

Habits of the Heart:
A Gateway to Critical Thinking, Personal and Social
Responsibility, and Vocation



A Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal
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Dr. V. Scott Koerwer, President
Dr. Christina Wendland and Dr. Joe McDonald, Co-Chairs, QEP
Selection Committee
Dr. Don Johnson-Taylor, Accreditation Liaison

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I. Executive Summary

The Newberry College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) promotes student development of critical thinking skills, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. The plan unites these three features under the umbrella of “Habits of the Heart”, a term used by Alexis de Tocqueville to describe the “moral and intellectual dispositions” necessary for engagement with the world around us and the maintenance of democratic institutions. The plan focuses on the first two years of the Newberry College experience, beginning with the incorporation of materials, activities, and assignments into the First Year Experience (FYE) and then into general education core courses that students take in their first and second year. The plan also calls for the construction of learning communities in the first year.

This plan evolved from a broad-based institutional process that involved faculty, students, administrators, alumni, board members, and representatives from the larger community of Newberry, SC. As critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocation emerged as key individual issues we realized that, collectively, they coalesced into one thematic endeavor. As “Habits of the Heart” they are fundamental to our mission, essential in the liberal arts tradition, and grounded in the Lutheran heritage. They will help students develop their moral and intellectual dispositions and find and use their voice. For faculty, they represent the essence of our hope for students, that they be critical thinkers who have the personal and social responsibility to participate in the issues around them and the opportunity to reflect on vocational callings. They will find their voice and express it through their actions on campus and in the community.

The plan selected received overwhelming support from all constituencies and meets SACS expectations: it is well-defined and focused, promises a significant impact on the student learning environment, is within the capability of our institution, and has measurable student learning outcomes linked to a comprehensive assessment plan. We are confident our plan will bring excitement and energy to our learning environment.

II. Process Used to Develop the QEP

In March of 2010, Dean Wayne Kannaday selected two faculty members to co-chair the QEP Committee: Dr. Cindy Johnson-Taylor, Chair of the Department of Education, and Dr. Joe McDonald, Director of the Values Based Learning Program. The Co-Chairs then selected members of the committee, keeping in mind the SACS concern that, in the selection of the QEP topic, “the institution ensure widespread participation by all pertinent institutional constituent groups – faculty, administrators, students, and perhaps even alumni and trustees.” The group selected included seven faculty members (from Music, History, Biology, Spanish, Education, Religion, and Sociology), one person from Student Affairs, one person from the Athletics Department, one student, and one alumnus. The Dean of the College, Dr. Wayne Kannaday, and Dr. Don Johnson-Taylor, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, were named ex-officio members of the committee. Early in the QEP development process, Newberry College was immersed in an administrative re-structuring, including a presidential search; thus, there was no presidential involvement at this point in time. In terms of areas and constituencies represented and length of service to the College, we deemed our committee well-suited for selecting our QEP topic.

The Committee met first on April 9, 2010. Our first task was to familiarize all with the QEP Manual. Dr. Cindy Johnson-Taylor had attended a SACS meeting in the fall of 2009, including sessions about the QEP process, and brought back to our campus ideas and models about beginning our process. We presented a power point that covered the definition of the QEP, guidelines for beginning our work, and considerations highlighted in the manual. We also used the SACS website to look at abstracts of QEP proposals from other schools. We highlighted the need for the QEP to enhance the learning environment for students, to connect to the history and mission of our college, for it to have clearly defined student learning outcomes, and for it to be data-driven.

We started our process by looking at our mission statement and the student learning outcomes which our Academic Assessment Committee derived from the mission statement. We decided that our first step should be to canvass multiple constituencies about (1) how important they considered each learning outcome to be for Newberry College graduates, (2) which of these outcomes we are teaching effectively, and (3) what other outcomes respondents thought should be added to the list.

