EXPERIENCE LEARNING

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
MARCH 31–APRIL 2, 2015

EXPERIENCE LEARNING
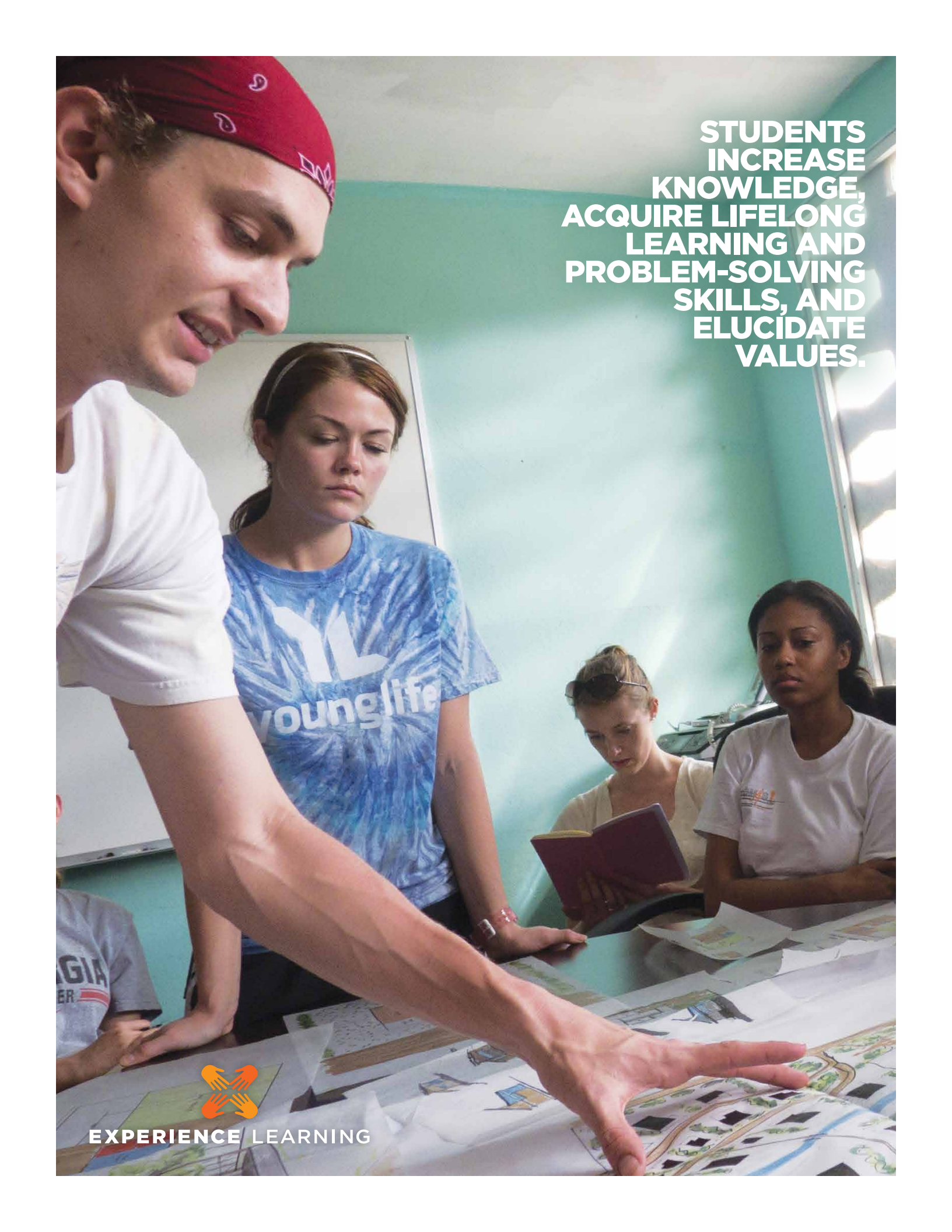
CONTENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

BIG ORANGE. BIG IDEAS.

STUDENTS INCREASE KNOWLEDGE, ACQUIRE LIFELONG LEARNING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS, AND ELUCIDATE VALUES.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Tennessee's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) addresses a comprehensive strategic campus initiative that has involved an all-inclusive stakeholders' process. This report will provide a detailed description of specific actions to be implemented; the timeline for implementing and evaluating these actions; organizational structure for adequately staffing and executing the QEP; and a thorough review of the resources, including human, financial, physical, and budgetary, for operationalizing the QEP. The plan identifies clear goals and measurable objectives, as well as detailed plans to assess student learning outcomes, the student learning environment, and the role of the QEP in helping to accomplish the mission of the university.

Our QEP topic is **experiential learning**, which is engaged student learning through direct experience and intense reflection to increase knowledge, acquire lifelong learning and problem-solving skills, and elucidate values. This topic is in alignment with our university mission, which promotes excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and engagement. It also is in alignment with our university vision of the Volunteer Spirit, which promotes value creation, the generation of new ideas, and the preparation of capable and ethical leaders. This QEP brings exciting opportunities to make significant changes in student learning and student experiences and will play a vital role in meeting our Vol Vision strategic plan, which includes priorities related to undergraduate education, graduate education, faculty, and research.

The QEP interdisciplinary development team was formed in April and May 2013. The members of the committee were selected with broad-based representation of key academic and administrative areas, student support units, and current and former students. The development team and subgroups met regularly as part of an institutional process that identified key issues emerging from institutional assessment. The team considered potential topics and gained student, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders' input through surveys, forums, presentations, focus group interviews, and a website page until experiential learning was identified as the QEP topic through an all-encompassing institutional process. Experiential

learning strengthens our commitment to the Vol Vision to provide a better learning environment for our students. At our university there is a growing need, voiced by students and various task forces and reports, that students need more opportunities to be involved in civic engagement, solving complex real-world problems, and contributing to the welfare of their communities as part of their regular course work. The results of national comparisons with peer institutions concur with these campus assessments.

From 2015 to 2020, this QEP will implement three initiatives as core actions: (1) faculty development programs, (2) Smart Communities Initiatives, and (3) faculty-staff-student support initiatives. The student learning outcomes measure that students will (1) value the importance of engaged scholarship and lifelong learning; (2) apply knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems; (3) work collaboratively with others; and (4) engage in structured reflection as part of the inquiry process. We will implement both direct and indirect assessment activities. We will rely on rubrics adapted from Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics as a direct assessment to evaluate the student level of competence across the identified student learning outcomes and their accompanying benchmarks. We will also implement surveys to evaluate the QEP's influence on the campus community and the environment for student learning.

Overall, the University of Tennessee's QEP was developed to enhance the quality of its educational programming by focusing on student learning, and specifically experiential learning, as well as the environment supporting that learning, including faculty training, as part of our Vol Vision goal of being one of the top 25 public universities in the United States.

CHAPTER 1:
PROCESS USED TO DEVELOP THE QEP

In 1938 John Dewey wrote, *"There is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education."* Experience and education: certainly Dewey was not the first to connect these processes. Sophocles remarked in the fifth century BC that *"One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it—you have no certainty until you try."* What these two thinkers did was articulate something that as educators we all know from our own experience, that the more students and faculty engage with a big idea the better it is understood and the more problems are solved. If students can just work with it, feel it, hold it in their hands, and be guided by faculty, they will understand it better.

Experience turns the theoretical into the real, and experience is at the heart of the University of Tennessee's Quality Enhancement Plan: The hands-on experience of learning. The experience of conducting research. The experience of helping a community to solve its problems. The experience of students actively engaging in their own education. The experience of students not being just a vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. Student experience is what drives a university. It's why students come to us and join our university community. It's the reason for our existence. It's the University of Tennessee's new QEP: *Experience Learning.*

The phrase is both a compound noun and an imperative sentence; a name and a call to action, a description of what we are doing and an invitation to participate. Experience Learning. It is what faculty and staff do every day as educators, and it's what the University of Tennessee hopes and plans and strives for our students to do, every day, for the rest of their lives.

INTRODUCTION: MISSION ALIGNMENT

The University of Tennessee is one of the oldest public universities in the United States, with its origins going back to 1794. Today, the University of Tennessee is a Carnegie research university/very-high research activity (RU/VH) that offers a comprehensive array of academic majors at the undergraduate and graduate level for more than 27,000 students, and is one of two federal land-grant universities in the state of Tennessee. Our commitment to service as the "Volunteers" is central to our institutional mission.

....

"Our primary mission is to move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate the citizens of the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the world. As the preeminent research-based, land-grant university in the state, the University of Tennessee embodies the spirit of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, outreach, and engagement attained by the nation's finest public research institutions" (University of Tennessee, 2014).

....

Our pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and engagement is strengthened by our Volunteer spirit that promotes value creation, the generation of new ideas, and the preparation of capable and ethical leaders. These values embrace principles such as diversity, community engagement, and intellectual curiosity.

The University of Tennessee's mission, vision, and values are implemented through our strategic plan. Known as Vol Vision, this strategic plan provides the framework for the University of Tennessee to reach its goal of being one of the top 25 public universities in the United States (University of Tennessee, 2011). The planning process for Vol Vision, which included all appropriate campus constituencies, started in 2010 and ultimately identified five strategic priority areas:

1. Recruit, develop, and graduate a diverse body of undergraduate students.

2. Educate and graduate increasing numbers of diverse graduate and professional students.

3. Strengthen our capacity and productivity in research, scholarship, and creative activity.

4. Attract and retain stellar and diverse faculty and staff.

5. Continually improve the resource base.

These priority areas and the University of Tennessee's underlying mission, vision, and value statements informed every step in the development of the QEP presented here. The selection of **experiential learning** as our QEP is an exciting opportunity to make learning transformative for students attending the University of Tennessee. It advances the university's abilities to engage undergraduate and graduate students in new educational experiences, generates new research and creative opportunities for students and faculty, supports faculty and staff development of new teaching and student engagement methods, and builds the university's capacity to better serve the community and diverse constituents. In short, the QEP not only focuses on the student learning experience but also can simultaneously and seamlessly integrate with the University of Tennessee's Vol Vision goal of being one of the top 25 public universities in the country (University of Tennessee, 2011).

Experiential learning is *"a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values"* (Association for Experiential Education, 2014). In contrast to passive traditional classroom lecturing, experiential learning invites students to actively participate and engage in their learning through a process of discussion, collaboration, hands-on involvement, application, and reflection. Experiential learning yields substantial benefits to students, faculty, the campus, and the larger community. Moreover, the broad scope of methods means that experiential learning is relevant across diverse academic disciplines as well as cocurricular and extracurricular student activities.

INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

At all steps in the QEP development process, all appropriate campus constituencies were invited and involved. It was important not only to involve faculty, staff, and students from across campus, but also to provide numerous opportunities for individual and organizational stakeholders to participate in the process.

This was a key consideration at the first step in the development process, when the QEP development team was formed in April and May 2013. The development team is a large interdisciplinary committee whose members were selected to give broad-based representation from the key academic and student support units at the University of Tennessee. As shown in Table 1, the committee included twenty-nine representatives, drawn from every academic college that serves undergraduate students as well as appropriate staff from the Student Success Center, Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center, Office of Service Learning, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, and academic advising centers, among other support units. A student member was added to the team in November 2013 and a separate student advisory committee was created in December 2013. This student advisory committee included representatives from all academic colleges and key student organizations (e.g., the Student Government Association and Chancellor's Honors Program) and met regularly from January to May 2014.

The QEP development team was divided into four subgroups in areas related to assessment, resources, research, and writing, based on the main elements of the proposal. Members were invited to join the QEP development team and assigned to a subgroup where they would make the strongest contribution. The subgroups and their responsibilities include:

1. **Assessment** – Develop student-learning outcomes and design the QEP's assessment plan and related measurement tools.

2. **Resources** – Create a budget that ensures the QEP has the necessary resources to achieve its goals and objectives. This subgroup was also responsible for developing the timeline for implementing the QEP and outlining a new organizational chart that incorporates required new personnel.

3. **Research** – Review literature on the benefits of experiential learning for students, faculty, campus, and the community and identify best practices for developing effective experiential learning pedagogies in higher education.

4. **Writing** – Prepare the final QEP report and work with the University of Tennessee's marketing and creative communications office to develop an effective marketing and branding strategy to promote the QEP on and off campus.

A handful of individuals served in leadership roles during the QEP development process:

- **Dr. Matthew Theriot**, associate professor in the College of Social Work, chaired the QEP development team. Dr. Theriot has served on numerous university committees and chaired the university's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Undergraduate Council.

- **Dr. Mary Albrecht**, associate vice provost for accreditation, served as a consultant to the development team.

- **Dr. Gary Skolits**, associate professor and director of the Institute for Assessment and Evaluation in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, chaired the assessment subgroup.

- **Dr. Sherry Cable**, professor of sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences, chaired the research subgroup.

- **Dr. Annette Ranft**, professor of business and senior associate dean for academic affairs in the Haslam College of Business, chaired the resources group.

- Finally, **Dr. Michael Palenchar**, associate professor in public relations in the College of Communication and Information and current chair of the university's Undergraduate Council, chaired the writing group.

TABLE 1: QEP DEVELOPMENT TEAM MEMBERS

Dr. Matthew Theriot (Chair)	*Associate Professor, College of Social Work*
Dr. Mary Albrecht	*Associate Vice Provost for Accreditation, Office of the Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor*
Ms. Julia Ross	*Student Member (2014–2015)*
Mr. Taylor Odle	*Student Member (2013–2014)*
Ms. Emily Walling	*Administrative Specialist, Office of the Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor*

ASSESSMENT GROUP

|	
Dr. Gary Skolits (Chair)	*Associate Professor, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences, and Director, Institute for Assessment & Evaluation*
Dr. Stan Guffey	*Senior Lecturer, Division of Biology and Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, College of Arts & Sciences, and Faculty Scholar, Tennessee Teaching & Learning Center*
Dr. Dottie Habel	*Professor and Director, School of Art, College of Arts & Sciences*
Mr. Michael McFall	*Assistant Director, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment*
Dr. Sandy Mixer	*Assistant Professor, College of Nursing*
Dr. Susan Riechert	*Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, College of Arts & Sciences; Co-Director of VolsTeach*

RESEARCH GROUP

Dr. Sherry Cable (Chair)	*Professor, Department of Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences*
Ms. Elizabeth Burman	*Director, Office of Community Engagement & Outreach, Office of Research & Engagement*
Dr. Chuck Collins	*Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, College of Arts & Sciences*
Dr. Brent Lamons	*Director of Advising, College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources*
Dr. Bill Park	*Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator, Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics, College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources*
Dr. Dulcie Peccolo	*Director of the Student Services Center, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences*
Dr. Anton Reece	*Executive Director, Student Success Center*
Ms. Teresa Walker	*Associate Professor and Head, Department of Learning, Research & Engagement, University of Tennessee Libraries*

RESOURCES GROUP

Dr. Annette Ranft (Chair)	*Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor, Haslam College of Business*
Ms. Betsy Adams	*Assistant Provost of Academic Resources, Office of the Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor*
Dr. Bill Dunne	*Associate Dean for Research and Technology and Professor, College of Engineering*
Dr. John Haas	*Interim Director and Associate Professor, School of Communication Studies, College of Communication & Information*
Dr. Jon Levin	*Professor, Department of Physics & Astronomy, College of Arts & Sciences*
Dr. Melissa Shivers	*Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Dean of Students, Division of Student Life*

WRITING GROUP

Dr. Michael Palenchar (Chair)	*Associate Professor, School of Advertising & Public Relations, College of Communication & Information*
Ms. Amy Blakely	*Assistant Director, Media Relations*
Ms. Kelly Ellenburg	*Campus Coordinator for Service-Learning, Office of Service-Learning, Office of the Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor*
Dr. John Koontz	*Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Cellular & Molecular Biology, College of Arts & Sciences*
Ms. Tricia Stuth	*Associate Professor, School of Architecture, College of Architecture & Design*
Dr. Lisa Yamagata-Lynch	*Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences*
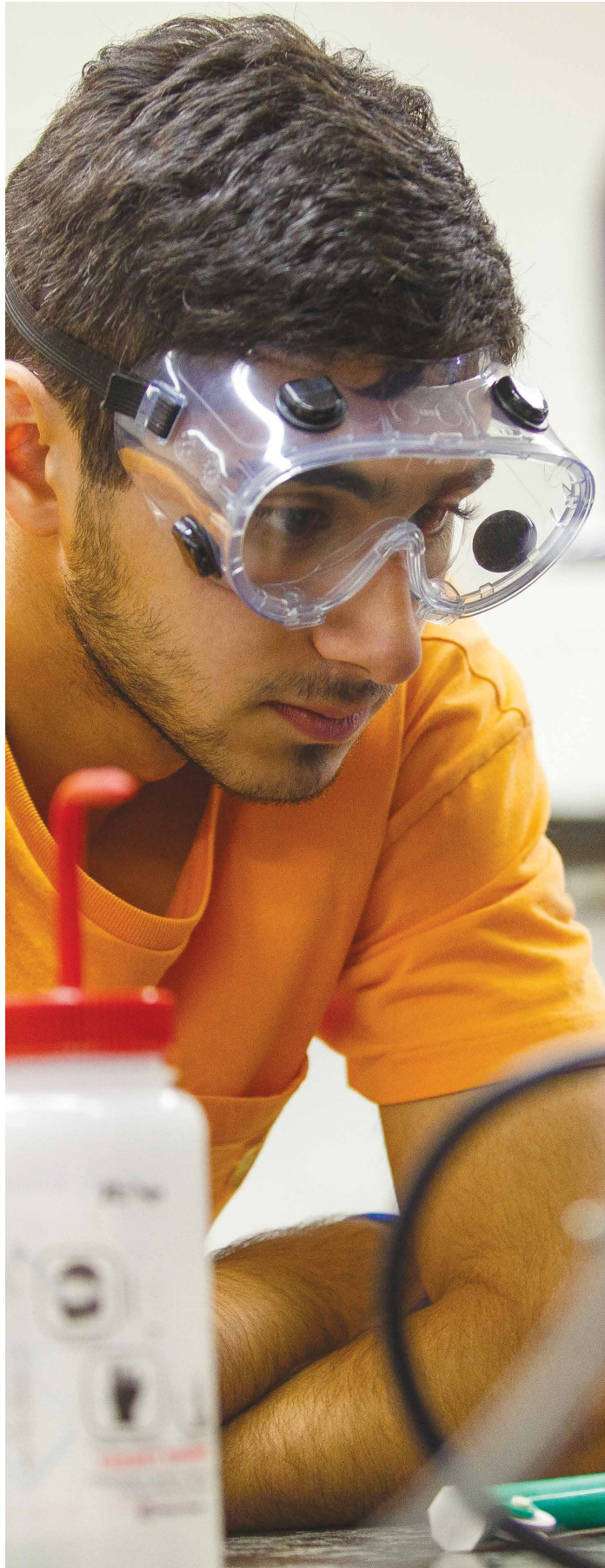
TOPIC EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The full QEP development team met regularly until a topic was selected and the QEP had clear focus and direction. At that time, the group alternated between full committee meetings and subgroup meetings. A complete list of all QEP development team and sub-group meetings is included as Appendix 1.

The QEP development team's first full meeting was convened on June 18, 2013. At this meeting, members were oriented to the QEP development process, its expectations, and its requirements. The university's provost, Dr. Susan Martin, briefly addressed the group and emphasized the value of the QEP to the institution and the importance of faculty, staff, and student input in creating the new QEP. Since the QEP is derived from institutional needs and priorities, members were encouraged to review the Vol Vision strategic plan as well as several campus task force and assessment reports that highlighted areas for growth and development at the University of Tennessee. The full committee began meeting every two weeks in August 2013 to discuss these data sources, brainstorm about the QEP, and explore potential directions. The full committee met seven times between August 23 and December 18, 2013.

Given the group's broad representation from all corners of campus and its extensive knowledge about student development and learning, an important early step in the QEP development process was to explore members' ideas for the focus of the QEP. All individual members were asked to submit their own ideas or preferences for a QEP based on their experiences, their thorough review of institutional planning documents, understanding of campus needs and priorities, student and institutional needs of their individual departments, and research into innovative campus learning initiatives at leading universities. This exercise yielded eighteen unique proposals that promoted topics ranging from faculty development to service-learning, a revised general education curriculum, sophomore retention activities, cocurricular transcripts, and expanded online teaching. The QEP team then spent several weeks reviewing and discussing these proposals and identifying common themes.

