Global Campus, and Phenix City Campus; Student Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected first-year courses will use The NYT in classes. Copies will be made available for general student use as well, using the following procedure: The University will purchase 2,600 subscriptions (paper and online) to The NYT. Faculty wishing to use The NYT will apply, giving number needed and justification for usage. The subscriptions will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on the quality of the justification for usage. A selected number of copies of The NYT will be placed in the library for general student usage.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning opportunities for students to read to other students and groups will be arranged and scheduled during the Summer Semester 2013 for the upcoming academic year.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed service-learning courses will be developed and implemented following established policy.</td>
<td>QEP Director, Subcommittee of QEP Implementation Team, Coordinator of Learning Initiatives (TBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional activities will be offered to faculty and staff.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for reading nooks will be submitted and funded as appropriate.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author visit</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning outcomes will be assessed and reported.</td>
<td>Office of IRPE and Testing and Assessment Subcommittee of the QEP Implementation Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the end of Year 5, a five-year report on the results of the QEP will be prepared.</td>
<td>QEP Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. ASSESSMENT PLAN

The QEP Implementation Team (steering committee) has identified 10 student learning outcomes that will form the basis for assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan. These learning outcomes will be assessed through a combination of direct and indirect measures, as defined in the review of assessment literature earlier in this document.

Ten Student Learning Outcomes for Assessment

1. Students will demonstrate their ability to interpret the meaning of key terms. (A direct measure, using the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP), that is summative).

2. Students will be able to make appropriate inferences in reading materials. (A direct measure, using the MAPP, that is summative).

3. Students will be able to recognize assumptions in reading materials. (A direct measure, using the MAPP, that is summative).

4. Students will be able to infer and interpret a relationship between variables in reading materials. (A direct measure, using the MAPP, that is summative).

5. Students will be able to draw valid conclusions based on information presented in reading materials. (A direct measure, using the MAPP, that is summative).

6. Students will be able to compare and contrast theories and concepts in reading materials. (A direct measure, using evaluation from the Common Reading Initiative (CRI), that is formative).

7. Students will be able to summarize information they read. (A direct measure, using evaluation from the CRI, that is formative).
8. Students will be able to synthesize concepts and information. (A direct measure for the CRI, that is formative).

9. Students will participate in a service-learning project that involves reading. (An indirect measure, using data from the Graduating Student Survey, that is summative).

10. Students will report that they invest more time in reading for pleasure and for academic purposes and that they invest more time in discussing their readings with others. (An indirect measure, using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement that is summative).

The Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) exam provides two perspectives related to the first five direct measures of student learning related to reading in the QEP.

First, the MAPP evaluates reading proficiency according to the percentage of students who are proficient, marginal, and not proficient in accomplishing the stated student learning outcomes. A student classified as marginal is one whose test scores do not provide enough evidence to classify the student either as proficient or not proficient. For the fall 2007, MAPP results for Troy University (N = 1320), 65% of Troy University’s students were proficient, 19% were marginal, and 16.2% were not proficient. These MAPP exam results include students from the Atlantic Region, Dothan, eArmy, eCampus, Montgomery, the Pacific Region, Phenix City, the Southwest Region, the Troy campus, and the Western Region.

- **The expected result of the QEP will be a proficiency score of greater than 75%.**

Second, the MAPP provides a numerical subscore for reading and for critical thinking. For the fall 2007 MAPP Report (N=1320) Troy University’s reading subscore for all students was 117.72 and its critical thinking subscore was 111.92.
• **The expected result of the QEP will be to raise the reading subscore for all Troy University students to over 118.50 and to raise the critical thinking subscore to over 112.25.**

Troy University expects the improvements in reading and critical thinking subscores to have a cumulative positive impact on its overall MAPP score that provides comparative data on reading, critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. Troy University’s university-wide total score for the fall 2007 (N=1320) was 441.22 compared to the national average of 444.6.

• **The expected result of the QEP will be to achieve a total score of 444.6 within the five years of the QEP.**

Baseline data on service-learning activities are now being collected through the 2008 – 2009 Graduating Student Survey.

• **The University’s expected result is to see a dramatic increase in participation in reading-related service-learning activities, doubling or tripling the baseline value.**

Participation in reading-related service-learning should also be reflected in student responses in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) item 1k on “Participation in a community-based project (service-learning) as part of a regular course.” The fall 2007 NSSE showed that 26% of Troy University’s first-year students responded “sometimes, often, or very often” to this question, compared to the national response rate of 36%. Among Troy University seniors in the fall 2007 NSSE, 32% responded “sometimes, often, or very often” compared to the national response rate of 46%.