On April 24 we sent an email about the survey (with a Survey Monkey link) to all students, staff, administrators, faculty, and board members. We also sent the survey to alumni (from a list provided by our alumni director), and sixteen people selected from the local Newberry community.¹ We spent two meetings discussing the results and implications of the survey (May 27 and June 28, 2010). As a result of our analysis we identified nine areas of interest for the QEP:

- Communication skills (oral, written, visual)
- Community involvement/citizenship/community service
- Critical thinking
- Internships/experiential learning
- Leadership
- Personal development
- Pluralism/multiculturalism/globalism/diversity
- Vocation/career
- Technology in instruction and learning

We sent an email to the entire campus to inform them about the results and as part of our commitment to openness.

We prepared a second survey that was sent on July 5 to the same constituents as before, asking them to rank these nine qualities and to suggest combinations of qualities that might make an appropriate QEP topic.² The data that resulted from this survey indicated five topics that were foremost among constituent responses: critical thinking, communication, personal and social responsibility, career/vocation, and leadership. By looking at the percentage of respondents in each group that placed a quality as a “number one” growth area for Newberry College, we were able to determine rather easily the five qualities listed above as areas in which we needed to concentrate our efforts. We paid special attention to faculty responses since, as the QEP Manual states, “faculty members shoulder responsibility for student learning” (8). For faculty, the top five responses were, in order, critical thinking, communication, personal and

¹ We received responses from 44 faculty, 28 staff, 186 students, 289 alumni, 8 members of the board of trustees, and 16 community members for a total of 571 responses. The results of the survey are in Appendix A as Tables 1 and 2.

² We received responses from 43 faculty, 59 students, 170 alumni, 23 staff, and 12 community members – a total of 307. See Table 1 in Appendix B for details of the responses.

social responsibility, vocation, and technology. Many respondents suggested combining some of the qualities, such as critical thinking with personal and social responsibility. At this time, we also began to research the literature on these topics. We consulted the numerous resources of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: essays, research reports, and rubrics about critical thinking, communication, and personal and social responsibility. We discuss these in the next section. In addition, we researched the results of Lilly Grants given to several Lutheran schools in 2002. The programs that grew out of those grants focused on vocation. We also discussed where the five qualities listed above are included at the present time at Newberry College.

Using the five top responses and the suggestions for combinations, each member of the committee was assigned a topic proposal to work on as a way of clarifying our thinking about what various QEPs, based on our five qualities, might look like. We evaluated these brief proposals at our meeting on September 3 and concluded unanimously that these topics, or combinations of these topics, would result in good QEPs. We decided we were ready now to ask for proposals from faculty, students, and staff. Based on our own writing of brief sample proposals we knew what we wanted to include in the request. We asked that the proposals be 1-2 pages in length and include a description of the idea, the student learning outcomes the plan addresses, and action steps to be implemented. We offered \$100 gift cards to the top ten proposals and created a rubric for evaluation.³ Thirteen proposals were submitted. The committee met on October 5, each committee member having evaluated the proposals with our rubric. After a lengthy discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal, six were selected. The authors of these proposals were asked to submit an expanded proposal, following guidelines we provided. We also asked Dean Kannaday to select additional readers to assist us in the evaluation so that fresh eyes would be included in the process and to make the process more inclusive. Again, we kept in mind the need for full support of the QEP we would select. We also sent the expanded proposals to all faculty and staff and selected students, with a link to Survey Monkey, asking for evaluations. We prepared another rubric, committee members and added readers scored the proposals with the rubric, and then we held a lengthy discussion on December 13, going over each proposal in detail.⁴

³ See Appendix H for the letter of solicitation.

⁴ See Appendix C for the rubric used to evaluate the expanded proposals.

Three emerged as top candidates for our QEP. The top three proposals were similar; each focused in some way on critical thinking and vocation as they related to communication and personal/social responsibility. It was becoming clear to the committee that the final QEP would involve a combination of these important topics. For faculty members, critical thinking ranked as the number one priority for our students, personal and social responsibility ranked third, and understanding vocation ranked fourth. Only seven percent of faculty members (44 responded to survey) responded that Newberry College is effectively preparing graduates to think critically, fourteen percent think we are effectively preparing graduates in social development and citizenship, and seven percent think we effectively prepare graduates to understand the Christian faith and its ethical implications. The proposals combining all three received superior evaluations from committee members, as well as the broader campus community. The proposal that combined critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection had immediate resonance with us. We realized that the three characteristics addressed the heart of our mission and they coalesced logically into one thematic endeavor.