Through this intense process of discussion and synthesis, the collection of proposals was ultimately

distilled to five possible focus areas. The development team was then divided into five working groups (different from the permanent subgroups identified earlier), and each group was charged with researching and writing a concise overview advocating one of these focus areas. These overviews were shared with the campus community to gain broad input for the committee's selection of the QEP's specific focus. Each overview was one to two pages in length and described the purpose and goals of a QEP focused in the area as well as potential actions that could be taken to achieve these goals. Each focus area was also linked to priority areas in the University of Tennessee's Vol Vision strategic plan (University of Tennessee, 2011). The five focus areas were:

1. **Transforming Student Learning through Enhancing Classroom Experiences.** This QEP would have enhanced student learning by retooling the classroom experience for students through enhancing physical infrastructure, technology, and instructional development.

2. **Lifelong Learning Skills for Decision Making, Problem Solving, Communicating, and Engaging in Research.** This QEP would have leveraged academic literacy expertise on campus to provide a framework for students to acquire lifelong learning skills, including information literacy, research skills, media and technology competencies, and the ability to critically analyze and communicate information.

3. **Problem Solving from Multidisciplinary Perspectives.** This QEP would have aimed to enhance the development of students' problem-solving skills by engaging them in research-focused learning through interdisciplinary seminars co-taught by instructors from different disciplines.

4. **Community-Based Experiential Learning across the Curriculum.** This QEP would have enhanced students' civic engagement by creating a program that connects faculty and students to local communities to address real-world community-based problems.

5. **Sophomore Success for Retention.** This QEP would have implemented new seminars, resources, and campus-based activities to help students navigate their second year and meet the challenges that can cause the sophomore slump.

BROAD-BASED INVOLVEMENT OF CAMPUS CONSTITUENTS

Beginning in October 2013, several different broad-based involvement efforts were conducted to solicit input from all appropriate campus constituents. This strategic involvement process included both quantitative and qualitative research formats and included surveys, open discussion forums, an on-campus presentation, and a feedback page on the University of Tennessee's website. (See Appendices 2 and 3 for more specific information about the surveys.)

The initial involvement process entailed the preparation and distribution of electronic surveys to all faculty and staff at the University of Tennessee. At the same time, a similar survey was distributed to all current undergraduate students, most recent graduates, and many recently admitted first-year students. Standard survey protocols were followed, including advance notice about the surveys, which was provided through e-mails sent from the provost's office and in the University of Tennessee's daily electronic newsletter, *Tennessee Today*. Separate e-mails were then sent to faculty, staff, and student groups containing links and instructions for completing the survey. Access to the surveys was also provided through the University of Tennessee's SACSCOC QEP website (http://sacs.utk.edu/qep). The electronic surveys were available from mid-November to the end of December 2013. Two reminders to complete the survey were sent via e-mail and one reminder was included in *Tennessee Today* during this time.

The electronic surveys started with a brief explanation of the purpose and requirements for a QEP and an invitation for respondents to provide input. Survey participants were then presented with each of the five identified overviews (previously described) and asked to respond to questions about each, measuring each potential QEP's ability to improve student learning and meet important campus needs and stating their level of support for each. Also, open-ended questions helped to gather data concerning general comments and suggestions related to the five overviews, as well any current initiatives, individuals, or organizations on and off campus involved in activities related to the potential QEP topic areas.

THERE SHOULD
BE MORE
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ACTIVE,
ENGAGED, AND
REFLEXIVE
LEARNING.
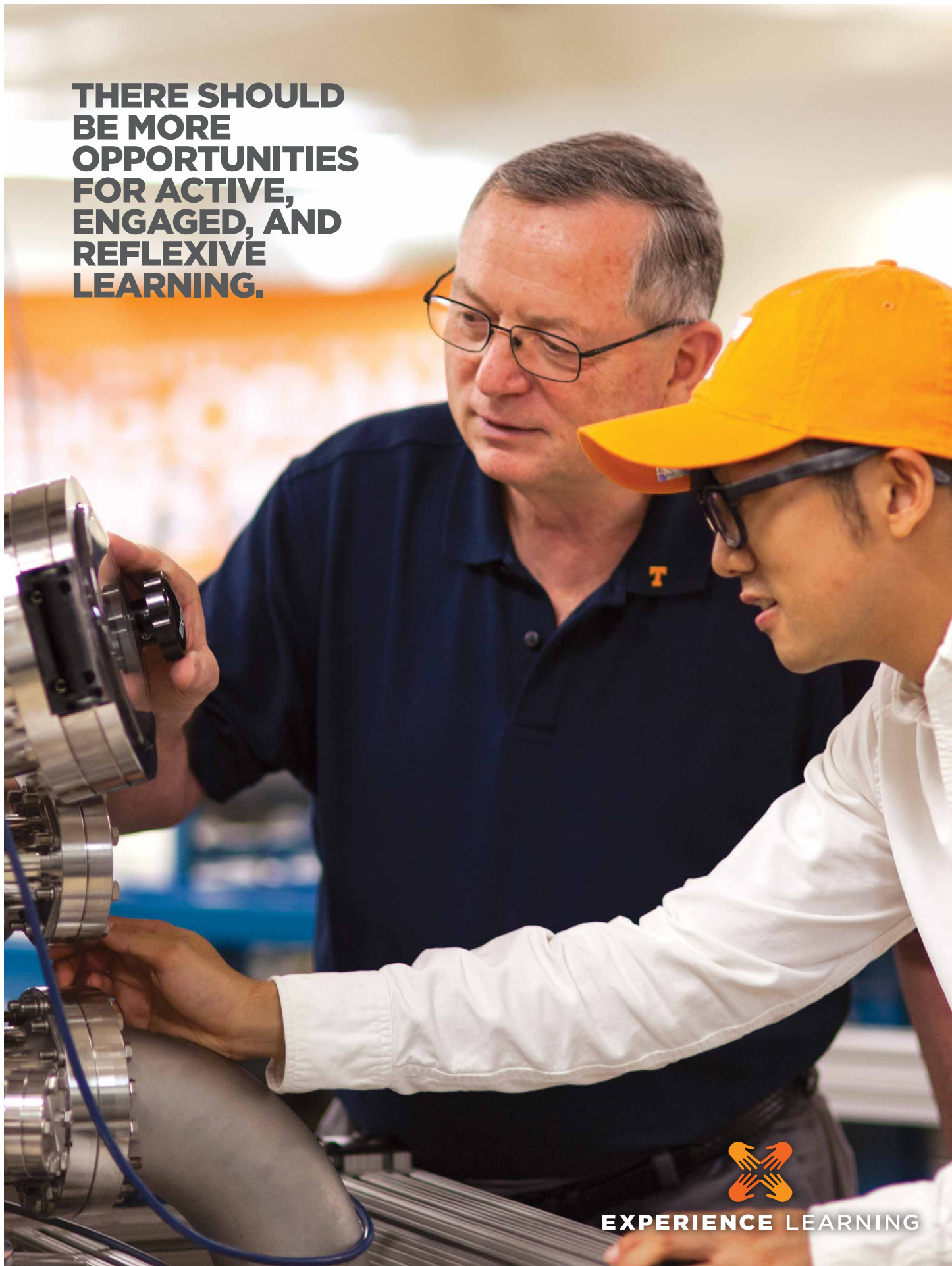
EXPERIENCE LEARNING

In addition to the electronic surveys, a series of nine open discussion forums were convened (four for faculty, staff, and graduate students and five for undergraduate students). At each forum, Dr. Matthew Theriot, QEP team chair, provided an overview about the role of the QEP as a component of the reaffirmation process and its commitment to enhancing the quality of higher education, with focused attention on student learning and each of the five focus areas.

Audience members were invited to share thoughts and reactions, ask questions, and give feedback. Comments were recorded and shared with the QEP development team. Forum days and times were staggered throughout November and December 2013 to encourage maximum participation. These dates were announced via e-mails and in *Tennessee Today*. The forum schedule was also posted to the University of Tennessee's SACSCOC QEP website. The schedule for discussion forums was:

- **November 18**   faculty, staff, and graduate students

- **November 19**   senior undergraduate students

- **November 21**   junior undergraduate students

- **December 2**   sophomore undergraduate students

- **December 2**   all undergraduate students

- **December 3**   faculty, staff, and graduate students

- **December 4**   freshman undergraduate students

- **December 11**   faculty, staff, and graduate students

- **December 16**   faculty, staff, and graduate students

Although attendance tended to be modest, the forums did generate enthusiastic and helpful discussion from attendees. In general, the forum participants were supportive of all five focus areas, though the strongest positive responses were for the focus on community-based experiential learning. Audience members viewed this as an important new direction for the University of Tennessee. Although there were examples of good experiential learning already happening on campus, they were limited and the participants felt there should be more resources and greater university-wide emphasis on this particular teaching method. Students were especially supportive of having more opportunities for active, engaged, and reflexive learning.

Regarding the other focus areas, faculty and staff who attended the forums supported enhancing the classroom experience, though there were concerns about instructors' willingness and availability to participate in regular trainings and teaching workshops. Students likewise worried that the instructors who most needed to improve as teachers would be the least likely to take advantage of these faculty development opportunities. The issue of limited faculty time and availability was also a concern for the other areas, particularly the effect on faculty members' teaching loads and scholarship if interdisciplinary seminars or seminars for second-year students were initiated.

Dr. Theriot also presented the five potential focus areas at a meeting of the university's Undergraduate Council on November 12, 2013. Like the forums, the presentation consisted of a brief introduction to the QEP and a summary of each focus area before council members were invited to give input.

Finally, throughout the QEP development process, a page on which to provide feedback was available at the University of Tennessee's SACSCOC QEP website (http://sacs.utk.edu/qep). This page offered yet another avenue for campus constituents to give input to the development of our QEP.

SELECTION OF THE QEP TOPIC

The electronic surveys, discussion forums, and other presentations gave considerable input to guide the QEP development team's selection of our final topic. More than 400 faculty and staff members and approximately 350 undergraduate students responded to the e-surveys. Faculty and staff respondents came from all academic colleges serving undergraduate students and diverse support units such as the Division of Student Life, Academic Affairs, Facilities Services, Office of Research and Engagement, and Office of Information Technology. Participating students represented all academic colleges and ranged from first-year students to graduating seniors.

While there was general support for all five topics, one consistently emerged as the most popular choice. As shown in Table 2, 72 percent of faculty and staff and 66 percent of students supported a QEP focused on community-based experiential learning. These were the highest percentages for both groups across the five potential focus areas. The survey results reflected the discussions at the open forums and showed again that this was an area with strong support from all appropriate campus constituents.

TABLE 2: SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL QEP TOPICS
Percentage of Respondents Who Agree or Strongly Agree

FOCUS AREA	A QEP focused in this area will improve student learning.		A QEP focused in this area will meet an important campus need.		I support a QEP focused in this area.	
	FACULTY & STAFF	STUDENTS	FACULTY & STAFF	STUDENTS	FACULTY & STAFF	STUDENTS
Community-Based Experiential Learning across the Curriculum	76%	68%	71%	61%	72%	66%
Transforming Student Learning through Enhancing Classroom Experiences	68%	68%	67%	63%	63%	65%
Lifelong Learning Skills	68%	64%	61%	61%	60%	61%
Problem Solving from Multidisciplinary Perspectives	73%	67%	64%	55%	66%	63%
Sophomore Success for Retention	55%	56%	56%	60%	52%	55%

After reviewing the feedback received from the surveys and discussion forums, the QEP development team selected experiential learning as the focus for our QEP in February 2014. To make the plan as inclusive as possible, the decision was made to expand the focus beyond just service-learning and community-based experiential learning; instead, the QEP will focus on the full spectrum of experiential learning pedagogies done in the classroom, on campus, and off campus. This broadened perspective facilitates more opportunities for faculty and student development and participation, and it further generates more avenues for academic and student support units across campus to be involved.

PROCESS SUMMARY AND COMPLIANCE WITH SACSCOC CRITERIA

As described above, and consistent with SACS Core Requirement 2.12, our QEP topic was identified and selected through a broad-based institutional process. We can say confidently that our expansive campus community of faculty, staff, students, and administrators endorses this QEP topic. The next chapter will further elaborate on the QEP's connection to the University of Tennessee's mission and strategic plan, show how it meets our needs and priorities, and demonstrate an exciting and supported QEP topic that is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning.

CHAPTER 2: IDENTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC

As noted previously, experiential learning is both a philosophy and methodology of engaging with students in learning through direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. Experiential learning invites students to actively participate and engage in their learning through a process of discussion, collaboration, hands-on involvement, application, and reflection. Experiential learning yields substantial benefits to students, faculty, the campus, and the larger community, and has a strong relationship to the institutional needs of the University of Tennessee and its stakeholders.

Experiential learning meets the University of Tennessee's needs and priorities in numerous different and important ways. The university's mission and vision statements clearly recognize its role as the flagship university for the state of Tennessee. As such, the university must seek ways to improve the lives of local citizens while also preparing our students to make positive contributions to communities beyond Tennessee. The QEP's emphasis on active and engaged learning promotes community involvement, citizenship, and service. Experiential learning encompasses research and scholarship, reflection, value creation, and lifelong learning.

As noted in Chapter 1, the QEP embraces the university's mission statement. In addition, the QEP embraces and reinforces the importance of value creation, original ideas, and leadership as set forth in the *Vol Vision* strategic plan:

VALUE CREATION through economic, social, and environmental development targeted to an increasingly global and multicultural world.
The University of Tennessee leads an increasing number of academic and public service activities that involve and benefit the local community, the state of Tennessee, the United States, and ultimately the world. This continuing commitment to the public good through a variety of outreach activities is grounded in the tradition of a land-grant institution.

ORIGINAL IDEAS that advance society through discovery, inquiry, innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activities.

The University of Tennessee's ability to create value is dependent on discovering new knowledge and generating new ideas and expressions. The complex concerns of the twenty-first century cannot be addressed with existing knowledge and systems. Our aim is a dramatic increase in these activities, requiring the interaction between committed, diverse faculty, staff, and students.

LEADERSHIP through the preparation of capable and ethical leaders.
The University of Tennessee's diverse graduates have unique and enriched learning opportunities accruing from the university's comprehensive mission, and a good portion of graduates will take their places as leaders in the state of Tennessee and beyond.

To further solidify the link between the University of Tennessee's mission and our QEP, the QEP development team created the QEP mission statement in February 2014. The purpose of this mission statement is to define the plan's goals, provide a path for moving forward, and contextualize the plan's relationship to the larger university mission of excellence in teaching, research, and engagement. Throughout the process of developing the QEP, the team frequently referenced this mission statement to ensure that it stayed true to the plan's goals and intentions as well as the institutional needs of the university.

THE QEP MISSION STATEMENT

The QEP will enhance opportunities for students to learn through actual involvement with problems and needs in the larger community. The purpose is to help students apply the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the classroom to real-world challenges. Learning occurs during the process of dealing with these problems and through guided reflection on these experiences, developing new skills, creating new knowledge, and clarifying values.

THE QEP EMBRACES
THE IMPORTANCE OF
VALUE CREATION,
ORIGINAL IDEAS,
AND LEADERSHIP.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

LINKAGE TO VOL VISION STRATEGIC PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS

Beginning in 2010, the University of Tennessee embarked upon a thorough strategic planning process to guide it to its goal of becoming one of the top 25 public universities in the United States. The resulting strategic plan, known as Vol Vision, identified five priority areas (University of Tennessee, 2011). The QEP has clear connections to four of these areas and, as a result, is a powerful tool for helping the University of Tennessee's faculty, students, staff, alumni, and other stakeholders to meet its institutional needs and strategic priorities.

PRIORITY 1: UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: *Recruit, develop, and graduate a diverse body of undergraduate students who, through engagement in academic, social, and cultural experiences, embrace the Volunteer spirit as lifelong learners committed to the principles of ethical and professional leadership.*

Experiential learning enhances students' engagement with their academic experience. Enhanced student engagement will boost student retention while also providing students with social and cultural learning experiences that will encourage them to be lifelong learners. The QEP will encourage new pedagogies to increase student engagement, grow service-learning opportunities across campus, increase the number of learning communities for students, enrich university honors programs, create more opportunities for undergraduate research, and expand leadership development programs for students.

Priority 2: GRADUATE EDUCATION: *Educate and graduate increasing numbers of diverse graduate and professional students who are equipped to address the pressing concerns of their fields, to extend the frontiers of knowledge, and to contribute to the public good through service to the academy or their professions.*

The QEP will offer opportunities for students, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, to work collaboratively on projects and activities. Opportunities for teamwork and mentorship will advance students' learning and engagement while increasing their abilities to create public good through service to the academy and professions.

Priority 3: FACULTY: *Attract and retain stellar, diverse faculty and staff who will proudly represent our campus, execute our mission, embrace our vision, exemplify our values, and collaborate to realize our strategic priorities.*

The QEP will advance the university's mission for service by facilitating interdisciplinary community connections and generating statewide engagement utilizing faculty expertise. Faculty development opportunities will provide support to those interested in incorporating experiential learning pedagogies into their classes.

Priority 4: RESEARCH: *Strengthen our capacity and productivity in research, scholarship, and creative activity to better educate our students; enhance economic, social, and environmental development; support outreach to our various constituencies; and extend the reputation and recognition of our campus.*

Experiential learning and research are related in a variety of ways. Research is a form of experiential learning. Experiential learning can lead to research ideas. Scholarship can evolve from implementing and assessing experiential learning activities. Through participation in the QEP, our students will have increased opportunities to grow academically; our faculty may choose to contribute to the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of outreach; and our university will contribute to the larger community.

EMPIRICAL DATA SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR INCREASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The National Survey of Student Engagement, or NSSE (2014), is an international survey that assesses undergraduate students' involvement with educational practices that are associated with high levels of learning and engagement. It is a valuable instrument for measuring student participation in these activities as well as the institutional support provided to help students be successful at the University of Tennessee. Because the NSSE is administered at universities throughout the United States, it also is a helpful tool for comparing the University of Tennessee to similar institutions of higher learning. Every year through 2011, UT's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment administered the NSSE to first-year students and seniors at the university. The scores were compared to previous years' data as well as scores from other institutions with similar characteristic and Carnegie classification as the University of Tennessee.

As shown on Table 3, undergraduate students in the past five years consistently scored below students at our peer institutions on a number of NSSE items that are related to experiential learning. For example, a significantly lower proportion of first-year students and seniors at the University of Tennessee have participated or plan to participate in a community-based project as part of a regular course compared to peer institutions. This trend is true for students working on research projects outside of course requirements. University of Tennessee students who responded to the NSSE also reported spending less time participating in cocurricular activities than students at comparison institutions. These students also were less positive about the institutional environment and many students did not feel encouraged to have contact with diverse classmates. Finally, first-year students and seniors at the University of Tennessee annually said that the institution made less of a contribution to their abilities to work effectively with others, solve complex real-world problems, and contribute to the welfare of their communities than respondents from peer institutions.

