Writing Across the Curriculum: Critical for Student Success

"Write Here…Write Now!"

Quality Enhancement Plan

Virginia Union University

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Executive Summary

The ultimate goal of Virginia Union University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to improve student learning outcomes through enhancing their (students') writing. The objectives of this plan reflect and affirm the university's commitment to enhance the quality of higher education and to support student learning, which is the heart of the mission of Virginia Union University (VUU). This QEP has been developed after an extensive process which included input from key stakeholders of the campus community: faculty, administrators, students, staff and alumni. The QEP is defined as one that will provide opportunities for growth in student learning, confidence, and reinvigorate an academic ethos among students, staff and faculty at Virginia Union University. Strategies for implementation of VUU's QEP include identifying writing intensive courses with an electronic portfolio requirement, implementing electronic tutoring programs to enhance our Writing Center, publishing a VUU Writing & Grammar Workbook/Handbook, and continuing an ongoing series of faculty development.

The VUU QEP faculty are preparing and equipping themselves to assist in promoting and implementing such a program that will enhance students' writing achievement. The entire faculty has engaged in faculty development sessions to learn about the QEP strategies and how they will affect the university holistically. The President and the Board of Trustees of the university have approved a generous allotment towards the plan and have expressed genuine desires to witness additions to make this a continuing effort. The Vice President for Academic Affairs has and will continue to dedicate time, input, and skillful efforts for the success and duration of this plan. The university community is dedicated to providing physical and monetary support toward the QEP to bring us one step closer to *"changing the world one person (student) at a time."*

The institution understands that identifying the actual achievements require substantial information of student learning outcomes as it pertains to writing skills. Therefore, the plan will be evaluated using direct and indirect assessment strategies to document the success of the QEP strategies and the degree to which these strategies impact student learning outcomes. Assessments include performance on standardized achievement measures, surveys capturing the satisfaction of students and faculty, quality analysis of products using a rubric, and post assessments of involved courses.

Virginia Union University formed a multidisciplinary QEP committee comprised of faculty and students to establish the areas of need to be addressed in the university's plan. The entire faculty and solicited alumni were involved in taking a survey that influenced the decision for the QEP topic. The students of VUU participated in a theme contest that inspired the theme, *Write Here…Write Now!* The theme is being used to publicize the QEP throughout the campus community and the surrounding area to send the message that we take pride in promoting our students' academic success. In addition, the university has selected a consultant from Spelman College (Atlanta, GA) for advisement to produce an effective writing across the curriculum (WAC) program.

VUU's selection of the WAC program has allowed the development of a plan that specifies program enhancements, faculty development activities aimed at improving the teaching and learning process across the campus, and specific outcomes for students. This plan is grounded in an analysis of past and current student performance data, a review of best practices in the research and theoretical literature relative to writing and its impact on student learning at the undergraduate level, and the input of stakeholders who will be responsible for the implementation of this plan over a five-year period.

I. Virginia Union University – Proud Heritage, Bright Future!

Virginia Union University (VUU) is Virginia's premier, private liberal arts institution. Founded in 1865, the institution has a rich and diverse history with the city of Richmond and the state of Virginia and has developed and sustained a reputation as a leading producer of African-American clergy and theologians. Virginia Union University has awarded over 15,000 degrees to individuals who have and are currently making meaningful contributions in the areas of arts, education, law, politics, public service, and religion.

Currently, VUU enrolls more than 1,200 undergraduates and 350 graduate students in five schools. The academic schools include the Sydney Lewis School of Business, the Evelyn R. Syphax School of Education, Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Mathematics, Science and Technology, and the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology. Collectively, these schools offer 26 undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Virginia Union University seeks to produce well-rounded graduates who are equipped to make meaningful contributions to a global society. This university's core values are centered on maintaining academic integrity and maintaining small classes and personal interaction with faculty, staff and administration. Virginia Union University remains committed to its mission to provide a nurturing, intellectually challenging, and spiritual environment where students are empowered and developed as scholars, leaders, and lifelong learners for a global society.

Mission

Virginia Union University is a liberal arts institution whose major disciplines demand effective reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Through dynamic academic and support programs, VUU is committed to helping students attain the foundational skills necessary to succeed in this world, which aligns with the university's mission to:

1) ***provide*** *a nurturing, intellectually challenging, and spiritually enriching environment for learning;*
2) ***empower*** *students to develop strong moral values for success; and*
3) ***develop*** *scholars, leaders, and lifelong learners for a global society.*

To accomplish this mission, Virginia Union University offers a broad range of educational opportunities that advance liberal arts education, teaching, research, science, technology, continuing education, civic engagement, and international experiences.

University Organizational Structure

The university is currently operating under the administration of President Dr. Claude Perkins. Dr. Perkins assumed this important role in August of 2009. The President's cabinet is comprised of five Vice Presidents and one Dean: Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Financial Affairs, and Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Vice President Research, Planning, and Special Programs and the Dean of The Samuel DeWitt School of Theology. The university is governed by a Board of Trustees (see Appendix A).

Institution/Student/Faculty Profile

Virginia Union University is an attractive, small private school with a significant historical reputation that attracts students nationwide. While the majority of the students are Virginia residents, others are from states in the mid-Atlantic region, northeast region and a few from states in the southwest. In a review of enrollment data from the past five years, an average of 47% of the student population originates from Virginia. In the fall of 2005, the in-state population was 48%.

Student enrollment over the past five years is shown in the table below. In addition to the students in the undergraduate school, the university serves 343 students in the Graduate School of Theology. As seen in the chart, enrollment has fluctuated since the fall of 2004, gradually decreasing through the fall of 2007, when the university experienced a 5% decrease in enrollment from the spring of 2007.

Student Enrollment - Fall 2004-Spring 2009

Fall 04	Spring 05	Fall 05	Spring 06	Fall 06	Spring 07	Fall 07	Spring 08	Fall 08	Spring 09
1722	1652	1655	1566	1567	1505	1418	1533	1466	1381

The family income of VUU students varies. Over the four-year period from 2004-2008, 28-34% of students reported incomes of $0-19,000 and 32% reported incomes of $20-40,000**.** These figures indicate a significant portion (over 50%) of VUU students who come from low income to low-middle income backgrounds. The average age of students enrolled in the undergraduate program is 21.

The faculty at Virginia Union University is diverse and is composed of individuals skilled in teaching, conducting research, and providing professional service at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels. Of the 75 full-time faculty members, 51% are female. The ethnic make-up of almost 60% of faculty is black, and more than 60% of faculty has earned a terminal degree. Tenured faculty composes 21% of the group, and 30% of faculty members have been at the university for five years or less.

Strategic Planning Process

During the summer of 2004, a university-wide Leadership Council was convened. The Leadership Council was charged with conducting a thorough analysis of the university's policies and administrative procedures, and to develop a plan for the future. The Leadership Council met with a nationally-recognized strategic planning consultant for one year on a monthly basis. The consultant guided the council through the process of creating a new vision for the university, revising the mission statement, and developing eight strategic priorities. The analysis conducted by the council led to the delineation of the university's core values and strategic priorities which are: academic excellence, small class sizes, personal attention, a nurturing environment, a strong HBCU heritage, and a campus experience rooted in spirituality.

In October 2005, the plan was approved by the Board of Trustees. In a continuing effort to keep programs current, the strategic plan was updated in the spring of 2009 (see Appendix B).

Restructuring of the Center for Undergraduate Studies

The university's Center for Undergraduate Studies serves as the hub of foundational skill development and advising services to undergraduate students during their first two years of study at Virginia Union University. The center's staff is composed of administrators who have direct contact with students on a daily basis, providing advising and a wide array of support services throughout the academic year.

Students become familiar with the center's services through the advising process, through participation in a mandatory orientation course and through participation in tutorial services and related enrichment opportunities designed to encourage students to utilize all available resources as they matriculate through their program of study. Recently, to increase focus on student retention and to improve graduation rates, the Vice President of Academic Affairs met with the center's staff to begin the process of restructuring.

The goal of the restructuring process was to improve current services and to add additional services directed at assessment of student potential, measurement of student performance, and increased collaboration between the Center for Undergraduate Studies and academic departments across the campus. The following is an excerpt from a 2009 report regarding the restructuring process:

> *The restructuring plan for the Center of Undergraduate Studies will encompass providing support services for freshmen and sophomore students, determining the appropriate placement of students in courses based on placement results, incorporating specific retention measures to increase both the retention and graduate rates of students, meeting the needs of athletes and transfer student population, offering tutorial services, reinstituting an Honors Program, and focusing on the concept of writing as agreed upon in our Quality Enhancement*

Plan. The whole idea of the restructuring plan is to maximize the university's resources and personnel to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Included within the restructuring of the center for improved services is an enhanced student assessment program (see Appendix C).

II. Development of the QEP

The Context

It is the intent of the faculty and administration that the Quality Enhancement Plan will focus attention on improving academic performance of VUU students and creating a renewed emphasis on academic excellence throughout the university. At the present time, student performance is declining, and thus, completion rates of first and second year students are below the standards set and maintained by the university for many years. Student retention affects graduation rates. The Quality Enhancement Plan described in this document will focus on improving student writing performance in academic coursework across the general education core, thus having a positive impact on student retention and graduation rates.

Correlation of the QEP to the Mission

Stakeholders of Virginia Union University developed the QEP with the university's mission in mind. Virginia Union is a liberal arts institution whose major disciplines demand student proficiency in reading, writing, and critical thinking. Through dynamic academic and support programs, VUU is committed to helping students attain the academic foundation in reading, writing, and critical thinking that students need to succeed as world citizens.

Of the three disciplines mentioned above, VUU elected to focus its QEP on writing across the curriculum. The premise was that by effectively employing the writing process in a range of writing tasks, contexts, and purposes, students will confront the challenge of becoming better writers *and* better critical readers and thinkers. As is consistent with the university's mission, writing across the curriculum will allow opportunity for faculty and support staff to nurture, challenge, and empower students. Because Virginia Union is an open-enrollment university, it bears the obligation of nurturing under-prepared students so as to facilitate their academic success without lowering the university's overall academic standards.

The QEP plan provides for student nurturing and support through the university's Center for Undergraduate Studies, through "Writing away Anxiety" workshops, and through a VUU custom-designed student handbook/textbook that guides students through the writing and assessment of writing processes. The VUU handbook will serve also as rhetoric and reader for the freshman writing courses. The readings in the text are high-interest level multicultural and cross-disciplinary selections. The idea is that the selections will challenge students to think provocatively about a range of issues—

aesthetic, cultural, economic, moral, political, spiritual, social, etc. As students grow in ability to express themselves across contexts on a variety of issues, students are more likely to transfer and adapt effective writing strategies across curricular and extracurricular experiences. In this way, students will empower themselves to become scholars, leaders, and lifelong learners.

Along with its mission statement, Virginia Union University has established a set of strategic priorities aimed at facilitating the university's mission. The QEP taps into strategic priorities 1.0, 3.0, 4.0, and 6.0 (discussed in the Connection of QEP Strategies to VUU's Strategic Plan section). Respectively, these priorities are improving the quality of academic programs, enrollment management, student engagement/empowerment, and image enhancement. By implementing writing across the curriculum, VUU is seeking to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process: specifically, student's clarity of expression, organization and coherence, development of ideas, and development of style appropriate for context and audience. Academic success will engage students and empower them to pursue dreams that previously seemed impossible. Also, with students' improved academic success, the university's retention and graduation rates will rise, thereby enhancing the university's image.

Connection Between the QEP and the General Education Core

The purpose of the QEP is to improve student learning, specifically students' writing, over time. The university has developed a set of learning outcomes designed to provide a framework for the teaching and learning process and measure the performance of first and second year students in a specific set of courses that will guide them through their first two years as academic scholars at VUU. The general education core at Virginia Union University provides a common bond of knowledge for all students; encourages the synthesis and integration of that knowledge into a unified whole; sharpens the skills of communication, computation, and critical analysis; develops appreciation for diverse cultures; promotes a lifestyle of physical, personal and intellectual well-being; and fosters leadership development.

The general education core requires that all students complete two courses in writing: English 101 and English 102. Virginia Union University has become aware that in order to improve students' writing and overall performance, immediate positive initiatives and implementations had to take place. Therefore, in the fall semester of 2009, VUU opted to initiate its QEP efforts through the re-implementation of English 100 (developmental English) that is designed to strengthen students' writing as they progress to both English 101 and 102. In addition to the new developmental English course, Virginia Union University has established both the VUU Writing and the VUU Tutoring Centers to assist students with their difficulties in writing and other general education subject areas. All course syllabi generated utilize a common template (see Appendix D), and all English 100 instructors use a common rubric to evaluate writing assessments (see Appendix E).

Dedicated to the academic success of its students, VUU desires to enhance its academic program. Enhancements include the implementation of strategies in the QEP that will assist in building students' writing proficiency. The enhancement of the VUU Writing Center includes the implementation of online tutorials. Virginia Union University will also identify writing intensive (WI) courses across the general education core that will incorporate an electronic writing portfolio. The university has also included the intensive training and development of faculty to meet the academic needs of VUU students. Incorporating these efforts in the general education core will help to prepare students for the writing capstone assessments required in various major course areas (see Appendix F).

Entrance and Performance Data /Establishing the Need for QEP

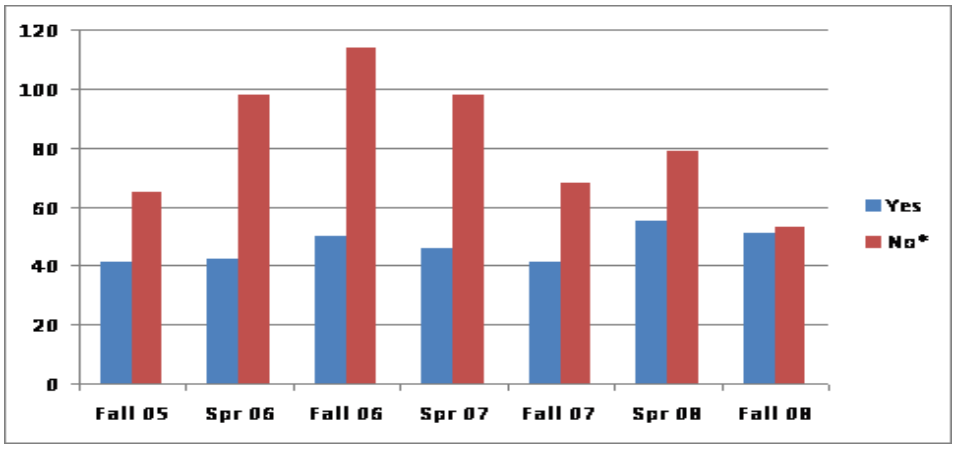
Virginia Union's undergraduate student population is varied in terms of academic preparedness. While some of our students possess the background to excel in any academic setting, many of our students are under-prepared for college at the time of their admission. As with other universities that practice open enrollment, Virginia Union prides itself in opening its doors to students who are among the first within their families to attend college. In the fall of 2008, the incoming freshman class had an average combined Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of 722 and a grade-point average (GPA) of 2.4. The mean for SAT scores for the four-year period beginning with the fall of 2004 and ending with the fall of 2008 appears in the table on page 11. ACT scores during the five-year period are reported to be an average of 15.