• **The University’s expected result is to exceed the 2007 national average of 36% for first-year students and 46% for seniors in responding to item 1k on the NSSE.**
In terms of the indirect measures of student engagement in reading, the University will utilize three questions in the National Survey of Student Engagement.

1. Level of engagement in discussion of ideas from readings with faculty members outside of class. Among first-year students in the fall 2007 NSSE survey, 48% of Troy University students gave positive responses compared to 59% nationally. Among seniors in the same survey, 55% of Troy University students gave positive responses compared to 72% nationally.

2. Level of engagement in discussion of ideas from readings with others outside of class. Among first-year students in the fall 2007 NSSE survey, 84% gave positive responses compared to 92% nationally. Among seniors in the same survey, 93% of Troy University students gave positive responses compared to 95% nationally.

3. Number of books read (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment. Among first-year students in the fall 2007 NSSE survey, 29% of Troy University students indicated reading five or more additional books compared to the national average of 18% at this level. Among seniors in the same survey, 25% of Troy University students reported reading at this level of activity compared to 25% nationally.

- Troy University’s expected results in this indirect formative (first-year students) and summative (seniors) measure is to exceed the 2007 national averages in all three of these areas in the National Survey of Student Engagement by 2013.

The key to effective assessment, whether through direct or indirect measures, is to have a quasi-experimental design that allows for comparison of student performance prior to, during and after the implementation of the QEP so that changes in student learning outcomes can be identified and evaluated for statistical significance. It is
important that the assessment process consist of an array of direct measures to provide different perspectives that can ensure that changes in student learning outcomes are related to the QEP and not to some other factor. The University plans to use a combination of direct measures of student learning outcomes that will provide for pre-QEP and post-QEP comparisons, along with other direct measures to confirm that changes in student learning outcomes are indeed related to the QEP.

Troy University has deployed the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) with all students in their junior years as a direct measure of student learning outcomes to support the assessment of the effectiveness of the general studies program. Existing MAPP scores provide a baseline of performance for Troy University students for the first five student learning outcomes identified in the QEP and will serve as the pre-QEP baseline data for comparative purposes. During the five year period for implementing the QEP, students will continue to take the MAPP and their scores will be analyzed to determine if there is positive movement on the questions that are direct measures of student learning outcomes related to reading.

In order to ensure that changes in standardized test scores related to student learning are related to the implementation of the QEP, additional direct measures will be conducted by faculty members, as formative measures, using course-embedded assignments and tests. Appendix J is an example of the assessment instrument that will be used in the Common Reading Initiative. Faculty will conduct direct assessments of students’ abilities to compare and contrast theories and concepts based on readings for their classes, to summarize the information they read, and to synthesize concepts and information. Faculty will be able to select from a variety of course-embedded assignments and tests such as directed paraphrasing; concept maps; invented dialogues; one-sentence summaries; content, form and function outlines; defining features matri-
ces; categorizing grids; one-minute papers; focus listing; and the inclusion of questions on tests and examinations.

The University will begin providing faculty with a workshop on using direct measures of student learning outcomes to support the QEP during the summer and fall semesters of 2009.

Because the QEP will encourage student participation in forms of service-learning related to reading, the assessment process will also include data collection related to service-learning activities. In order to provide a pre-QEP baseline, the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness modified the 2008–2009 Graduating Student Survey to collect data regarding the current level of participation in service-learning projects among Troy University students, including service-learning related to reading. Student participation in reading-related service-learning activities will be assessed using data from the Graduating Student Survey each year and comparing it to the 2008-2009 baseline data.

As the QEP is implemented, the University will continue to conduct the Graduating Student Survey and will have longitudinal data that will enable the University to determine whether or not service-learning related to reading has increased. This is an indirect measure of activity that will provide a useful perspective for interpreting the results of the direct measures. Similarly, the University is interested in the indirect measures of student behaviors related to reading that are included in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE includes questions related to “clusters of effective educational practice” as well as several questions related to student behaviors related to reading that will provide additional perspective for interpretation of the direct measures obtained through the MAPP and by faculty in classes. NSSE items related to reading include discussion of ideas from readings with faculty members outside of
class, discussion of ideas from readings with others outside of class, and the number of books read (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment. A review of the assessment data will be conducted by the QEP’s assessment committee.