TABLE 3: NSSE SCORES AND COMPARISONS TO CARNEGIE PEER INSTITUTIONS, 2007–2011

NSSE ITEM		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	CARNEGIE PEERS (2011)
N/Response rate		1150 / 23%	2172 / 38%	1925 / 39%	2114 / 25%	1742/16%	
ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCES		In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often					
Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	FY*	1.46	1.48	1.48	1.51	1.53	1.55
	SR	1.49	1.57	1.53	1.55	1.53	1.63
Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)	FY	1.44	1.52	1.52	1.60	1.56	1.57
	SR	1.67	1.78	1.76	1.81	1.82	1.78
ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES		Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution? (0=no or undecided, 1=yes. Thus, the mean is the proportion responding "yes" among all valid respondents.)					
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	FY	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.07
	SR	0.49	0.53	0.52	0.52	0.50	0.52
Community service or volunteer work	FY	0.36	0.39	0.43	0.38	0.40	0.41
	SR	0.59	0.64	0.62	0.68	0.66	0.65
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	FY	0.18	0.18	0.19	0.23	0.22	0.22
	SR	0.22	0.26	0.24	0.28	0.27	0.27
Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements	FY	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.05
	SR	0.19	0.20	0.19	0.21	0.24	0.24
TIME USAGE		About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following? 1=0 hrs/wk, 2=1-5 hrs/wk, 3=6-10 hrs/wk, 4=11-15 hrs/wk, 5=16-20 hrs/wk, 6=21-25 hrs/wk, 7=26-30 hrs/wk, 8=more than 30 hrs/wk					
Participating in cocurricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.)	FY	2.25	2.40	2.48	2.40	2.37	2.44
	SR	2.02	2.20	2.16	2.18	2.21	2.29
INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT		To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much					
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	FY	2.55	2.63	2.59	2.74	2.72	2.75
	SR	2.15	2.28	2.33	2.32	2.36	2.51
Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)	FY	2.88	2.94	2.91	2.94	2.99	3.00
	SR	2.62	2.70	2.68	2.77	2.76	2.77
EDUCATIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH		To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much					
Working effectively with others	FY	2.94	2.94	2.93	2.98	3.05	2.97
	SR	2.99	3.05	3.09	3.07	3.05	3.13
Solving complex real-world problems	FY	2.61	2.58	2.56	2.66	2.70	2.73
	SR	2.59	2.59	2.65	2.70	2.69	2.84
Contributing to the welfare of your community	FY	2.39	2.36	2.27	2.32	2.32	2.52
	SR	2.21	2.26	2.23	2.28	2.25	2.48

*FY = First-Year Student; SR = Senior Student   ▉ Score exceeds Carnegie peers for the year.   ▉ Score below Carnegie peers for the year.

TASK FORCE REPORTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR INCREASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In addition to the linkages described above, a handful of recent task force and annual reports further support the need for more experiential learning pedagogies on our campus. Prepared by different groups of students, faculty, and staff in the past few years, these reports highlight the importance of engaged, active learning to enhance the academic and social experiences for students.

First, a group of undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee came together in 2011 to create the Student Forum on Learning (SFL). The SFL involved representatives from several academic colleges. They sought to provide a student perspective and propose student-driven solutions to advance institutional needs and priorities. The group authored a white paper that outlined areas they believed should be targeted for improvement (Student Forum on Learning, 2011). "Service-learning and community engagement" was one of these highlighted areas addressing the concern that many students are not exposed to meaningful civic engagement through formal and informal educational experiences while at the University of Tennessee.

The SFL also identified "classroom experience" as a priority area for improvement. Their recommendations supported the need for faculty development around experiential learning. They recommend interactive classroom and cocurricular activities that promote students to engage in active participatory learning, opportunities for peer and small group interactions, and increased accessibility to faculty outside of the classroom. They also desired more varied teaching methods in the classroom that accommodates diverse learning styles.

Following the 2011–2012 academic year, the Student Success Center conducted a study titled *Report of the Task Force on Retention* (University of Tennessee, 2013), to explore the reasons that some undergraduate students left the University of Tennessee before degree completion. While most of the 153 students who were surveyed identified financial reasons as their main reason for leaving, several said that they were disappointed with their classroom experience. Notably,

these students said that teachers were inaccessible or they were not able to establish an academically beneficial relationship with their instructors.

In addition, the Division of Student Life at the University of Tennessee articulates strategic goals that show the value of experiential and engaged learning operating outside the formal academic curriculum. The Division encompasses seventeen nonacademic departments committed to providing comprehensive support services to all students on campus. Departments include Career Services, Sorority and Fraternity Life, the Student Health Center, and University Housing. As described in their strategic plan for 2011–2016, one of the division's strategic goals is to "engage all students in meaningful cocurricular opportunities to promote retention, and persistence to graduation" (Division of Student Life, 2011). This involves enhancing and generating more opportunities for formal and informal learning experiences through student leadership and civic and cultural education.

EVIDENCE
HIGHLIGHTS
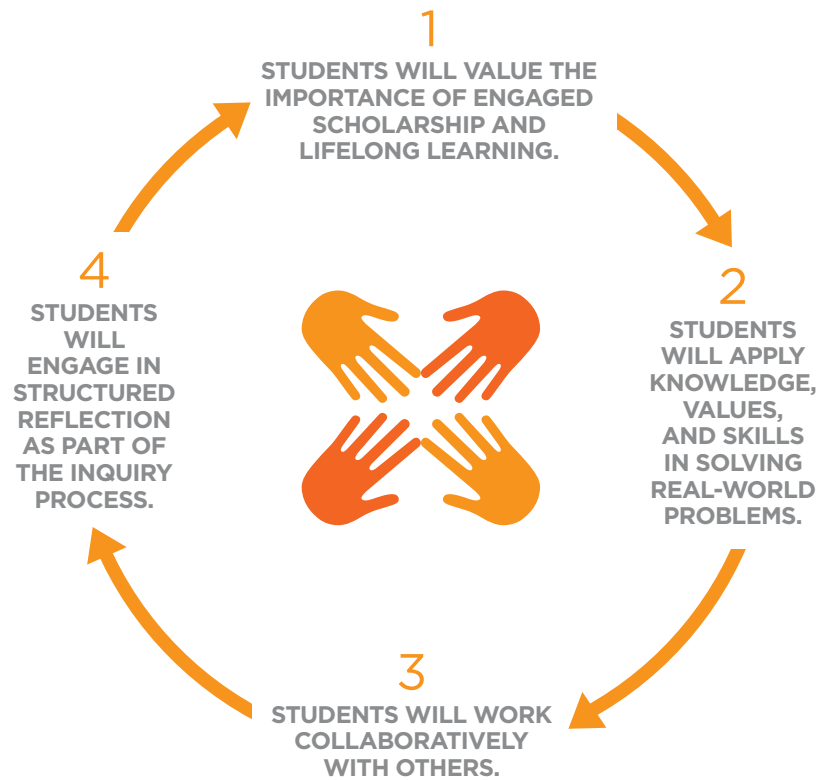THE IMPORTANCE
OF ENGAGED,
ACTIVE LEARNING.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

CHAPTER 3: DESIRED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The primary goal of our QEP is to enhance students' development and educational experiences by providing more opportunities for experiential learning. Experiential learning is most effective when it is a dynamic process in which students engage, apply, collaborate, and reflect on course content and lessons learned. Since learning occurs at all of these stages and in a continuous cycle, it is important to measure students' learning and growth throughout the process. These stages of experiential learning therefore formed the foundation for defining our desired student learning outcomes (SLO).

The four interrelated QEP student learning outcomes are directly derived from the QEP mission statement, which calls for "enhancing opportunities for students to learn through actual involvement with problems and needs in the larger community." As further detailed in the QEP assessment plan (see Chapter 9), the following student learning outcomes will be assessed using specific direct and indirect measures. Each SLO is accompanied by a set of benchmarks that operationalize the learning outcome and guide the assessment measures.

FIGURE 1: QEP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1 STUDENTS WILL VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

2 STUDENTS WILL APPLY KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS IN SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS.

3 STUDENTS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS.

4 STUDENTS WILL ENGAGE IN STRUCTURED REFLECTION AS PART OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS.

SLO 1:
STUDENTS WILL VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

Benchmarks (students will):

1. Show evidence of interest in the problems of society (needs of others).

2. Value (i.e., offer a positive attitude toward) the use of engaged scholarship to address societal problems.

3. Express a desire to utilize engaged scholarship.

4. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.

For students to truly commit to engaged scholarship and lifelong learning, they must acknowledge and come to value the potential importance and benefits that can be derived from such a commitment. Students, as future graduates, would not be expected to invest the time and effort required to continually engage real-world problems unless they find such engagement to be of importance for members of the communities confronting the problem as well as something that they personally value. Overall, the first student learning outcome focuses on and assesses the development and magnitude of the value students place on engaged scholarship and lifelong learning.

SLO 2:
STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS IN SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS.

Benchmarks (students will be able to):

1. Clearly describe a real-world problem amenable to engaged scholarship.

2. Analyze literature (content/research methods) related to the problem.

3. Formulate an inquiry approach driven by questions relevant to the problem.

4. Address potential ethical issues related to addressing the problem.

5. Employ the selected inquiry approach to
   • Collect and analyze data.
   • Draw conclusions/inferences (interpret).

6. Apply findings toward addressing the problem.

Beyond acknowledging and valuing the importance of experiential and lifelong learning, the experiential learning process requires active student engagement, engagement through the development and application of knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems. Students must encounter a problem, assess the needs of the community affected by the problem, and then they must enlarge and apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward problem solutions. Overall, the second student learning outcome focuses on and assesses the extent to which students are engaging in real-world problems and developing and applying their knowledge, skills, and values toward understanding and solving the problem.

SLO 3:
STUDENTS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS.

Benchmarks (students will):

1. Participate in collaborative interactions.

2. Support group processes.

3. Be attentive to the ideas of others.

4. Offer relevant questions and comments.

5. Meet obligations for group assignments on a timely basis.

Real-world problems are often complicated, multifaceted, and deeply interrelated with other societal problems. Such problems are not amenable to quick fixes by single agents acting alone. Real-world problems often require the collaboration of experts from multiple fields working in concert with the broad constituencies of increasingly diverse communities. Students therefore must become adept at working in a collaborative manner with a range of peers, relevant experts, and a diverse set of community members. Overall, the third student learning outcome focuses on and assesses students' ability to work collaboratively on a real-world problem in concert with a broad range of individuals in a variety of relevant roles and contexts.

SLO 4:
STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE STRUCTURED REFLECTION AS A PART OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS.

Benchmarks (students will be able to):

1. Use structured reflection in assessing an engaged inquiry experience.

2. Assess what they have learned about themselves as an individual (self-awareness) from experiences.

3. Assess what they have learned about themselves as members of the broader community.

4. Use reflection on the inquiry process to guide lifelong learning.

Experiential learning requires students to actively engage in reflection during and after the process of addressing a real-world problem. Students are expected to reflect in action—reflection that occurs when students are engaging a problem and thinking about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they constantly must interactively draw upon to address the problem. Students are also expected to reflect on action—reflection that occurs when students think about their overall experience, especially from the perspective of the lessons they have learned and can carry forward when addressing future problems. Overall, the fourth student learning outcome is focused on and assesses the extent to which students are engaged in reflection throughout and beyond their efforts to address a real-world problem.

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REFLECT BOTH IN ACTION AND ON ACTION.
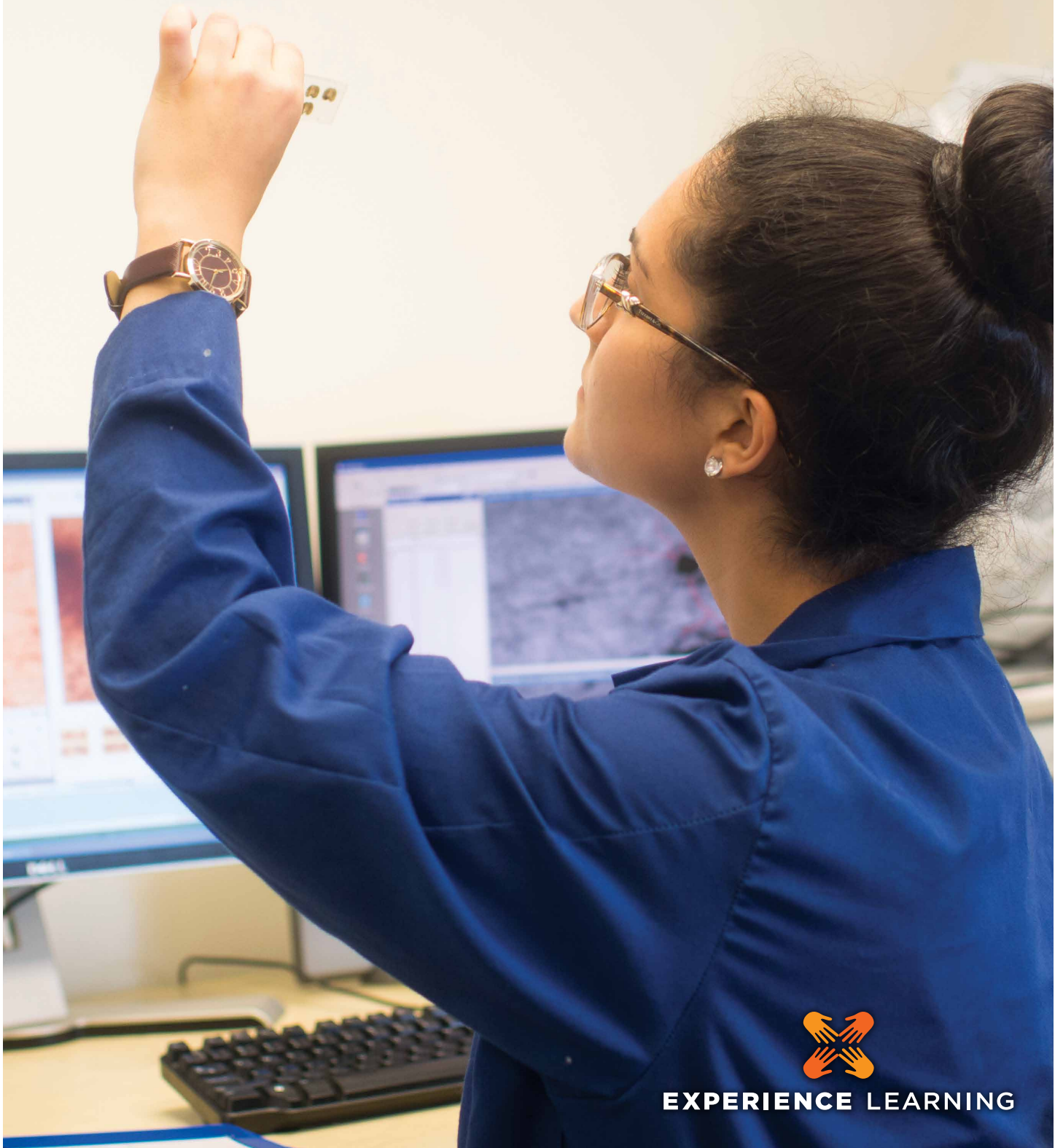
CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

The notion of learning by experiencing is not a new concept. Notable educational analysts such as John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and David Kolb provide the groundwork for learning theories that focus on "learning through experience" or "learning by doing." Theorists address the question "*Why* is experience central to the learning process?"

Dewey (1938) contended that traditional education's authoritarian, preordained knowledge approach was focused too much on delivering knowledge and too little on students' receipt of knowledge and their actual experiences in the classroom. At the same time, students who are unconstrained by educators, he argued, are frequently unable to structure their own learning experiences for maximum benefit. He advocated an educational pedagogy that provided students with carefully structured experiences that were immediately valuable to them and better enabled them to become informed, effective members of democratic society.

Other theorists adapted Dewey's ideas in their own work. Kurt Lewin, considered the founder of modern social psychology, studied field theory, group dynamics, and experiential learning. From this he formed his premise that learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process (1943).

Psychologist David Kolb's theory of learning is influenced by the work of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. Kolb defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming experience" (1984, p. 41). He distinguishes experiential learning theory from cognitive and behavioral theories. Cognitive theories emphasize mental processes, and behavioral theories ignore subjective experience in the learning process. Kolb's theory is more holistic, emphasizing how experiences, including cognitions, environmental factors, and emotions, influence the learning process.

Kolb's experiential learning model is based on his identification of two ways of grasping experience (concrete experience and abstract conceptualization) and two ways of transforming experience (reflective observation and active experimentation). His model represents a four-stage learning cycle. Concrete experiences provide information that serves as the basis for observations and reflections. We assimilate the information from our reflections, distilling them in abstract concepts. We then use the concepts to develop new theories about the world, which we actively test. By testing our ideas, we again gather information through our concrete experience, cycling back to the beginning of the process. Many educators use Kolb's four-stage learning cycle as the basis for the development of a contemporary experiential learning pedagogy.

INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT ROLES IN THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSE

Experiential learning courses are demanding for both instructor and student. Their roles are interactive and reciprocal. Northern Illinois University's Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center (n.d.) suggests the unique roles that instructors and students adopt in an experiential learning course.

INSTRUCTOR ROLE

In experiential learning, the instructor guides rather than directs the learning process where students are naturally interested in learning. The instructor assumes the role of facilitator and is guided by a number of steps crucial to experiential learning as noted by Wurdinger and Carlson (2010, p. 13):

- Be willing to accept a less teacher-centric role in the classroom.

- Approach the learning experience in a positive, nondominating way.

- Identify an experience in which students will find interest and be personally committed.

- Explain the purpose of the experiential learning situation to the students.

- Share your feelings and thoughts with your students and let them know that you are learning from the experience too.

- Tie the course learning objectives to course activities and direct experiences so students know what they are supposed to do.

- Provide relevant and meaningful resources to help students succeed.

- Allow students to experiment and discover solutions on their own.

- Find a sense of balance between the academic and nurturing aspects of teaching.

- Clarify student and instructor roles.

STUDENT ROLE

Qualities of experiential learning are those in which students decide themselves to be personally involved in the learning experience (students are actively participating in their own learning and have a personal role in the direction of learning). Students are not completely left to teach themselves, however, for the instructor assumes the role of guide and facilitates the learning process. The following list of student roles has been adapted from UC–Davis (2011) and Wurdinger and Carlson (2010):

- Students will be involved in problems that are practical, social, and personal.

- Students will be allowed freedom in the classroom as long as they make headway in the learning process.

- Students often will need to be involved with difficult and challenging situations in the process of discovery.

- Students will evaluate their own progression or success in the learning process, which becomes the primary means of assessment.

- Students will learn from the learning process and become open to change. This change includes less reliance on the instructor and more on fellow peers, the development of skills to investigate (research) and learn from an authentic experience, and the ability to objectively evaluate one's own performance.

THE BENEFITS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSES

Furco (2012) performed a comprehensive meta-analysis of published works on the effects of experiential learning on students and faculty. Furco's work demonstrated measurable benefits for students, including student persistence and retention; increased academic, civic and career outcomes; and increased positive personal and social outcomes. The following studies were used to guide actions to be implemented. The following studies also support the four student learning outcomes previously identified (see Chapter 3): (1) engaged scholarship and lifelong learning; (2) developed and applied knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems; (3) collaborative work; and (4) structured reflection.

STUDENT PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION

Research demonstrates increased student persistence and plans to re-enroll. First-year students engaged civically through service-learning were more likely than non-service-learning peers to indicate they planned to re-enroll and eventually graduate from their current institution (Muthiah, Bringle & Hatcher, 2010). In addition, participation in experiential learning during college enhances mediating variables for student retention, including students' interpersonal, community, and academic engagement and peer and faculty relationships (Muthiah, Bringle & Hatcher, 2010; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Kuh, 2008).

STUDENT ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Research demonstrates an increase in students' content knowledge and skills. For example, college students enrolled in service-learning developed a more profound understanding of political science than the control group (Markus, Howard & King, 1993). In another study, freshman composition students participating in project-based learning experiences integrated with course content showed higher gains than a comparison group in writing abilities, based on Biber's computer-mediated writing assessment (Wurr, 2002). Seniors majoring in rehabilitation services (n=65) enrolled in a section of a medical aspects of disabilities services course containing experiential learning components scored statistically significantly higher on course examinations than the rehabilitation services students (n=65) enrolled in the section of the same course that did not contain a community-based learning component (Mpofu, 2007). Finally, community college students participating in experiential learning (n=1,687) reported statistically higher outcomes in application of coursework to everyday life than comparable students not engaged in experiential learning (n=630) (Prentice & Robinson, 2010).

Experiential learning also improved higher-order thinking skills. Students engaged in experiential learning tied to the curriculum demonstrated greater complexities of understanding than comparison group (Blair, Millea & Hammer, 2004; Eyler & Giles, 1999), and students engaged in experiential learning experiences with reflection showed statistically significant increases in their ability to analyze increasingly complex problems (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Finally, engagement in course-based, experiential learning revealed significant increases in students' critical thinking abilities (Bringle, 2006; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne, Hammerich & Hensley, 1998; Prentice & Robinson, 2010).

STUDENT PERSONAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Finally, experiential learning programs provide students more positive personal and social outcomes. Experiential learning increases students' self-esteem (Colby et al., 2003; Furco, 2003; McMahon, 1998; Miller & Robertson, 2010; Shaffer, 1993; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Switzer et. al. 1995). It also is shown that participation in experiential learning enhances students' sense of self-efficacy and empowerment (Furco 2003; McMahon, 1998; Morgan & Streb, 1999; Shaffer, 1993; Johnson & Sherraden, 2007; Tapia, 2007).