In the past, students' proficiency in writing was also reflected in their performance on the university's English Essay Exam (EEE), a writing proficiency exam developed by faculty and administered on-site. It was developed by faculty in the English department to assess student writing. The test was designed and scored by faculty using a university-developed rubric:

> *"The English Essay Exam has been a part of the graduation requirements for Virginia Union University students [at least] since the 1970s. All students must take the exam before leaving the University. It is recommended that students take the exam in their sophomore year. Before taking the exam, students must pass English 101 and English 102 with a C or better. Students must also pass Humanities 225 or 226 or a 300- or 400-level English class. All of these prerequisites will be completed by the second semester of a student's sophomore year if he or she successfully follows his or her department's advising template. The EEE is a three-hour writing exam. Students must write an acceptable 500-word essay in the three hours allotted."*

The Pass Rate for EEE from Fall 2005 - Fall of 2008

Virginia Union University English Essay Pass Rate, Fall 05-Fall 08							
Pass Rate	Fall 05	Spr 06	Fall 06	Spr 07	Fall 07	Spr 08	Fall 08
Yes	41/40%	42/30%	50/31%	46/32%	41/38%	55/42%	51/41%
No*	65/60%	98/70%	114/69%	98/68%	68/62%	79/58%	53/59%
Total	106	140	164	144	109	134	104



"No" indicates students whose scores were unacceptable or conditional according to scoring guidelines.

According to the data on the chart above, over a three-year period beginning in the fall of 2005 and ending in the spring of 2008, an average 35% of the students passed the English Essay Examination. These scores are evidence of the deficiencies students continue to demonstrate in the area of writing. Typically, the students who struggle with writing also struggle in other courses. These are typically the students who leave the university at the end of their freshman or sophomore year. Those who remain often must repeat courses; therefore, they are unable to matriculate within four years. As a case in point, many students did not take the EEE during their sophomore year as was expected. This is because they either had not met the prerequisites or they suffered from writing anxiety. The result was that a significant number of students struggled to pass the exam in their senior year. Some of these were taking the exam for the first time. Others had taken and failed the exam several times. Writing across the curriculum as administered under the QEP will mitigate the problem through early intervention. By writing across the curriculum, students will understand that effective writing is also significant in disciplines outside of English. Likewise, students will have greater opportunity to write for various contexts both within and outside of English classes. Students now will be able to transfer and adapt appropriate writing strategies as they move from course to course within and outside of their major.

Virginia Union has an open enrollment policy to encourage students with potential. The mean scores for entering freshman on Scholastic Aptitude Test for a period of five years are shown below.

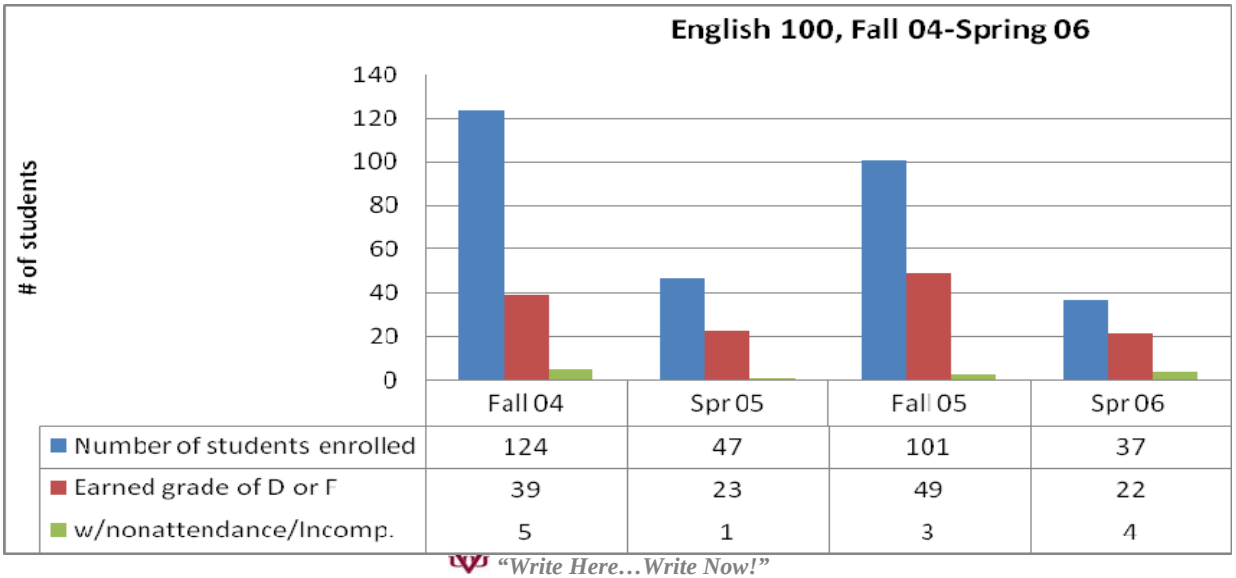
Mean SAT scores Fall 2004-Fall 2008

Academic Year	Mean SAT scores for Incoming Freshman class
Fall 2004	744
Fall 2005	772
Fall 2006	749
Fall 2007	761
Fall 2008	722

Academic readiness of incoming freshmen as indicated on the SAT shows that many freshmen begin their education with skill deficiencies that may affect their performance across multiple disciplines. The 2005 through 2008 SAT test included a writing component to determine students' ability to express their thoughts and ideas in written form. The scores of the students over this five–year period indicate that students have entered the university with limited writing skills. An analysis of SAT writing scores for a sample of entering freshmen in the fall of 2008 further indicates a need to enhance students' writing skills. The highest score achievable on the writing section of the SAT is 800; however, the average score from the sample was 318.45 with 10% scoring in the 200 range, 50% in the 300 range, and 40% in the 400 range.

Students who entered through the fall of 2004 to the spring of 2006 who were not proficient on the entrance essay were placed in English 100, a remedial course to prepare them for English 101. The data below shows student performance in English 100 during that two-year period.

Student Performance Data for English 100 from Fall 2004-Spring 2006



Of the 124 students enrolling in English 100 in the fall of 2004, 65% completed the course with a C or better and 35% of the students did not adequately complete course requirements. In the subsequent fall of 2005, student performance continued to decrease, 49% of entering provisional freshman completing the course with a C or better while 51% did not perform adequately. Students who did not complete the course with a C or better had to repeat the course the following semester. The need for enhancements in the English 100 course continues to increase as the number of freshmen entering college needing enhancements in writing skills escalates. According to the COMPASS placement test in the fall of 2009, over 80% of new freshmen were placed in English 100.

Process of Initiating the QEP

In preparing to write the Quality Enhancement Plan, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness surveyed the faculty, staff, and students. The first survey was conducted in the fall of 2007. An analysis of the survey revealed that faculty members at Virginia Union University generally cite inadequate reading, writing, and critical thinking skills for students' poor performance in classes. They further believe that student frustration resulting from weak foundational skills contributes to poor student attendance in classes and a high student attrition rate (see Appendix G). *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* reported in its January 15, 2009 weekly bulletin that the graduation rate for Virginia Union University was 14%. It also reports that most Historically Black Colleges and Universities, like Virginia Union, graduate less than 50% of their students (http://www.jbhe.com).

Selection of the Topic

An analysis of stakeholders' input led to the selection of four specific areas for the administration to consider as a topic for the QEP. The four areas receiving the majority of support were: Technology, Faculty Development, Student Academic Foundation, and Student Engagement. In the late fall of 2008, four subcommittees of faculty and staff were engaged to develop white papers on each of these topics for submission to the Executive Council and Board of Trustees. After review of each of the papers, the Executive Council agreed upon the selection of 'Foundational Skills' as the Quality Enhancement Plan topic for the development of a five-year plan to improve student learning outcomes at Virginia Union University.

As a result of the Executive Council's decision, the QEP committee began its research focusing on writing as foundational for student success. An initial review of the literature and best practices related to writing was conducted. Upon reviewing and discussing the literature in relationship to the academic needs of Virginia Union students, the QEP team determined that the development of a plan to address writing would enable the QEP committee to develop a focused, sustainable plan as required by SACS. The QEP committee chose a topic to focus on the key discipline of writing and its role as a foundational skill across the curriculum. The topic was presented to the Executive Council in its regularly scheduled meeting on May 15, 2009 and the cabinet concurred.

The QEP committee met on May 21st to continue its work focusing on the newly revised topic: *Writing Across the Disciplines: Critical for Student Success.*

The QEP Committee reconvened September 3, 2009 under new leadership and examined the topic, *Writing Across the Disciplines: Critical for Student Success*, and after a thorough review, concluded that the topic needed to be directly tied to the general education core. Ultimately, the Committee decided to change the topic to *Writing Across the Curriculum: Critical for Student Success.*

Composition of the Committee

In the fall of 2007, a committee of faculty, students, and staff convened to begin the process of developing the QEP. Among the committee were junior and senior faculty from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, including English, foreign language, psychology, criminal justice, and education units. Also included on the committee were two students and an administrator from the School of Theology Graduate Program. Leading the committee during the earlier stages was the former Director of Institutional Effectiveness, working under the guidance of the Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning and Special Programs. The first chair of the QEP committee was Ms. Joyce Davis, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. Ms. Ingrid Bircann-Barkey, Associate Professor of Foreign Languages was named as the second QEP chair in early 2008. Later, Dr. Joy L. Davis, Director of the university's Center for the Advancement of Academic Excellence became chair of the committee. This particular committee produced the first draft of the QEP in the spring of 2009. The committee also developed a timeline relevant to initiating the QEP process at VUU (see Appendix H).

In the summer and fall semesters of 2009, the committee went through another transformation. A new QEP director was appointed and the committee was downsized to focus on the specifics of the QEP document and to compose a final draft. Although the committee was downsized, the composition of the group sustained its representation of faculty, staff, and students. This committee developed another timeline that was appropriate for this point in the QEP process (see Appendix I). The newly formed committee was divided into subcommittees to examine specific areas of the QEP. Below, the current QEP committee director and members are listed according to their subcommittee appointments.

Director of QEP Committee	Narrative Subcommittee	Advertising/Publicity Subcommittee	Budget Committee

Ms. Vickie Whidbee- Cruz	***Ms. Sarah Colvert*** ***Dr. Eve Davis*** ***Ms. Linda McDonald*** ***Ms. Vickie Whidbee-Cruz***	***Ms. Carey Brown*** ***Dr. David Hood*** ***Ms. Mia Horace*** ***Mr. Samuel Nettey***	***Dr. Jeffery Clark*** ***Dr. Thomas Hardy*** ***Dr. Phil Umansky***

Current QEP Committee Composition

Stakeholder Support

The university began the process of soliciting stakeholder support for the QEP in the spring of 2008. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members were among the stakeholder groups providing input regarding the selection of a topic for the QEP. The survey results were analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. These results were shared with the QEP committee and later, with the Executive Council in July of 2008. This data was used to determine the four most popular topics of concern. White papers were written by faculty, led by members of the QEP committee. The white papers were then presented to the Executive Council in December of 2008.

Updates of the ongoing QEP work were provided to the Executive Council and at faculty meetings during the fall of 2008. Later, in the spring of 2009, once the topic of Foundational Skills was selected as the QEP topic, an additional survey of faculty and staff was placed online for responses to questions regarding the importance of reading, writing, and the integration of the two skill areas. This survey and information collected in the initial literature review provided the basis for this QEP document. Members of the committee were divided into subgroups to begin the process of completing specific sections of the plan and then, submitting those to the lead writer: the Chair of the QEP committee for the development of the completed document. As seen in the comments received from faculty, there is abundant support for selecting writing as the topic for the institution's QEP (see Appendix J).

III. A Brief Review of the Literature

Writing Across the Curriculum: A National Perspective

Recent research and theoretical literature regarding foundational skills of first and second year college students reveal nationwide concerns about the ability of certain students to be successful in college and in careers for which they are preparing. Furthermore, research shows that institutions were not prepared to meet the needs of the under-prepared students (Russell, 2008). These 'under-prepared students' are a source of concern for college administrators and faculty in all disciplines (Dzubak, 2008; Stephens, 2001; Tierney & Garcia, 2008). The disconnection between student aspirations for college and their preparation to be successful in college is also noted as

a contemporary phenomenon affecting college success rates (Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003).

The decline in literacy has been attributed to many factors. Research reviewed indicates that societal changes, including a broader representation of the general population attending colleges, and in some cases, lower educational standards, are among the reasons that literacy decline has negatively impacted college attendance and success in the most recent years (Rao, 2005; Russell, 2008).

One strategy suggested in the literature to positively impact student literacy is to address writing skills. Without strong writing skills, students cannot attain academic and career success. According to Schunk (2008), writing is defined as a "translating of ideas into linguistic symbols in print" (p. 424). Richardson (2008) notes that writing papers is a working out of ideas and not just a basic skill.

Further, other researchers state that in order *to develop effective instruction, excellence in writing is critical* (Graham, 2006; Harris, Graham, & Mason, 2006; Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Therefore, faculty development plays a role in the training of teachers to make them more effective instructors. In his book, *Faculty Development for Student Achievement: The QUE Project*, Henry (2006) elaborates on the importance of faculty development. He mentions that it brings about the insights and revelations vital to teaching, and it is profoundly significant to student success.

Faculty and administrators at Virginia Union University recognize the need for students to learn to write across the curriculum and to understand writing as a means of recognizing and using different rhetorical modes and writing paradigms. As Emig (1994) suggested, Virginia Union University's teachers agree that the ultimate goal is to use writing and writing pedagogies to create readers, writers, and thinkers who have the skills to communicate across and within various contexts and communities. In addition, students must convey written ideas, not only in the classroom, but also for their career choices. Consequently, effective writing has become essential to student success at VUU.

WAC Writing Centers and Online Tutoring Programs

One programmatic model employed to address student performance across various disciplines has been writing across the curriculum (WAC). Writing across the curriculum programs are university-wide efforts that attempt to validate the importance of writing in every discipline (Holdstein, 2001). In 1991, McLeod and Soven (as cited by Holdstein) elaborated on this definition, noting that such programs involve a comprehensive plan for faculty development, requiring writing in all courses to improve student writing and critical thinking skills.

WAC programs began in the United States in the 1970s (McLeod, 2000). The proliferation of writing centers and research documenting the effectiveness of these programs on campuses across the country are described by Jones (2001). He notes

that widespread attention to the teaching of writing led to numerous studies and articles for a thirty year period. Throughout all the research and theoretical constructs related to writing examined, Jones indicates that determining with hard evidence, the effectiveness of writing centers is difficult. The author, however, offers student reports of increased self confidence with the process of writing and positive faculty feedback as a basis for the effectiveness of writing centers and supporting programs (Jones, 2001).

The writing center's role in nurturing and providing support for writers across all disciplines is noted by leading scholars involved in the development writing center programs nationwide (Harris, 1988; Harris & Schaible, 1997; McLeod, 2000). Campus-wide use of writing centers and writing across the disciplines is justified by Haviland (2003) as a way of "*facilitating thinking skills/writing instruction and establishes writing as an important resource for all students rather than a narrowly defined developmental resource"* (p.6). This author also discussed the difference in writing programs as faculty-centered or student- centered.

Faculty-centered programs assist faculty in developing writing assignments within any curriculum, developing appropriate strategies for the assessment of writing, and offering opportunities for faculty to engage with expert writers in other disciplines to discuss writing as a tool for thinking and learning (Harris & Schaible, 1997; Haviland, 2003). Student-centered programs are those that focus more attention on skill deficiencies demonstrated by students and address those deficiencies through tutorials, use of specific software and writing workshops conducted by campus experts (Haviland, 2003; Callahan & Chumney, 2009).