All undergraduate students at all Troy University locations are required to take the MAPP. Students working on associate degrees are required to take the MAPP after they have completed 48 hours of academic work toward their degrees. Students working on a baccalaureate degree are required to take the MAPP after they have completed 70 hours of course work. MAPP data are collected on an annual basis running from June through May. MAPP scores are then available for review in the fall of the next academic year. MAPP scores from 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 will constitute the baseline pre-QEP scores for comparative purposes.

The National Survey of Student Engagement was conducted among all Troy University students during the 2006–2007 academic year, with results provided to the University during Fall Semester 2007. These results will constitute the pre-QEP baseline data for indirect measures of student learning outcomes.

Assessment of the Major Field Reading Initiative will be determined by faculty working with the Dean of the college. A sampling of assessment results will be forwarded to the QEP director and to the assessment subcommittee of the QEP implementation team.

An assessment timeline is provided in Appendix K.
### D. PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of First-Year Studies</td>
<td>Director of the QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to Dean of First-Year Studies</td>
<td>Administrative Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Workers (2)</td>
<td>Clerical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistant (S)</td>
<td>Technical Assistance, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator of Learning Initiatives</td>
<td>Service-Learning Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Implementation Team</td>
<td>Subcommittees work as structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Reading Initiative Book Selection Committee</td>
<td>Select Common Reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development of this Quality Enhancement Plan has been a University-wide effort. It has brought together faculty, staff and students to consider strategies to improve the learning environment and to enhance student learning. It has been well noted by all involved that this important endeavor truly ranks among their most rewarding experiences at the University. “It’s all about the students,” noted Dr. Ed Roach, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, in one of his briefings to the SACS-COC. That belief has been echoed throughout the work on this project.

So we return to “Only Connect . . . The Goals of a Liberal Education,” for nowhere is the purpose of Creating a Culture of Reading explained more clearly than by William Cronon, who was cited earlier in this document:

. . . skilled readers know how to read far more than words. They are moved by what they see in a great art museum and what they hear in a concert hall. They recognize extraordinary athletic achievements; they are engaged by classic and contemporary works of theater and cinema; they find in television a valuable window on popular culture. When they wander through a forest or a wetland or a desert, they can identify the wildlife and interpret the lay of the land. They can glance at a farmer’s field and tell the difference between soybeans and alfalfa. They recognize fine craftsmanship, whether by a cabinetmaker or an auto mechanic. And they can surf the World Wide Web. All of these are ways in which the eyes are attuned to the wonders that make up the human and the natural worlds. None of us can possibly master all these forms of “reading.” But educated people should be competent in many of them and curious about all of them. (p. 76)

All things considered, the QEP will most certainly enhance the quality of student learning at Troy University and yield many benefits, including those anticipated as well as those not currently envisioned.


Barefoot, B. (Eds.) *Using National Newspapers in the College Classroom: Resources to Improve Teaching and Learning* (Monograph No. 28). Columbia: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.


No. 28). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.


learning (Monograph No. 28). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Knowlton & B. Barefoot (Eds.), *Using national newspapers in the college classroom: Resources to improve teaching and learning* (Monograph No. 28). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.


Ryan, M., & Glenn, P. (2007). What do first-year students need most: Learning strategies or academic socialization. In Higbee, et al. (Eds.), *Best practices in college reading and learning*. CRLA.


To read or not to read: A question of national consequence. (2007). National Endowment for the Arts. Washington, DC: NEA.


APPENDIX A—FIRST-YEAR TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Dr. John Schmidt, Chair, Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Services

Dr. William Nathan Alexander, Assistant Professor of History

Ms. Eleanor Lee, Director of Instructional Support Services

Dr. Bryant Shaw, Professor of History

Mr. Buddy Starling, Dean of Admissions

Dr. Hal Fulmer, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Jean Laliberte, Associate Vice Chancellor for Development

Ms. Donna Schubert, Associate Professor, School of Journalism

Ms. Susan Pierce, Director, Student Development/Counseling

Dr. Lance Tatum, Acting Dean, College of Health and Human Services

Ms. Barbara Patterson, Director, Student Involvement and Leadership

Ms. Teresa Rodgers, Academic Counselor, Student Development/Counseling
APPENDIX B—IDEAS GENERATED BY FOCUS GROUPS