The committee met again on January 5, 2011, without the added readers, to make the final selection. We selected one proposal, entitled *Habits of the Heart, A Gateway to Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Vocational Reflection*. The topic was announced to faculty at our January 31 faculty meeting; the co-chairs presented a power point outlining the process, the survey results, the discussions, and the final selection.

Dr. Cindy Johnson-Taylor left the committee, as she had planned to do from the beginning of the process, to direct important Education Department assessments. Dr. Christy Wendland replaced her as co-chair of the committee. Also, two members were added to the committee, one from the English Department and one from the Office of Student Affairs, to assist us with the writing of the narrative and with coordinating this proposal with the Office of Student Affairs. We then subdivided the work of writing the proposal, with two members of the committee assigned to the major sections. The co-chairs met periodically with President Koerwer, Dr. Don Johnson-Taylor, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and our Accreditation Liaison, and with Dr. Timothy Elston, the Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, to discuss organizational structure and resources and keep them informed of progress in writing the narrative. They also met regularly with Ms. Sharon Lackey about promoting the QEP to the campus community. Ms. Lackey designed a logo and created materials such as posters and bookmarks, to be used in the campus promotions. She arranged for the student planner, given

to all students at the beginning of the year, to carry the logo and a brief description of the QEP inside the front cover.

As will become evident in the next section, our QEP topic is grounded in our institutional mission and history, is guided by current thinking about best practices, is significant for our institution and the learning environment for students, and is within the capacity of the college to implement. It is a bold and challenging topic that holds tremendous promise and excitement for our institution.

III. Identification of the Topic

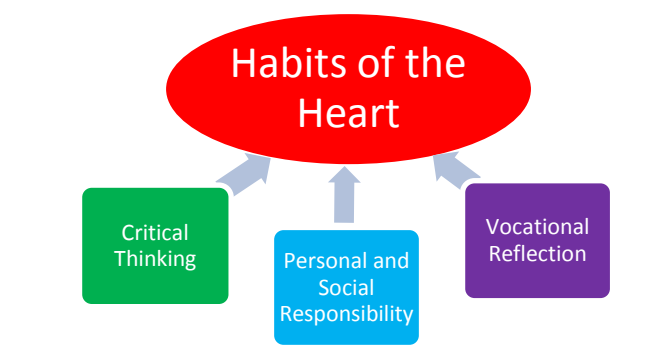
Founded in 1865, Newberry College is a small, Lutheran-affiliated college with a liberal arts curriculum. Its mission is to “challenge and nurture students for lifetimes of service and leadership through intellectual transformation, social development, a culture of physical well-being, and spiritual growth by providing a Christian education in the Lutheran tradition.” Located in a rural area in the midlands of South Carolina, the college educates a diverse population of students each year. Just over 30 percent of our students are African-American, one-third are first-generation college students, and ninety-nine percent receive some type of financial aid.

The historical and social context of Newberry College was a decisive factor in our determination of a QEP topic. First, in terms of our mission statement, critical thinking aligns with intellectual transformation, social development is part of our mission, personal responsibility is implied in a “Christian education in the Lutheran tradition,” and vocation is at the core of “lifetimes of service and leadership.” Additionally, the Lutheran tradition encourages an ongoing dialogue wherein students “engage the intellectual claims of the faith with the claims of other disciplines” (ELCA, *Our Calling in Education*, p. 27); and an “emphasis on broad and integrated learning and critical thinking [that] equips students for a whole life” (*Our Calling*, p. 27).

Second, in terms of the logic of combining these qualities into a single topic, we read an essay by Parker Palmer entitled *Humility, Chutzpah, and the Future of Democracy* (2010) in which he cites those habits of the heart described by Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America* (1835, 1956). These habits are the personal characteristics that guide our thinking and feeling about the issues around us. Tocqueville also called these our “moral and intellectual dispositions” (287). The liberal arts tradition, historically, has embraced education for the kind of effective citizenship necessary for maintaining democratic institutions. In his essay Palmer lists some of

the habits of the heart – listening to others, seeking out opposing viewpoints, appreciation of ambiguity, exploration of contradictions and paradox - and how these habits should lead to students knowing their own voice and having the confidence and courage to use it. The committee agreed that 'habits of the heart' provided that conceptual and thematic umbrella under which to focus on and nurture critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocation.

