

To: UNCW Faculty & Staff

Fr: Kim Cook, QEP Topic Development Coordinator

RE: QEP update and announcement

October 26, 2012

After several cycles of involvement and participation, I'm pleased to update the campus community on our QEP and invite your additional feedback. Thanks to the helpful feedback collected last spring on the draft plan, our QEP has been significantly revised. **This document outlines the revised components for your information and for your additional feedback.** Please send your comments, if any, to Kim Cook at cookk@uncw.edu by November 15, 2012. Additional information is available at: www.uncw.edu/qep

The QEP Topic Development process kicked off in the fall 2010 semester. There were multiple campus-wide forums to discuss what we do well and what we can improve upon. After much thoughtful consideration, the campus adopted Applied Learning as the focus for our QEP. During the spring and summer of 2011, we solicited and selected proposals to pilot Applied Learning in several ways, including a teaching & learning community, community engagement, undergraduate research, and collaborative DIS projects. Lessons learned from that pilot were shared and discussed extensively. During this time and through the early spring semester of 2012, we held a series of forums and focus group meetings to discuss the approach for our QEP, providing multiple opportunities for faculty, staff, and students, to offer insights, feedback and ideas regarding the details of our QEP. Constructive feedback was received in the spring of 2012 after the first draft of the plan was released that further strengthened the proposal and its potential impact for applied learning at UNCW. The Faculty Senate endorsed the concept of the QEP to focus on "applied learning with instructor-centered development opportunities." Our title has been revised to:

eTEAL: experiencing Transformative Education through Applied Learning.

The main goal is to enhance applied learning experiences and critical reflection through promotion of successful pedagogical practices and providing resources to support innovative application of those practices. Key features of the plan include:

- **providing faculty and staff** information and resources to incorporate **effective practices** of applied learning pedagogy as appropriate to their discipline and responsibilities
 - This includes opportunities for both curricular experiences and for non-curricular applied learning experiences (exa: RA Training, other leadership opportunities)
- **promoting the incorporation and implementation** of successful practices of applied learning throughout UNCW (exa: the principles of good practice from the National Society for Experiential Education)
- improving student learning in applied learning experiences

Iterative campus-wide feedback has led to the following foundational elements:

- **Applied learning** is a pedagogical model that places students in experiences that require them to *integrate* theories, ideas, and skills they have learned in new contexts, and thereby extending their learning.

- **Critical reflection** is a pedagogical process that helps capture the evidence of student learning. First, during the learning experiences critical reflection techniques help to stimulate deeper student learning, and render student intellectual development “visible” and thus available for assessment purposes. Second, capturing evidence of student learning through critical reflection artifacts will provide data for measuring the impact of **eTEAL** as it operates.

The QEP approach includes three avenues for participation:

I. Applied Learning & Teaching Communities (ALTCs) – open to interested faculty, staff, and students to discuss pedagogy in regular meetings. The Center for Teaching Excellence currently provides support for an active ATLC. The ALTCs can be a gateway into other QEP-related activities. These communities will also help to disseminate information to the broader UNCW community including lessons learned from the Applied Learning Summer Institute and the **eTEAL-Supported Initiatives**.

II. Applied Learning Summer Institute (occurs annually) – open to all faculty and staff. UNCW-based experts and nationally recognized experts will deliver workshops that cover:

- Research-based effective practices in pedagogy and critical reflection
- Development of implementation plans for applied learning in classes with course-specific student learning outcomes (SLOs)
- Encourage participants to submit proposals for **eTEAL-Supported Initiatives**

III. eTEAL-Supported Initiatives for implementing applied learning opportunities using a RFP process

- Competitive proposal process to support legitimate costs associated with applied learning opportunities
- Criteria based on best practices & research literature as described and discussed in the Applied Learning Summer Institute and the ALTCs
- Commitment of instructors to complete the project and share what they have learned with colleagues in the ALTC

- **Assessment** – to maximize institutional efficiency, **eTEAL** will use the student learning outcomes from the University Studies component: Explorations Beyond the Classroom as our umbrella SLOs. Furthermore, impact on student learning will be measured, in part, through assessment of UNCW Learning Goals: Critical Thinking, Inquiry, and Thoughtful Expression. Explorations Beyond the Classroom student learning outcomes are:

- SLO 1. The student will articulate their expectations, the purpose, and/or the goals of the experience in terms of their personal educational development. [Thoughtful Expression]
- SLO 2. The student will synthesize knowledge drawn from their coursework to address the issues/challenges/questions involved in the experience. [Critical Thinking, Foundational Knowledge, Inquiry]

- SLO 3. The student will communicate the impact or significance on their personal educational development and on others in the profession or in the field at the *conclusion* of the experience. [Critical Thinking, Inquiry]

The plan has been endorsed by the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association. Presentations have been made to a variety of faculty, staff, and administrative groups. During the remainder of this academic year, the QEP Task Force will be drafting the proposal for SACS review. Opportunities to participate will be announced in the near future.

Thank you all for your continued interest and participation in the development of our Quality Enhancement Plan. **Your comments and ideas are always welcome.** Please contact Kim Cook: cookk@uncw.edu, or 962-3785.