Faculty Ideas

- Self-efficacy evaluation— a factor in persistence.
- Inner criteria – strategies one can do to improve studies/well-being.
- Retention related to residence hall.
- Analysis of halo effect on retention.
- Increased oversight on non-athletes.
- Language requirement – Arizona State model.
- Require students to have laptops, wire classrooms and buildings, use open source educational software.
- Self-selecting opportunities/options, such as a foreign language.
- Change how we teach general chemistry.
- Identify a group of faculty to redesign teaching.
- Offer a spectrum of opportunities to channel creative energy among junior faculty.
- Shift from a teaching environment to a learning environment.
- Help students think about the attributes of being a university scholar.
- Listening, civility – understanding arguments.
- What do we expect in terms of being global citizens?
- U.S. travel – going to NYC/SF etc.
- Ecological issues – visit venues to study “green” issues.
- Reading – a way to develop a global perspective.
- Take at-risk incoming students for a month-long hike/study experience. Tap into kinesthetic learning.
- Summer transition program.
- More substantial signal-starting college.
- Boot camp – one to two weeks – rappelling, etc., routines, time management.
- Civil Rights focus – Montgomery resources – small groups/quest.
- Corpus linguistics methods to assess learning development to experiences.
- Offer separate sections of chemistry.
- Remedial history – watching films and critiquing to reality.
- Remedial/preparatory activities for multiple disciplines.
- Film pedagogy
- Address drinking/drug use in orientation.
- Personal wellness counseling.
- Multiple strategies for teaching – coaching for faculty.
- Involving graduate students with first year students.
- Freshman mentoring high school students.
- Provide electronic tutorials to incoming freshmen.
- Pre-first-year initiative model from military academies.
- First-year Academy – do not have a major until after first year – LSU Model.
- More work on study skills.
- Mentoring/advising program.
- First-year Intervention Program.
- Engaging parents.
- Civic Engagement/Informed reading.
- St. Johns University Seminar model.
Staff Ideas

- Training for our students who work with first-year students (RAs, Tutors, Fraternity/Sorority Leaders, Freshman Forum).
- Improve reading/writing skills.
- Train faculty/staff working with first-year students.
- Designate faculty advisors for freshmen and tie in with orientation teachers.
- Orient students to study aboard – assess results.
- Use math placement data to assess improvement.
- Further define “first-year students.”
- Develop program for students with low score on assessment exams and their faculty.
- Measure change in world view.
- Reading program.
- Coordinated developmental program.
- Involve non-Greek students in campus activities.
- Involve students in religious organizations.
- Invite/push students in residence halls to participate in events.
- Get back to 1:20 RA-student ratio.
- Involve American students in international student groups.
- Look at skill building in terms of improving employability.
- Parental involvement/education.
- Implement grades first for whole campus.
- Attendance policy for first-year students.
- Educate students on online classes.
- Improve students’ technology skills.
- Provide courses/support on research.

Student Ideas

- Have a lab associated with Intro to Accounting.
- More sections for anatomy and physiology.
- More clarity at Impact about what General Studies classes are needed.
- Use a STARS type website to state General Education requirements.
- Raise qualifications to get into Troy University.
- Poor condition of some dorms.
- If freshman are required to live on campus, dorms need to improve.
- Some stay sick from problems with dorms.
- Have enough teachers for English Comp classes.
- Some math teachers do not know math.
- Registration schedule/procedures unclear.
- No notice to Undecided for advising/registration.
- Put Microsoft office on computers – Let students use hand-out print function.
- Need more computers students can use – library.
- People using library computers for MySpace.
- More affordable test books.
- Put a time limit on library computers.
Administrators’ Ideas

- Improve reading ability/vocabulary.
- Writing ability – one page essay.
- Identify the community.
- Look at GECE feedback – do pre/post testing.
- Clarify what we want students to learn.
- Enhance first-year advising.
- Empower first-year students to use advising information.
- Skills: reading, writing, critical thinking, and math.
- Content – course redesign.
- Geographic literacy/knowledge.
- Introduce midterm grades – how students would use this.
- Enhance learning/retention of foundation information.
- Build on first-year reading experience.
- Reactivate the reading center.
- Involve international students in reading.
- Passport system – going to certain number of events.
- Include international students in engagement events.
- More activities for students to have to do.
- Add a pub.
- Expand grades first program.
- Take information to international students on activities.
APPENDIX C—MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

PROPOSED SLOGAN: weREAD@Troy University

(Could be translated into several different languages)*

It is recommended that Ed Noriega (Graphics and Design) create the graphics for the slogan. [Icon – Stack of Books (which can open)/Open book/Cell Phone with slogan as text]

Examples of marketing:

- Advertising (on-campus and local)
- Articles in Tropolitan
- Articles in TROY Today
- Articles on faculty integration
- Articles on outreach programs
- Articles on student integration
- Athletics – use of players reading
- Author visit
- Barnes & Noble involvement
- Blogs – students, faculty and staff
- Book clubs for students, faculty/staff
- Bookmarks
- Buttons
- Café material-tray liners, napkins, etc
- Coffee cups/mugs
- Colleges – use of pictures of nursing, education, trainers, theatre and other students reading
- Contests
- Email address – weREAD@troy.edu
- Email blasts regularly
- Face Book community
- Faculty/Staff Convocations
- Feature courses involved
- Filming of student discussion groups
- Flyers – around campus, paycheck envelopes
- Have you read a book?
- Highlight in recruitment publications
- Highlight in TrojanTracks
- IMPACT material
- Interactive activities
- Interviews on Public Radio
- Interviews on TrojanVision
- iREAD The NYT/iREAD- print/magnetic
- Letter from Chancellor or Provost
· Magnets
· Pied Piper involvement
· Pocket folders
· Prizes
· PSAs on reading
· Series of _______ READS posters
· Speak at groups – Deans meeting, division meetings, unit meetings, SGA meetings, etc.
· Stickers – ASK ME/DO YOU KNOW
· Table Tents
· Talking points developed
· Teasers
· Tee-shirts
· Theatre Productions
· Wall posters
· Web banner
· Web presence – Web page/video streaming/archival material/social media
· Window sticker
COMMON READING INITIATIVE RECOMMENDATION FORM

The First-Year Reading Initiative Common Book Selection Committee has identified several goals for the common reading:

- To engage students in the reading of a book that many will want to read from cover to cover
- To engage students in the reading of a book that many will find interesting, fun, thought provoking, easy to relate to, or better yet—all of the above
- To engage students in the classroom in lively discussions of material
- To engage students outside of the classroom in lively discussions of supplements to the book, such as movies, plays, lectures, and/or activities that stem from having read the book

Considering the above goals, please recommend one book:

1. Title:
2. Author:
3. Brief summary—three to five sentences:
4. Briefly explain how your selection will help meet the common reading goals:
5. Name of individual submitting recommendation:

Thank you.
Please return the completed form to
Eleanor Lee, Dean, First-Year Studies/ elec@troy.edu
101 Eldridge Hall
APPENDIX E—COURSE INTEGRATION SAMPLE

Course Integration

Instructors of English, biology, history, and art used *The Road* in their classes.

Below is an excerpt from a conference presentation that shows how biology incorporated *The Road* into classes.

**SAMPLE PROJECT: Poster Presentation at Conference**

**INTEGRATED LEARNING: FIRST-YEAR READING INITIATIVE AND PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY**

*Michael Wayne Morris, Rachael N. Koigi, and Christi Magrath*

*Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences*

*Troy University*

During the Fall Semester 2007, the Troy Campus of Troy University piloted a First-Year Reading Initiative to foster integrated learning among entering freshmen. One of the goals of this reading initiative is to promote a variety of perspectives reflecting each discipline involved on a common literary work. This, in turn, is meant to sharpen the analytical skills of first-year students at Troy University and to remind them that different college subjects are not to be learned in their own respective vacuums. Seemingly unrelated subjects can be integrated for a holistic approach to learning. To help accomplish this, a faculty committee chose a national bestseller about a post-apocalyptic world, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, to incorporate into English, art, history, University orientation, and biology classes.

Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences faculty teaching Principles of Biology had the challenge of finding life in a “lifeless” world as described by McCarthy and sharing that discovery with their students. Biology faculty drafted questions, some of which required the students to do some research outside of class, related to *The Road* and also related to topics such as ecology, health, and biological chemistry that are traditionally taught in life science courses. Five of these questions were included on final exams after faculty had discussed specific relationships between the “biology of *The Road*” and class topics and also after the students had researched some current environmental problems in the Southeast to see how interconnected the various aspects of our natural surroundings are. One faculty member in biology had an open-ended question addressing three important biologically relevant themes in the book. Experiences of biology faculty and students conducting this exercise were presented.
## CLASS ASSIGNMENT: English (ENG) 1101