All of these habits are fundamental to our mission, important in the liberal arts tradition, and grounded in Lutheran history. They will help students develop their moral and intellectual dispositions and find and use their voice. So, our proposal recognizes Tocqueville and Palmer and acknowledges Habits of the Heart as the essence of our hope for our students. We propose to prepare students to be critical thinkers who have the personal and social responsibility to participate in the issues around them and opportunity to reflect on vocational callings that will enable them to utilize fully their critical thinking skills and their responsibility. They will find their voice and express it through their education on campus and in the community. In this way, our QEP is about one thing, not three.



Definitions:

1. **Habits of the Heart:** the personal characteristics that guide our thinking and feeling about the issues around us and that are necessary for maintaining democratic institutions.
2. **Critical thinking:** a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or *conclusion* (from AAC&U).

3. **Personal and Social Responsibility:** Personal and Social Responsibility refers to students reaching for excellence in the use of their talents, taking responsibility for the integrity and quality of their work, and engaging in meaningful practices that prepare them to fulfill their obligations as students in an academic community and responsible global and local citizens.

Five dimensions of personal and social responsibility (as identified by AAC&U)

- a. Striving for excellence: developing a strong work ethic and consciously doing one's very best in all aspects of college;
- b. Cultivating personal and academic integrity: recognizing and acting on a sense of honor, ranging from honesty in relationships to principled engagement with a formal academic honors code;
- c. Contributing to a larger community: recognizing and acting on one's responsibility to the educational community and the wider society, locally, nationally, and globally;
- d. Taking seriously the perspectives of others: recognizing and acting on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engaging diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work;
- e. Developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action: developing ethical and moral reasoning in ways that incorporate the other four responsibilities; using such reasoning in learning and in life.

Character traits associated with these five dimensions:

- Honesty
- Open-mindedness
- Respect for self and others
- Social and Cultural Awareness
- Responsibility
- Motivation
- Compassion

Our proposal recognizes that, in order to promote critical thinking, personal/social responsibility, and vocational reflection, we will need to pay attention to the campus learning environment. Promoting critical thinking and responsibility will succeed to the

extent that all in the campus community consider themselves part of a discourse community and adhere to basic principles of civil discourse

4. **Vocation:** The word *vocation* is derived from the Latin word *vocare*, which means “to call” and can be defined as a calling to serve God and the neighbor. Vocation is also a central tenet of higher education in the Lutheran tradition. Vocation shapes the entire life of an individual. Thus, vocation in the Lutheran tradition involves the whole arena of one’s life, embracing professional and personal relationships, work and leisure, involvement in a faith community and civic engagement. Finding our vocation is a lifelong process of discovering who we are, what we desire to become, and how we want to live our lives. The Lutheran conception of vocation encourages an education that helps students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effective citizenship and helps them cultivate an understanding of the source and nature of their skills and dispositions.

The Alignment of this QEP Topic with Academic Strategic Planning

This QEP also supports the efforts of the college to refine its vision for the future as part of our strategic planning efforts; as we have grappled with this vision we have begun to talk in terms of sending our students into the world to do well and do good, to take the Newberry experience to the world at large, and to be new generations of citizen leaders ready to shape the world around them. The focus of this QEP aligns with this vision and with the direction of strategic planning.

This alignment was not planned but has been the result of some fortunate timing. As our QEP selection committee began to meet in the spring of 2010, an academic strategic planning committee was in the early stages of working on plans to change the fundamental character and structure of our general education program. We did not know where that process would take us. Over time as each committee continued its work, similarities in focus emerged. The QEP topic combining critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection was selected in January of 2011 at the same time that the Academic Strategic Planning Committee’s ideas began to take shape. Both were focusing on critical thinking, both wanted to employ learning communities, both wanted to intensify the academic rigor of our first year seminar and for students to take more responsibility in shaping their education. Both were incorporating community-based learning and more emphasis on the Lutheran concept of vocation. So, two

committees whose work was on parallel tracks saw that these tracks could converge. This convergence was facilitated by the happy circumstance that four faculty members were on both the QEP Committee and the Academic Strategic Planning Committee. Thus, in writing this narrative and in developing a proposal for a new general education curriculum, common concepts, terminology, and resources now appear. In addition the Academic Assessment Committee has been brought into the process to coordinate the language of the learning outcomes for QEP and the new general education curriculum, advise on combining assessments when possible, and suggest timing of assessments for both.