Students' participation in course-based experiential learning increases their likelihood to engage in prosocial behaviors and decreases students' likelihood to engage in at-risk behaviors (Astin & Sax, 1998; Batchelder & Root, 1994; Berkas, 1997; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999; O'Donnell et al., 1999; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Stephens, 1995; Yates & Youniss, 1996).

Regarding student motivation, course-based experiential learning experiences have positive effects on students' motivation for learning (Covitt, 2002; Furco, 2003; Loesch-Griffin, Petrides & Pratt 1995; Stephens, 1995; Tumlin, Linares & Schilling, 2009).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES
Guiding principles and best practices, based on empirical research, provide a pragmatic grounding for the development of an expanded experiential learning program at the University of Tennessee.

"Simple participation in a prescribed set of learning experiences does not make something experiential. The experiential methodology is not linear, cyclical, or even patterned. It is a series of working principles, all of which are equally important or must be present to varying degrees at some time during experiential learning. These principles are required no matter what activity the student is engaged in or where the learning takes place" (Warren, Sakofs & Hunt, 1995, p. 243).

Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman (1992) provide a list of guiding principles garnered from the literature that should be present to define a method as experiential.

- **Mixture of content and process:** There must be a balance between the experiential activities and the underlying content or theory.

- **Absence of excessive judgment:** The instructor must create a safe space for students to work through their own processes of self-discovery.

- **Engagement in purposeful endeavors:** In experiential learning, since the learner is the teacher, there must be "meaning for the student in the learning." The learning activities must be personally relevant to the student.

- **Encouraging the big-picture perspective:** Experiential activities must allow the students to make connections between the learning they are doing and the world. Activities should help build in students the ability to see relationships in complex systems and the capability to work within them.

- **The role of reflection:** Students should be able to reflect on their own learning, bringing "the theory to life" and gaining insight into themselves and their interactions with the world.

- **Creating emotional investment:** Students must be fully immersed in the experience, not merely doing what they feel is required of them. Ideally, the learner will be invested to the extent that the topic being learned and the experience combine to create a powerful reaction within the learner.

- **The re-examination of values:** By working within a space that has been made safe for self-exploration, students can begin to analyze and even alter their own values.

- **The presence of meaningful relationships:** One part of getting students to see their learning in the context of a world view is to start by showing the important relationships between the learner, the teacher, and the learning environment.

- **Learning outside one's perceived comfort zones:** Students often learn more when they have opportunities to learn outside their individual comfort zones. This refers not only to the physical environment but also the social environment, and might include being held accountable for one's actions and their consequences.

The most common description of best practices in the experiential learning literature is that provided on the National Society for for Experiential Education (2014) website. This includes intention, preparedness and planning, authenticity, reflection, orientation and training, monitoring and continuous improvement, assessment and evaluation, and acknowledgment.

- **Intention:** All parties, from the outset, must be clear about why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied, or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience.

- **Preparedness and Planning:** Participants must ensure that they enter the experience with a foundation sufficient to support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives, and activities that are clearly defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds.

- **Authenticity:** The experience must have a real-world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. It should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.

- **Reflection:** Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.

- **Orientation and Training:** For the full value of the experience to be accessible to both the learner and the learning facilitator(s), and to any involved organizational partners, it is essential that they be prepared with important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner's appreciation of the context and skill requirements of her/his work.

- **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:** Any learning activity will be dynamic and changing, and the parties involved all bear responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide the richest learning possible while affirming the learner. It is important that there be a feedback loop related to learning intentions and quality objectives and that the structure of the experience be sufficiently flexible to permit change in response to what that feedback suggests. While reflection provides input for new hypotheses and knowledge based in documented experience, other strategies for observing progress against intentions and objectives should also be in place. Monitoring and continuous improvement represent the formative evaluation tools.

- **Assessment and Evaluation:** Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes. Assessment is a means to develop and refine the specific learning goals and quality objectives identified during the planning stages of the experience. In contrast, evaluation provides comprehensive data about the experiential process as a whole and whether it has met the intentions that suggested it.

- **Acknowledgment:** Recognition of learning and impact occur throughout the experience by way of the reflective and monitoring processes and through reporting, documentation, and sharing of accomplishments. All parties to the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience.

PLANS
SHOULD BE
FLEXIBLE
ENOUGH TO
ALLOW FOR
ADAPTATIONS
AS THE
EXPERIENCE
UNFOLDS.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The survey of literature on experiential learning found a general consensus that faculty involvement enhances student learning. More specifically, ongoing faculty development and support are crucial to enriching that involvement and cultivating innovative experiential pedagogy.

Involvement in experiential learning benefits faculty as well as students. Furco's meta-analysis identified important benefits experiential learning courses provide for faculty, including enhanced faculty interest in subject matter (Strage, 2000), greater satisfaction with teaching (Hammond, 1994; Hesser, 1995), stronger bonds between faculty and students (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002; Sax & Astin, 1997), enhanced faculty collaboration and learning communities (within and across disciplines) (Furco & Moely, 2012), enhanced faculty affinity to institution and community (Roldan, Strage & David 2004), and enhanced faculty support for experiential learning (Vogelgesang, 2000).

Faculty are oftentimes pulled in many different directions, which makes involvement with mentoring and experiential learning challenging. Research on best practices for faculty development in experiential learning curricula and programs is limited. However, research does show that the quality of faculty development in experiential learning in higher education is driven by four factors: (1) administratively supportive environments for experiential pedagogy, (2) curricular opportunities for developing experiential learning courses/projects, (3) faculty perceptions of and attitudes toward experiential learning, and (4) faculty peer-to-peer mentoring.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Administrative support for faculty development in experiential learning programs is key. Support at the administrative level should advance opportunities for innovative pedagogy within experiential learning curricula and encourage faculty involvement (Allen 2011). Encouragement and education of varying instructional styles and designs are essential in faculty development; however, infrastructure put in place to promote and sustain faculty training also varies but is just as important. At many institutions awareness of experiential learning opportunities are present, but limited knowledge of experiential learning pedagogy (at both the faculty and administrative level) inhibits the formulation of faculty training and infrastructure to support that training (Ghose, 2010).

Kolb and Kolb (2005) suggest that an institutional development plan is needed when looking to organize and promote an experiential learning program. A holistic example of this that they point to is Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. The president of Case Western Reserve University established a commission and in the main charge noted that "education is best accomplished through experience" (President's Commission, 2001, p. 2). Under the pilot program for general education, they developed a five-year faculty development program. The program was rigorous and was operated through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education. Through this program, eighty faculty members underwent five years

of training on how to develop an experiential learning course, infuse experiential opportunities into courses already in place, and develop new experiential learning experiences and opportunities (e.g., community-based/service-learning projects, residential hall experiential learning experiences). Faculty in the program meet on a regular basis to discuss ideas related to course structure and experiential learning theory, attend workshops on experiential learning, and brainstorm ideas on how to better develop training for future faculty on infusing experiential learning into their pedagogy. Kolb and Kolb (2005) cite this as an excellent example of administrative vision and support that promote experiential learning.

FACULTY INTERNSHIPS

Faculty internships are another innovative approach to enhance faculty development in an experiential learning program. These opportunities increase practical application of discipline-specific content. Specifically, Herron and Morozzo (2008) found that in the disciplines of medicine, law, accounting, and engineering, faculty internships were especially beneficial to student learning and also very helpful for preparing students entering the workforce. In addition, faculty internships bring together industry professionals and faculty in bridging the gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is expected in the professional environment. Faculty also reported that the internship experiences helped them re-evaluate how they might infuse experiential learning opportunities into their classes and restructure their syllabi. In this instance, the internship experience itself

was a form of experiential learning for faculty who then drew from the experience to develop pedagogical innovations that could transfer into their courses.

FACULTY MENTORING IN RESIDENCE HALLS
Another example of getting faculty involved in experiential learning is faculty mentoring in residence halls (Jhaveri, 2012). This is good way of getting faculty involved in the lives of students beyond the classroom and is an extension of the important student-to-faculty relationship. The research found in a dissertation by Jhaveri (2012) concluded that faculty mentoring had a significant positive influence on retention and success of students. Her research also showed that minority students benefited more from the faculty mentoring program than did the majority student population and that first-year students benefited more than non-first-year students. While access to the faculty was increased through the faculty mentoring program in residence halls, some faculty didn't have the training and appropriate skills to connect to the students. Jhaveri's research highlights that support for faculty training and development opportunities for those faculty mentors was lacking. Because of this, the efficacy of faculty mentoring in residence halls program, across the board, was not overwhelmingly successful. Again, we see the connections between a well-organized faculty development plan and a successful experiential learning program.

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES
The biggest challenges and impediments to faculty involvement in experiential learning are faculty's own perceptions and attitudes toward the concept. This challenge is noted well throughout the literature (Allen, 2011; Beggs & Hurd, 2010; Gallagher, 2007; Simons et al., 2012). These attitudes are formed in a variety of ways, from their previous pedagogical training, to perceptions about experiential learning's appropriateness within their discipline, to fragmented (and limited) faculty development opportunities currently offered at their institution (Smith, 2013; Tuberville, 2014). This can create a situation where faculty don't feel prepared to accept and apply an experiential pedagogy or don't believe that experiential pedagogy is appropriate to their discipline. Tuberville (2014) explored faculty perceptions of the challenges and successes of experiential learning at a public university and found that faculty (who had served as mentors in experiential learning classes before) in her study highly valued instructional practices typical in experiential learning. While diverse in discipline, the faculty in the study served as experiential learning class mentors and this fact likely skews the findings. Tuberville finds the need for further faculty development delivered by faculty mentors (peer to peer) who have experience in planning and organizing experiential learning opportunities.

Ultimately, experiential learning calls on and challenges faculty to rethink how they teach and approach the delivery of their course content. The ever-evolving nature of pedagogy and faculty roles requires higher education institutions to rethink how it supports and develops faculty innovation to sustain the academic vitality among faculty members. "Faculty development has a critical role to play in promoting academic excellence and innovation" (Steinert, 2000, p. 45) and this is especially true in the context of experiential learning.

EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING
CREATES NEW
ALLIANCES AND
PARTNERSHIPS.
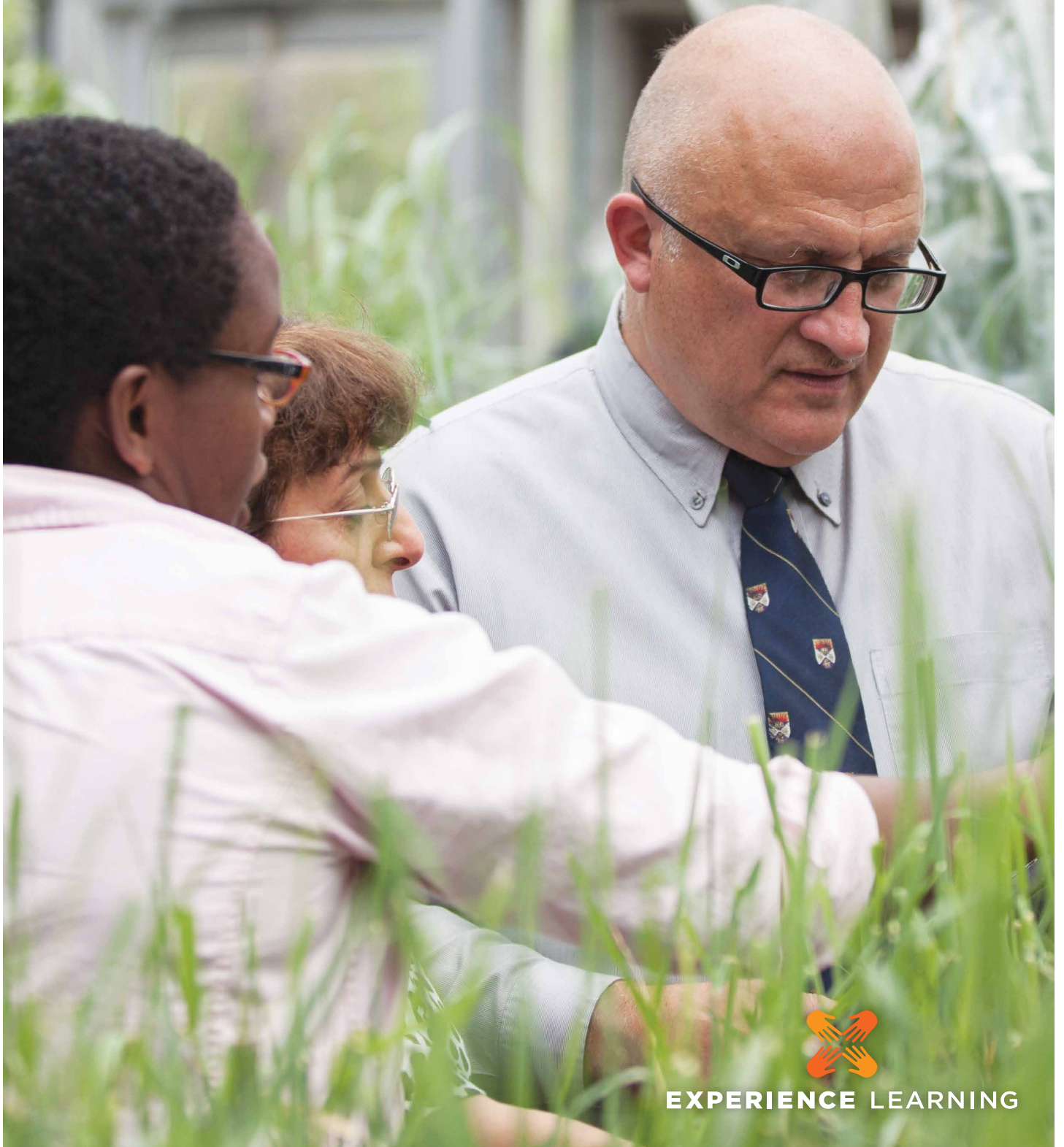
EXPERIENCE LEARNING

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITIES

Research also demonstrates positive outcomes of experiential learning related to civic and community outcomes. This includes a variety of well-organized experiences that have a positive effect on students' sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gray et al., 2000; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; Levine, 2010; Moely, McFarland, et al., 2002). Substantial, meaningful engagement in the community through service-learning and experiential community engagement activities enhances students' commitment to community service (Astin et al., 2000; Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Peyrot, 2005; Markus, Howard & King, 1993; Vogelgesang & Austin, 2005).

Regarding student engagement, experiential learning experiences enhance students' engagement in civic-related activities (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Keen & Keen, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000, 2005; Yates & Youniss, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). It also has been demonstrated to enhance students' engagement with faculty, peers, and community members (Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Furco 2003; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Loesch-Griffin, Petrides & Pratt 1995; Morgan & Streb, 1999; Rutter & Newmann, 1989) and in school and in learning (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Mpofu, 2007; Silcox, 1993; Tapia, 2007; Wurr, 2002).

BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY

In addition to student and faculty benefits, community-based experiential learning courses benefit the host communities. Vanderbilt University researchers conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on the impacts of community-based experiential learning courses (Eyler et al., 2001). They found three primary themes in communities' responses to their involvement in experiential learning courses: (1) satisfaction with student participation (Clarke, 2000; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Driscoll et al., 1996; Ferrari and Worrall, 2000; Foreman, 1996; Gelmon, Holland & Shinnamon, 1998; Gray et al., 1998; Greene & Diehm, 1995; National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, 1995; Nigro & Wortham, 1998; Ward & Vernon, 1999), (2) useful service in communities (Bringle & Kremer, 1993; Clarke, 2000; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Driscoll et al., 1996; Gelmon, Holland & Shinnamon, 1998; Gray et al., 1998; Henderson & Brookhart, 1997;

Nigro & Wortham, 1998; Ward & Vernon, 1999; Western Washington University, 1994), and (3) enhanced university relations (Clarke, 2000; Driscoll et al., 1996; Gray et al., 1998).

Clark University's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2009) identified some benefits of experiential learning courses to communities, including supporting the work of agencies that are often understaffed and underbudgeted by providing resources and time given by students, faculty, and staff; creating new alliances and partnerships with the university; demystifying what may seem to be a large and complex institution; creating opportunities to learn about the latest research in their areas and work to test that research; creating opportunities to ask for and become involved with more research on practical questions for staff and clients; garnering wider support for the work that community agencies do; and allowing agencies to work with students and decide whether there are future recruits among them.
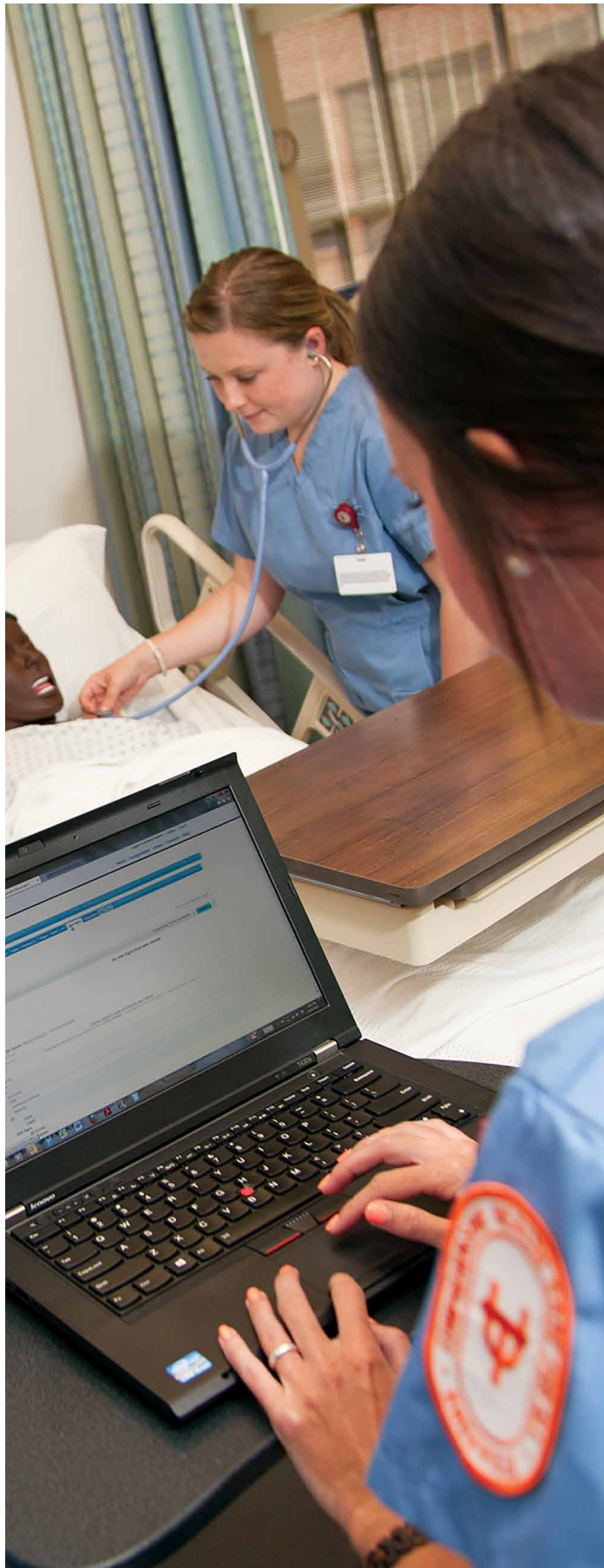
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND FACULTY-STAFF-STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVES

The literature review demonstrates that experiential learning happens in curricular, cocurricular, and extra-curricular activities. The literature review demonstrates the need to create a structure that seeks to identify, support, sustain, and recognize the full breadth of experiential learning at the University of Tennessee.

Today's educators generally recognize that pedagogies other than traditional lecturing can promote more depth in learning. A number of pedagogies designed to facilitate experiential learning have been implemented and improved over time. Common features of these pedagogies include addressing real-world questions, issues, and controversies; developing research and communication skills; problem solving; collaborating in and beyond the classroom; fostering deep understanding of content knowledge; and participating in the public creation and improvement of ideas and knowledge (Jones & Pfeiffer, 1998).