During the Fall Semester 2008, students in two sections of Michael Orlofsky’s English 1101 classes were asked to evaluate *A Lesson Before Dying* by noting the positives and negatives and offering suggestions. Below is a sampling of answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Lesson Before Dying</em> appealed to me in many ways. I found it particularly interesting being that I am a history education major and enjoyed the perspective given on the old US South. It gives a first-hand account of how black and white communities interacted with one another and how they viewed one another.</td>
<td>One thing I would’ve enjoyed from the book would’ve been more in-depth descriptions and more time devoted to some other characters. It would have been interesting to see what the home life of the while folks was and what conversations they had amongst one another pertaining to Jefferson’s situation.</td>
<td>I’m not much of a fiction reader except for the classics. I’m more interested in nonfiction. In fiction books, I tend to enjoy books with historical relevance, but this may not be a proper suggestion to the entire student body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Lesson Before Dying</em> has a great plot. Grant and Jefferson’s development as human beings was interesting to read about.</td>
<td>I was confused at the beginning. I wasn’t sure who was telling the story and who was related to whom. Also, Jefferson’s diary was a bit confusing to comprehend.</td>
<td>I would recommend <em>Night</em>. It’s a great book about a boy’s journey in the Holocaust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was the perfect length. I didn’t feel like it was too long. Great plot. He makes you think while you read.</td>
<td>Grant and Jefferson’s conversations. Grant never told him much, but he changed anyway.</td>
<td>Not too long. I dread long books. Excitement is always good. A lot of action and suspense to keep readers interested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The book in general was good. It presented a lot of imagery.</td>
<td>It only captured one side of the story. We never knew what Jefferson was thinking.</td>
<td>Something all races can relate to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought Ernest J. Gaines’ novel <em>A Lesson Before Dying</em> was an enjoyable read. Gaines really painted vivid imagery for me as a reader. I was able to catch myself getting caught up in the 1940’s Louisiana community.</td>
<td>One negative about the book was it tended to be kind of spread out. Gaines seemed to jump around different situations too much. The book seemed to jump around a lot.</td>
<td>I would recommend for future readers the committee select a book that can be related to a more modern day situation. I think since the younger American college student would be more interested in books dealing with love, mystery, or Sci Fi, maybe an autobiography.</td>
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THE FIRST-YEAR STUDIES PROGRAM
Common Reading Initiative
Book Selection Committee
Troy University

Announces the 2008-2009
Common Reading Selection
for New Students

A LESSON BEFORE DYING
By Award Winning Author
Ernest J. Gaines

A Lesson Before Dying won the 1993 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, the most recent of numerous awards that Gaines has received. In 2004, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. A few of Gaines’ other awards include a National Humanities Medal (2000), the Governor’s Arts Awards Lifetime Achievement Award (Louisiana) in 2000, Southern Book Award for Fiction (1994), a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellow (1993), Guggenheim Fellow (1971), National Endowment for the Arts grant (1967), and a Wallace Stegner Fellow (1957). Gaines has steadily been recognized for his achievement as a master of the novel and short story.

For additional information, please contact Eleanor Lee at 334-670-3209/ellee@troy.edu
APPENDIX G—SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Session 1: Bloom’s Taxonomy and Instructional Objectives
The concept of a hierarchy of learning is essential to mastery of new material. The average (or in the case of the developmental courses, below average) college freshman is leaving an educational environment that relies most frequently on knowledge, comprehension, and application. Higher order skills require a scaffolding of information management that must be supplied by the instructor. This session is a true “short course” in learning theory, and it will introduce participants to Bloom’s hierarchy, the need to develop clear instructional objectives, and the role of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in learning. The workshop leader will present content area samples illustrating the necessity for knowledge to precede comprehension, and comprehension to precede application, and so on. Participants will use a list of key verbs to develop instructional objectives for the courses.

Session 2: The Reading Process: An Overview
In this session, an expert trainer in adolescent reading will present current research on the processes involved in reading, as well as the three elements of reading (vocabulary, comprehension and fluency) that the instructor of adolescents and young adults can influence. Participants will view a simulation that illustrates some of the difficulties faced by readers, including comprehension problems and distractions. The importance of activating prior knowledge will be explained and demonstrated through content-area examples. The trainer will identify characteristics of effective readers and provide participants with suggestions for directing their students to practice those habits.

Session 3: Purposeful Reading
Rosenblatt’s (1978) transactional reading theory will be presented. Participants will learn in this session why a simple reading assignment can generate such a disparity of responses from the students who complete it. Furthermore, this session will introduce the participants to the concept of “stance” in reading, either efferent or aesthetic. The trainer will illustrate how different pieces of text can be understood—or misunderstood—if the reader approaches them with the wrong purpose. Participants will practice with their own texts to determine how to guide students into a reading assignment.

Session 4: Using the Textbook
This topic is deceptive to untrained instructors who mistakenly believe that putting a book in the hands of the student is adequate. The fact is that many students do not exercise good practice in addressing a textbook. Instructors must be trained to introduce the text to their students. The elements of this session will include working with the individual instructors’ assigned textbooks and analyzing the text structures (table of contents, index, appendices, chapter summaries, chapter reviews, headings, subheadings, glossaries, graphs, charts and tables) as well as printing elements (font attributes, leading, number of words on a page, and text block length). Instructors will receive instructions in guiding their students into the effective use of the textbook.

