

Radford University's Quality Enhancement Plan

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by the QEP-WT
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Most often cited reservations

- “This is just like the Core.”
- “My department doesn’t do this.”
- “Faculty are already over-engaged. This is asking us to do more, just piling it on.”
- “The SC Fellows program spends too much time and money on too few students.”
- “What is this “enhancing”?”
- “This is assessment driven and imposed on us.”

As we know ...

A Quality Enhancement Plan

- is a required part of the our SACS reaffirmation of accreditation process.
- is typically the product of an 18 – 24 month process.
- is considered by SACS to be a living document.
- is not a “zero-sum” game.
- must be tied to student learning and reflect best practices.
- has a necessary connection to an institution’s strategic plan.
- requires resources.

Why a QEP?

In SACS's view,

- The QEP is a demonstration of the commitment of the institution to increase overall quality and to promote student learning in and outside the classroom.
- The QEP is a vehicle by which institutions can increase their overall quality and effectiveness by focusing on one specific aspect of the student learning environment/experience.
- The QEP is a transformative, creative campus process that brings together diverse constituencies and ideas in the pursuit of the goal of improving student learning.

Accreditation Timeline

- May 2010: SACS Reaffirmation Symposium
- November 2010: QEP Topic Selection Forum (8 Possible Themes Identified)
- February – March 2011: Recommendations on Theme Selection Solicited from the Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Residence Hall Association, Student Media Committee, Intercollegiate Athletics Staff
- March 31, 2011: Announcement of RU's Adoption of "Citizen-Scholar" (later changed to Scholar-Citizen) as Our QEP
- **April-Present: QEP-Writing Team Works with Campus Constituencies to Design and Develop the Plan**
- **February 1, 2012: QEP Final Draft Due to SACS; Implementation Team Constituted**
- **March 27-29: SACS On-Site Visit**
- **Fall 2012: QEP Pilot Courses and Initiatives Underway**
- **December 2012: Reaffirmation Confirmed with SACS' Recommendations**

Our QEP Process

- Has been accelerated.
- Has been recursive.
- Has been inclusive.
- Has been the beginning to an iterative process.
- Has been mindful of resources.

Our Argument for SACS

Why Scholar-Citizen?

- **Broad support across campus from all constituencies.**
- **Addresses an institutional deficiency in student learning by focusing on the synthesis and application of knowledge to public issues.**
- **Builds upon existing pockets of public scholarship and collaborative curricular and co-curricular efforts at RU and provides an opportunity to expand and enhance work in which some on campus are already passionately engaged.**
- **Creates a community of practice.**
- **Opportunity to enhance perceptions of Radford University.**
- **Increases the marketability of students who can demonstrate involvement in tackling real-world issues, are self-reflective, and have experiences in professional “real-world” settings.**
- **Is consonant with the University mission.**

RU's Mission Statement

“Radford University **serves the Commonwealth and the nation through a wide range of academic, cultural, human service and research programs.** First and foremost, the university emphasizes teaching and learning and the process of learning in its **commitment to the development of mature, responsible and well-educated citizens.** RU develops **students’ creative and critical thinking skills, teaches students to analyze problems and implement solutions, helps students discover their leadership styles and fosters their growth as leaders.**”

Definition of RU Scholar-Citizen

The focus of the Scholar-Citizen initiative is to promote a teaching and learning culture that fosters our sense of how we can live our lives in ways that best contribute to the world around us. **Radford University Scholar-Citizenship is defined as active and scholarly participation in the complex and multicultural world by connecting and applying disciplinary knowledge and academic and leadership skills to the challenges facing our local, national, and global communities.**



Goals of RU's QEP

QEP Goal 1: Enhance Student Learning through Real-World Problem Solving.

RU Scholar-Citizens will be able to effectively connect and apply academic skills and knowledge including that of their discipline in addressing real-world issues in our local, national, and global communities.

QEP Goal 2: Foster a Culture of Engaged Learning and Scholarship.

RU as an institution will support and encourage a community of practice devoted to connecting academic and leadership skills and knowledge to promoting political, cultural, social, and economic change.

Desired Outcomes

Scholar-Citizen Student Learning Outcomes:

A Radford University Scholar-Citizen will be able to:

- Critically analyze different viewpoints of or theories about a contemporary issue using reliable sources.
- Make connections between one's academic experiences/ knowledge and one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
- Apply ethical reasoning to contemporary local, national, or global issues
- Propose or evaluate solutions to problems in the context of contemporary local, national, or global issues
- Effectively communicate how her/his academic studies and co-curricular experiences have affected her/his sense of ethics, values and social responsibility in the context of local, national or global issues.