What Data Support a Focus on the Three Components Chosen for Our QEP?

- Internal Data

In its various reports for SACS, Newberry College has noted its weakness in assessment of learning outcomes. This weakness has meant that the QEP Committee did not always have direct assessment data to support our argument for the need for a QEP based on critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocation. However, we believe that the combination of internal data we do have, the surveys of constituents, and the strong faculty support for the three components are strong arguments for our choice of this QEP.

1. Critical Thinking: Newberry College has emphasized critical thinking in different ways over the years: in English classes such as ENG 111 and 112, speech classes, logic classes, science and social science classes. As the Committee reviewed how we have handled critical thinking, the evidence was clear that there was not a unified and cohesive approach in teaching or evaluating. Some classes mention critical thinking on the syllabus, most do not. Science courses view it differently from humanities courses. Some professors employ a rubric, others do not. We have a writing-across-the-curriculum program that includes mention of critical thinking but it has played a secondary role in that program. We previously mentioned the survey we sent out as part of the process of QEP topic selection that found only seven percent of our faculty members think we are teaching critical thinking “very effectively.”

In addition, we now have confirming evidence about the need for more focus on critical thinking, from the ETS Profile Proficiency Survey administered to all Newberry College seniors in May of 2011. The mean score for Newberry seniors was 109.38 compared to 112.79 for seniors at seventy-seven other liberal arts colleges. Ninety-eight percent of

our seniors were judged to be NOT proficient in critical thinking. We will administer this survey and the CIRP survey to Freshmen at the beginning of fall semester, 2011, giving us additional data on where we stand.

We also have anecdotal data gleaned from informal discussions with faculty members about the critical thinking weaknesses of our students. This is a frequent topic of conversation over lunch and within the academic strategic planning group. That group has made critical thinking a central focus in transforming our general education program.

2. **Personal and Social Responsibility:** As we looked at catalog descriptions of majors and courses, we saw that there was little explicit focus on this area across the campus as a whole. Although we demand academic integrity in classes and hold students responsible for conduct in and out of classes, we have no systematic focus on a comprehensive view of personal and social responsibility, no formal learning outcomes specified, and little assessment. We do not place a strong emphasis on our academic honesty policy. The Values Based Learning Program promotes service-learning and education for citizenship and administers surveys each semester about behavior and attitudes involving community service. These surveys actually show a good level of support for service and good evaluations from students about what they have learned about community issues and citizenship. However, these are students who have been involved with classes with a service-learning component. Again, a comprehensive, campus-wide program to address the personal development of responsibility toward others does not exist.

3. **Vocation:** Vocation features prominently in the Lutheran tradition of higher education. At Newberry College, the Values Based Learning Program was named for Martin Luther's concept of vocation as service based on our deepest values, and each year several campus members attend the Vocation of a Lutheran College meeting and the Association of Lutheran College Faculty meeting. We have incorporated vocation into the syllabus of COL 101, our first year experience course, but have left the manner in which it is explained largely to the individual instructors. Students in the course are required to write a 1000-word reflection essay that connects the Lutheran notion of vocation to the themes of the course and to their service-learning. However, faculty members who teach the first year seminar report in meetings of the instructors that

students do not display a grasp of vocation in their reflection papers. We think this is due to lack of training for faculty members in vocational reflection, which produces inconsistencies in how it is presented. Beyond the COL 101 course, there is no systematic program for integrating vocation into other courses or activities. The Academic Strategic Planning Committee has identified this as a problem for our curriculum and has been considering ways to make vocation a topic across the curriculum.