The development of WAC programs has a unique set of challenges. The challenge to change philosophy and academic structures within campus communities from singular department expertise to campus-wide collaboration is noted by several who have examined WAC programs over the past twenty years (Holdstein, 2001; Harris & Schaible, 1997; Townsend, 2008). Developing and maintaining institutional cohesion is noted also as a specific challenge for collaborative program models such as WAC programs (Holdstein, 2001). One of the most significant challenges is to gain faculty interest in the WAC program. Another challenge is the identification and designation of specific writing intensive courses. Though these challenges exist, student testimonies across programs serve to validate the importance of WAC programs to their academic success and sense of scholarship among a community of learners (Jones, 2001; Sommers & Saltz, 2004).

As an enhancement to writing center offerings, online writing labs are useful means of providing access to electronic resources and convenient tutoring services to students (Anderson-Inman, 1997, p. 650). Most electronic tutoring services emerge as extensions from physical writing center locations; yet, the existence of these programs draw more attention to the main writing centers and provide assistance to students, like distance learners, who have difficulty visiting the physical sites (Anderson-Inman, 1997, p. 650). Although the writing center at Virginia Union University is centrally and conveniently located on campus, the electronic tutoring service will benefit the entire

student body, including those students who either work conflicting hours at their jobs or are hesitant to seek help in person. This method will increase the writing center's exposure on campus and encourage students to seek additional help.

The Role of Electronic Portfolios in Writing Intensive Courses

An essential and effective means of tracking students' writing progress in a WAC program is through the use of an electronic portfolio, or 'e-portfolio'. While a common definition has not yet been established for the e-portfolio, its usefulness in academia extends beyond mere digital storage for student writing. The e-portfolio concept affords students several administrative and communicative capabilities such as updating and maintaining the content of the file itself, communicating with professors and classmates about posted material, receiving and offering scholarly peer feedback, and providing personal commentary on completed work (Greenberg, 2004). Moreover, Greenberg (2004) contends that electronic portfolios encourage professional development by showcasing accomplishments for future career opportunities, facilitating scholarly discourse on previous work, and establishing and strengthening networking ties among former classmates, colleagues, and other professionals across disciplines and professions.

Implementing the e-portfolio aspect into the writing across the curriculum program at Virginia Union University will not only serve as a method of presenting information and communicating, but it will also enable faculty, administrators, and students the opportunity to make assessments about writing and effectively evaluate progression. Hence, faculty and students will be able to collaborate on document content and style from various disciplinary perspectives, which will contribute to improved student performance.

Faculty Development and Faculty Collaboration

The critical role of faculty and staff in an undergraduate education program is clear from the research reviewed (Callahan & Chumney, 2009). The recommended faculty development models consist of regular faculty meetings, articulation of goals, objectives, common course descriptions, and training in multisensory approaches to learning (Boylan, 2002; Dzubak, 2008; NCTE, 2004). Specifically, intensive faculty development in writing across the curriculum programs has been found to affect student writing positively (Melzer, 2008).

Collaboration with other academic units to gain support for educational programs is also advocated in the literature (Boylan, 2002; Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Dzubak, 2008). Boylan (2002) suggests that as collaboration develops, faculty may be more willing to take ownership of the program and any resulting problems. Melzer (2008) describes positive writing results for students whose courses were taught by instructors who team-taught with English department faculty members.

Encouraging faculty and staff to participate in professional organizations and support attendance at conferences is also recommended (Boylan, 2002). Professional development is recommended for faculty to learn more about student learning styles and to improve their own teaching styles (Claxon & Murrell, 1988). Research indicates that programs that encourage professional development are more successful than those that do not (Boylan, 2002). The teaching of writing within disciplines, assessing student writing, and the development of appropriate writing assignments are among the topics cited as important to intense professional development of faculty across the disciplines (McLeod, 2000; Sommers & Saltz, 2004).

Mindful of the research findings, Virginia Union is instituting a series of ongoing faculty development sessions to address such topics. Faculty who are teaching writing intensive courses must participate in the sessions. Tips, strategies, and knowledge derived from the sessions will be shared with the remainder of the faculty at faculty meetings and pre- and post-school conferences. As faculty members gain expertise, they will assist in the training and mentoring of other faculty. To inspire faculty and secure faculty "buy-in" prior to implementation of the QEP, Virginia Union University sponsored a faculty development session conducted by WAC specialist Dr. Margaret Price of Spelman College, on November 11, 2009.

The importance of faculty having the appropriate credentials, particularly those teaching freshman composition courses and their continued participation in intensive faculty development programs, is noted by several researchers and experts in the area of writing across the curriculum (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Harris & Schaible, 1997; Richardson, 2008).

Developmental Programs

In a historical review of developmental education programs in the United States, Stephens (2001) describes the functions of such programs over the past one hundred years. He asserts that the phenomenon of developmental education is not new in higher education in American colleges and universities. In addition to the need to address under-preparation of some college students, Stephens (2001) also notes that programs should be broadened to help all students within the undergraduate curriculum.

The assurance of appropriately qualified and credentialed instructors is critical to the provision of developmental coursework (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Richardson, 2008). As previously noted, researchers believe that developmental educators are prime candidates for faculty development programs (Gardner, as cited by Stephens, 2001).

Studies have shown that the use of daily directed writing activities increases remedial college students' writing abilities. In a study of student use of strategies learned in developmental English course, Sitler (2001) discovers that students who practice college writing skills to obtain a better understanding of writing are better able to use

strategies outside of the classroom in other courses. Research recommends that colleges should identify students performing poorly as early as possible (Dzubak, 2008). The purpose of the early identification is to provide appropriate support to enable students to be successful in their chosen academic programs. A soundly structured student assessment program is critical to the improvement of student support and to the developmental coursework that some students may require.

Tutorial Service

Well-designed tutoring programs that use volunteers as tutors have been shown by research to be effective in improving writing skills (Bell, 2002; Callahan & Chumney, 2009). Students who are tutored by peer or cross-age tutors also provided evidence of gains in their writing skills level. In the case of peer or cross-age tutors, students who were tutored demonstrated higher self-esteem and positive attitudes toward school. Tutoring programs associated with the most significant gains in writing are those that provide extensive training for tutors, formal time commitments by tutors, structured tutoring sessions, careful monitoring of tutoring services, and close relationships between classroom instruction and curriculum and the tutoring services provided (Callahan & Chumney, 2009). Bell (2002) suggests that the use of professional tutors in writing centers for making recommendations for revisions to student writing shows improvements in student writing.

In addition to the use of peer and professional tutors, tutorial software also has been effective as remedial support for college students. One of the main advantages of computer-based education is the ability to provide immediate feedback on individual responses. Feedback is vital because it is a message generated in response to a learner's action (Chang, 2003). Students are more likely to complete remedial courses and to earn higher grades when computer-based instruction is used (Chang, 2003; Krause, 2006).

Summary

This brief review of the literature reveals a number of best practices that should be instrumental in the development of a structured five-year plan for the improvement of student learning outcomes in writing and across the curriculum at Virginia Union University. The best practices revealed are WAC programs, intensive faculty development, discipline-based writing coursework, tutorial programs using peers, professionals and computer software, developmental courses, and writing centers used by all faculty and students. To enable VUU to create a structured, focused plan to improve student performance, retention, and graduation rates, the best practices listed above will become the foundation for the Quality Enhancement Plan.

IV. The Quality Enhancement Plan

The QEP is intended to create changes in student knowledge, skills, behaviors and values with the ultimate goal being enhanced academic success for students and

improved retention and graduation rates for the university. In order to accomplish this, an integrated plan has been developed including goals, implementation strategies, and outcomes for the student body as well as faculty. While it is recognized in present student performance data and graduation rates that deficiencies may exist in the ability of VUU's students to successfully complete their academic programs, it is also noted through the review of the literature and comments made by key stakeholders at the beginning of this process that the teaching and learning process initiated by faculty has an impact on learning outcomes for VUU students.

Features of the undergraduate studies program include administration of placement tests to ensure that students are prepared for credit-bearing coursework in English. The program also includes collaborative academic advisement to provide students maximum support as they enter the university. These advisors are specialized freshmen and sophomore coordinators working closely with students' assigned academic advisors. The use of an early alert system assists with detecting problems students may have early and providing appropriate academic supports that will contribute to the success of undergraduate students. Embedded within this QEP are other systems that will support and extend the services provided by the Undergraduate Studies department and focus attention on the courses governed by the undergraduate curriculum.

QEP Primary Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes

The QEP has a primary goal, objectives, and expected/learning outcomes that are delineated to help improve student learning outcomes that will start with the curriculum and follow students to their major courses, and then to a successful matriculation. The primary goal, objectives, and expected/learning outcomes are as follows:

Primary QEP Goal: *To improve student learning outcomes through enhancing their (students') writing*

***Objective 1* -** Implement Writing Intensive (WI) courses in the undergraduate curriculum

Expected/Learning Outcomes:

- Students enrolled in WI courses will demonstrate improvements by submitting writing samples in an electronic portfolio;
- There will be a 10 % annual increase in the percentage of the students passing the Criterion assessment *(upon completing ENG 102 above the baseline of 75% in fall 2009 until a 90 % pass rate is obtained after which we will maintain for the remaining years of implementation);*
- There will be a 10% annual increase in the percentage of students passing the writing segment of the CAAP assessment upon completion of a minimum of 42 semester hours above the baseline of 11 % in fall 2009;
- Students will produce written documents that display multi-disciplinary ideas and audiences *(directing their thinking towards their own disciplines and career paths).*

Objective 2 - Implement electronic tutoring programs in the VUU Writing Center

Expected/Learning Outcomes:

- There will be a 10% annual increase in the percentage of students passing the common final exam in each of the following courses: ENG 100, 101 and 102 (*by 10% over the established baseline of common exams administered during the 2009-2010 academic year);*
- There will be a 10 % annual increase in the percentage of the students passing the Criterion assessment *(upon completing ENG 102 above the baseline of 75% in fall 2009 until a 90 % pass rate is obtained after which we will maintain for the remaining years of implementation);*
- Expressions of student satisfaction with the electronic tutoring programs.

Objective 3 - Construct and implement a VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook

Expected/Learning Outcomes:

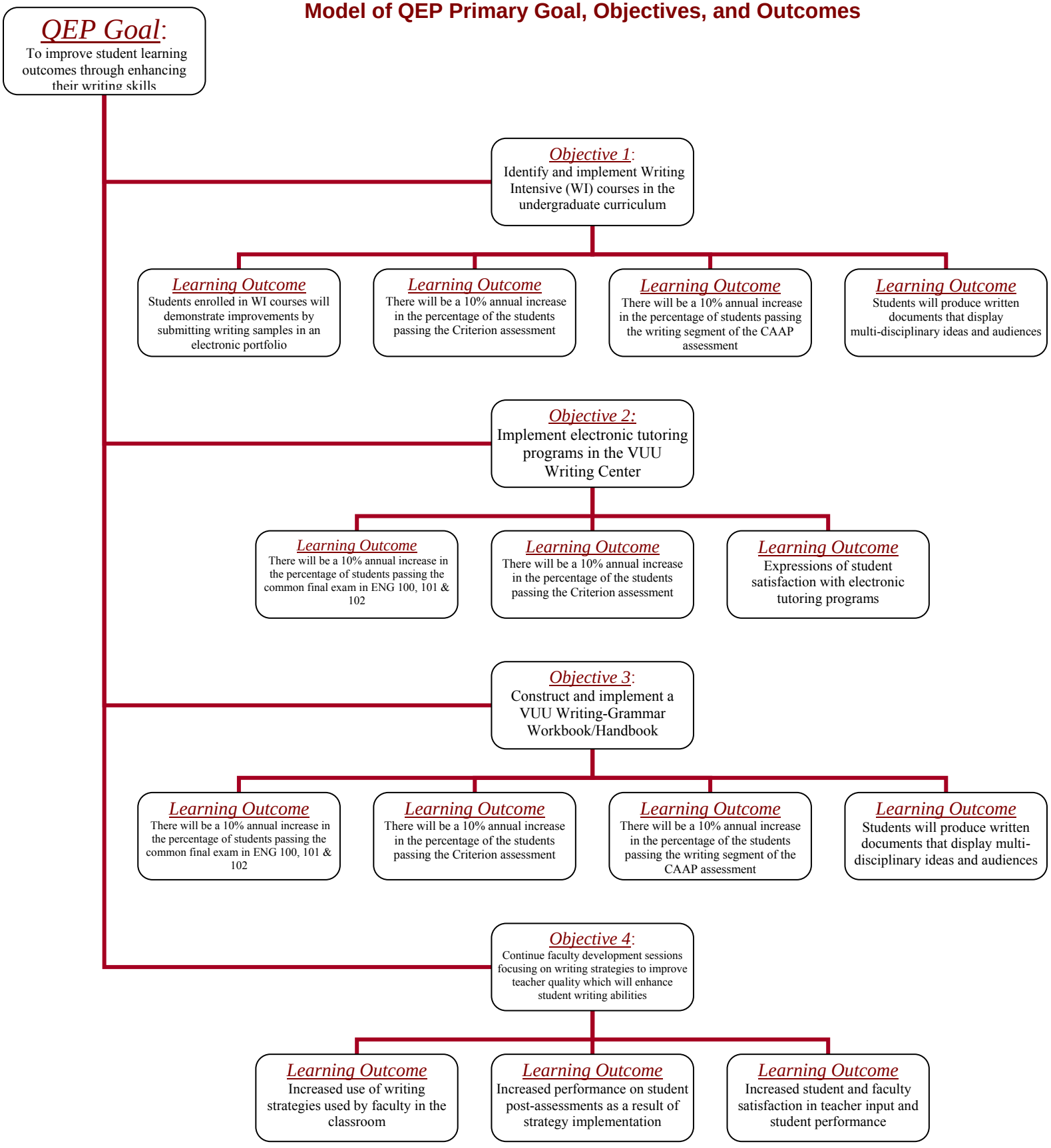
- There will be a 10% annual increase in the percentage of students passing the common final exam in each of the following courses: ENG 100, 101 and 102 (*by 10% over the established baseline of common exams administered during the 2009-2010 academic year);*
- There will be a 10 % annual increase in the percentage of the students passing the Criterion assessment *(upon completing ENG 102 above the baseline of 75% in fall 2009 until a 90 % pass rate is obtained after which we will maintain for the remaining years of implementation);*
- There will be a 10% annual increase in the percentage of students passing the writing segment of the CAAP assessment *(upon completion of a minimum of 42 semester hours above the baseline of 11 % in fall 2009);*
- Students will produce written documents that display multi-disciplinary ideas and audiences *(directing their thinking towards their own disciplines and career paths).*

Objective 4 - Continue faculty development sessions focusing on writing content to improve teacher quality which will enhance student writing abilities

Expected/Learning Outcomes:

- Increased use of writing strategies used by faculty in the classroom;
- Increased performance on student post-assessments as a result of strategy implementation;
- Increased student and faculty satisfaction in teacher input and student performance.