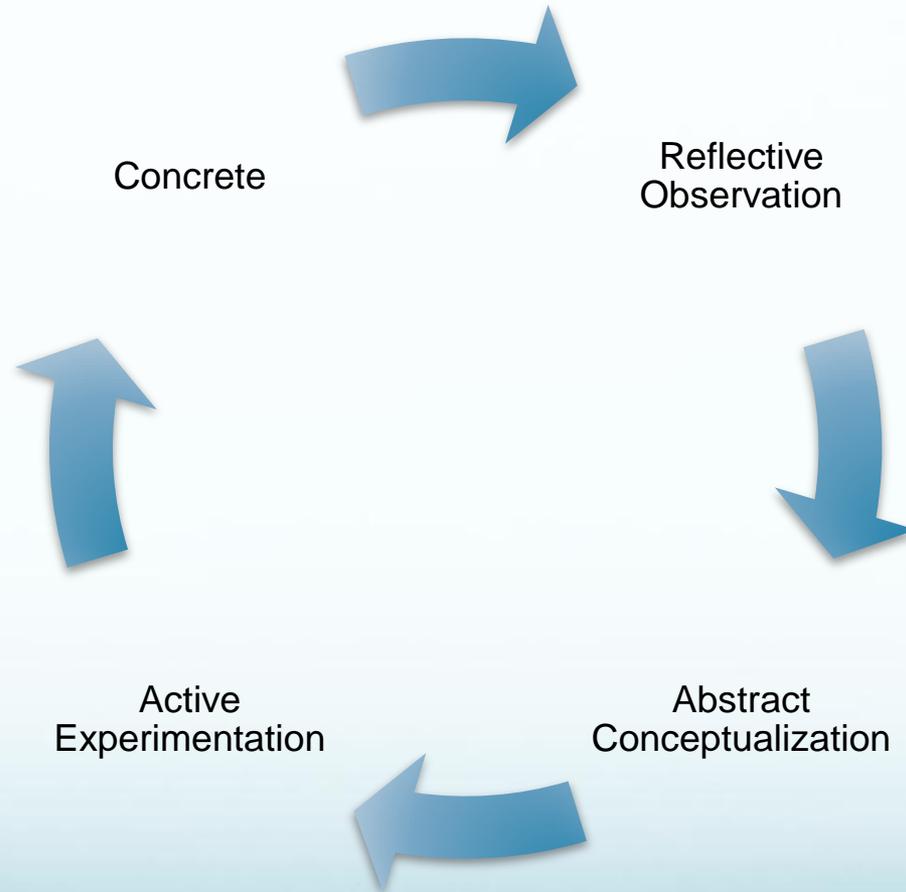
Desired Outcomes

Scholar-Citizen Programmatic Outcomes

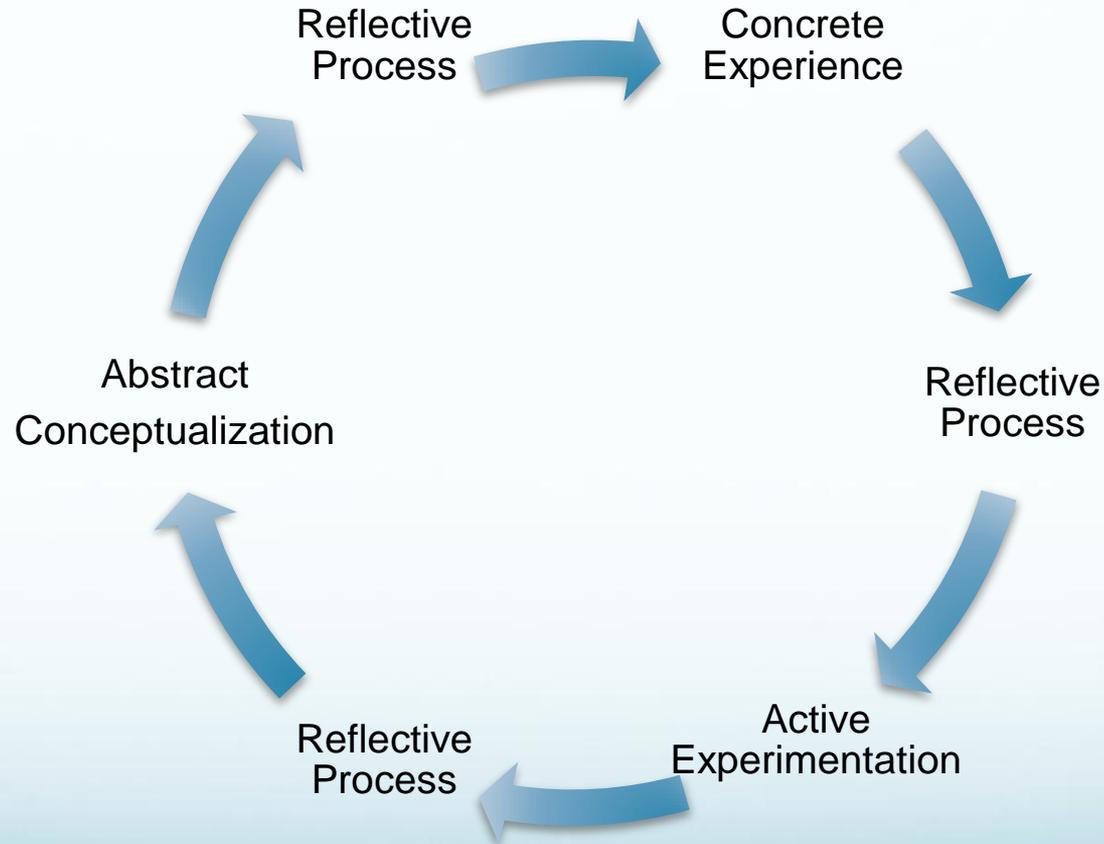
The Radford University Scholar-Citizen initiative will increase the number of students who engage in:

- Cultural immersion experiences (alternative spring break, study abroad).
- Community-service.
- Experiences incorporating pedagogies of engagement (e. g., service-learning, experiential learning, community-based research, investigative case-based learning, problem-based learning, collaborative learning).
- Public and non-profit sector internships.

Kolb Experiential Learning Model



Scholar Citizen Learning Model



SCI Activities May Include ...

Learning experiences in and out of the classroom that incorporate SC learning outcomes may include some or all of the following:

- Course Embedded Experiences and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Public Lecture Series
- Co-curricular programs, organizations and leadership
- Internships
- Study-Abroad
- Alternative Spring Break
- Service Learning Projects
- Peer Mentoring
- Film Series
- Performances



Benefits for Students

- Opportunities to discover their scholarly identity and to discover ways to live that best contribute to the world around them and utilize their academic training.
- Provision of structured opportunities to participate in service learning, internships, and/or study abroad experiences.
- Development of strong and ongoing mentor relationships with faculty members.
- Participation in interdisciplinary discussions of current issues that matter to students.
- Development of leadership, organizational and communication skills that will contribute to their sense of professionalism and marketability to employers.
- Development of a Scholar-Citizen e-portfolio that documents the ways that a student turns what matters most to him or her into programs of inquiry/research, public action, and/or career possibilities.