Fundamentally, experiential learning is learning through reflection on structured activities, in contrast to rote or didactic learning. Wurdinger and Carlson (2010) contend that most college faculty teach by lecturing exclusively because few learned other pedagogies in graduate school. The authors urge supplementing lectures by inviting students' active participation in the learning process "through discussion, group work, hands-on participation, and applying information outside the classroom" (p. 2). High-impact experiential learning programs enhance the classroom environment to support student learning.

Students in traditional classroom settings with highly structured instruction often either compete with one another for grades or remain disengaged and unmotivated. In contrast, students in semistructured experiential learning settings in the classroom and the community cooperate and learn from each other. A course can be designed to engage students in direct experiences that illustrate real-world problems and relate to course content. Crucial to experiential learning courses are the stages of the learning cycle: experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimentation.

Students learn through active engagement with and reflection on actual real-world problems. In experiential classrooms, "students can process real-life scenarios, experiment with new behaviors, and receive feedback in a safe environment. Experiential learning provides opportunities for students to relate theory to practice and to analyze real-life situations in light of course material" (Lewis & Williams, 1994, p. 8).

Another crucial element of experiential learning is its interdisciplinary nature. Subjects are not kept in discrete, unconnected bundles because compartmentalization does not reflect the real world. The experiential classroom works to create an interdisciplinary learning experience that mimics real-world learning (Wurdinger, 2005). Keys to a successful experiential learning experience are the course design, implementation strategy, and recognition of the reciprocal nature of instructor and student roles.

Experiential learning is an immersive method of instruction, deeply engaging students to apply classroom knowledge to experience and then encouraging their reflection on it to develop new skills, attitudes, and ways of thinking (Lewis & Williams, 1994). Full immersion in the experience can result in the student's transformation as she explores and examines her own values.

The design of the learning experience presents the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes. The instructor's primary roles involve selecting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting students, ensuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process. With a suitable experience, content becomes content with relevance, so that students connect with needs in the larger community. Students learn critical thinking, guided through dialogue and reflection. Learning becomes personal and forms the basis for future experience and learning.

Breunig (2008) described instructor responsibilities in designing an experiential course, including (1) informed consent, (2) establishing a concrete vision, (3) setting ground rules, and (4) providing process tools. Wurdinger (2005) also provides another guide for designing the experiential learning course: (1) use a major project of field experience, (2) use a combination of learning experiences, (3) try everything together, (4) ensure activities are challenging yet manageable,

(5) provide clear expectations for students, (6) allow students the necessary time, and (7) allow students to change direction midstream.

Wurdinger (2005) also describes key points for implementing the experiential learning course, including (1) allow for students to be able to make mistakes, (2) recognize the importance of personal relevance for students, (3) ensure students clearly understand why they are doing something, (4) match students with appropriate activities, (5) create opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences, and (6) delegate authority to students.

TYPES OF CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning courses come in different forms. Each has particular features that distinguish experiential learning courses from other courses. Northern Illinois University's Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center (n.d.) provides an example of the wide variety of experiential learning forms that were used to guide our QEP development.

- **Apprenticeship experiences** provide students an opportunity to try out a job, usually with an experienced professional in the field to act as a mentor.

- **Clinical experiences** are hands-on experiences of a predetermined duration directly tied to an area of study, such as nursing students participating in a hospital-based experience or child development and teacher education students participating in day care and classroom settings.

- **Fellowship experiences** provide tuition or aid to support the training of students for a period of time. They are usually made by educational institutions, corporations, or foundations to assist individuals pursuing a course of study or research.

- **Field work experiences** allow students to explore and apply content learned in the classroom in a specified field experience away from the classroom. Field work experiences bridge educational experiences with an outside community that can range from neighborhoods and schools to anthropological dig sites and laboratory settings.

- **Internship experiences** are job-related and provide students and job changers with an opportunity to test the waters in a career field and also gain some valuable work experience. Internships can be for credit, not for credit, paid or unpaid.

- **Practicum experiences** are often a required component of a course of study and place students in a supervised and often paid situation. Students develop competencies and apply previously studied theory and content, such as school library media students working in a high school library or marketing majors working in a marketing research firm.

- **Service-learning experiences** are distinguished by being mutually beneficial for both student and community. Service-learning is growing rapidly and is considered a part of experiential education by its very nature of learning, performing a job within the community, and serious reflection by the student. Service-learning involves tackling some of society's complex issues such as homelessness, poverty, lack of quality education, pollution, etc. One of the goals of service-learning is to help students become aware of these issues and to develop good citizenship through learning how to help address these problems.

- **Simulations and gaming/role-playing** aim to imitate a system, entity, phenomenon, or process. They attempt to represent or predict aspects of the behavior of the problem or issue being studied. Simulation can allow experiments to be conducted within a fictitious situation to show the real behaviors and outcomes of possible conditions. But simulations cannot simply be regarded as a homogeneous collection of approaches. While overlaps between activities exist (Yorke & Hollinshead, 1981), previous studies have identified three specific types of simulation-based learning: role play, gaming and computer simulation (Feinstein et al., 2002; Hsu, 1989). Each type is different in its composition and utility (Lean et al., 2006).

- **Student teaching experiences** provide student candidates with an opportunity to put into practice the knowledge and skills they have been developing in the preparation program. Student teaching typically involves an on-site experience in a partner school and opportunities for formal and informal candidate reflection on their teaching experience.

- **Study abroad experiences** offer students a unique opportunity to learn in another culture, within the security of a host family and a host institution carefully chosen to allow the transfer of credit to a student's degree program.

- **Undergraduate research opportunities** across all disciplines are increasingly common. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve

students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

- **Volunteer experiences** allow students to serve in a community primarily because they choose to do so. Many serve through a nonprofit organization—sometimes referred to as formal volunteering—but a significant number also serve less formally, either individually or as part of a group. Because these informal volunteers are much harder to identify, they may not be included in research and statistics on volunteering.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

STUDENT CAREER OUTCOMES

Research shows clearly that career outcomes benefits include an increased career awareness and career skills. Regarding career awareness, engagement in internships, clinical practica, service learning, and community-based research experiences enhances students' sense of career options and expands career possibilities (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Leary, 1997; Gray et. al, 2000; Pezzoli & Howe, 2001; Lee et al., 2006; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Tartter, 1996). For career skills, experiential learning activities enhance students' sense of technical competence in a variety of fields (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999; Langley, 2006; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Sledge, Shelburne & Jones, 1993; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000, 2005).

Students are understandably concerned with gaining employment after graduation. Experiential learning courses emphasize many of the skills prized by a wide array of employers. Hart Research Associates conducted an online survey of employers for the Association of American Colleges and Universities and issued their report in April 2013 (Hart Research Associates). They surveyed 318 employers who have at least 25 employees and report that at least 25 percent of their new hires hold either an associate's degree from a two-year college or a bachelor's degree from a four-year college. Respondents are executives at private sector and nonprofit organizations, including owners, CEOs, presidents, and vice presidents. The report provides a detailed analysis of employers' priorities for the kinds of learning that today's college students need to succeed in today's economy. It also reports on changes in educational and assessment practices that employers recommend. The results indicate that employers' preferred traits for an employee are highly consonant with the benefits of experiential learning.

AMONG THE FINDINGS

Innovation is a priority for employers today.
- Nearly all employers surveyed (95 percent) say they give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace.

- More than nine in ten agree that "innovation is essential" to their organization's continued success.

- Employers recognize capacities that cut across majors as critical to a candidate's potential for career success, and they view these skills as more important than a student's choice of undergraduate major.

- Nearly all those surveyed (93 percent) agree that "a candidate's demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major."

- More than nine in ten of those surveyed say it is important that those they hire demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity, intercultural skills, and the capacity for continued new learning.

- More than three in four employers say they want colleges to place more emphasis on helping students develop five key learning outcomes: critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written communication, oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings.

- Employers endorse several educational practices as potentially helpful in preparing college students for workplace success. These include practices that require students to 1) conduct research and use evidence-based analysis; 2) gain in-depth knowledge in the major and analytic, problem-solving, and communication skills; and 3) apply their learning in real-world settings.

Employers recognize the importance of liberal education and the liberal arts.
- The majority of employers agree that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge is most important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success. Few think that having field-specific knowledge and skills alone is what is most needed for individuals' career success.

- Eighty percent of employers agree that, regardless of their major, every college student should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences.

- When reading a description of a twenty-first century liberal education, a large majority of employers recognize its importance; 74 percent would recommend this kind of education to a young person they know as the best way to prepare for success in today's global economy.

Employers endorse a blended model of liberal and applied learning.

- Across many areas tested, employers strongly endorse educational practices that involve students in active, effortful work including collaborative problem solving, internships, research, senior projects, and community engagements. Employers consistently rank outcomes and practices that involve application of skills over acquisition of discrete bodies of knowledge. They also strongly endorse practices that require students to demonstrate both acquisition of knowledge and its application.

Employers think that more college graduates have the skills and preparation needed for entry-level positions than for advancement.

- A majority of employers (56 percent) express satisfaction with the job colleges and universities are doing to prepare graduates for success in the workplace, but more than two in five indicate room for improvement.

- Two in three employers (67 percent) believe most college graduates have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in entry-level positions, but think only 44 percent of college graduates have what is required for advancement and promotion to higher levels.

Employers express interest in e-portfolios and partnerships with colleges to ensure college graduates' successful transition to the workplace.

- In addition to a resume or college transcript, more than four in five employers say an electronic portfolio would be useful to them in ensuring that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their company or organization.

- Notable proportions of business and nonprofit leaders say they are already partnering with two- and four-year colleges to advance the success of college students after graduation. Those who are not currently involved in such partnerships express interest in doing so to provide more hands-on learning opportunities and to help college students successfully make the transition from college into the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The challenge of learning from experience is not a new one. The various models and methods of infusing experiential learning into curriculum covered in this section reveal that this QEP shares similar goals with other experiential learning initiatives, including goals to (1) enhance opportunities for students to engage in addressing and solving real-world problems; (2) provide opportunities for students to develop and apply content knowledge, skills, and values to real-world challenges; (3) enable ongoing faculty development; and (4) cultivate reflective practice by bringing students out of the classroom and into the world.

The literature review also highlights three significant foundational structures that could form the development of an experiential learning focused QEP: (1) faculty development; (2) civic engagement and community involvement; and (3) diverse faculty, staff and student support initiatives.

Finally, the decision to focus on experiential learning at UTK comes directly from the university's mission to create value, discover new ways of doing things, and promote leadership among our students. It is responsive to employers' preferences for hiring graduates who have tested their knowledge through applied and active learning. We have a responsibility then to provide such opportunities to our students and to help them communicate their achievements in tackling real-world problems to potential employers.

CHAPTER 5: ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Experiential learning is broad and encompasses a large constellation of teaching methods ranging from role-plays and simulations to service-learning and internships. A thorough analysis of our institutional context, needs, and priorities, as well as an exhaustive literature review for the development of the QEP (see Chapter 4), led the committee to select three important initiatives that promise to enhance and expand the full scope of experiential learning activities at the University of Tennessee. The three initiatives are:

  a. Faculty Development Program

  b. Smart Communities Initiative

  c. Faculty-Staff-Student Support Initiatives

Broad participation from groups across campus is critically important for the success of the QEP. All of these initiatives are therefore designed to engage diverse units for the purpose of advancing the full spectrum of curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular experiential learning opportunities for students. An important first step for each initiative will be the development of strong collaborative relationships between the QEP staff and the numerous departments and support units on campus that can be involved in experiential learning. Experiential learning also provides invaluable opportunities to enhance connections between current students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the university. Alumni are an important resource who can help facilitate and lead experiential learning activities; foster better community engagement for faculty, staff, and students; and offer professional and academic mentoring to students.

In addition to academic departments and our extensive network of alumni, other groups to be included are (in alphabetical order):

- Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy (a nonpartisan public policy center that aims to provide policy makers, citizens, and students with the information and skills necessary to work effectively within our political system)

- Career Services

- Center for International Education

- Center for Leadership and Service (offers a variety of programs to students with the goals of furthering leadership skills and serving those in need)

- Center for Student Engagement (seeks to contribute to the cocurricular education of students and their holistic education)

- Chancellor's Honors Program and college honors programs

- Classroom Upgrade Committee (charged with improving the classroom environment through enhanced technology and redesigned physical spaces)

- College internship and fieldwork programs

- Division of Student Life

- Office of Community Engagement and Outreach in the Office of Research and Engagement (coordinates and facilitates a broad and diverse set of community-campus partnerships)

- Office of Development and Alumni Affairs

- Office of Information Technology

- Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

- Office of Service-Learning

- Office of Undergraduate Research in the Office of Research and Engagement

- Student Success Center

- Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center

- University Housing

- University Libraries

The structure and focus of each initiative are outlined in this chapter. Subsequent chapters then build on this information by describing the timeline, organizational structure, and resources allocated to fully initiate, implement, and complete the QEP in compliance with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2. The final chapter in this report, Chapter 9, describes the thorough and integrated assessment plan created to evaluate the QEP's achievements related to improving student learning and advancing experiential learning at the University of Tennessee.

BROAD PARTICIPATION FROM GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Faculty members will play a lead role in the QEP's success since an undeniable relationship exists between the quality of faculty involvement and the level of student achievement. Yet experiential pedagogies require a different approach to teaching than is common in many college classes. Instructors assume the role of facilitator and must create a less teacher-centric environment where students feel safe to engage in a process of self-discovery and structured reflection. Experiential learning encourages faculty to consider other innovative yet potentially challenging changes to their teaching such as new uses for technology, redesigning the use of physical classroom space, and restructuring how class time is spent.

Given the demands and exciting opportunities associated with experiential learning, faculty development is critically important for instructors to feel prepared and supported in these pursuits. Faculty development is also essential to fulfill the university's mission to embody excellence in teaching (University of Tennessee, 2014). The Vol Vision strategic plan similarly highlights the need to both build an infrastructure for recognizing faculty achievements and consider new pedagogies for enhancing undergraduate student engagement (University of Tennessee, 2011).

An important component of the QEP will be a comprehensive faculty development program. A faculty development coordinator with expertise in experiential learning pedagogies will be hired to help develop and implement the program. This coordinator will join the staff in the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (Tenn TLC). The Tenn TLC, in combination with the Office of Information Technology Instructional Support (OITIS), is responsible for helping the faculty and graduate teaching assistants improve their teaching practice, for the purpose of enhancing student learning at the University of Tennessee. While they offer several services to assist instructors, teaching assistants, and academic departments, they do not currently have the skilled faculty development position needed to lead this new program. Further, each unit offers very useful programs and assistance, but not in a fully coordinated manner, which would be achievable with the addition of this position. Tenn TLC provides faculty development generally without specializing in technology while OIT Instructional Support provides assistance for more effective teaching with technology.

Under the supervision of the director of the Tenn TLC, the faculty development coordinator will partner with the QEP staff (QEP director, QEP implementation leader, and business and risk manager), staff at the Tenn TLC, staff at the Office of Service Learning, and staff at OITIS, and other units to create a program featuring the following key components:

A. WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

Workshops, presentations, and other events about experiential learning will be advertised to the campus community and open to all instructors at the University of Tennessee. The workshops will be designed around the guiding principles and best practices for experiential learning described in the preceding literature review as well as emerging research on this topic. These events

will address the effective uses of technology, classroom spaces, classroom-based time, student activities outside formal classroom times, and service-learning activities to enhance student learning. When appropriate, workshops and presentations will feature invited guests such as faculty who successfully utilize experiential learning pedagogies (e.g., brown bag presentations) or other invited speakers. Academic departments can also request specialized presentations to learn more about discipline-specific experiential learning methods and how to infuse more experiential learning into their curricula.

B. FACULTY FELLOWS PROGRAM

Instructors seeking more intensive training in experiential learning can apply to the new Faculty Fellows Program. A cohort of Faculty Fellows (approximately ten to twenty) will be selected each year. Fellows will attend several workshops and presentations on experiential learning and receive regular individualized consultation and mentoring from the faculty development coordinator, Tenn TLC staff, Faculty Leaders (see next program), and others. They will agree to redesign at least one of their classes to incorporate more experiential learning and to conduct direct assessment of student learning in this class using the QEP assessment tools (see Chapter 9). Faculty Fellows will also be connected to units like OITIS or University Libraries for assistance with redesigning their classes depending on their unique needs and goals. The University Libraries is helping to develop online modules and virtual learning environments for students and faculty at the University of Tennessee, while OITIS helps instructors with integrating and effectively using technology in their teaching.

Faculty participation will be incentivized through course releases, stipends for classroom enhancements or supplies, funds to travel to professional development conferences and workshops, and campus-wide recognition. The faculty development coordinator and the Tenn TLC director will work with the QEP director, QEP implementation leader, and QEP staff to develop the application and selection procedures, and to encourage participation from diverse academic departments and units across campus.

C. FACULTY LEADERS PROGRAM

This new program will recognize instructors who have employed effective experiential learning pedagogy. A limited number of Faculty Leaders will be selected annually following the campus-wide solicitation of applications and nominations. Faculty Leaders will serve

as ambassadors for the QEP by encouraging more experiential learning. They will also act in an advisory role to instructors who are interested in integrating more experiential learning opportunities into their classes. The faculty development coordinator and the Tenn TLC director will work with the QEP staff to develop the application, selection, and assessment procedures and to encourage participation from diverse academic departments and units across campus.

Leaders will be spotlighted on campus and provided with incentives such as course releases and honoraria in recognition of their achievements and engagement with the program. The QEP implementation leader, QEP director, and staff will coordinate with the provost's office, department heads, and college deans to ensure that Faculty Fellows' and Faculty Leaders' participation in these programs is a recognized and valued part of their workload for the purposes of annual evaluation and assignment of service and teaching responsibilities. In fact, beyond these two specific groups, a broader goal for the QEP is for experiential learning to become a highly valued and rewarded teaching method at the University of Tennessee. To fully achieve this goal, faculty evaluation for annual review, promotion, and merit considerations must recognize faculty participation in QEP-related activities as positive and as a portion of both desired faculty workload and improvement of faculty quality.

D. MENTORING AND CONSULTATION

Faculty Leaders will serve as mentors to Faculty Fellows and be available to talk with other instructors with similar teaching interests. After Faculty Fellows complete their program and successfully integrate experiential pedagogies into their courses, they will be encouraged to serve as Faculty Leaders and provide mentoring to the subsequent cohorts of Faculty Fellows. Faculty Leaders and Faculty Fellows will also be expected to serve as peer facilitators within their home departments and colleges. In this role, they will assist colleagues with integrating more experiential learning into the department's classes and cocurricular activities. The faculty development coordinator will also be available for individualized meetings and consultation with faculty members who wish to discuss experiential learning activities or ideas related to their specific classes and students. The faculty development coordinator and the Tenn TLC director will work with the QEP staff to develop mentoring, consultation, and peer-facilitation programs and the plan for assessing these programs when appropriate.

SMART COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

A new program located within the University's Office of Service-Learning, the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI) will help us extend rigorous, action-based learning experiences to more than 500 different students each year (approximately twenty to forty different courses with average enrollment of ten to thirty students per course per academic year). This dramatic expansion of service-learning opportunities for students helps meet a specific priority area outlined in the University of Tennessee's Vol Vision strategic plan (University of Tennessee, 2011). It also addresses specific needs identified in NSSE data and in the white paper authored by the Student Forum on Learning in 2011 (see Chapter 2). NSSE data show that our students frequently lag behind our peer institutions regarding participation in community-based projects or community service. As previously noted, the white paper highlighted the limited number of service-learning and community engagement opportunities available to students. Finally, the SCI clearly advances the QEP mission to enhance student learning opportunities through actual involvement with the problems and needs in the larger community.

Adapted from a program started at the University of Oregon (2014), the SCI will partner twenty to forty academic courses across campus each year with one designated city, county, or other local government partner to engage in real-world problem solving tied directly to the needs of that community. Cities, counties, or other local government partners wishing to be involved with the SCI will submit applications, and one community will be selected each academic year. The director and assistant director of service learning and a team of faculty advisors recruited by the director will help select the partner community. The director and assistant director of service-learning will then match projects identified by the local government partner to faculty across campus to take on through their academic courses. Project/course matches will be based on interest and relevance of the project to their teaching assignments and research expertise.