Model of QEP Primary Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes



WAC

Implementation Strategies

The QEP provides a set of four implementation strategies that will take place over a five-year period. The university plans to stagger the implementation of these strategies over the first three years and will monitor the success of them in the final two years with one of the strategies ongoing from year one through year five. These four strategies will directly impact the student body, directly impact the faculty, and suggest collaboration between faculty and students. The hiring of a WAC Coordinator will assist VUU with a smooth implementation process (detailed in the QEP Organizational Structure section). The detailed QEP strategies are as follows:

1. **Writing Intensive Courses**- To fulfill the goal to enhance students' writing and prepare them for possible future writing capstones in their major class areas, VUU has decided to implement Writing Intensive (WI) courses. Writing Intensive courses at Virginia Union University will be defined as courses across the curriculum that integrate numerous writing assignments in the curriculum. For example, a biology course can be identified as a WI course using biology lab reports. English 102 (Freshman Composition), History 145 (World Civilization I), NSC 260 (Introduction to Environmental Science), SCI 150 (Intro to Biological Science), SCI 151 (Intro to Physical Science), and SCI 152 (Intro to Chemical Science) have been designated as WI courses at Virginia Union University. Other courses will be identified as the program progresses. Selected samples of students' writing will be included in a ***non-electronic portfolio*** in year one of the QEP and in an ***electronic portfolio*** beginning in year two and continuing through year five.

   The non-electronic portfolio will be assessed using a rubric currently being constructed by the Languages and Literature Department and will be evaluated by the members of the multidisciplinary committee at the end of the first year. The electronic portfolio will be a requirement for the WI courses being introduced in year two of the QEP implementation and will follow the student as he or she continues to take WI courses (at end of sophomore year). The portfolio will be evaluated in the second semester of the student's sophomore year which ends their journey in the general education core. The evaluation of the electronic portfolio will be performed by the multidisciplinary committee using a rubric as a guide. Advisors will be given the results and will meet with the students to discuss areas of concern and make recommendations. Students will be given an opportunity to make changes and resubmit for reassessment.

   Optional: After this evaluation of the portfolio, major courses may opt to take advantage of the electronic portfolio as students will be able to access their accounts until the end of their senior year.

Before implementing the electronic portfolio, VUU will establish a ***multi-disciplinary*** committee led by a WAC Coordinator, who will be hired prior to the first year of QEP implementation to coordinate the QEP program. The multi-disciplinary committee will be trained on the electronic portfolio process for WI courses and all other aspects involved in WI courses prior to *year one*; once trained, the coordinator will train others teaching WI courses.

Virginia Union University will pilot all sections of SCI 150 as WI courses in year one with a non-electronic portfolio requirement to allow faculty and students a chance to become familiar with the program. English 102 and SCI 151 will be added in the second year with the electronic portfolio requirement, which includes the pilot course. The other listed courses will be added in year three of the implementation process with the electronic portfolio requirement. We anticipate having more courses across the curriculum to link with the "WI course movement."

2. **Electronic Tutoring Program**- To enhance the services for the VUU Writing Center, the university will establish the "Ask a Writer" electronic tutoring initiative, and utilize links to MyWritingLab. MyWritingLab is a site that offers tutorials, exercises, and quizzes on writing and grammar. All quiz results can be emailed directly to instructors. The program will allow instructors the opportunity to diagnose students' writing skills and select a tract of tutorials, exercises, and quizzes suited for their students' needs. Instructors will also have access to an online grade book through MyWritingLab to track students' performance as they utilize this program in the VUU Writing Center. Instructors and students will receive access codes through the purchase of the VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook (detailed in strategy 3). MyWritingLab will be implemented in year one to coincide with the implementation of the VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook. "Ask a Writer" will be similar to "Ask a Librarian" where a student can talk directly to a writing tutor through instant-messaging (IM). Faculty/students who staff the Writing Center (at specific hours) will keep an IM window open to field questions from students connecting remotely. The instant message link will be found on the VUU Writing Center website and will be implemented in year two.

   In year one of the QEP implementation process, ENG 100 students will be required to have at least 2 contact hours in the VUU Writing Center per week. Since the duration for ENG 100 is only one semester, the VUU Writing Center and all the other QEP strategies will serve to assist students who are underprepared in writing skills. All Virginia Union University students will continue to be referred by their instructors and/or take advantage of the center's offerings for their personal academic enhancement. The decision to implement the enhancements to the center in year one of the implementation processes is because the VUU Writing Center is already established and in operation; the training for these electronic programs is not too intensive; and a minimal number of people have to be trained.

3. **VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook–*(Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success)-*** The Center for Undergraduate Studies and the Languages and Literature Department are partnering with Pearson Publishers to create *Think, Plan, Write*: *Strategies for Lifelong Success, a* customized workbook/handbook for use in English 100, 101, and 102. The text will be used by all students in first year writing beginning fall 2010 (prior to year one of QEP implementation) and will be packaged with access to MyWritingLab (to be used as an electronic tutoring enhancement in the VUU Writing Center). It will be segmented into three parts; however, one of the advantages of a customized book is that instructors may use any of the material should it become necessary for review or continuity of a project. The objective of this workbook is to provide the first-year writing students with best writing practices/processes for each of the courses. The workbook focuses on discussions and practices of how to think about writing, how to write ideas clearly, how to revise writing for clarity and strategies for the improvement of writing assignments. English 100 will teach students how to develop paragraphs, how to explain their ideas with clarity and how to develop essays, using basic narrative writing as the foundation for all discourse. Because the text is progressive, each level or course will build upon the previous one. For example, English 101 will teach rhetorical writing including but not limited to research and writing using the MLA format and other academic writing using the APA format. The workbook/handbook will include a common syllabus for each class and guides on how writing happens by using models to generate ideas. Although these are not the only ways of generating ideas, and the handbook will discuss other methods of idea gathering, this is an example of how comprehensive the text is. The text includes a combination of VUU student work models and published works, including essays, poetry, research papers, reports, résumés, and cover letters (types of writing across the disciplines). Many of the readings include thinking and writing assignments and grammar exercises. Other advantages of the text are the cost is controlled by VUU, the content is controlled by VUU, and the VUU Writing Center/Languages and Literature will receive 10% for each sale, which will be used to purchase additional resources for the students.

4. **Faculty Development**- Five faculty development sessions will be conducted by experts each year. Three sessions will be held each year on teaching and evaluating students' writing across the curriculum. Faculty teaching WI courses will be required to attend all sessions; remaining VUU faculty will be required to attend one of these sessions per year. Representatives from Live Text (electronic portfolio) will train WI faculty and any other interested faculty prior to year one of QEP implementation process and will continue with two sessions per year beginning in year one through year five. The sessions that will include all VUU faculty members will help to prepare them and keep them informed of the aspects of our QEP program.

Virginia Union University's faculty believes that having these sessions is highly important. This was evidenced in the fall of 2009 when VUU faculty who currently teach classes that require some level of student composition were invited to a developmental session to explore how they could better address their students' writing problems and needs and how the Writing Across the Curriculum program could better assist faculty in this effort. At the end of the session, the faculty was given a survey asking them to rank needs and possible solutions in terms of importance and potential success. This session revealed that 98% of participating faculty members ranked the importance of writing skills in their courses and for their majors as "high" or "very high," and 73% of the respondents ranked the materials distributed at this session as "high" or "very high" in terms of usefulness to their efforts to improve or further incorporate writing in their courses. The faculty participation and discussion were constructive, culminating more than 20 suggestions for the types of writing assignments that might be useful to their students and planning future QEP presentations. Participants suggested the implementation of team-teaching sessions between English faculty members and faculty in other departments, composing lesson plans focused on specific problem areas in writing, and sharing teaching methods to address writing-related issues. The WAC Coordinator and the multidisciplinary team will adhere to these suggestions as they collaborate with the Faculty Development Committee to produce more of these sessions. All sessions offered during WAC implementation will count towards the university policy for faculty development attendance. All faculty members will receive professional development certificates at the conclusion of sessions. The WAC faculty development sessions will lead faculty to develop a better conceptual understanding of the writing process, foster a commitment to student writing, and promote writing as a vehicle for learning.

Connection of QEP Strategies to VUU's Strategic Plan

The VUU QEP is directly linked to the strategic plan for the university. The strategies implemented for the QEP are correlated with certain strategic priorities outlined in the strategic plan. A portion of VUU strategic priority one (1.10) emphasizes assisting VUU graduates in obtaining admission into a graduate or professional school. Accordingly, writing intensive courses in the QEP support this strategy to assist students with entry as well as in future graduate and professional programs. VUU strategic priority one (1.11) also speaks to exposing students to collaborative opportunities during their matriculation at VUU. The writing intensive courses will allow for interdepartmental collaboration since the courses emphasize writing across the curriculum.

VUU's strategic priorities are linked throughout the QEP strategies. VUU strategic priority five (5.1) is to strengthen faculty and staff performance. Implementing satisfaction surveys as part of the QEP strategy is critical to this priority. Also helpful in supporting this strategy is the creation of the VUU writing-grammar workbook/handbook. This will allow English faculty to teach to a standardized set of learning objectives, also allowing more room for strengthening skills through

collaboration. VUU also seeks to enhance the technological experience of students, as expressed in strategic priority seven (7.5). Through the electronic tutoring program, electronic portfolios, and the writing center explained in the QEP strategy, a portion of the university's technology goals are also addressed.

A major focus for VUU is embodied in the university's strategic priority three (3.2), increasing retention efforts. All of the strategies of the QEP will significantly increase the university's retention efforts. The university seeks to make the overall experience of VUU students as fulfilling as possible, and strengthening the academic curriculum through the various QEP strategies will achieve this goal.

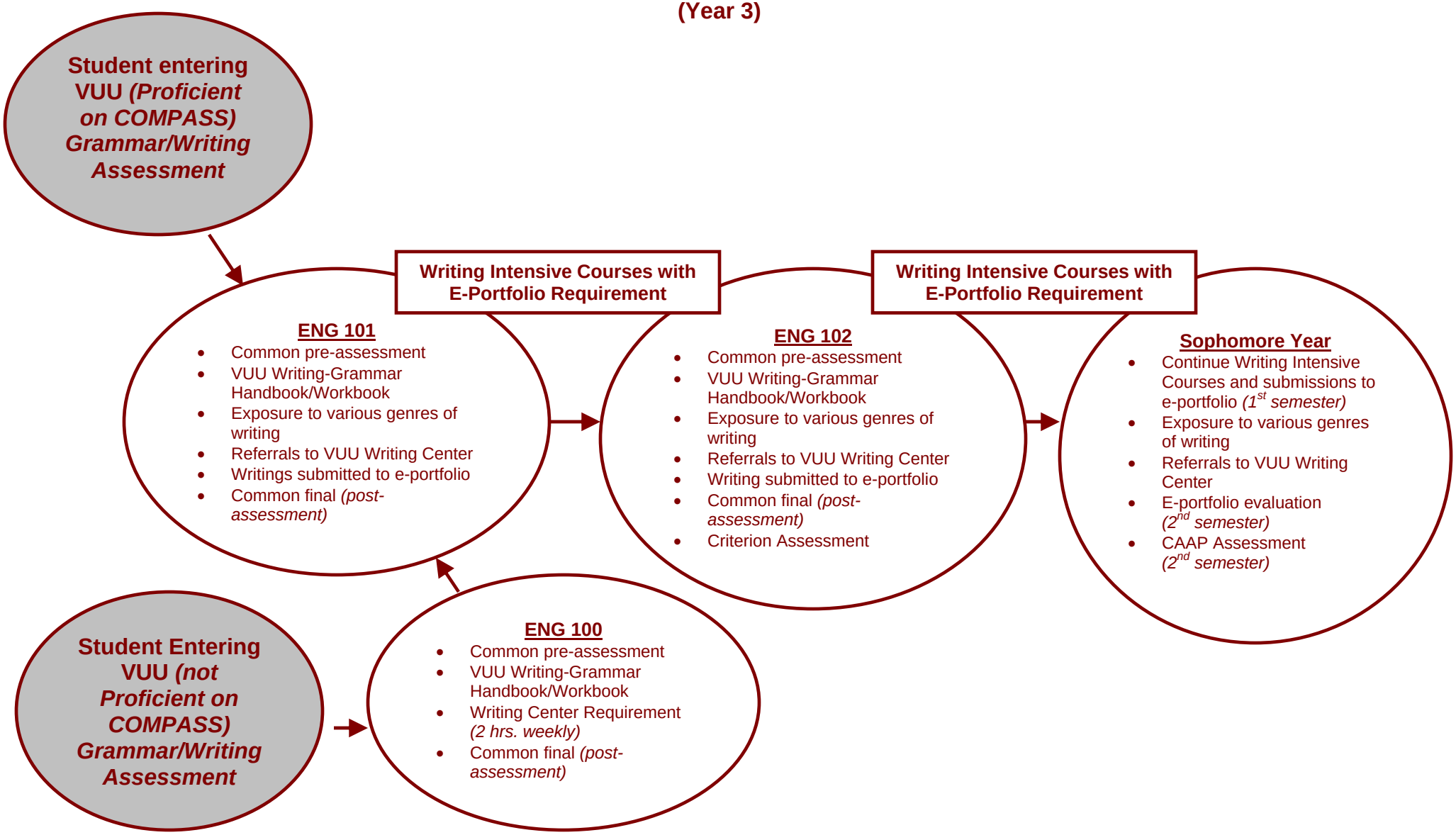
The timeline on the following page demonstrates how the proposed strategies will be implemented at Virginia Union University over a five-year interval. The timeline is "tentative" as a selection of the strategies will be piloted in the fall of 2010; therefore, our efforts will be well in progression prior to year one of the QEP implementation process. Monitoring will take place each year and with each implementation.

Timeline for Implementing Strategies

Strategies	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Strategy 1: Writing Intensive Courses	• Pilot SCI 150 as a WI course with non-electronic portfolio requirement	• Add ENG 102 & SCI 151 as WI Course with electronic portfolio requirement (including the pilot course)	• Add History 145, NSC 260, & SCI 152 as WI courses with the electronic portfolio requirement	• Monitoring the progress of the courses & student achievement/ making adjustments as necessary	• Monitoring the progress of the courses & student achievement/ making adjustments as necessary
Strategy 2: Electronic Tutoring Programs	• Training for VUU Writing Center Staff on the E-tutoring programs • Implement "MyWritingLab" • Implement Writing Center attendance requirements for students in ENG100 courses	• Implement "Ask a Writer"	• Monitor progress of programs & student achievement/ making adjustments as necessary	• Monitor progress of programs & student achievement/ making adjustments as necessary	• Monitor progress of programs & student achievement/ making adjustments as necessary
Strategy 3: VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook	• *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* book used as the textbook for ENG 100, 101, & 102	• *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* book used as the textbook for ENG 100, 101, & 102	• *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* book used as the textbook for ENG 100, 101, & 102	• *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* book used as the textbook for ENG 100, 101, & 102	• *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* book used as the textbook for ENG 100, 101, & 102
Strategy 4: Faculty Development	• Five faculty training/development sessions on WAC initiatives	• Five faculty training/development sessions on WAC initiatives	• Five faculty training/develop-ment sessions on WAC initiatives	• Five faculty training/develop-ment sessions on WAC initiatives/ making adjustments as necessary	• Five faculty training/develop-ment sessions on WAC initiatives/ making adjustments as necessary

The QEP at Work for the VUU Student

(Year 3)



QEP Assessment Plan/Evaluation of WAC Program

Virginia Union University will use the assessment plan already in place to assess student improvements during and after implementing the QEP strategies and to evaluate the success of the QEP program. Baselines are currently being set of by using the assessments discussed in this section. The following paragraphs emulate Virginia Union University's QEP assessment plan.