- Recognition at graduation.

Benefits for Faculty

- Potentially Upping Enrollment in Low-Enrolled Courses
- Availability of Engaged Scholar Grants for SCI Course Development and Research Support
- Faculty to Faculty Mentoring Opportunities
- Participation in a Community Dialogue
- Increased Student Engagement and Involvement
- Recognition and Reward for Instructional Innovation
- Opportunities for Professional Development Including Conference Attendance and Networking with Colleagues with Similar Goals

What Makes the Scholar-Citizen Initiative Different

- Emphasis on the Synthesis and Application of Knowledge to Real-World Contexts and Issues
- Emphasis on Reflection and Meta-Cognition, Turning Students into Expert Learners and Engaged Community Members
- Emphasis on Supporting the Professional Development of Students AND of Faculty AND of Staff.
- Emphasis on Recognition and Reward of Instructional Innovation

Dimensions of the QEP

- Identification, promotion, development, and enhancement of SCI courses and initiatives.
- Recognition of students who complete a minimum set of SCI Experiences (“Scholar-Citizen Fellows Program”).
- Develop Scholar-Citizen co-curricular events and programming that promote engaged learning.
- Support adoption of the e-portfolio initiative as a Social Pedagogy.
- Establish adequate resources and forums for faculty/staff support and development.

Resources Needed

- Incentives for and support of participating departments and faculty
- Incentives for the development of programming and events
- Support of affiliated offices (Academic Assessment, Community Engagement, Career Services, International Education, Instructional Technology, Faculty Development Center, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning)
- Administrative support

Questions?