Faculty teaching SCI courses will work closely with the project leaders from the local government partner to design projects that enhance student learning outcomes while helping the community become more economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and

socially equitable. Course projects will address issues such as water quality and natural resource protection, sustainable development, citizen access to amenities and opportunities, community place-making, civic engagement, public relations, public health and nutrition, education, and economic opportunity.

Courses engaged in the SCI will take one of the following formats:

1. A standard enrollment course specializing in a field of study related to the project: These courses will be composed of anywhere from ten to thirty students and may be entirely or partially dedicated to the project. These courses will be most suitable to projects that could benefit from a variety of different ideas and perspectives grounded in disciplinary or interdisciplinary theory, or large projects that need to be divided into subcomponents.

2. An internship course in a field of study related to the project: These courses will entail a faculty-recommended student working under the close supervision of a faculty member in a discipline relevant to the project. This format will be most appropriate for small-scale projects or single components of a large project.

3. An interdisciplinary research team of two to four students: These courses will entail two to four faculty-recommended students working under the guidance of a faculty member in a discipline relevant to the project. This format is flexible and will serve a range of project types.

SCI faculty and their students will work through a variety of research- and inquiry-based approaches to examine problems, research best practices and existing needs and assets, identify successful benchmarks, engage citizens and stakeholders, pitch new ideas and creative approaches, and test strategies. While students in SCI courses will spend considerable time working in the community, they will also engage in extensive "behind the scenes" reflection under the guidance of their faculty instructors. Reflection exercises will be structured to stimulate inquiry, connect knowledge across disciplines, test assumptions, and enhance the value of the scholarly output.

Each SCI project will culminate in a student-authored final report delivered to the local government partner, which will compile the results of the students'

inquiry and recommendations for implementation. Most courses will also include one or more student presentations, in which students will share their findings with city staff and stakeholders and will consider recommendations for incorporation into their final work products. The assistant director of service-learning will be responsible for managing program operations and ensuring the timely delivery of all final reports.

Each year, participating SCI faculty and students will engage in multiple large- and small-group interdisciplinary dialogues about the work they are doing in the partner community. These dialogues will be structured to facilitate connections across participating courses, promote networking and collaborative engagements, inform each other's work, share successes and challenges, explore conceptual and geographical linkages across projects, and examine real-world experiences within the context of complex community challenges.

The SCI year will begin with a kickoff event in the partner community, in which participants and stakeholders from the university and community come together to celebrate and preview the upcoming year's projects. Project work will also be showcased throughout the year through university and community press releases. The year will culminate in a wrap-up event featuring project findings and next steps for the partner community. Through events and spotlighting, the SCI will create meaningful opportunities for participating students to showcase their work to a wide array of public, nonprofit, and business-sector partners looking to recruit creative, talented graduates.

FACULTY-STAFF-STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVES

While the first two initiatives are focused primarily on curricular enhancement, we must recognize that experiential learning happens in curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities. It is important then to create a structure that seeks to identify, support, sustain, and recognize the full breadth of experiential learning at the University of Tennessee. The third initiative therefore uses a multifaceted approach to promote, enhance, and expand experiential learning activities and projects.

a. An important component of this initiative is the development of an ongoing process for identifying and promoting experiential learning at the University of Tennessee. While there are many different experiential learning activities already happening on campus, we do not have a systematic process for identifying these opportunities and promoting them to students. The QEP implementation leader, director, and other staff will coordinate with academic departments and involved units listed above plus other key groups to develop a process for reviewing and identifying specific courses, extracurricular activities, and cocurricular programs that utilize experiential learning. A prime example of how this process might look is the new campus-wide effort to explicitly identify all service-learning courses at the University of Tennessee. After being vetted by the campus coordinator for service-learning and her advisory committee, the courses will be marked with an S designation in the Undergraduate Catalog. This creates a clear guide for students who wish to enroll in a service-learning course, and the creation of an official designation emphasizes the importance of service-learning at the University of Tennessee. Similar processes can be implemented to promote designations for courses that incorporate other experiential learning pedagogies. This might include courses with a significant focus on undergraduate research or courses requiring structured volunteer activities. The QEP will help to develop and streamline these processes, promote the various designations, and help sustain the efforts for future semesters.

b. Beyond creating procedures for identifying experiential learning courses, the QEP staff will engage with academic departments and other programs to help them initiate or expand experiential learning opportunities for students. For example, two priority objectives identified by the university's Vol Vision strategic plan are to expand undergraduate research opportunities and increase the number of service learning programs for students (University of Tennessee, 2011). The QEP will help interested groups to meet these objectives by fostering relationships across units and providing resources to help advance their experiential learning ideas and activities.

c. This initiative will support smaller individual or group experiential learning activities that are not part of any formal curriculum or experiential learning program. The QEP implementation leader and the QEP director will work with other campus leaders to develop an application process for faculty, staff, and registered student organizations to request funds to support experiential learning activities and events that will enhance student learning. A wide range of experiential learning approaches will be eligible. Applicants will need to describe how their projects meet the QEP's definition of experiential learning and how they contribute to students' attainment of the student learning outcomes.

d. The preceding literature review (Chapter 4) highlighted the value of students' involvement with experiential learning as preparation for success in the workplace after graduation. Potential employers also favor students who have engaged in applied learning and real-world problem solving (Hart Research Associates, 2013). A final component of this initiative, therefore, is to develop a procedure for recording students' participation in experiential learning and establishing a mechanism for them to demonstrate and communicate these achievements to prospective employers after graduation. This might include creating a cocurricular transcript for students or supporting the development of e-portfolios. The QEP staff will collaborate with the Office of the University Registrar and other units on campus to explore options, then create and implement these procedures.

EXPANDING
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH IS
A PRIORITY
OBJECTIVE OF
THE VOL VISION
STRATEGIC PLAN.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

CHAPTER 6: TIMELINE

Table 4 shows the timeline for implementing the QEP's major initiatives and activities. The timeline extends for five academic years beginning in fall 2015 and ending in spring 2020. The table is designed to give a comprehensive overview of how the different pieces of the QEP will be phased in over the first year of the plan with the goal of having all components fully implemented in the second year. This measured and systematic timeline shows that the University of Tennessee has the institutional capability to initiate and implement the QEP (SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2).

Prior to fall 2015, several steps will be taken to prepare for the QEP's official launch, with a number of important activities occurring during the 2014-2015 academic year:

- Market and promote the QEP to broad constituent groups (fall 2014 and spring 2015).

- Educate the campus community about the QEP and its initiatives (fall 2014 and spring 2015).

- Advertise for QEP implementation leader, QEP director, and assistant director of service-learning positions; the provost will appoint search committees to interview candidates for these positions (spring 2015 and summer 2015).

- Pilot Smart Communities Initiative in partnership with Cleveland, Tennessee (fall 2014 and spring 2015).

- Pilot use of direct assessment rubrics in SCI classes (spring 2015).

- Coordinate with the Provost's Office and the Office of Communications and Marketing to promote the QEP's initiatives and activities—to be done by members of the QEP development team until the QEP implementation leader and QEP director are hired (spring 2015 and summer 2015).

- Continue to coordinate SCI classes and events—to be done by the director of service-learning will until the assistant director of service learning is hired (fall 2014 and spring 2015).

TABLE 4: TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING QEP INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES	FALL 2015	SPRING 2016	FALL 2016	SPRING 2017	FALL 2017	SPRING 2018	FALL 2018	SPRING 2019	FALL 2019	SPRING 2020
PERSONNEL										
Hire QEP implementation leader	●									
Hire QEP director	●									
Hire business and risk manager		●								
Hire assessment coordinator		●								
Market QEP initiatives and activities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SMART COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (SCI)										
Hire assistant director of service-learning	●									
Hire graduate research assistant			●							
Recruit community partners and faculty for SCI	●		●		●		●		●	
Offer SCI classes	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SCI kickoff event with partner community	●		●		●		●		●	
SCI wrap-up event with partner community		●		●		●		●		●
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM										
Hire faculty development coordinator		●								
Hire graduate research assistant		●								
Develop application process and eligibility criteria for Faculty Fellows and Faculty Leaders programs		●	●							
Recruit participants for Faculty Fellows program			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Offer training, consultation, and mentoring to Faculty Fellows				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Recruit participants for Faculty Leaders program				●		●		●		●
Offer campus-wide workshops and faculty development activities				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Maintain faculty development coordinator availability for individual consultation with campus faculty				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Allocate faculty and staff travel grants			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
FACULTY-STAFF-STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVE										
Develop and implement process for identifying and appropriately designating experiential learning courses		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Develop application process and eligibility criteria for experiential learning and undergraduate research grants		●								
Allocate grant funds to experiential learning projects			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Allocate grant funds for undergraduate research			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Develop and implement procedures for recognizing graduating students' participation in experiential learning activities				●	●	●	●	●	●	●
FACULTY-STAFF-STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVE										
Direct assessment of SLOs in SCI classes (rubrics)		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Direct assessment of SLOs in Faculty Fellows classes (rubrics)					●	●	●	●	●	●
Collect data for indirect assessments (outputs and counts)			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Conduct NSSE survey of students		●						●		

CHAPTER 7: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The QEP is a large and important project for enhancing student learning at the University of Tennessee. It is critically important that the plan have the proper status and administrative structure to achieve its goals. Figure 2 illustrates this structure. As required by SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2, this robust organizational arrangement demonstrates the University of Tennessee's capability to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.

The **QEP director** will manage the plan's day-to-day activities. This is a full-time position charged with providing leadership to the QEP; coordinating QEP services; assisting with the implementation, monitoring, and execution of the plan's initiatives; and being a liaison among the numerous individuals, departments, and units that are involved with the QEP. This position reports directly to the provost and senior vice chancellor. The QEP program will be aided by a **business and risk manager**, who reports to the director. This manager is responsible for managing the risk and liability issues associated with the on- and off-campus activities of the QEP and similar programs on campus, and attending to financial matters for the QEP program.

The **QEP implementation leader** also reports to the university's provost and senior vice chancellor. This is a part-time (25 percent) position that will be filled by an established senior faculty member from the University of Tennessee who has shown strong leadership skills and a commitment to high-quality teaching and experiential learning. Such characteristics are important since the primary responsibility for the implementation leader is promoting and marketing the QEP to faculty, students, and community constituents. Having the QEP director and a respected implementation leader with direct reporting lines to the provost and senior vice chancellor elevates the QEP's status and further certifies it as an institutional priority.

The QEP director, implementation leader, and business and risk manager constitute the QEP's core personnel. In addition to the various responsibilities described above, they will collaborate with the other units involved with the QEP's initiatives. For example, they will collaborate with the university's director of service learning to implement the Smart Communities Initiative and with the director of the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center to implement the faculty development program. They will also collaborate with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to implement the comprehensive assessment plan, monitor regular data collection, and generate reports about the QEP's outcomes and outputs. Since the QEP seeks to involve diverse groups from across campus, these core personnel will build and sustain collaborations with the numerous other units, departments, organizations, and individuals that are engaged with and supported by the QEP.

The **director of service-learning** is a relatively new position at the University of Tennessee and was created to meet campus demand for more service and experiential learning opportunities. Under the supervision of the vice provost for academic affairs, this director leads several service-learning initiatives at the University of Tennessee, including the S designation for service learning classes and now the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI).

To help ensure that the SCI and other service-learning programs have the necessary coordination and oversight to be successful, an **assistant director of service-learning** will be added to oversee the initiative's daily operations. Key responsibilities for this position will be facilitating planning and implementation needs of the various SCI projects and classes; acting as a central liaison between SCI instructors and community partners; managing travel for instructors and students; helping to recruit and select future SCI community partners; coordinating instructor and student orientation and intergroup dialogue sessions; planning SCI events and site visits; working with the Office of Communications and Marketing and external press; managing the SCI website and newsletter; presenting at meetings and conferences; supporting work of the SCI Faculty Fellows and advisory team; overseeing SCI expenditures, deadlines, and contractual obligations to municipal partners; and supporting the broader work of the service-learning office. The assistant director will be aided by a graduate research assistant.

The new **faculty development coordinator** to be hired for the QEP will join the staff at the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (Tenn TLC) and be supervised by the center's director. The vice provost for faculty affairs oversees the Tenn TLC. The coordinator will

participate in the creation of the QEP's new faculty development program and then manage the daily operations of the program. This includes planning, implementing, and leading workshops and presentations about experiential learning, involving both Tenn TLC and OITIS personnel and resources. The coordinator will consult with faculty about experiential learning pedagogies, including their integration into existing or new courses. The coordinator will also collaborate with the director of service-learning to help train faculty for effective service learning and SCI activities when appropriate. A graduate research assistant will be hired to help the faculty development coordinator achieve program goals.

To fully implement and sustain the QEP's comprehensive assessment plan (see Chapter 9), a **QEP assessment coordinator** will be hired to coordinate and manage the data collection. The assessment coordinator will join the staff in the university's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) and be supervised by the assistant provost and OIRA director. Specific responsibilities for the assessment coordinator include coordinating with instructors to administer the direct assessment rubrics, collaborating with units on campus to regularly collect indirect assessment data, maintaining a database of direct and indirect assessment data, preparing QEP reports, and presenting QEP data as needed. The coordinator of assessment will also help with the development and administration of new surveys and qualitative measures that will be created to further assess the QEP's outcomes and outputs as the plan evolves through the years.

Finally, a **QEP Advisory Committee** will be constituted to maintain consistent faculty, staff, and student voices throughout the QEP's implementation and completion. The committee will include faculty and staff who are engaged with the QEP as well as students who have completed experiential learning courses or activities. It will meet regularly with the QEP director and staff to give input about QEP programming, identify concerns or areas for improvement, and help plan future events. The Office of the Provost will appoint members, who will be nominated or solicited from academic departments, support units on campus, and student organizations.

FIGURE 2: QEP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

■ New position created for the QEP
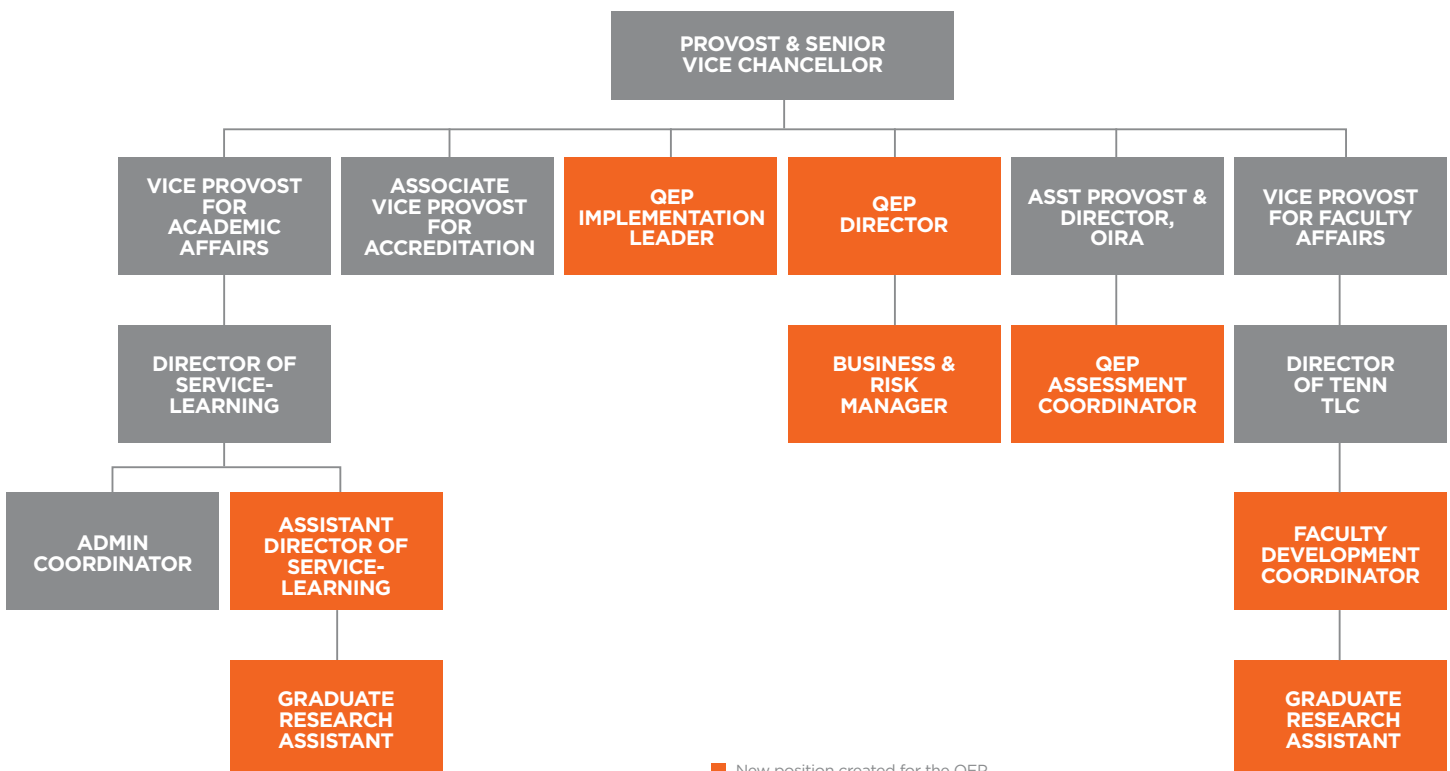
RESOURCE ALLOCATION BOTH ADVANCES AND SUPPORTS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.
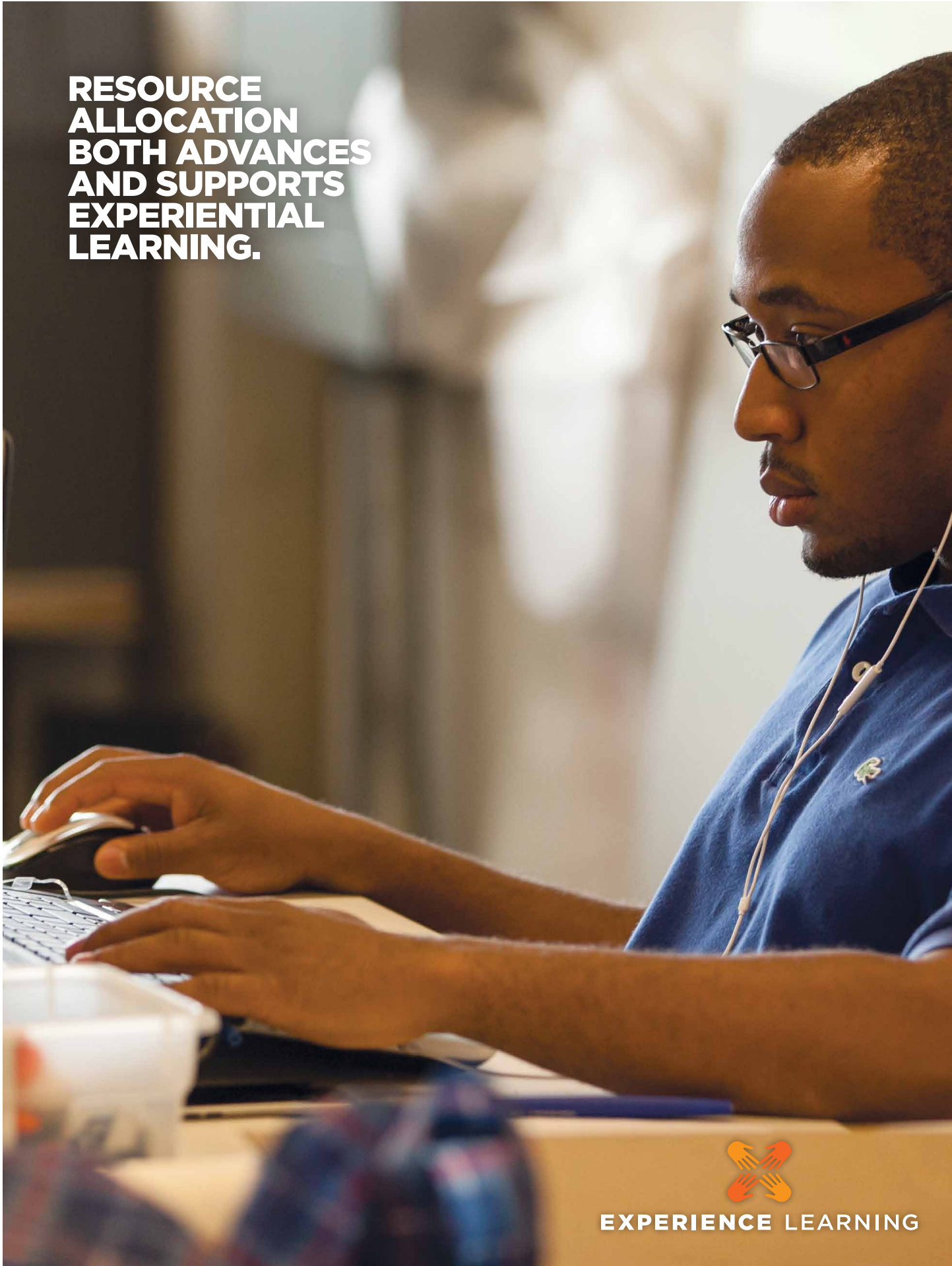
EXPERIENCE LEARNING

CHAPTER 8: RESOURCES

This chapter explains the resources needed to initiate, fully implement, and successfully complete the QEP. The QEP resources subgroup was careful to allocate resources in ways that would advance experiential learning activities across campus while also providing the necessary personnel to properly support these activities. Such an arrangement is important and gives further evidence of the university's compliance with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2.