As freshmen enter Virginia Union University, they are required to take the COMPASS (Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System) test. Students who transfer into VUU with less than 45 hours must also take the COMPASS. This test is used to assess students' reading, writing, and mathematics skills for placement into the appropriate courses. The COMPASS provides individual, group and institution reports for student placement and development of future university-based assessments. Students scoring 75 or below in writing on the COMPASS are required to take developmental course English 100 as indicated by their performance.

In addition to the use of COMPASS, the university has chosen to utilize the Criterion writing assessment. Criterion is a web-based instructional tool that evaluates students' essay-writing skills. At the completion of English 102, Criterion offers students an opportunity to develop better writing skills by being able to revise their own essays, receive immediate online constructive feedback and a holistic score, with reference to each essay submitted. The analysis gives feedback on grammar, mechanics, usage, style, development, and organization. The analysis also gives the student an in-depth overview about each error that was made in order to identify which areas of writing needs improvement. The holistic scores are on a 6-point scale. Students who receive a 3 or less, must get assistance from the VUU Writing Center. The VUU Writing Center will provide the essential tools the student needs to write a more effective paper, eventually improving their holistic score. The writing tutor will recommend to the testing and tutoring monitor when the student is ready to retake the examination. Students who receive a 4 or better will have satisfied the competency requirement for the Criterion.

With a multiplicity of essay topics to choose from, faculty members are able to decide which topic would be most beneficial to their students. Criterion prompts range from many types such as persuasive, issue, argumentative, informative, narrative, and expository. The Criterion service is beneficial to students, faculty, and staff because it allows the university to make program changes and to utilize the scores as a benchmark for future testing. ***The Criterion assessment will be used to assist in the evaluation of the effectiveness of WI courses and the Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook.***

The CAAP is designed to measure student proficiency in requirements across the curriculum. CAPP provides reports that will enhance the institution's ability to evaluate and improve the program. CAAP measures student proficiency in mathematics, reading, and writing**.** The use of these standardized tools will greatly improve the university's ability to serve students based on their potential, to design instructional programs using data reports which all instructors have access, and to measure the effectiveness of the general core program to provide the best foundation for all students matriculating at Virginia Union University. ***The results of the writing section of the CAAP assessment will provide information to assist with evaluating the effectiveness of the WI courses as well as the Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success textbook.***

In addition to these assessments, Virginia Union University will evaluate the electronic portfolio product with a rubric developed by the WI course teachers, multi-disciplinary team, and the WAC Specialist *prior to year one* of implementation. The trainings and faculty development sessions will be assessed by student performance on course post-assessments, surveys, and teachers' self evaluations. The additional assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the electronic tutoring programs will include student survey responses on their experiences using these programs in the VUU Writing Center, and student performance on post-assessments for ENG 100, 101, and 102 courses.

To evaluate the entire WAC program, semester reports will be generated and included in annual assessment reports on the QEP initiatives to be given to Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The five-year impact report mandated by SACS-COC will be compiled from these reports. Data from the semester and annual reports will be used to determine if changes must be made to the WAC program or if a new program needs to be introduced. The ongoing monitoring process will produce information on how effective the WAC program is for Virginia Union University.

The chart on the following page shows the strategies, anticipated outcomes, and assessments for our QEP.

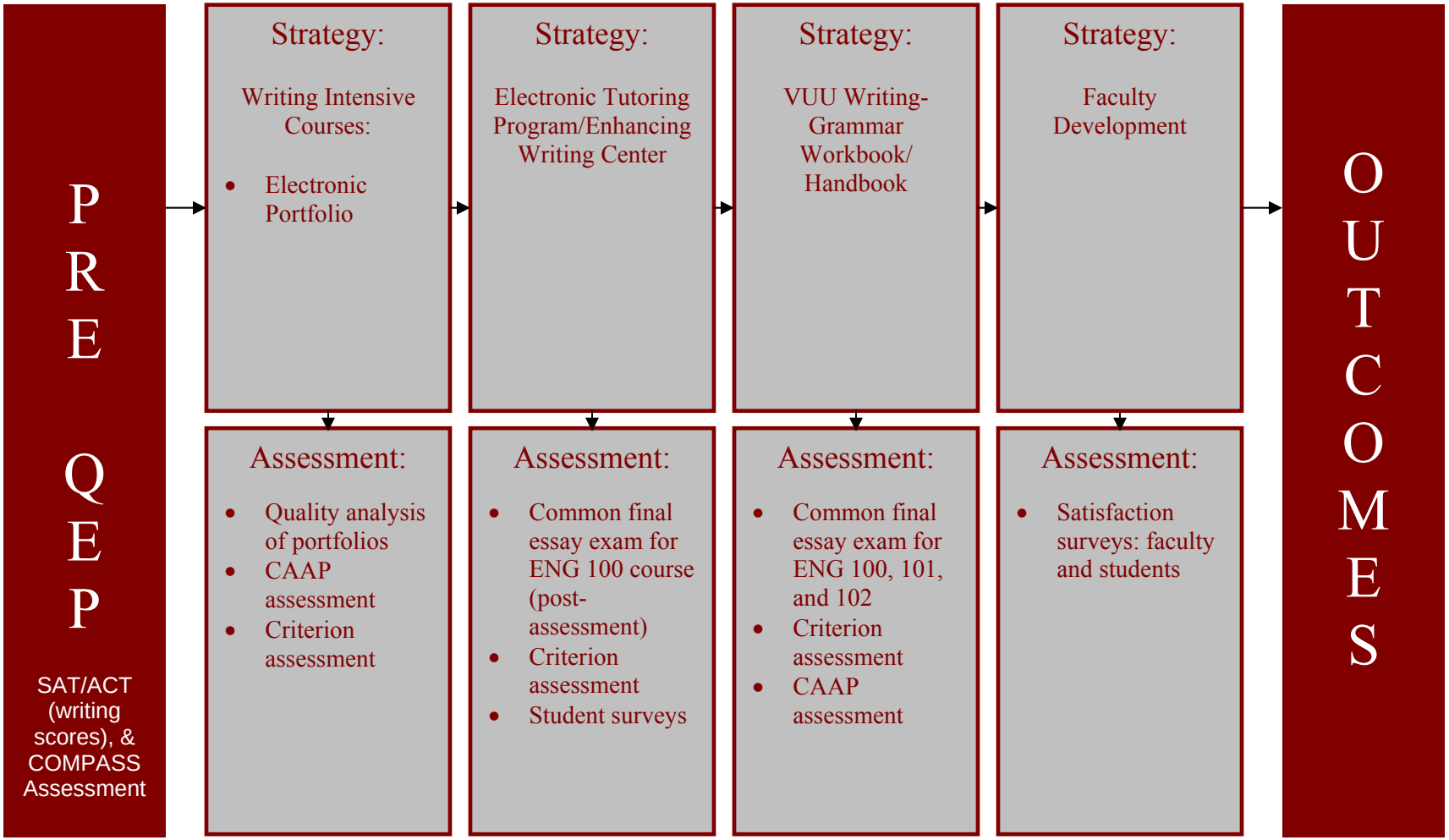
Table of Strategies, Anticipated Outcomes, and Assessments

(This chart displays abbreviated outcomes; the detailed outcomes are found in the section entitled "QEP Primary Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes")

Strategy	Anticipated Outcomes	Assessment
Writing Intensive Courses: • ***electronic portfolio***	• *improvements in writing samples submitted in e-portfolio* • *10% annual increase in passing rate for Criterion* • *10% annual increase in passing rate for CAAP* • *Written documents displaying multi-disciplinary ideas & audiences*	• *Quality analysis of portfolios* • *CAAP assessment* • *Criterion assessment*
Electronic Tutoring Program/Enhancing VUU Writing Center	• *10% annual increase in passing rates for ENG 100, ENG 101, & ENG 102* • *10% annual increase in passing rate for Criterion* • *Expressions of student satisfaction with electronic tutoring programs*	• *Common final essay exam for ENG 100 course (post-assessment)* • *Criterion assessment* • *Student surveys*
VUU Writing-Grammar Workbook/Handbook	• *10% annual increase in passing rates for ENG 100, ENG 101, & ENG 102* • *10% annual increase in passing rate for Criterion* • *10% annual increase in passing rate for writing section of CAAP* • *Written documents displaying multi-disciplinary ideas & audiences*	• *Common final essay exam for ENG 100, 101, an 102* • *Criterion assessment* • *CAAP assessment*
Faculty Development Sessions	• *Increased use of writing strategies used by faculty in the classroom* • *Increased performance on student post-assessments* • *Increased student and faculty satisfaction in teacher input and student performance*	• *Satisfaction surveys: faculty & students*

QEP Evaluation Design

The following plan will be used to measure the overall achievement of the QEP
(The five-year impact report will be compiled from the annual assessment reports for each strategy)



QEP Organizational Structure

Virginia Union University has fashioned an organizational structure tailored to suit the needs of the newly proposed WAC program. We are aware that the QEP initiatives are the efforts of the entire university family; however, to have an effective program, the university will appoint/hire a WAC Coordinator who will be a part of the Center for Undergraduate Studies and will be supported by a multi-disciplinary committee.

The multi-disciplinary committee, which will be headed by the WAC Coordinator, will be comprised of faculty who teach courses across the general education core, instructors of Writing Intensive courses, and representatives from all academic departments. The committee will serve to give each department a voice in the implementation, progression, and evaluation of the QEP initiatives. The multi-disciplinary committee will replace the QEP committee that developed the QEP topic, and plan for Virginia Union University. The multi-disciplinary committee will provide assistance to the WAC Coordinator with the input from their respective areas and suggest improvements to the initiatives as necessary. The WAC Coordinator and the committee will also work closely with both the Director and the Assistant Director of the Center for Undergraduate Studies and Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

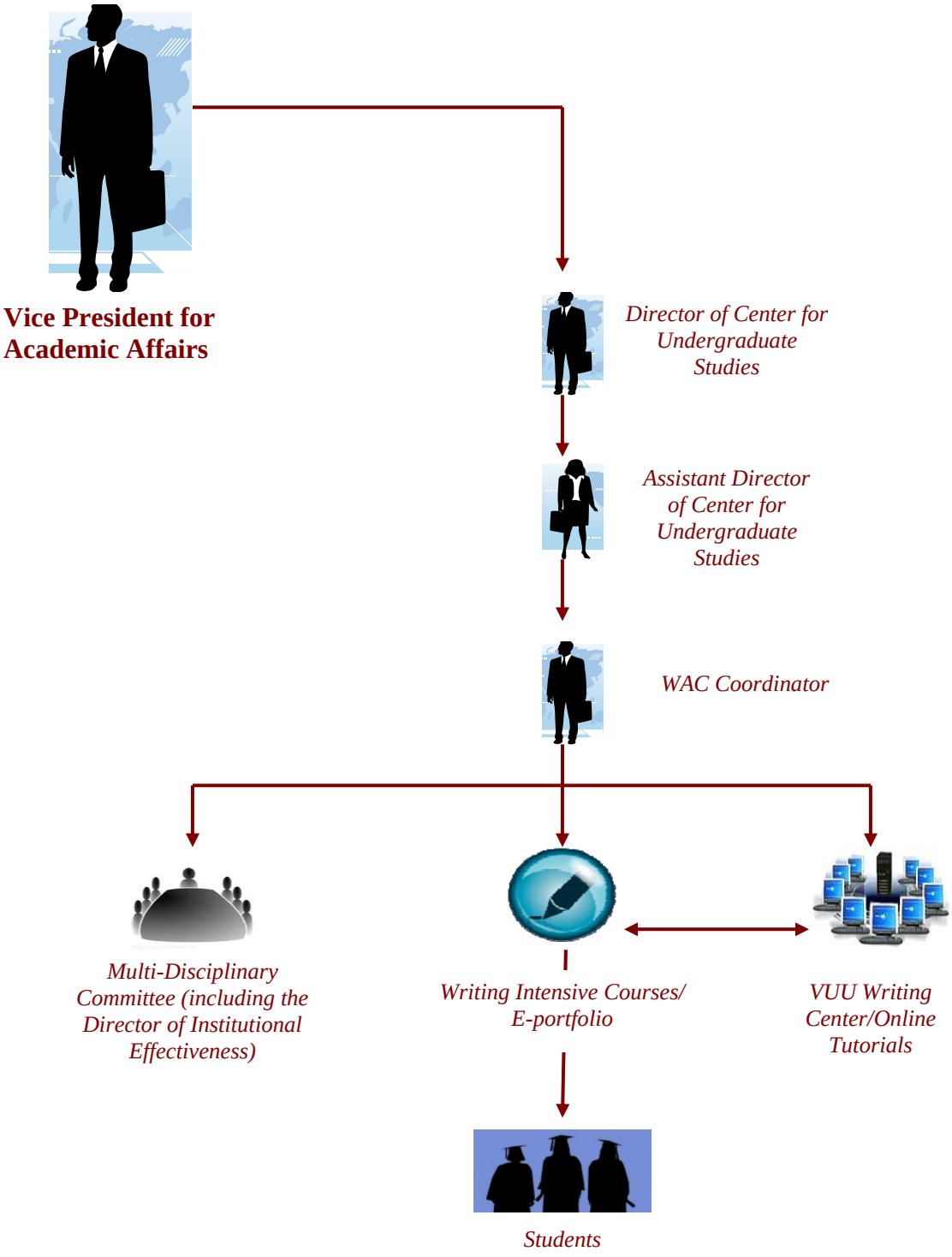
The preferred qualifications of the WAC Coordinator are as follows (However, we will adapt according to experience): terminal degree; however, a Masters degree in English/Rhetorical writing or English/Technical writing is acceptable.

The WAC Coordinator is responsible for implementation of the QEP. To implement Writing Intensive Courses and the WAC program at VUU, the university will designate a position for a qualified WAC Coordinator who will:

- approve courses as fulfilling the WI requirement (as more courses "buy-in")
- oversee development of a university rubric for use with general writing assignments, research projects, and electronic portfolio
- create guidelines needed for required writings
- coordinate training for faculty on electronic portfolios and other WAC initiatives (working closely with the Faculty Development Committee)
- monitor the effectiveness and progression of WI courses and other WAC initiatives including the VUU Writing Center
- work closely with multi-disciplinary team in regards to progression of the program and other concerns
- manage QEP budget concerns
- designate other teams or committees as needed for the effectiveness of the program
- generate annual assessment reports on the QEP initiatives to be given to Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (the five-year impact report will be compiled from these reports).

Below is a diagram of the QEP Organizational Structure.

Organization of Personnel for QEP Initiatives



QEP Budget and Sustainability

The Board of Trustees and the administration of the university have made the QEP efforts priority because of the desire to see VUU's students succeed academically. In addition, the 10% return from the *Think, Plan, Write: Strategies for Lifelong Success* textbook will also help increase yearly budget allotments. With the continued support of our administrators as well as other stakeholders, VUU is confident that its efforts will be carried out efficiently. The following chart shows the proposed budget for the writing program.

