

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Faculty Response to the University Quality Enhancement Plan**  
**by**  
**Department and Division**

The University Quality Enhancement Plan was disseminated to the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences through the College's Council of Chairs. Faculty in each area were given an overview of the QEP by their chair and were asked to respond to the plan in written form and specifically address five discussion topics identified by the QEP Team. These responses were collected and summarized by the chairs and submitted to the Dean of the College. The QEP team narrowed the focus of the topics to two areas, student interaction and student feedback. Below is a summary of faculty responses designed to give an overall picture of the College's approach to these two areas.

**TOPIC 1: STUDENT INTERACTION:**

The various departments and divisions within the College of Arts and Sciences employ many methods that invite student interaction and sharing of understanding. Faculty reported that they use class critiques, class discussion, small group critiques, collaborative problem solving, presentations, small seminar formats, e-mail, debate, and role-playing to engage students and assess understanding.

In the Introduction to Literature course in Languages and Literature, for example, there is a group presentation of a mock trial for a character like Faulkner's Ab Snopes which results in inspired and spirited interaction among students. In the Division of Social Sciences, geography students are encouraged to role-play interactions and experiences of different groups on the Brazilian Amazon frontier. Role-playing in this instance, combines theater and fun with knowledge acquisition, and 'fools' students into learning 'boring' topics (what it means to be a family in a Lima slum, for example) and putting them into their own terms. Other departments use methods similar to these tailored to their discipline.

The departments/divisions identified several areas for improvement. Many faculty reported that they are trying to encourage greater student participation in class discussions and critiques. Some areas want to engage students in experiential ways particularly in upper division classes. Most departments expressed dissatisfaction with student preparedness and feel that overly large sections contribute to this problem. Several areas want to formalize a process for students to provide written feedback and begin to use a web page and e-mail to help with this process.

**TOPIC 2: FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS:**

The departments/divisions reported many methods of feedback to students including tests, class discussions, written comments on essays and other projects, feedback through

oral critiques and study groups, question and answer sessions, and the use of the web and e-mail to help keep students informed of their progress. The importance of office hours for working with students one-on-one and to clarify concerns was a reoccurring theme along with the importance of returning graded work back to students within a reasonable amount of time. For disciplines where cumulative knowledge is important for continued success, mathematics for instance, instructors are encouraged to return graded work as soon as possible in order to help students identify weaknesses. Students are urged to go to the academic support lab to get help with concepts that are hindering their understanding. Many professors review material briefly at the beginning of class or re-teach concepts in order to ensure mastery. Several areas have developed tutoring programs.

One repeated concern and area for improvement was over student preparedness. This concern was expressed for both freshman and upper level work. Many departments/divisions felt that students are ill prepared for rigorous college course work and lack the necessary study skills to succeed. Several suggestions were made to help in this area. Professors stressed the advantage of having smaller, more manageable classes in order to help students who are having difficulty. Faculty feel that students do not take advantage of the academic support available on campus and attribute this to heavy course loads. Advising students to take smaller loads that would allow time for help outside of class would assist students who are having difficulty adjusting to a college curriculum. The suggestion was made to observe students closely to help identify those who need help and urge them to take advantage of the support available on campus.