PERSONNEL

A thorough description of each position and its primary responsibilities with the QEP is given in Chapter 7. With the exception of the QEP implementation leader and graduate research assistants, these are all full-time positions:

1. **QEP Director:** The director is responsible for managing the QEP's performance, including its day-to-day operations, and managing the QEP's resources. The director will assist with the plan's implementation and reports directly to the provost and senior vice chancellor.

2. **QEP Implementation Leader:** The implementation leader is responsible for the initial implementation of the QEP. The implementation leader will be a senior faculty member at the university who can serve as an opinion leader and advocate for the QEP to help build relationships and promote the plan to diverse constituents across campus. The implementation leader is a part-time (25 percent) position that reports directly to the provost and senior vice chancellor.

3. **Coordinator of QEP Assessment:** The assessment coordinator is responsible for executing the QEP's assessment plan. The coordinator collaborates with QEP staff and reports to the assistant provost and director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

4. **Business and Risk Manager:** This position is responsible for assisting with the QEP's daily operations as well as managing risks associated with the student and faculty experiential learning activities. This includes proactively addressing liability issues related to on- and off-campus activities and helping ensure safe and secure experiences for everyone involved in QEP activities.

5. **Director of Service-Learning:** The director of service-learning oversees a wide range of service-learning initiatives at the University of Tennessee, including the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI). The director supervises the assistant director of service-learning.

6. **Assistant Director of Service-Learning:** The assistant director manages the day-to-day operations of the SCI and acts as the primary liaison between faculty and staff involved with the SCI and their community partners. This position reports to the director of service-learning.

7. **Faculty Development Coordinator:** The faculty development coordinator is an experienced and skilled trainer who will lead faculty development workshops and develop other training events to advance experiential learning at the University of Tennessee. This coordinator is assigned to the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (Tenn TLC) and reports to the center's director.

8. **Graduate Research Assistants:** Graduate research assistants (GRAs) will support the work of the SCI and faculty development program. Tasks are likely to include helping prepare workshops, collecting assessment data, and assisting faculty and staff who are involved with these programs, among other duties as needed. One GRA will be assigned to work with the SCI and will be supervised by the director of service-learning. The other GRA will be assigned to the faculty training program and is supervised by the director of Tenn TLC.

INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

1. **Marketing and Communication:** Marketing and communication are critical for increasing faculty, staff, and student participation in the QEP and for promoting the plan's positive outcomes. Marketing and communication will be done using multiple media sources, including banners and posters, e-mails, websites, and other traditional and new/social media.

2. **Faculty Development Grants:** To assist instructors with redesigning existing courses or developing new experiential learning activities, small grants will be awarded to faculty members who are involved with the SCI or faculty development program. The exact amount awarded per faculty member will vary depending on the activities being developed, number of students affected, and the resources needed. Some awards may be used for course releases to facilitate faculty involvement while they are redesigning their classes.

3. **Professional Development Travel Grants:** To maximize student learning, it is critical that faculty and staff engage in effective best practices for experiential learning. These grants will facilitate faculty and staff members traveling to experiential learning trainings and workshops that complement the trainings done on campus. These grants can be used by staff members of the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center to attend workshops that will help them to better train instructors at the University of Tennessee. Grants can also be used by staff in the Office of Service-Learning to support training and conference attendance.

4. **Operating Program Support:** These funds will be used to support the daily operations of the SCI and faculty development program. Potential operating expenses include supplies for faculty development workshops, travel to and from SCI partner communities, and miscellaneous office supplies and photocopying.

5. **Grants for Experiential Learning Projects:** Faculty, staff, and registered student organizations will have access to small grants to support experiential learning projects. An application process and eligibility criteria will be developed for interested parties to request funds. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their projects contribute to students' attainment of the QEP's student learning outcomes.

6. **Undergraduate Research Grants:** As described in the literature review (Chapter 4), undergraduate research is a valuable and popular path for experiential learning. There is growing demand among students and faculty for more research opportunities. Increased productivity in research, scholarship, and creative activity is also one of the five priority areas outlined in the Vol Vision strategic plan. These grants to faculty, staff, and students will be allocated by the QEP director in coordination with the university's Office of Undergraduate Research.

CHAPTER 9: ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Our QEP implements a series of specific and intentional initiatives to enhance and expand experiential learning opportunities for students. These activities are expected to positively contribute to student learning and augment the environment supporting student learning at the University of Tennessee. The extensive planning, investment of resources, and good intentions that underlie the QEP are important for executing a plan that can be successful, yet the true measure of the QEP's success and effectiveness must come from a sound and rigorous assessment plan.

This chapter summarizes the QEP's assessment plan, including the development of direct and indirect assessment tools, the relationship between specific initiatives and outcomes and outputs, and the timeline for implementing the numerous pieces of the assessment plan. As described in the preceding chapter, a coordinator of QEP assessment will be hired to implement and execute this assessment plan in coordination with the QEP staff and engaged units on campus. This includes working with the faculty development coordinator and staff in the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center to assess the faculty development program as well as the director and assistant director of service-learning to assess the Smart Communities Initiative.

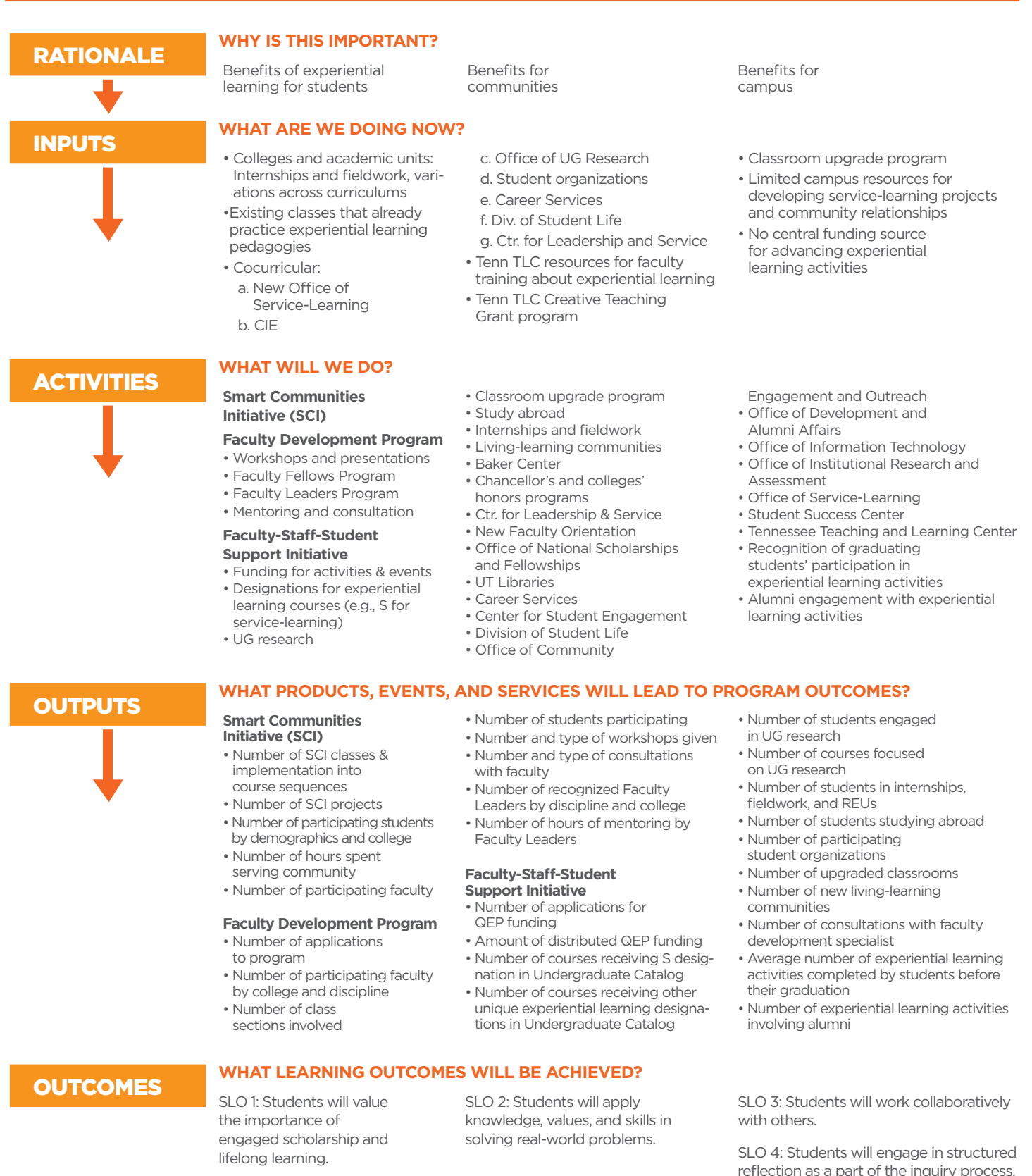## THE QEP STRATEGIC DESIGN: FROM INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENTS TO STUDENT LEARNING AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURAL CHANGE

Our QEP reflects a unified, strategic, and integrated approach to experiential learning. This logic model–based approach (Table 5) flows directly from the QEP mission statement. The design is comprehensive, beginning with the QEP rationale for experiential learning and flowing across interrelated inputs, activities, expected outputs, and ultimately anticipated outcomes for student learning. While these relationships have been described throughout this report, the logic model reflects and demonstrates our compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2 ("The institution has developed a QEP that … identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.") Specifically,

as the logic model flows from left to right, it connects current experiential learning offerings to new QEP initiatives. Together these inputs and activities will lead to specific outputs and outcomes as follows:

- **Rationale** – identifying experiential learning benefits for students, faculty, and larger communities.

- **Inputs** – identifying what we are currently doing toward experiential learning.

- **Activities** – identifying the newly developed programmatic efforts (Smart Communities Initiative, faculty development program, and faculty-staff-student initiatives) that will build upon existing efforts to promote experiential learning.

- **Outputs** – identifying the products, number of events and trainings, number of event/training participants, and related efforts and services resulting from current and expanded activities/programmatic initiatives. These outputs are important for indirect assessment of the QEP.

- **Outcomes** – identifying the specific student learning outcomes to result from the inputs, activities, and outputs. Direct and indirect assessments of students' achievement of these outcomes are fundamental for evaluating the QEP's success.

These outputs and outcomes address short- and medium-term goals. Beyond the time frame of the QEP, our long-term goal is to transform the university culture regarding engaged learning. As emphasized throughout this plan, the ultimate goal of the University of Tennessee QEP is enhancement of campus culture in a manner that values and supports meaningful experiential learning.

TABLE 5: LOGIC MODEL FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE QEP

RATIONALE

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Benefits of experiential learning for students

Benefits for communities

Benefits for campus

INPUTS

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

- Colleges and academic units: Internships and fieldwork, variations across curriculums
- Existing classes that already practice experiential learning pedagogies
- Cocurricular:
  - a. New Office of Service-Learning
  - b. CIE

- c. Office of UG Research
- d. Student organizations
- e. Career Services
- f. Div. of Student Life
- g. Ctr. for Leadership and Service
- Tenn TLC resources for faculty training about experiential learning
- Tenn TLC Creative Teaching Grant program

- Classroom upgrade program
- Limited campus resources for developing service-learning projects and community relationships
- No central funding source for advancing experiential learning activities

ACTIVITIES

WHAT WILL WE DO?

Smart Communities Initiative (SCI)

Faculty Development Program
- Workshops and presentations
- Faculty Fellows Program
- Faculty Leaders Program
- Mentoring and consultation

Faculty-Staff-Student Support Initiative
- Funding for activities & events
- Designations for experiential learning courses (e.g., S for service-learning)
- UG research

- Classroom upgrade program
- Study abroad
- Internships and fieldwork
- Living-learning communities
- Baker Center
- Chancellor's and colleges' honors programs
- Ctr. for Leadership & Service
- New Faculty Orientation
- Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships
- UT Libraries
- Career Services
- Center for Student Engagement
- Division of Student Life
- Office of Community

Engagement and Outreach
- Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
- Office of Information Technology
- Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
- Office of Service-Learning
- Student Success Center
- Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center
- Recognition of graduating students' participation in experiential learning activities
- Alumni engagement with experiential learning activities

OUTPUTS

WHAT PRODUCTS, EVENTS, AND SERVICES WILL LEAD TO PROGRAM OUTCOMES?

Smart Communities Initiative (SCI)
- Number of SCI classes & implementation into course sequences
- Number of SCI projects
- Number of participating students by demographics and college
- Number of hours spent serving community
- Number of participating faculty

Faculty Development Program
- Number of applications to program
- Number of participating faculty by college and discipline
- Number of class sections involved

- Number of students participating
- Number and type of workshops given
- Number and type of consultations with faculty
- Number of recognized Faculty Leaders by discipline and college
- Number of hours of mentoring by Faculty Leaders

Faculty-Staff-Student Support Initiative
- Number of applications for QEP funding
- Amount of distributed QEP funding
- Number of courses receiving S designation in Undergraduate Catalog
- Number of courses receiving other unique experiential learning designations in Undergraduate Catalog

- Number of students engaged in UG research
- Number of courses focused on UG research
- Number of students in internships, fieldwork, and REUs
- Number of students studying abroad
- Number of participating student organizations
- Number of upgraded classrooms
- Number of new living-learning communities
- Number of consultations with faculty development specialist
- Average number of experiential learning activities completed by students before their graduation
- Number of experiential learning activities involving alumni

OUTCOMES

WHAT LEARNING OUTCOMES WILL BE ACHIEVED?

SLO 1: Students will value the importance of engaged scholarship and lifelong learning.

SLO 2: Students will apply knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems.

SLO 3: Students will work collaboratively with others.

SLO 4: Students will engage in structured reflection as a part of the inquiry process.

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT (ASSESSMENT OF INPUTS, ACTIVITIES, AND OUTPUTS)

The implementation and ongoing development of the QEP will be assessed and reflected in the annual periodic QEP reporting process. This reporting will address inputs (what initiatives are ongoing), activities (the actual implementation of the Smart Communities Initiative, the faculty development program, and the faculty-staff-student Initiatives), and outputs that will address the products, event participants/effort, and services resulting from current and expanded activities/programmatic initiatives (e.g., the numbers of faculty trained, the length of training, etc.). The reporting of these elements of the logic model is critical—the logic model fully indicates that project inputs, activities, and outputs must occur to achieve the desired learning outcomes and subsequent culture changes.

Additional outputs are required to assess the effectiveness and impacts of the Smart Communities Initiative and faculty development program. These outputs contribute to a fuller picture of the implementation and utilization of the programs. These data will be compiled each semester by the QEP director and assessment coordinator in consultation with the service-learning director and faculty development coordinator. For the Smart Communities Initiative, examples of key outputs to assess are:

- Number of SCI classes and implementation into course sequences
- Number of SCI projects
- Number of participating students by demographics and college
- Number of hours spent serving the community
- Number of participating faculty
- Number of consultations by program participants and other interested instructors with the campus's service-learning director
- Number of faculty hours spent planning and implementing SCI projects

For the faculty development program, examples of important outputs to assess are:

- Number of applications to the program
- Average attendance at workshops and presentations
- Number of participating faculty by college and discipline
- Number of class sections involved
- Number of students participating
- Number and type of workshops given
- Number of consultations between program participants and the faculty development specialist or other Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center staff

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES)

Student learning outcomes—outcomes that are expected to result from the specified inputs, activities, and outputs—represent the end game of the QEP. The QEP seeks to enhance student learning in four particular areas:

SLO #1. STUDENTS WILL VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

SLO #2. STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS IN SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS.

SLO #3. STUDENTS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS.

SLO #4.: STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE STRUCTURED REFLECTION AS A PART OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS.

Assessment of progress on these learning outcomes will include direct and indirect measures.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF QEP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Direct assessment is critical for evaluating the QEP's impact on student learning at the University of Tennessee. This will be done by using a series of rubrics designed around each of the QEP's student learning outcomes and associated benchmarks. The rubrics were adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics (http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm). The sixteen VALUE rubrics

were created in 2009 by teams of faculty and staff experts from AAC&U member institutions. Each rubric is intended to evaluate students' level of competence across key domains such as critical and creative thinking, global learning, oral communication, teamwork, and quantitative reasoning. The rubrics have demonstrated good reliability and validity and are popular tools utilized by institutions throughout the United States.

The assessment subgroup reviewed all sixteen VALUE rubrics to identify specific items that most closely align with the outcomes and benchmarks we had previously defined. These items were then adapted to fit the purpose and goals of the QEP. This adaptation typically required adding language that reflects the content of the benchmarks as well as adding language that emphasizes the focus on experiential learning to address real-world problems. Table 6 shows each SLO and benchmark and the corresponding VALUE rubric from which an item was adapted.

TABLE 6: VALUE RUBRICS ADAPTED FOR QEP SLOS AND BENCHMARKS

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS	VALUE RUBRIC
SLO 1: STUDENTS WILL VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING.	
Show evidence of interest in the problems of society (needs of others)	Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
Value (i.e., offer a positive attitude toward) the use of engaged scholarship to address societal problems	Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
Demonstrate a desire to utilize engaged scholarship	None
Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning	Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
SLO 2: STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS IN SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS.	
Clearly describe a real-world problem amenable to engaged scholarship	Critical Thinking
Analyze literature (content/research methods) related to the problem	Critical Thinking
Formulate an inquiry approach driven by questions relevant to the problem	Creative Thinking
Recognize potential ethical issues related to addressing the problem	Ethical Reasoning
Employ the selected inquiry approach • Collect and analyze data • Draw conclusions/inferences (interpret)	Inquiry and Analysis
Apply findings toward addressing the problem	Global Learning
SLO 3: STUDENTS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS.	
Participate in collaborative interactions	Teamwork
Support group processes	Teamwork
Be attentive to the ideas of others	Teamwork
Offer relevant questions and comments	Civic Engagement
Meet obligations for group assignments on a timely basis	Teamwork
SLO 4: STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE STRUCTURED REFLECTION AS A PART OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS.	
Use structured reflection in assessing an engaged inquiry experience	Integrative Learning
Assess what they have learned about themselves as an individual (self-awareness) from experiences	Integrative Learning
Assess what they have learned about themselves as members of the broader community	Integrative Learning
Use reflection on the inquiry process to guide lifelong learning	Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning

The final adapted rubrics are shown in Tables 7 through 10, beginning on the following page. One rubric was created for each SLO. Students' competence with each benchmark is assessed across four achievement levels, moving from beginner to developing then accomplished and finally advanced skill. As a requirement to participate in the Smart Communities Initiative and intensive Faculty Fellows program, instructors must agree to align their class's final capstone assignments with these rubrics. Instructors will be permitted to select one benchmark from each SLO to create a rubric that best fits with the topic and content of their particular class and assignment. We will encourage other instructors on campus to use these rubrics in their courses and will make them available through the QEP administrative staff.