Proposed Budget for QEP Initiatives

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
1. Coordinator--Writing Across the Curriculum Program	$55,000 Base Salary plus $11,000 Fringe Benefits = $66,000	$55,000 Base Salary plus $11,000 Fringe Benefits = $66,000	$55,000 Base Salary plus $11,000 Fringe Benefits = $66,000	$55,000 Base Salary plus $11,000 Fringe Benefits = $66,000	$55,000 Base Salary plus $11,000 Fringe Benefits = $66,000	$330,000
2. Writing Center Monitor	$35,000 Base Salary plus $7,000 Fringe Benefits = $42,000	$35,000 Base Salary plus $7,000 Fringe Benefits = $42,000	$35,000 Base Salary plus $7,000 Fringe Benefits = $42,000	$35,000 Base Salary plus $7,000 Fringe Benefits = $42,000	$35,000 Base Salary plus $7,000 Fringe Benefits = $42,000	$210,000
3. Tutors	$11,675	$12,675	$13,675	$14,675	$15,675	$68,375
4. E-Portfolio	$0	$4,000	$9,000	$9,000	$9,000	$31,000
5. Instant Messaging System	$800	$0	$0	$0	$0	$800
6. Training Costs for Faculty/Off-Site Conference Attendance by WAC Personnel	$9,450	$9,450	$9,450	$9,450	$9,450	$47,250
7. Assessments	$13,675	$13,675	$13,675	$13,675	$13,675	$68,375
8. Supplies and Miscellaneous	$3,200	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$19,200
Total	$146,800	$151,800	$157,800	$158,800	$159,800	$775,000

A breakdown of the Proposed Budget appears on the next page.

QEP Proposed Budget Breakdown

(1) *WAC Coordinator* – $55,000 of base salary plus 20% in fringe benefits ($11,000) (social security taxes, pension plan, health insurance, etc.)
Total = $330,000

(2) *Writing Center Monitor* – $35,000 of base salary plus 20% in fringe benefits ($7,000) (social security taxes, pension plan, health insurance, etc.)
Total = $210,000

(3) *Tutors* – Pay per hour of tutoring=$10 with some increase each year
$11,675/$10 per hour = 1,167.50 hours available for tutoring Year 1
Total = $68,375

(4) *E-Portfolio (Live Text)* – $80 per student which will begin Year 3. The university will pay $20. Freshmen will pay a one-time technology fee of $60. E-Portfolio will begin Year 3 for 450 students (450 x $20= $9,000 but will be piloted Year 2 on 200 students (200 x $20=$4,000)
Total = $31,000

(5) Instant Messaging System (Para Chat) - $600 for initial installment; $200 for maintenance contract
Total = $800 (one time payment for first year)

(6) Training/Faculty Development Costs
Cost for each one full day workshop:
$1,500 stipend to instructor of session
$300 for travel expenses
$90 for lodging
Total = $1,890 per workshop
Year 1 to 5 = $1,890 x 5 workshops = $9,450
$9,450 x 5 years=$47,250
Total = $47,250

(7) *Assessments*
COMPASS-- $3.45 per person x 500 = $1,725
Criterion – $14.50 per person x 400 = $5, 800
CAAP Assessment - $20.50 per person x 300 = $6, 150
Total = $13,675 per year for five years
Grand Total = $68, 375

(8) *Miscellaneous Supplies* for VUU Writing Center and the implementation of Virginia Union University's QEP
$3,200 for year one
$4,000 (years 2-5) x 4 years = $16,000
$16,000 + $3,200 = $19,200
Total = $19,200

Marketing Plan

The 'Writing Across the Curriculum QEP will be marketed to the Virginia Union University community using a variety of resources. The starting point for informing the campus community about the plan, its purpose, components, services, and benefits will be the VUU website. In addition to the general announcement of the 'Writing Across the Curriculum' QEP topic on the website, the following activities will also be conducted:

1. **Student QEP theme contest** (to be held during the fall of 2009). The selected theme will be used to develop QEP banners, t-shirts, posters, bumper stickers and other advertising paraphernalia. The theme contest will last for a week, and the QEP committee will vote on the best topic. All banners, t-shirts, posters, and other items displaying the theme will be posted accordingly. Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place themes.

2. **Alumni Conference** on campus to announce the QEP topic. QEP team members and the director will present the plan; Theme contest winner will be presented. Alumni will be offered opportunities to provide scholarships for writing competitions and funding for other QEP activities. This will assure Alumni support and engagement in the implementation and success of the QEP for the five–year period.

3. Beginning with the spring semester of 2010, the **VUU website will provide a QEP link** which will detail the plan, the Writing Center, and its services. The website will link the user to the Writing Center, allowing students and faculty to contact the staff or request a service. The website will also link the faculty to professional development sessions, providing dates, sites, topics and presenters.

4. In the spring semester of 2010, **"QEP Quips"** will be sent via email to VUU faculty and students bi-weekly. "QEP Quips" are brief witty statements about writing strategies and WAC to keep students and faculty informed of the aspects of the QEP.

5. In the spring semester 2010, a **QEP Day** in which the topic and purpose of the QEP will be stressed by faculty, in each area of the curriculum, to students. This will be done in order to effectively convey how the QEP topic affects each area.

Regular updates of QEP activities will be given at all Faculty meetings to ensure that the faculty is fully informed and embraces the concept and activities of the Quality Enhancement Plan. Faculty will also be involved in the planning of certain QEP activities; therefore, the opportunity to share their ideas will extend beyond faculty meetings to direct involvement in planning and implementation of the 'Writing Across the Curriculum' outcomes and key strategies.

The QEP committee will continue to meet throughout the semester to plan and implement further strategies to inform the university family of the WAC initiatives. Sponsoring student writing contests and presenting writing awards will be key marketing tools to attract aspiring writers. Promoting the VUU Writing Center's services during student programs will remind the students where they can get help to improve their reading and writing skills. Also, publication of brochures, posters, newsletters, pamphlets, and writing guides will be used integrate the QEP objectives and activities into the daily life of the campus.

External Support

As Virginia Union University sought to implement a WAC program, the input of various experts became vital to the process. However, our primary QEP consultant is Dr. Margaret Price of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Price serves as an assistant professor in the Department of English. She has demonstrated her expertise at Virginia Union University through her valued input to both the Quality Enhancement Plan document and to the proposed WAC program. She held consultation meetings with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the director of the QEP committee, and the QEP committee to offer ideas and advice on having a successful WAC program. Dr. Price also facilitated a faculty development session entitled "Writing Across the Curriculum" in the fall of 2009 highlighting key strategies for the proposed WAC program. The session also stimulated discussions and ideas of how writing can be incorporated across the disciplines. Dr. Margaret Price will continue to be an advisor to VUU regarding any concerns about the WAC program. She will also present at selected faculty development sessions for Virginia Union University.

Summary of QEP

The development and design of this QEP has provided an excellent opportunity for VUU faculty to get deeply immersed in an analysis of student performance data, current research in an area of grave concern to the campus community, and engage in discourse about how the new discoveries and past concerns merge to set a course for change across the university. Designing activities that directly impact teaching and learning for students and faculty has been equally rewarding. VUU is confident that the primary goal set, implementation strategies, anticipated outcomes, and assessments can be met in the time frame allowed with the support of the entire campus community. These strategies align well with the re-organizational structures recently implemented by the administration. Having available student data to provide baseline information for the evaluation of each outcome will serve the university well as the plan unfolds over the next five years.

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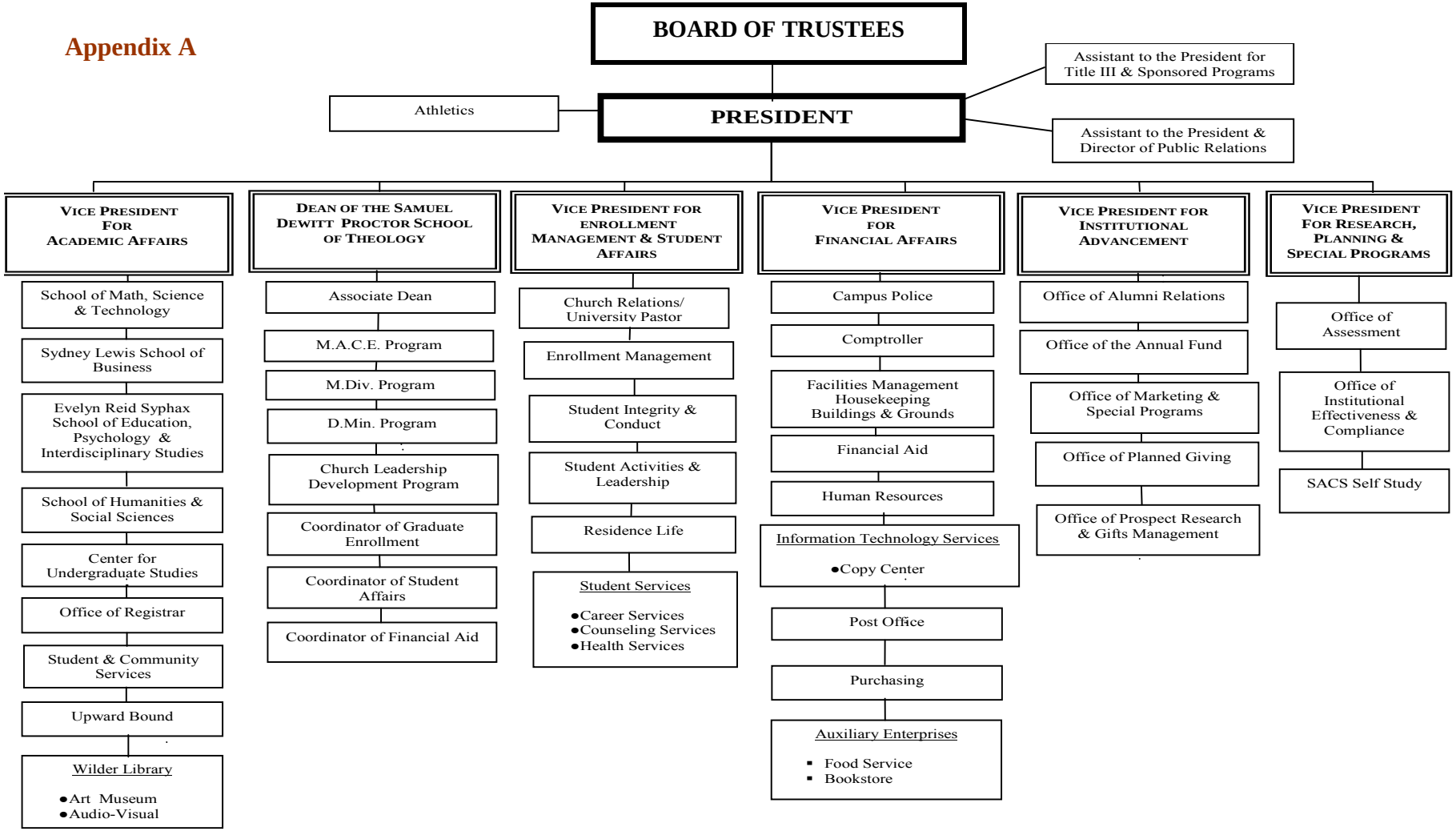
Appendix A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SACS Self Study

Appendix B

Strategic Plan for Virginia Union University

Strategic Priorities

1.0 Quality of Academic Programs
2.0 Financing the Mission of the University
3.0 Enrollment Management
4.0 Student Engagement/Empowerment
5.0 Continuous Quality Improvement
6.0 Image Enhancement
7.0 Technology
8.0 Civic Engagement

Strategic Priority One – Quality of Academic Program Goals

1.1 To review all current academic programs
1.2 To explore new academic programs
1.3 To develop on-going, comprehensive assessment plans for each major
1.4 To establish a Continuing Education Program
1.5 To enhance the University's enrollment management processes
1.6 To enhance faculty technological skills
1.7 To expand the number of Smart Classrooms
1.8 To review and revise policies and procedures for academic actions (warnings, probations, suspensions) and the Integrity Code
1.9 To ensure that new faculty and adjuncts are made aware of the Institution's policies and procedures
1.10 To assist VUU graduates in attaining admission into graduate or professional school
1.11 To expose students to extracurricular experiences, experiential learning and collaborative opportunities during their matriculation at VUU
1.12 To provide international educational experiences to students and faculty through student and faculty exchanges with other countries and study abroad programs

ACTIONS - Priority One

- Form Program Review committee, establish program review design, collect and analyze data
- Establish mechanism for researching market demand for new majors and form Academic Programs Marketing Committee
- Review student learning outcomes for each major and purchase software program for reporting assessment results
- Conduct market analysis for new Continuing Education Program and pilot new courses by June 2006
- Establish University-wide Task Force to address recruitment, advising, and retention.
- Develop training session and implement Enhanced Advisement Model (EAM)
- Expand ANGEL training program and enhance existing technology evaluation criteria
- Develop and implement an Orientation Program for all new faculty and adjuncts
- Establish Graduate School committees in each School to identify graduate programs and assist students in attaining admission
- Expose students to more academically-based internships and co-op experiences
- Designate a team leader for international affairs

Strategic Priority Two – Financing the Mission of the University Goals
2.1 To strengthen the Institution's long-term financial viability
2.2 To improve administrative processes
2.3 To improve the University's living and learning environment
2.4 To create alternative revenue streams

ACTIONS - Priority Two
• Institutionalize Academic Empowerment Program
• Control health care expenditure growth by exploring health care consortium agreements and initiating wellness programs for employees
• Control utility expenditure growth by improving thermo performance, addressing critical building systems, and increasing University awareness of energy efficiency
• Reduce percentage of write-off to revenues by assisting students in locating alternate financial aid resources and reducing the Stafford/Perkins Loan default rate
• Explore bulk purchasing and engage in exclusive contracts
• Foster new endowment gifts of $2.5 million annually
• Establish internal audit/internal control function
• Outsource accounting for individual endowment funds
• Reduce amount of deferred maintenance and explore grant opportunities for historic buildings
• Institute campus safety program
• Improve campus perimeter

Strategic Priority Three – Enrollment Management
3.1 To recruit students who show potential for being successful at Virginia Union University
3.2 To increase retention efforts

ACTIONS - Priority Three
• Identify students who fit within University's 20-60-20 enrollment policy, participate in National Student Search Programs, and implement "Project Renew and Restore" with Baptist General Convention
• Develop committee of faculty, staff, and students to review and amend recruitment materials
• Train students for peer to peer interventions with students at risk for attritionExplore opportunities for online degrees

Strategic Priority Four – Student Engagement and Empowerment Goals
4.1 To increase the level of student engagement and leadership campus-wide
4.2 To enhance communications in all aspects of student life
4.3 To create an environment that cultivates holistic student development
4.4 To expose students to the conscious proliferation of cultural and ethnic experiences

ACTIONS - Priority Four
• Administer and conduct analyses on student surveys to determine needs and interests
• Require new student development portfolio
• Incorporate leadership curriculum as second semester component to Freshman Orientation
• Coordinate with Alumni Office to identify opportunities for collaboration and develop a Parent's Assistance Group
• Provide programs and services that follow the CAPSL model (Civic Engagement,

Academic Achievement/Engagement, Personal Growth, Spiritual Development and Leadership)
• Engage Student Affairs consultants to conduct a SACS review of VUU Division of Student Affairs

Strategic Priority Five – Continuous Quality Improvement Goals
5.1 To strengthen faculty and staff performance
5.2 To conduct an ongoing evaluation and assessment of Institutional Programs
5.3 To establish a university-wide system of evaluation for external contracts

ACTIONS - Priority Five
• Develop faculty and staff mentoring program
• Establish mechanism for competitive evaluation of research/grant proposals
• Create mechanism for continuous review and update of handbooks
• Conduct annual workshops for all new staff
• Establish mechanism for fine-tuning faculty and staff evaluation instruments
• Institute a merit-based performance evaluation system
• Re-examine University indirect cost grant structure