4. All Three Components: This proposal addresses three of the top five characteristics identified in the surveys sent out by the QEP Committee as being of greatest interest and in need of most attention for our college. For faculty, all were in the top four.

- External Data

We noted above our weaknesses in internal data but there is overwhelming external data that supports our QEP. Many national organizations, supported by significant research, have argued for, and created initiatives around, the need for colleges across the country to strengthen their focus on critical thinking and personal and social responsibility. We feel that the situation at Newberry College is well reflected in the critiques of these organizations and the data they cite.

- (1) The AAC&U has been a leading advocate for improvement in the teaching of critical reflection and personal and social responsibility. It has created specific initiatives focusing on these and cites data analysis in support of these initiatives. We have included some of these reports below. The AAC&U has also developed the Bringing Theory to Practice Program which encourages learning communities and interdisciplinary teaching and promotes research on “high impact practices”. Newberry College received a grant from this program to create learning communities in 2008-10.
- (2) An employer survey by Peter Hart and Associates in 2007 found that only 22 percent of employers found recent colleges graduates “very well prepared” in the area of critical thinking skills.

- (3) A survey of 23,000 undergraduates and 9,000 faculty/staff/administrators conducted by the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education in 2008 (*Should Colleges focus more on Personal and Social Responsibility?* (2008) contained two conclusions of interest to this QEP:
- "Across the board, students, faculty, administrators, and student affairs staff on the 23 campuses believe that personal and social responsibility should be a major focus of attention at their own college or university" (3).
 - "Despite the perceived value of attending to these issues, all surveyed groups reported that their campuses were not focusing enough attention on issues of personal and social responsibility" (3).
- (4) The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in partnership with the American Association for Higher Education has created a program called "Critical Thinking for Civic Thinking" which embodies the notion contained in this QEP proposal that critical thinking is best understood and taught as interconnected with other skills. Their definition of civic thinking is close to what Parker Palmer and this proposal call "Habits of the Heart": "Civic thinking involves critical analysis, engagement with policy development issues, skills in developing multi-sided argumentation, that move more deeply into the issues beyond the more superficial, political, media headline-driven level of analysis" (www.carnegiefoundation.org).
- (5) The Lilly Endowment has funded vocational reflection programs in several Lutheran colleges over the last ten years. Evidence from these programs demonstrates that a planned, comprehensive focus on vocation raises the level of interest and knowledge in pursuing vocational reflection.

What is the Logic of the Combination?

- a. Critical thinking is not developed in a vacuum. Personal and social responsibility and vocational reflection provide a rich vein of substance and activities for the development of critical thinking skills.
- b. Personal and social responsibility raise questions of "who am I" and "what is my relationship to others" that are a natural part of the college years whether or not

colleges explicitly pose them. Placing them in the context of critical reasoning skills and vocational reflection provides significant opportunities for students to address them.

- c. Critical thinking and personal and social responsibility, together, add up to more than just the sum of the two. Focusing on them in tandem creates the opportunity for a discourse community. As Darrell Jodock has written (1999), “No individual in isolation can know the truth, but the truth emerges amid the engaged deliberations of people.” This community of discourse, he continues, prepares students to be communicators and leaders: “If a person is to lead, normally that person must be able to *articulate, to explain, and to persuade others* (emphasis added) regarding a course of action that benefits the community. And the wisdom to discern what actually does benefit the community needs to be discovered in dialogue. . .” (30). The ELCA, in support of discourse communities, has launched a new initiative, an e-Advocacy network, to keep people apprised of important current issues and to encourage conversation and action (www.elca.org/advocacy).
- d. Vocational reflection demands an understanding of ourselves and others and the ability to discern how this knowledge coalesces into our calling.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes

The QEP Committee devoted considerable time to constructing student learning outcomes for this QEP. We met with the Newberry College Academic Assessment Committee, the Academic Dean, and the President. Members of our Department of Education provided valuable guidance because of the focus they are required to place on assessment as part of their accreditation. We also profited from the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Carnegie Foundation. Both have valuable on-line resources addressing learning outcomes. We have divided the learning outcomes into three groups, representing the three foci of our QEP. We expect students to meet these outcomes by the end of their second year of involvement in the QEP initiative. Our discussion of the assessment plan for these outcomes is presented in Section X.