Session 5: Newspapers as Supplementary Reading Assignments
Central to the University’s QEP is the freshman’s subscription to The New York Times. For students to achieve full impact of the University’s investment for this initiative, a commitment by faculty members to use the newspapers regularly and effectively is es-
sentential. This training module will rely heavily on *The New York Times* Readership Program and will follow the guidelines offered in their training materials.

**Session 6: Note Taking**
Just as students are frequently ill-equipped to address a new textbook efficiently, they are often unskilled in taking good notes. This training session provides instructors with content-appropriate strategies for their students to use; this session also addresses ways the faculty members can help students differentiate between major points and less important information. *Trainers will address the next three topics using a seamless instructional model approach. Each of these sessions will follow a prescribed curriculum developed by experts in differentiation of instruction.*

**Session 7: Vocabulary Instruction**
The scope of new vocabulary confronting a first-year college student can overwhelm even the brightest undergraduate. Abstract concepts, names, places, events, mathematical and scientific terms, foreign phrases can all lead to frustration and failure. The rigor of The LINCS Vocabulary Instruction approach will serve as the curriculum for this training session. Faculty members will learn how to assist their students in connecting new terms with prior knowledge, increase their students’ ability to learn independently, provide students with a sense of control over their learning, and increase students’ motivation to learn new strategies.

**Session 8: Graphic Organizers**
Concept maps and other graphic organizers enable students to form visual images, make connections, summarize content, and make inferences by visualizing connections within the text. Studies have shown success in the various content areas through the use of graphic organizers with adolescents and adults, including mathematics (Braselton & Decker, 1994), language arts and writing (Doyle, 1999), science (Guastello, 2000; Ritchie & Volkl, 2000), and social science (Armbruster & Boothby, 1991). This workshop provides a structure for teachers across the content areas to help students to visualize their thought processes and physically to put their ideas in a logical order. Numerous styles of organizers will be available to faculty members; they will experiment with various graphical approaches to determine which styles best fit the demands of their texts.

**Session 9: Mnemonic Devices**
Recent research suggests that students can be taught how to learn by applying appropriate strategies, but the strategy must suit the individual’s approach to learning. Mnemonic devices are effective for some people, but not for others. This session will be a departure from the others, as this strategy is less content-area specific and more individual learner specific—some students feel that learning a mnemonic device confuses the issue, while others depend heavily on the strategy. Faculty members will be presented with a variety of strategies, but the emphasis in this session will be on encouraging the students themselves to attend workshops if they believe the strategy is appropriate to their learning preferences.

**Session 10: Scoring Rubrics**
An enormous obstacle to persuading instructors to move away from objective tests is the increased time involved in reading, marking, and grading written responses—time they perceive as wasted when students subsequently fail to acknowledge anything but
the final grade. Scoring rubrics can assist the instructor in this matter, both by saving time and by providing the students with exemplars for quality work. Additionally, researchers are finding that the very development of the rubric forces the instructor to attend more carefully to articulating assignments. Furthermore, the use of the rubric encourages a wider set of options for assessment, including project and performance, for which many faculty have traditionally felt their evaluations could be too subjective. This session will introduce participants to the concept of scoring rubrics and the scope of their use. Hands-on practice in creating content-area specific rubrics will be an important part of the session.

**Session 11: Creating service-learning opportunities**

Although some courses lend themselves naturally to real-world application, university faculty are rarely skilled in pursuing and developing these opportunities or in ensuring their integration into curriculum. This training session will assist faculty in evaluating their curricula to establish appropriate placements, identifying partners in the field, and embedding the experiences as seamless components of their courses. Participants will receive research-based guidelines for creating, supervising, and assessing service-learning placements.
APPENDIX H—PROPOSAL TO USE THE NEW YORK TIMES IN CLASS

PROPOSAL TO USE THE NEW YORK TIMES IN CLASS

Instructor’s Name__________________________________________________
(Please print or type)

Briefly explain how you plan to use The New York Times in your class:

How do you plan to assess student learning in regard to The NYT (For example, vocabulary quizzes essays, short response, projects, research papers, etc).