Strategic Priority Six – Image Enhancement Goals
6.1 To assure a positive image for the University among all constituents
6.2 To improve public perception of the University
6.3 To engage the University faculty, staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in developing image enhancement strategies
6.4 To develop a University brand
6.5 To cultivate the constituents of the University

ACTIONS - Priority Six
• Improve quality of University publications
• Re-design University website
• Plan and implement at least two yearly events to showcase University programs to the community
• Engage services of public relations firm
• Update recruitment tools
• Conduct marketing study of potential advertising options
• Design database of faculty areas of specialization (media source book)
• Update alumni database

Strategic Priority Seven – Technology Goals
7.1 Campus Connectivity: To ensure a strong technological infrastructure to keep pace with campus and global needs in order to meet academic, research, and business needs
7.2 IT Center Service Enhancement: To deliver swift, accurate, and efficient services by positioning existing and future IT services to respond effectively to growing campus demands
7.3 Integrated Campus Information System: To enhance current administrative software by adding additional system and integrity features
7.4 Campus Communications: To further improve employee service to include documentation, consulting, and liaison support
7.5 Technology Integration: To enhance the technological experience of all students

ACTIONS - Priority Seven

- Implement all fiber network to remaining administrative buildings and dormitories during 2007, 2008, and 2012
- Increase bandwidth for enabling voice, video, teleconferencing, and other technologies
- Implement monitoring software for information and network security
- Implement network disaster recovery plan
- Consolidate campus-wide printer system
- Implement document imaging system
- Add Inventory Asset module to track campus-wide capital assets, buildings, vehicles, computers, etc.
- Implement student laptop requirement for entering freshmen
- Implement SmartCard student ID swipe interface with Integrated Campus Information System

Strategic Priority Eight – Civic Engagement Goals

8.1 To standardize an approach to provide opportunities for civic engagement activities and programs, such as service learning and community service

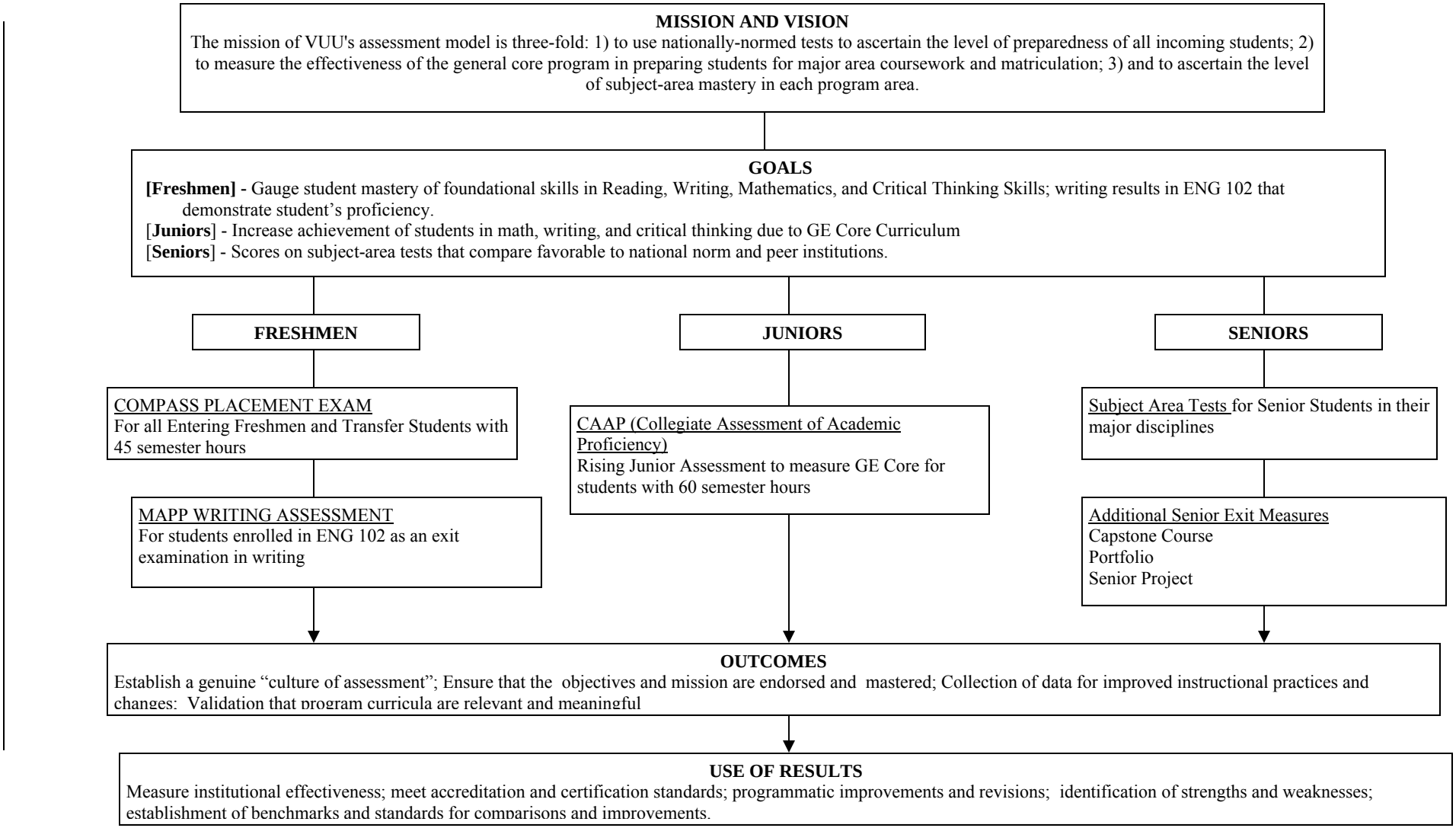
8.2 To ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of service learning and community service projects at all levels of the Institution

8.3 To explore the feasibility of establishing faith-based community focused projects at all levels of the Institution

ACTIONS - Priority Eight

- Establish Civic Engagement Coordinating and Oversight Committee
- Classify and catalog programs and activities appropriate to service learning and community service at various institutions of higher education
- Identify existing service learning and community service activities on campus
- Conduct forum to introduce service learning and community service programs to Virginia Union community
- Use freshman orientation course to introduce students to civic engagement
- Establish "Ambassador" liaison program to surrounding communities
- Establish joint task force to explore feasibility of initiating faith-based community focused initiatives

UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT MODEL



05/09
Evans/Leche

Appendix D VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS
COURSE: ENGLISH 100 SECTION: _____
ACADEMIC YEAR: _____

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Course Number: ENG 100
Course Title: Freshman Communication Skills
Credit Hour(s): 3 cr.
Meeting Days/ Time: _____
Location: _____

COURSE INFORMATION:
Name: _____
Office Location: _____
Office Hours: _____
Office Telephone: _____
Email Address: _____

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Objectives
Virginia Union graduates will be provided with a Curriculum that will enable them to obtain skills, knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and application of:

- Communication, decision-making, and critical thinking skills
- The modes of thoughts, concerns, and methodologies in natural and social sciences, fine arts, humanities, and mathematics
- Research techniques, including the use of information and technology
- Diverse cultures, including religions, languages, and value systems of the world
- Ethics, including means of achieving personal wellness, ongoing growth, and accountability
- Problem-solving processes
- Disposition and commitment to self and community via civic engagement and community service opportunities

Student Learning Outcomes
The Curriculum at Virginia Union University is composed of **five (5) distinct Learning Outcome Areas** with their respective **competencies and/ or student learning outcomes** as represented below:

Learning Outcome Areas	Learning Outcome/ Competencies
II) Foundational Skills	1. Communication and Decision-Making Skills
	2. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
	3. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis and Research Skills
II) Disciplinary Skills	1. Literary Knowledge and Experience
	2. Societal and Cultural Knowledge and Experience
	3. Information and Technology Literacy

VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS
COURSE: ENGLISH 100 SECTION: _____
ACADEMIC YEAR: _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
ENGLISH 100 reviews the fundamentals of communication skills. Primary emphasis is placed on the basic principals of composition. This is the suggested course for entering students who do not score satisfactorily on the English Placement Examination. The credits for this course do not count toward meeting degree requirements. A grade of "C" or better is required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The three important objectives are as follows:

- to gain mastery of the conventions of standard English (grammar, mechanics, usage)
- to actively engage in critical thinking skills
- to utilize the writing process to develop effective paragraphs and essays

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
* **Functional outcomes:**

- Demonstrate critical thinking and reflective inquiry skills.
- Demonstrate skills at summarizing, critiquing, analyzing, spontaneous writing, and synthesizing.
- Demonstrate skills at articulating, supporting, and defending a mature opinion on a particular topic.
- Demonstrate proficiency in communication (both written and spoken, including the use of technology).
- Willingly and critically reflect on and articulate standpoints and positions regarding educational issues and challenges.

* **Content outcomes:**
The student will be able to:

1. Write original text that is free of serious errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, sentence structure, and diction.
2. Focus topic and details as appropriate for audience and stated purpose.
3. Develop paragraphs and essays that contain logical, coherent, unified, and adequate support.
4. Employ appropriate rhetorical modes, transitional devices, order, and other organizational techniques to compose effective paragraphs and essays.
5. Approach writing as a process that requires prewriting, planning, writing, and revising.
6. Synthesize ideas, drawing sound conclusions from written texts.
7. Complete all in- and out-of-class assignments.

* **Behavioral outcomes:**

- Present a professional demeanor/ disposition at all times.
- Adopt a professional dress code at all times.

ASSESSMENT/ EVALUATION METHODS:
Common Assessment (In- and out-of-class assignments)
Daily exercises and drills in grammar, mechanics, usage, and diction
Sentence modeling
10 original paragraphs
Peer evaluations
Writing journal
Tutorials
2 short essays (approximately 300 words)
Final Exam (5-paragaph essay)
Analysis of model essays
Additional Assessment
Oral presentation
Conferences
Portfolio
Vocabulary development

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GRADING PROCEDURE:
Assignments are graded on the following scale:
90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
0-59 = F
Failure to submit required assignment will result in a grade of 0.

Alignment Table

	General Education Competency Addressed	Corresponding Course Learning Outcome	Specific Assessment Measure (assignment given)
1.	**II 1**	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**	**ALL**
2.	**II 2**	**2, 3, 4, 5, 7**	**Grammar exercises, paragraph, essay and journal compositions, sentence modeling, peer evaluations**
3.	**II 3**	**6**	**Analysis of model essays, sentence modeling, tutorials**
4.	**III 1**	**6**	**Analysis of model essays**
5.	**III 2**	**1, 2, 6**	**Grammar exercises, sentence modeling, peer evaluations, journals, Analysis of model essays**
6.	**III 3**	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**	**All out of-class assignments will be typed and formatted for audience and purpose**

EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:

1) Attendance Policy (Catalog, Page 41):

Attendance will be taken in all classes. Students are expected to attend each class for the courses in which they are enrolled. Students MUST come to class on time. Students entering the classroom beyond five (5) minutes of the class' start-time will be marked late. After attending two classes late, the student will receive an absence in the Instructor's Roll Book. Also, if a student leaves class early, a similar policy will be followed, i.e. two early departures will equal one class absence.

The maximum amount of time students may be out of class for reasons other than University sanctioned events is three (3) times for a class that is offered for three (3) credit hours; four (4) times for a class that is offered for four (4) credit hours. When freshmen and sophomores accumulate these absences, the instructor will send the appropriate form to the Center for Undergraduate Studies indicating that the student may be in jeopardy of either failing the

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course or having his/ her final grade in the course reduced. A copy of the form will be sent to the student's advisor and to the Chair of the department of future action.

2) Attire:

We will follow the dress code as set forth in the *Student Handbook.* The code includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **No caps, hats or Du-Rags in the classroom**
- **No bedroom slippers, pajamas**
- **No clothing that inappropriately exposes body parts**

3) Code of Conduct:

The classroom is a paraprofessional setting and as such requires professional conduct. Thus, students will avoid all behaviors that disrupt the productive learning environment, including:

- **Engaging in any behavior (verbal or otherwise) that shows disrespect for the professor and/or other classmates**
- **Interrupting class to announce your late arrival or to sign the attendance sheet**
- **Frequently leaving and entering the classroom**
- **Using cell phones to talk, text message and e-mail. Ringing phones are a definite distraction. Therefore, all phones must be turned off or set on pulse and placed out of sight once class begins.**
- **Eating, drinking, popping gum, sleeping or placing one's head on the desk, talking or chatting while the professor or a classmate is speaking—"to learn, you must first listen."**

Failure to comply with the above policies and expectations may result in one or more of the following actions:

1st: Student will receive 1 or 2 immediate verbal warnings.

2nd: Student will receive one written warning.

3rd: Student will be directed to not return to the class or to withdraw from the class.

4th: Judicial action will be taken with Student Affairs.

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4) Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of any university or college. Any acts of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated in this class.

Cheating is defined as copying another student's work on any class assignment or examination, using notes or books or any unauthorized aids to find answers on an assignment when you have not been authorized to do so, or unauthorized discussion of answers on any examination.
Plagiarism is any situation in which you attempt to pass off ideas or writing that are not your own as your own without giving proper credit to their original source. In other words, students are not to get any undocumented help from books, the Internet, a best friend – or any other un-cited source. (YOUR name is on your work and, honorable, it is your effort.) You should see the instructor or a tutor for help in improving your writing skills.

Students must display academic responsibility as stated in the University Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) will be severely sanctioned according to the rules and policies of the University. **All assignments above MUST be YOURS** – from your own heart and mind. **Plagiarism is a crime!** It is copying information from other writers or passing off another student's work as one's own. To avoid plagiarism, a student must give the original author credit by citing reference sources or using quotation marks around someone else's direct words. Fabricating and falsifying information or citations, submitting the same work for credit in more than one course, providing the work of another student or attempting to help another student commit act of academic dishonesty will be **severely sanctioned and students will answer to the University Judicial Board. Plagiarism may result in the student's failure of the assignment, failure of the course, or possible expulsion from the university.**

5) Tutorial Services:

Students may sign up for free tutoring in English or a number of other subjects through the Center for the Advancement of Academic Excellence in Ellison Hall, Room 102.

It is incumbent upon students to seek help if it is needed. All students experiencing academic difficulty by mid-term must either participate in eight (8) hours of documented tutorials through the Center for the Advancement of Academic Excellence or with individual faculty members during their office hours.

REQUIRED READING(S):

SUPPLEMENTAL READING(S)/ RESOURCES:

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD:

Methods of instruction will include but will not be limited to: lecture and demonstration, peer collaboration and review, multimedia presentations (Power Points, Transparencies, videos…), written papers, independent inquiry and presentations, writing workshops, active participation, collaborative and cooperative small group inquiry, guided research and discussion. Students will be required to search library databases and Internet sites and communicate with the instructor using e-mail.

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NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT:
VUU is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative-Action Institution committed to cultural, racial, and ethnic communities and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

COURSE OUTLINE/ AGENDA:
The instructor reserves the right to amend the course agenda at any time during the semester.