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to

- State and describe issues/problems clearly and comprehensively.

- Assess and analyze evidence for a position.
- Identify the influence of context and assumptions.
- Develop their own perspectives and positions on issues.
- Identify and assess conclusions.

Personal and Social Responsibility: Students will be able to

- Develop and display a strong work ethic to do their best.
- Understand and apply ethical standards in their academic work and campus behavior.
- Recognize and act on their responsibility to the educational community and the wider society.
- Engage diverse and competing perspectives while demonstrating respect for the rights of others to express dissenting opinions.
- Develop and display ethical and moral reasoning.

Vocational Reflection: Students will be able to

- Analyze and communicate the steps through which they have gone to identify vocational strengths and interests.
- Articulate a self-statement about their strengths and weaknesses as concerns vocational planning.
- Identify and articulate their vocational goals.

V. Literature Review and Best Practices

A. Literature Review – The Historical Context of Our Topic

A deep knowledge of one's own traditions and culture is by no means narrowing, especially if the traditions are themselves rich and diverse. Indeed, those who do not thoroughly grasp at least one tradition well are ill-equipped to understand another.

Robert Audi, *Moral Value and Human Diversity*⁵

The selection and construction of *Habits of the Heart* have deep roots in the history of Newberry College. This historical legacy contributes to our QEP's effectiveness and relevance for our students, faculty and entire college community. As an institution affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Newberry College continues Lutheran spiritual and educational traditions based on the components of critical thinking, vocation, and personal and

⁵ Robert Audi, *Moral Value and Human Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 116.

social responsibility. The literature review of *Habits of the Heart* includes sources that explain Newberry College's past and the continuity of Lutheran values. While a thorough review of sources on Lutheranism and the QEP components would be out of the scope of this proposal, this bibliographical review guides readers to a useful and relevant body of work that provides historical perspective on Lutheranism and the founding of Newberry College. It also points to sources that explain the connection between this history and the main themes of the QEP. Much of the uniqueness of *Habits of the Heart* comes from the soul of the college itself, and the literature spotlighted in this review reflects that unique character.

A thorough understanding of Newberry College and *Habits of the Heart* must begin with a survey of its administrative body and its connection to the ideals of open dialogue and inclusiveness. The ELCA, one of the two largest Lutheran denominations in the country, was formed in 1988 by a merger of the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America.⁶ The ELCA pursues "a vision of inclusiveness" (theological, cultural, and gendered) and participates in the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the National Council of Christian Churches.

The Lutheran heritage came not from a sect, but from national church traditions. The ELCA is the offspring of national churches in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and other countries. A national church must be inclusive and comprehensive as it provides for the religious needs of many. It must include various concerns and points of view. Lutherans have been united through the Augsburg Confession and its services have remained based in liturgy. The liturgical nature of the church allows a well-ordered, participatory, reasoned approach to faith, and avoids fanaticism and actions based solely on emotionalism.⁷ The Lutheran church is a creedal church not defined by rite or ceremony, but by written confessions designed to instruct. The Augsburg Confession of 1530, which still remains the beating heart of the Lutheran church, was drafted to explain an ecumenical stance, a commitment to continuing reform, and a willingness to compromise. Lutheran historians Eric Gritsch and Robert Jenson point out that the confessions do not act as the constitution of an established church. Instead, they serve as the manifesto of a

⁶ The Lutheran Church in America was formed in 1962 with the merger of the United Lutheran Church in America, the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. For a history of the merger, see Johannes Knudsen, *The Formation of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, Press, 1978).