TABLE 7: DIRECT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC—SLO 1: STUDENTS WILL VALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

BENCHMARK	4 ADVANCED	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 DEVELOPING	1 BEGINNER
Show evidence of interest in the problems of society (needs of others)	Explores a real-world problem in depth, yielding a rich awareness indicating intense interest in the problem and helping those affected.	Explores a real-world problem in depth, yielding insight or information indicating interest in the problem.	Explores a real-world problem with some evidence of depth, providing occasional insight or information indicating mild interest in the problem.	Explores a real-world problem at a surface level, providing little insight or information beyond the basic facts indicating low interest in the problem.
Value (i.e., offer a positive attitude toward) the use of engaged scholarship to address societal problems	Completes required work, generates and pursues opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond required work.	Completes required work, identifies and pursues opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond required work.	Completes required work and identifies opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond required work.	Completes required work.
Demonstrate a desire to utilize engaged scholarship	Articulates a deep recognition of the potential value of engaged scholarship to address the real-world problem as well as the potential benefits beyond the immediate project.	Recognizes the potential benefits of engaged scholarship to address the real-world problems and acknowledges potential benefits beyond the immediate project.	Recognizes the potential benefits of engaged scholarship to address the real-world problem.	Cannot articulate the potential benefits of engaged scholarship but is open to utilizing it to address the real-world problem.
Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning	Educational interests and pursuits exist and flourish outside classroom requirements. Knowledge and experiences are pursued independently that build on classroom requirements.	Beyond classroom requirements, pursues additional knowledge and actively pursues independent educational experiences.	Beyond classroom requirements, pursues additional knowledge and shows interest in pursuing independent educational experiences.	Begins to look beyond classroom requirements, showing interest in pursuing knowledge independently but takes no action.

TABLE 9: DIRECT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC—SLO 3: STUDENTS WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS.

BENCHMARK	4 ADVANCED	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 DEVELOPING	1 BEGINNER
Participate in collaborative interactions	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: • Treats team members respectfully. • Conveys a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Expresses confidence about the importance of the project and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: • Treats team members respectfully. • Conveys a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Expresses confidence about the importance of the project and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: • Treats team members respectfully. • Conveys a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Expresses confidence about the importance of the project and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any one of the following: • Treats team members respectfully. • Conveys a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Expresses confidence about the importance of the project and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and encouragement to team members.
Support group processes	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to the project by both constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them to engage.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to the project by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to the project by restating the views of other team members and/or asking questions for clarification.	Engages team members by taking turns and listening to others without interrupting.
Be attentive to the ideas of others	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of team members' ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the team.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the team.
Offer relevant questions and comments	Tailors communication strategies to effectively listen and respond to the diverse perspectives of others.	Frequently shows the ability to listen and respond effectively to the diverse perspectives of others.	Occasionally shows the ability to listen and respond effectively to the diverse perspectives of others.	Rarely shows the ability to listen and respond to the diverse perspectives of others.
Meet obligations for group assignments on a timely basis	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.

TABLE 10: DIRECT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC—SLO 4: STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE STRUCTURED REFLECTION AS A PART OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS.

BENCHMARK	4 ADVANCED	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 DEVELOPING	1 BEGINNER
Use structured reflection in assessing an engaged inquiry experience	Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences to deepen understanding of the inquiry process.	Identifies several specific examples of experiences that contributed to deeper understanding of the inquiry process.	Identifies limited number of specific examples of experiences that contributed to deeper understanding of the inquiry process.	Recognizes connections among experiences but cannot articulate specific impact on own learning.
Assess what they have learned about themselves as an individual (self-awareness) from experiences	Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner to build upon experiences to respond to new and challenging real-world problems.	Thoroughly evaluates changes in own learning over time and recognizes the complex factors that impacted learning in prior experiences.	Describes strengths and areas for improvement within prior experiences to increase effectiveness.	Describes own performance with general descriptors of success and failure.
Assess what they have learned about themselves as members of the broader community	Thoroughly describes what he/she has learned about self because of involvement with broader community and demonstrates a clear commitment to ongoing community engagement.	Some reflection on what he/she has learned about self because of involvement with broader community and demonstrates a commitment to ongoing community engagement.	Awareness of learning about self because of involvement with broader community but cannot articulate specific examples. No articulation of a commitment to ongoing community engagement.	No awareness of learning about self because of involvement with broader community and no commitment to ongoing community engagement.
Use reflection on the inquiry process to guide lifelong learning	Reviews prior learning in depth to reveal significantly changed perspectives about educational and life experiences, which provide foundation for expanded knowledge, growth, and maturity over time.	Reviews prior learning in depth, revealing fully clarified meanings or indicating broader perspectives about educational or life events.	Reviews prior learning with some depth, revealing slightly clarified meanings or indicating somewhat broader perspectives about educational or life events.	Reviews prior learning at a surface level, without revealing clarified meaning or indicating a broader perspective about educational or life events.

INDIRECT
ASSESSEMENT
WILL EVALUATE
THE QEP'S
INFLUENCE ON
CAMPUS
COMMUNITY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT
FOR STUDENT
LEARNING.

EXPERIENCE LEARNING

INDIRECT ASSESSMENTS OF QEP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Indirect assessments complement direct assessments by measuring changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors resulting from the QEP. Whereas the previously described rubrics assess student learning in QEP-related classes, a series of indirect assessment tools will be used to evaluate the QEP's influence on campus community and the environment for student learning. These assessments will collect data from students, faculty, and staff at the University of Tennessee. Indirect assessment is critical for assessing changes in cultural norms, which are best reflected in the attitudes and dispositions of faculty, staff, and students. Together with direct assessments, both indirect and direct measures will provide a comprehensive and longitudinal assessment perspective of all short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes specified in the QEP design (logic model).

The first method for indirect assessment is a survey to measure students' perceptions of their own learning and attainment of the SLOs and benchmarks. This builds upon the rubrics used for direct assessment by providing another opportunity for students to engage in structured reflection as part of their learning process. The survey will be designed by a group of faculty and staff who are involved with the QEP, including the QEP director, assessment coordinator, and representatives from the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center, among others. The survey will be administered at the beginning and end of the SCI and Faculty Fellows courses.

The assessment group will also create a survey to be administered to faculty members who are involved in the SCI and faculty development program. The survey will gauge their perceptions and level of satisfaction with the structure and organization of the activities, content of the trainings and related programming, and knowledge gained from participating in these programs. Data will be collected at the end of the different QEP activities. In addition to the quantitative data collected by this survey, the QEP director and assessment coordinator will organize regular focus groups of faculty and staff who have been involved with the QEP. These focus groups will aim to collect qualitative data about their experiences with QEP activities, strengths of the activities, and areas for improvement.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will also be an important indirect assessment tool. The NSSE is administered to first-year students and seniors at the University of Tennessee twice in a five-year cycle as required by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. As described in Chapter 2, NSSE data from undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee strongly support the need for more experiential learning activities. These data from the NSSE survey over the past few years provide a baseline for measuring changes in future semesters as the QEP is implemented. Table 11 shows the linkages between specific items on the NSSE and the QEP's student learning outcomes. By identifying these relationships, it is possible to track changes in students' perceptions of the SLOs in the NSSE results from multiple cycles.

TABLE 11: SPECIFIC NSSE ITEMS LINKED TO QEP STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

NSSE ITEM	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4
DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU DONE THE FOLLOWING?				
Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways	●			
Asked another student to help you understand course material			●	
Explained course material to one or more students			●	
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students			●	
Worked with other students on course projects or assignments			●	
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	●			
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues		●		
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments		●	●	●
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue				●
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective			●	●
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	●			
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	●			
Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)		●	●	
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	●			
Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)		●		
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)		●		
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information		●		●
Identified key information from reading assignments		●		
Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials		●		
DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, HOW MUCH HAS YOUR COURSEWORK EMPHASIZED THE FOLLOWING?				
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations		●		
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts		●		●
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source		●		
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information		●		
DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, ABOUT HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH PEOPLE FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS?				
People of a race or ethnicity other than your own	●		●	
People from an economic background other than your own	●		●	
People with religious beliefs other than your own	●		●	
People with political views other than your own	●		●	
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU DONE OR DO YOU PLAN TO DO BEFORE YOU GRADUATE?				
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	●	●		
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group		●		
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	●		●	
Participate in a study abroad program	●			
Work with a faculty member on a research project	●		●	
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	●	●		
ABOUT HOW MANY OF YOUR COURSES AT THIS INSTITUTION HAVE INCLUDED A COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT (SERVICE-LEARNING)?	●	●		

NSSE ITEM	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4
HOW MUCH DOES YOUR INSTITUTION EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING?				
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic works	●			
Providing support to help students succeed academically	●	●		
Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	●		●	
Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)			●	
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	●			
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	●	●		
ABOUT HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU SPEND IN A TYPICAL 7-DAY WEEK DOING THE FOLLOWING?				
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)	●			
Participating in cocurricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)			●	
Doing community service or volunteer work	●			
HOW MUCH HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THIS INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?				
Writing clearly and effectively	●			●
Speaking clearly and effectively	●			●
Thinking critically and analytically				●
Analyzing numerical and statistical information		●		
Working effectively with others			●	
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics				●
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)			●	
Solving complex real-world problems		●		
Being an informed and active citizen	●			

THE QEP AND BEYOND— ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND CULTURAL CHANGE

As emphasized throughout this document, the primary goal of the University of Tennessee's QEP is to enhance the campus culture that promotes and supports meaningful experiential learning activities for students. As this culture evolves, numerous and varied experiential learning opportunities are expected to grow and expand across the institution. Substantial financial and infrastructure supports are available to support these faculty, staff, and student initiatives. As these resources are distributed across campus, several outputs will be measured to assess their broad impact on the institution.

- **INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE—INCREASED FACULTY AND STUDENT BUY-IN.** In addition to indirect assessments described with the Smart Communities Initiative and faculty development programs, these outputs are measured as counts. Examples of key outputs to be tracked include:

  - Number of recognized Faculty Leaders by discipline and college

  - Number of hours of mentoring by Faculty Leaders

  - Number of applications for QEP funding by college, unit, and organization

  - Amount of QEP funding distributed annually

  - Number of courses receiving special experiential learning designations in the Undergraduate Catalog (including the S designation for service-learning courses)

  - Number of students engaged in undergraduate research

  - Number of classes with a focus on undergraduate research

  - Number of students in internships, fieldwork, and REUs

  - Number of students studying abroad

  - Number of participating student organizations

- Number of upgraded classrooms

- Number of new living-learning communities

- Number of consultations, meetings, and presentations made by the QEP implementation leader, QEP director, or other QEP staff

- Number of consultations about experiential learning with the faculty development specialist or other Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center staff

- Number of consultations with the campus's service learning director

- Average number of experiential learning activities completed by students before graduation

- Number of experiential learning courses and activities that involve alumni

- **CULTURAL CHANGE.** Along with evidence of increased faculty involvement with experiential learning courses and activities, the NSSE student survey items linked to student learning outcomes also have the capacity to provide an assessment of institutional cultural change. If the QEP is having an impact on faculty and students, it is reasonable to expect that this will be reflected in student attitudes and self-reports as captured by the survey. The survey is longitudinal, enabling the gauging of change across the QEP cycle and beyond. In addition, cultural change will also be assessed through ongoing qualitative data collection such as faculty, staff, and student focus groups.

ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

The assessment plan described here involves frequent and regular data collection. A breakdown of the schedule for data collection across the first five years of the QEP is shown in Table 4. The rubrics to collect direct assessment data from the Smart Communities Initiative will be used each semester beginning with the QEP's launch in Fall 2015. Data will be collected at end of each semester when SCI classes conclude.

Direct assessment data from students in classes that have been re-designed by participants in the Faculty Fellows development program will be collected beginning in 2016 after the faculty development program is implemented. The corresponding student and faculty surveys and focus groups will be

administered at the same time intervals as the direct assessment rubrics.

The NSSE is administered on a rotating cycle defined by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. To help evaluate the QEP, NSSE data are scheduled to be collected in March 2016 and March 2019.

The various counts of outputs will occur each semester, and these will be reported annually. The QEP director will coordinate with the QEP's assessment coordinator and other units on campus to develop a system for collecting these quantitative data. An important first step when implementing the QEP will be to compile baseline data about the different outputs. Such data provide the initial benchmarks and make it possible to track institutional enhancements and changes resulting from the QEP's implementation. Regular monitoring of these outputs throughout the coming semesters will also be important for recognizing changes that are needed to improve and maximize the QEP's effectiveness throughout its lifetime.

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APPENDIX 1:
LIST OF ALL QEP DEVELOPMENT TEAM
AND SUBGROUP MEETINGS,
JUNE 2013–SEPTEMBER 2014

DATE	TIME	SUMMARY
June 18, 2013 (Full Committee)	1-2 p.m.	Initial meeting to introduce the committee
August 23, 2013 (Full Committee)	2-4 p.m.	Brainstormed about 24 QEP ideas
September 11, 2013 (Full Committee)	2:30-4 p.m.	QEP website created
September 13, 2013 (Alternate meeting time)	10:30-11:30 a.m.	
September 25, 2013 (Full Committee)	2:30-4 p.m.	
September 27, 2013 (Alternate meeting time)	10:30-11:30 a.m.	
October 9, 2013 (Optional meeting)	2:30-4 p.m.	
October 11, 2013 (Optional meeting)	10:30-11:30 a.m.	
October 23, 2013 (Full Committee)	2:30-4 p.m.	Narrowed down to 5 ideas
October 25, 2013 (Alternate meeting time)	10:30-11:30 a.m.	
November 6, 2013 (Full Committee)	2:30-4 p.m.	Distributed a survey across campus about the final 5 QEP ideas
December 18, 2013 (Full Committee)	2:30-4 p.m.	
January 8, 2014 (Full Committee)	10-11 a.m.	Narrowed down to 2-3 finalists for QEP
January 24, 2014 (Full Committee)	11 a.m. to noon	
February 5, 2014 (Full Committee)	10-11 a.m.	Visitors from University of Oregon discussed their Sustainable Cities Initiative
February 19, 2014 (Full Committee)	12-3 p.m.	Chose experiential learning as focus for QEP
February 26, 2014 (Full Committee)	10-11 a.m.	
March 5, 2014 (Assessment and Research Subgroups)	11 a.m. to 1 p.m.	
March 12, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-2 p.m.	Began drafting the QEP mission statement
March 28, 2014 (Full Committee)	10-11 a.m.	
April 9, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-2 p.m.	
April 23, 2014 (Full Committee)	10-11 a.m.	
May 6, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	2:30-3:30 p.m.	Subcommittees began to meet for the summer
May 7, 2014 (Resources Subgroup)	1-2 p.m.	
May 12, 2014 (Full Committee)	10 a.m. to noon	Drafted the student learner outcomes
May 19, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	10-11 a.m.	
May 19, 2014 (Resources Subgroup)	1-2 p.m.	
May 28, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	1-2 p.m.	
May 29, 2014 (Writing Subgroup)	10-11 a.m.	
June 10, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-3 p.m.	
June 16, 2014 (Research Subgroup)	10-11 a.m.	
June 17, 2014 (Resources Subgroup)	10-11 a.m.	
June 17, 2014 (Writing Subgroup)	11 a.m. to noon	
June 17, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	1-2 p.m.	
June 24, 2014 (Research Subgroup)	11 a.m. to noon	
June 26, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	9-10 a.m.	
June 26, 2014 (Resources Subgroup)	11 a.m. to noon	
June 30, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-3 p.m.	Budget drafted. Literature review draft.
July 22, 2014 (Research Subgroup)	9-10 a.m.	
July 22, 2014 (Assessment Subgroup)	12-1 p.m.	
July 23, 2014 (Writing Subgroup)	12-1 p.m.	
July 23, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-3 p.m.	Creative Communications presented the committee with a draft of the logo.
August 11, 2014 (Full Committee)	1-3 p.m.	
September 29, 2014 (Full Committee)	11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	

APPENDIX 2:
TEXT FROM EMAIL INVITATION
FOR QEP INPUT SURVEY

Dear UT Faculty and Staff,

As part of our reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the University must develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

The QEP must be:

- A carefully designed and focused plan of action that enhances student learning or the environment supporting student learning,

- A campus-wide project that can be created and implemented within 1-2 years and has a primary emphasis on undergraduate students,

- Consistent with our strategic plan and directly tied to our institutional mission.

The QEP is relatively new as a part of SACS accreditation and this will be only our second one. Our first was Ready for the World, a broad plan aimed at increasing international and intercultural awareness and knowledge across campus. Ready for the World was successful and had a positive impact on the campus, although it did pose challenges for implementation and assessment.

It's now time to select our new QEP topic. This process began in May 2013 with the formation of the QEP team. The team is a large and diverse group comprised of faculty and staff members representing colleges, offices, and units from across campus. The roster of team members is available at our QEP website (http://sacs.utk.edu/qep/). Over the past several months, the team has reviewed numerous task force and committee reports, university data, published research, and documents related to our Vol Vision/Top 25 strategic plan. Through that process, we have identified five topic areas that represent different directions for the QEP. Each will meaningfully enhance student learning on our campus. Our goal is to select a plan that will positively transform student learning on campus, and we will establish a comprehensive assessment plan to evaluate this impact.

We need your input on the QEP and each of these five topic areas. This is a critical step in the process of selecting our new QEP and your feedback is greatly appreciated. Everyone's voice is important; we welcome everyone's comments.

In an effort to get input from as many people as possible, we request your responses to this electronic survey. For each of the five topic areas, you will find a brief description, a list of potential actions, and a summary of how the topic links to our Vol Vision/Top 25 strategic plan. You will be asked to answer three questions about each topic and to give open-ended comments. This is a completely anonymous and voluntary survey.

Follow this link to the Survey:
Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://utk.co1.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?Q_SS=4UTpYOLLJ6QqYjH_9RWCtrMntNQZ0pv&_=1

In addition, we are convening a series of open forums for faculty and staff to meet with the team and discuss the QEP. See the QEP website for a list of the forum times and places.

The results of the survey and forum discussions will be extremely helpful to the team as we select our new QEP.

After selecting our topic, the team will conduct a comprehensive review of best practices and model programs so we can develop and implement the best and most effective QEP for our students and campus.

We look forward to hearing from as many people as possible in the coming weeks.

Thank you,
Matthew Theriot, QEP Chair

APPENDIX 3:
CONTENT AND STRUCTURE
OF QEP INPUT SURVEY

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this electronic survey. This is an important step in the process of selecting our new QEP. The QEP team has identified five topic areas. In the survey, you will find a brief description of each topic, a list of potential actions related to that topic, and a summary of how the topic links to our Vol Vision/Top 25 strategic plan. You will be asked to answer three questions about each topic and to give open-ended comments.

This is a completely anonymous and voluntary survey. As you review each topic and consider your feedback, please remember that the QEP must be:

- A carefully designed and focused plan of action that enhances student learning or the environment supporting student learning

- A campus-wide project that can be created and implemented within 1-2 years and has a primary emphasis on undergraduate students

- Consistent with our strategic plan and directly tied to our institutional mission.

Your time and attention to give feedback is greatly appreciated. If you experience any technical problems with the survey, please contact Michael McFall (*mmcfall@utk.edu*). If you have any questions about the QEP, please visit *http://sacs.utk.edu/qep/* for more information and contact information for the QEP team. I also hope you will take time to attend one of our open discussion forums for faculty and staff. Dates and times for the forums also are posted to UT[1]s QEP website. The importance of your input to help select our new QEP cannot be overstated.

Thank you,
Matthew Theriot, QEP Chair

Survey Body

The five focus areas were set to appear in a random order for each survey. This was done to maximize feedback about each area if respondents completed only part of the survey. Each focus area included a statement about the context and importance of the area, a bulleted list of potential actions that could be taken with a QEP in this area, and an overview of how the area fits with the university's Vol Vision/Top 25 strategic plan. A list and brief description of the five focus areas is provided on page 11.

Participants were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements for each area. Each statement had five response options—strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree.

1. A QEP focused in this area will improve student learning.

2. A QEP focused in this area will meet an important campus need.

3. I support a QEP focused in this area.

Each area also included two invitations for open-ended responses. These were:

4. Comments and suggestions related to this QEP topic area.

5. To help the committee, please tell us about any current initiatives or people on campus who are involved in activities related to this QEP topic area.

At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide general comments about the QEP. Faculty and staff were then asked to indicate their employment status (i.e. tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, non-tenured faculty, exempt staff, non-exempt staff) and where they worked on campus. Student respondents were asked about their status at the university (i.e. first-year student, sophomore, junior, senior) and their college affiliation based on their major.

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