Please list the following information for each section in which you plan to use The NYT:

Section # ___________ Enrollment________ Total subscriptions needed:_______
Section # ___________ Enrollment________ Total subscriptions needed:_______
Section # ___________ Enrollment________ Total subscriptions needed:_______

Signature__________________________________________________________
Date:______________
Department Chair’s Signature________________________________________
APPENDIX I—JUSTIFICATION FOR SELECTION OF COMMON READER

2008-2009 Common Reader: A Lesson Before Dying

After a seven-month process that involved reading, discussing, and analyzing many books, the Common Selection Committee has chosen Ernest Gaines’ A Lesson Before Dying as the common book for the 2008-2009 academic year.

A Lesson Before Dying (Lesson) is an excellent choice for several reasons. The fact that Earnest Gaines is a living southern writer residing in Louisiana provides several opportunities for student enrichment. The author could be brought to campus to speak to students and to engage them in an extended activity, such as a writing seminar. Moreover, the English department is considering Gaines for the Hall-Waters Prize in Southern Literature. In addition to the author advantage and the regional identification, a finely crafted, multi-dimensional plot makes for an engaging, interesting, easy to read story. While the racial issue is not the predominant theme, it is in the background. Therefore, the book would provide students an opportunity to join the national conversation on race. As well, Lesson lends itself to discussion of many other significant themes. Among these are injustice and responsibility, the inescapable past, constructive lying, redemption in death, the nature of prejudice and discrimination, religion in one’s life, socio-economic factors and race, the death penalty, stereotypes, education, and other themes. For further student interaction with the book, movies with similar themes are available for discussion.

Most supportive of the choice is that Gaines’ novel ultimately addresses the question of what it means to be a human being, “a creature striving for dignity in a universe that often denies it.” This question has been discussed by philosophers, theologians, educators, psychologists, and ordinary people through the ages. Indeed, the rich-
ness of Gaines’ novel provides many opportunities to enhance student learning and thinking.

The Common Reading Book Selection members include Nathan Alexander, Assistant Professor of History; Michael Orlofsky, Professor of English; Hal Fulmer, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Barbara Patterson, Director of Student Involvement and Leadership; and Eleanor Lee, Dean of First-Year Studies.
APPENDIX J—TROY 1101 CLASS ASSIGNMENT

April 14, 2008

CLASS ASSIGNMENT: TROY 1101 – University Orientation

During the 2008-09 Academic Year, all students in Troy 1101 were given a set of questions to answer regarding the book *A Lesson Before Dying*. Following is that exercise:

1. Did you read the book?  Yes ___  No___

2. Who is the author of *A Lesson Before Dying*? What do you know about the author?

3. Where and when does the story take place?

4. Briefly summarize the plot of the novel.

5. Which character in the book most interested you and why?

6. Which two characters in the book do you believe are most alike or most different each other and why?

7. In your opinion, what is one theme (main idea) of the novel?

8. Which question would you most like to ask the author?

9. What do you believe is the greatest lesson learned in the book?

10. Why do you think this book was selected for Troy's Common Reading Initiative?

11. Do you have a book to recommend for next year?
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<td>FA</td>
<td>Student MAPP scores will be compared to the baseline pre-QEP scores to identify meaningful changes in student test scores on questions that measure reading-related student learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>Faculty members will be asked to provide data on the results of their direct measures of student learning outcomes for the QEP which had been summarized over the summer. The assessment team will review the results from the MAPP and to collect and review direct measures provided by members of the faculty.</td>
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<td>The Graduating Student Survey is administered online throughout each academic year, beginning in June and running through May of the next year. This surveying schedule enables the University to summarize the results and provide a report so that review and actions can be taken during the fall and spring semesters when university and college committees are most active.</td>
<td>The Graduating Student Survey will be reviewed and necessary actions will be taken.</td>
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<td>Survey questions related to service-learning activities will be available to the members of the assessment committee when they review the MAPP test results and the direct measures provided by faculty members.</td>
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<td>Survey questions related to service-learning activities will be available to the members of the assessment committee each fall when they review the MAPP test results and the direct measures provided by faculty members.</td>
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<td>To provide ongoing assessment information, Troy University will repeat the NSSE survey in 2010 – 2011 and 2012 – 2013, allowing the University to have access to a robust set of indirect measures in the fall of 2012 and 2014.</td>
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<td>The assessment committee will prepare a report on assessment results for the QEP that will be submitted to the QEP Planning Team and reviewed by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and the members of the Academic Steering Committee, which includes all of the Deans and Vice-Chancellors.</td>
<td>The assessment committee will prepare a report on assessment results for the QEP during the fall that will be submitted to the QEP Planning Team and reviewed by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and the members of the Academic Steering Committee, which includes all of the Deans and Vice-Chancellors.</td>
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<td>Graduating Student Surveys will be reviewed and necessary actions will be taken.</td>
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