WEEK #	DATE	TOPICS	ITEMS DUE

Appendix E

Department of English- Persuasive Essay Rubric

	The A Paper	The B Paper	The C Paper	The D Paper	The F Paper
Ideas	Excels in responding to assignment, interesting, demonstrates sophistication of thought. Central idea/thesis is clearly communicated, worth developing; limited enough to be manageable. Paper recognized some complexity of its thesis; may acknowledge its contradictions, qualifications, or limits and follow out their logical implications. Understands and critically evaluates its sources, appropriately limits and defines terms.	A solid paper, responding appropriately to assignment. Clearly states a thesis/central idea, but may have minor lapses in development. Begins to acknowledge the complexity of central idea and the possibility of other points of view. Shows careful reading of sources but may not evaluate them critically. Attempts to define terms, not always successfully.	Adequate but weaker and less effective, possibly responding less well to assignment. Presents central idea in general terms, often depending on platitudes or clichés. Usually does not acknowledge other views. Shows basic comprehension of sources, perhaps with lapses in understanding. If it defines terms, often depends on dictionary definitions.	Does not have a clear central idea or does not respond appropriately to the assignment. Thesis may be too vague or obvious to de developed effectively. Paper may misunderstand sources.	Does not respond to the assignment lacks a thesis or central idea, and may neglect to use sources where necessary.
Organization & Coherence	Uses a logical structure appropriate to paper's subject, purpose, audience, thesis, and disciplinary field. Sophisticated transitional sentences often develop one idea from the previous one or identify their logical relations. It guides the reader through the chain of reasoning or progression of ideas.	Shows a logical progression of ideas and uses fairly sophisticated transitional devices; e.g., may move from least to more important idea. Some logical links may be faulty, but each paragraph clearly relates to paper's central idea.		May have random organization, lacking internal paragraph coherence and using few or inappropriate transitions. Paragraphs may lack topic sentences or main ideas, or may b e too general or too specific to be effective. Paragraphs may not all relate to paper's thesis.	No appreciable organization; lacks translations and coherence.
Support	Uses evidence appropriately and effectively, providing sufficient evidence and explanation to convince.	Begins to offer reasons to support its points, perhaps using varied kinds of evidence. Begins to interpret the evidence and explain connections between evidence and main ideas. Its examples bear some relevance.	Often uses generalizations to support its points. May use examples, but they may be obvious or not relevant. Often depends on unsupported opinion or personal experience, or assumes that evidence speaks for itself and needs no application to the point being discussed. Often have lapses in logic.	Depends on clichés or overgeneralizations for support, or offers little evidence of any kind. May be personal narrative rather than essay, or summary rather than analysis.	Uses irrelevant details or lacks supporting evidence entirely. May be unduly brief.
Style	ir Chooses words for their precise meaning and uses and appropriate level of specificity. Sentence style fits paper's audience and purpose. Sentences are varied, yet clearly structured and carefully focused, not long and rambling.	Generally uses words accurately and effectively, but may sometimes be too general. Sentences generally clear, well structured, and focused, though some may be awkward or ineffective.	Uses relatively vague and vague and general words, may use some inappropriate language. Sentence structure is generally correct, but sentences may be wordy, unfocused, repetitive, or confusing.	May be too vague and abstract, or very personal and specific. Usually contains several awkward or ungrammatical sentences; sentence structure is simple or monotonous.	Usually contains may awkward sentences, misuses words, employs inappropriate language.
Mechanics	Almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.	May contain a few errors, which may annoy the reader but not impede understanding.	Usually contains several mechanical errors, which may temporarily confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding.	Usually contains either many mechanical errors or a few important errors that block the reader's understanding and ability to see connections between thoughts.	Usually contains so many mechanical errors that is it impossible for the reader to follow the thinking form sentence to sentence.

Appendix F VUU Capstone Activities Involving Writing

Dept/School	Description	Instruments/Strategies
Education and ID Studies	Capstone Course: EDU 424 Student Teaching (9 credits) An instrument is used to assess each activity.	Exit Interview/ Portfolio Presentation, Lesson Plans, Evaluation Summary.
English	The department produces students who demonstrate the following competencies in writing and presenting, literary interpretation, language and linguistic analysis, and editing:	This spring semester we also used the Major Field Test ETS-MFT and Area Concentration Achievement Test ACAT used in the second semester senior year.
Mathematics & computer science	Students to take ETS field exam in Mathematics.	ETS field exam
Computer Science	CSC 320 Web Development	(Capstone Requirement: A fully functional web site)
Political Science/Public Administration (PSCPA)	All 300/400 courses require a term paper and some type of a project such as developing a proposal for funding. All PSCPA seniors are required to take a three (3) Credit-hour capstone course and another required three (3) Credit-hour Internship course. Students are required to pick a topic for the Capstone courses and develop a thesis paper of at 15-25 pages long. The internship course requires a journal and a written critique and synthesis of the experience	Term Paper Thesis Internship Journal/written Critique
Psychology	All psychology majors are required to complete PSY 204: Research Methods II. A major component of this course is the completion of a research paper. Students are required to meet specific writing standards in order to receive a passing grade in this course.	Research Paper
Criminal Justice	We will be instituting this process in the coming academic year when graduating students complete their Senior Seminar in the spring. They will be assessed using the attached form in the following three areas:	Comprehensive Research Paper

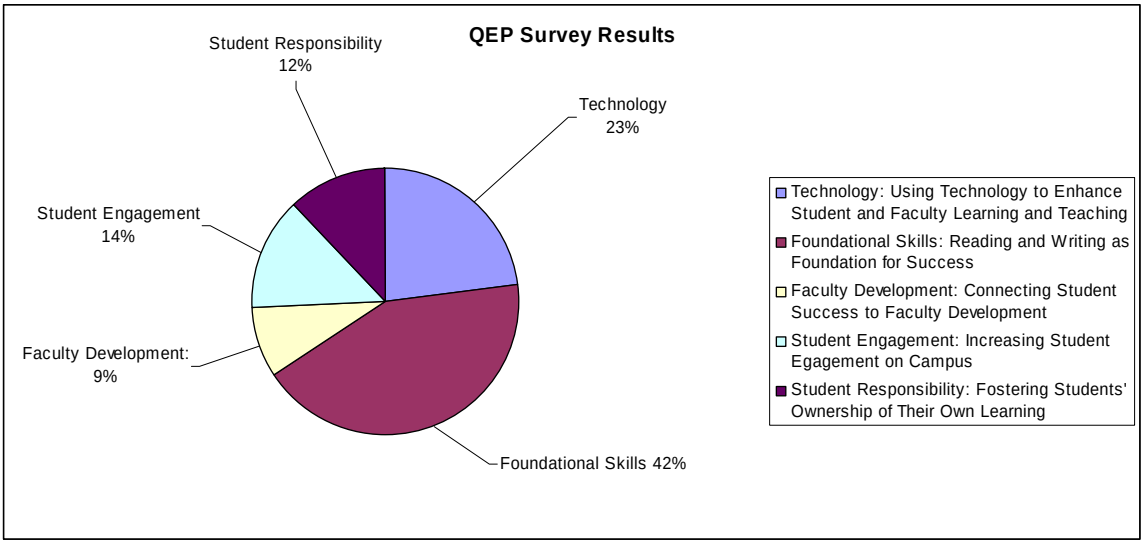
	Ability to read and understand scholarly articles/reports Ability to research a topic and make an oral presentation on same Ability to research a topic and write a comprehensive research paper on same	
SLSB	Within this core, learning outcomes have been established of which written communication is considered a very important competency. Written assignments are integrated into this core. .	Entrepreneurship Management students must write a business plan.
Religious Studies	The Religious Studies Department administers an exit exam to all graduating seniors during final exams week. It consists of 3 essays in 3 areas of concentration within the discipline plus 1 essay in philosophy or religion. The exam tests not only their knowledge of the field but also their ability to impart this knowledge in written form.	Exit exam- 3 essays

Appendix G QEP Survey Results

Table 1: Rank order of Topics Selected by Sub-Groups

Group Surveyed (Number Surveyed)	Rank Order of Topic Selection by Sub-Groups	#	%
Students (54)	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	25	46.3%
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	10	18.5%
	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success	10	18.5%
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	5	9.3%
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	4	7.4%
Undergraduate Faculty (46)	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success	28	60.9%
	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	6	13.0%
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	5	10.9%
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	4	8.7%
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	3	6.5%
New Faculty (5)	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success Student	3	60 %
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	2	40 %
	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	0	0 %
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	0	0 %
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	0	0 %
School of Theology Faculty (20)	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success	9	45 %
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	5	25 %
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	4	20 %
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	2	10 %
	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	0	0 %
Staff (21)	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success Student	6	28.6%
	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	5	23.8%
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	5	23.8%
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	3	14.3%
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	2	9.5%
Administrative Leadership (28)	Foundational Skills: Reading and Writing as Foundations for Success	18	64.2%
	Technology: Using Technology to enhance Student and Faculty Learning and Teaching	4	14.3%
	Student Engagement: Increasing Student Engagement on Campus	4	14.3%
	Student Responsibility: Fostering Students' Ownership of their own Learning	2	7.1%
	Faculty Development: Connecting Student Success to Faculty Development	0	0 %

Table 2: Total Percentage of Topics Selected



Appendix H

VUU Quality Enhancement Plan
Timeline 2007-2010

Key tasks to be completed/responsible person(s)	Methodologies Involved	Tangible Results/Outcomes Documentation	Timeline(s) From/To
Identify Director/Chair of the QEP/V.P. IPRSP	Identify Director/Chair of QEP to coordinate the process of developing and producing the QEP	QEP Director/Chair will be in place by October 1, 2007	October 1, 2007
Identify Development Committee/ Director QEP, V.P.IPRSP	Identify those individuals who have the greatest knowledge about and interests in ideas, content processes, and methodologies as it relates to the development of the QEP	Development Committee in place by November 1, 2007	November 2007
Development Committee meets every other week to discuss topic solicitation, selection, methods, etc./ Director/Chair QEP	Secure meeting place and convenient time for committee	Development Committee creates a plan to identify topics/issues for QEP	December 2007
Solicit QEP suggestions from the institution at large/ Chair of QEP, Development Committee	Implement plan to identify QEP suggestions. Hold Open Forums with students, staff, and faculty on campus to solicit ideas for topics. Develop surveys to be distributed to major stakeholders.	Transcripts of QEP topic suggestions from students, faculty, staff, administrators	By March 2008
Review topic suggestions/narrow	Compile the topic suggestions and	Tentative QEP topics	July 2008

suggestions/Chair QEP/Development Committee	narrow suggestions		
QEP Chair writes a report of the tentative topics of the QEP	Write Report	Report of tentative QEP topics	July 2008
Director of Institutional Effectiveness presents report with tentative topics for QEP at the President's Leadership Retreat	Present report to Executive Council	Approval by the President's Leadership of the QEP topics with recommendations	July 2008
Present topics in Fall Faculty/Staff PreSchool Conference /Director/Chair QEP	Present topics to Faculty/Staff	Faculty/Staff approval with recommendations	August 2008
Set-up Web page with tentative QEP topics to solicit input from major stakeholders	Present topics via web-site	Major stakeholders' voting results on the QEP topics	September 2008
Ad hoc committees appointed to assist the QEP committee with writing white papers on the QEP topic areas	Write white papers on QEP topic areas	White papers on QEP topics	November 2008
Submit white papers to SACS Leadership Team for final decision on the QEP topic	Submission of white papers	Final QEP topic	January 2009

Chair of QEP and Development Committee meet every week to start writing the QEP	Write the QEP	Final DRAFT	March – June 2009
Present first complete draft of the QEP to Faculty/Staff at Pre-School Conference QEP Director	Seek approval/ Recommendations For changes	Approval of refined Proposed QEP with recommendations.	August 2009
V.P. IPRSP presents draft of QEP to the Executive Council	QEP draft presented by V.P. IPRSP to Executive Council	Final approved Quality Enhancement Plan	August 2009
Submit QEP to SACS	Draft of QEP		Due six weeks in advance of on-site visit (December 2010)

Appendix I

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Tentative QEP Timeline

Date	Events
August 2009	• Develop a proposal for CCRAA funds to pilot portions of the QEP • Meeting with SACS liaison on QEP document • Develop a timeline for QEP • Contact potential consultants to assist with reviewing QEP • Meeting with QEP Committee
September 2009	• Secure a consultant • Begin usage of Writing Center (especially geared toward Eng 100 students and others who have not yet met proficiency on EEE) • Meet with English 100 teachers • Meet with QEP committee to review & discuss updates and revision to QEP document for VUU (beginning of month) • Consultant to meet with QEP committee (Sept. 17, 2009) • Consultant to meet with the QEP director • Begin theme contest
October 2009	• Staff development on QEP • QEP narrative committee will make revisions to document (Oct. 10, 2009) • Consultant to meet with the QEP director, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and SACS coordinator (Oct. 14, 2009) • Consultant to meet with QEP narrative committee (Oct. 14, 2009
November 2009	• Consultant will present faculty development on "Writing Across the Curriculum" (Nov. 11, 2009) to meet with QEP committee • Consultant to meet with QEP director (Nov. 11, 2009) • Updates and/or revisions to QEP document (Nov. 11, 2009)
December 2009	• Selected representatives attend SACS Conference in Atlanta • QEP lead evaluator nominations are due to liaison on December 15, 2009
January 2010	• QEP committee meeting to make finalizations on document (date pending) • Staff development on QEP • Submit final copy of QEP document to VUU Administrators
February 2010	• Begin advertising/marketing the QEP: website, t-shirts, posters, banners, "QEP Quips," etc. • The QEP is due on week of February 23
April 2010	• The on site review team will review the QEP and any areas of concern from the offsite review on April 6-8
May /June 2010	• Professional Development
December 2010	• Decision on accreditation renewal QEP announced by the Commission on Colleges

Appendix J

Faculty Survey Comments

Listed below are comments from faculty in response to the specific question: ***How would you describe the importance of writing as related to your content area/discipline?***

- *The ability to write well is actually more important than the ability to read well. Writing both enables one to communicate thoughts and ideas to others and helps one understand one's own thoughts. My own philosophical thoughts are often quite vague and confused until I sit down to make them explicit in writing*

- *Writing is also very critical in the field of criminal justice. Most positions include case management and documentation, preparing documents for court, writing reports, etc. Students going on to graduate and/or law school need exemplary writing skills in order to succeed.*

- *The goal of writing courses is not only to enhance students' academic skills in areas of writing and critical thinking, but writing courses ultimately prepare students for the workplace. Writing skills, or communication skills in general, are required in all sorts of occupations and professions, thus teaching students to write and think will help them to succeed in their respective careers.*

- *Students are expected to respond in writing to content that is presented in the text and in other formats. Writing is essential to the content of psychology and counts for 25% of the grade in every class I teach.*

- *Writing is essential not only for college work but also for graduate and professional education as well as in the work field. I have found that many of our students have great difficulty writing even simple, direct sentences that are free of writing errors. The problems are compounded when students have to write an essay. I want to stress that it is critical that students master the basic skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.*

- *Writing is also very important in the Library. One must be able write well to communicate their story or research to others, whether on paper or online. Writing can be a reflection of how you speak, your command of the English or other language(s), and/or your level of reading.*

- *Students in social work must be able to write well or they will not be taken seriously as young professionals. We hear back from our intern supervisors that they are not happy with the writing ability of our students.*

- *Without the ability to write papers and analyses of data in Standard English, one cannot succeed in the area, because one must be able to interact in written form with the subject matter. That is the nature of the fields. They are all reading and writing intensive.*

- *In science, it is very important that data are communicated accurately, precisely, and in a nuanced way. Professionals in the field should take great effort to communicate their results correctly and in a clear way. Good oral and written communication skills are absolutely essential in today's job market for professionals in the natural and physical sciences.*

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