⁷ David Veal, *An Essential Unity: A Contemporary Look at Lutheran and Episcopal Liturgies* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1997), 4-7.

still unfolding ecumenical movement that embraces other churches and denominations; the church itself is an ecumenical movement of its own.⁸

The willingness of the Lutheran church to engage in meaningful dialogue and its instructive spiritual traditions allow the concepts of vocation and critical thinking to flourish in the classrooms of its institutions. Lutheran education is committed to life-long learning and fulfillment of one's service and personal calling through more than emotionalism. Much of the motivating force behind Lutheran investment in theological work emanates from taking truth seriously. Indeed, the title of an article by J.A.O Preus III is "Lutheran Identity Is Insistence on Truth."⁹ David Morgan argues in *The Lutheran Reader* that "Lutheranism has never embraced a 'decision theology' where conversion is quick and certain and fueled by enthusiasm. Good things take a long time . . . It takes an entire life to figure out how to respond to God's grace."¹⁰ Morgan's observation directly applies to the Lutheran roots of reasoned faith, particularly the concept of vocation, or calling. The ELCA defines vocation as a calling "to follow Christ's example, living a life of meaning and purpose in service to the common good."¹¹ An essay by Robert Perkins defines vocation as "a duty to be faithful to one's calling." Perkins explains a "calling" as "the transfiguration of work characterized by enthusiasm and love, and issuing in personal satisfaction," and "an expression of the universally human by and through the individual." While a calling is often associated with work and profession, the definition of vocation reaches for a higher meaning. "It can refer to the very proclamation of the gospel, through which human beings are called to be the children of God. It can also be used as meaning the work which each does as a farmer, craftsman, etc."¹²

Much of the Lutheran conception of vocation has been based on Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. Luther looked for an understanding of God that avoided the extremes of separation from the political world and subjugation to a total Christianization of law and order.¹³ Luther

⁸ Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 6.

⁹ Buschart, 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹¹ "Life as Vocation," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, www.elca.org/Growing-in-Faith/Vocation/Life-as-vocation.aspx.

¹² Robert Perkins, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 92-93.

¹³ Gritsch, 18.

argued that God works in both the world of the Gospel and the world of law and order. Thus, Luther himself rejected the sacred and secular spheres of the medieval notion of calling. He broadened the concept of vocation from a narrow ecclesiastical definition to one that describes the life and work of all Christians: “Just as individuals are different, so their duties are different; and in accordance with the diversity of their callings, God demands diverse works of them.”¹⁴ Historian Mark Noll argues in a study of American Protestants that although a great distance separates the theology of Luther from the religion of today, the power of the individual conscience would be one of Luther’s reforms that he would still recognize today.¹⁵

Marilyn Harran’s perceptive work on Luther and education argues that education was at the heart of all of Luther’s activities, and he linked it to the pursuit of one’s calling. “Vocation in the larger sense applies to one’s special role in the family and in society, as well as in a particular occupation. Thus, in the strongest terms, Luther rejected the popular medieval view that only parents, monks, and nuns experience a calling. He likewise rejected the perception of daily, secular life as unholy, as not part of one’s divine calling and as inferior to one’s religious life.” Harran argues that education was at the heart of all of Luther’s activities, allowing a crucial role of the teacher in guiding others to their vocations. A person’s calling comes through the people encountered daily, individuals “performing the divine work by calling one to particular activities and deeds.”¹⁶

Bernard Lohse, a professor of church history at the University of Hamburg, points to the formative role of the university in Luther’s development and his later understanding of God. Luther owed his study of the arts to his grounding in logic, and “regularly staged disputations gave students a facility for apt expression and encounter quick at repartee, likewise later to benefit Luther at every turn.” He also developed the art of logical progression and development of conclusions supported by argument.¹⁷ Luther’s university training obviously influenced his

¹⁴ Kathryn Kleinhans, “The Work of a Christian: Vocation in Lutheran Perspective,” *Word & World*, Fall 2005.

¹⁵ Mark Noll, *The Work We Have to Do: A History of Protestants in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 132-133.

¹⁶ Marilyn Harran, “Luther as Professor,” in Harran, *Luther and Learning* (London: Associated University Press, 1985), 15, 30.

¹⁷ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 32.

description of writing as a serious endeavor involving “the whole man.”¹⁸ The university life also instilled in Luther a set of values that extended beyond the walls of the church. He wrote letters in support of funding for public schools and libraries, institutions that measured the wealth of a city in terms other than magnificent buildings and accumulated treasures: “A city’s best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consist rather in its having many learned, wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens.”¹⁹

Newberry College was founded on the concept of vocation, and its founder, the Rev. John Bachman, vividly shows the connection between Lutherans and higher education. Bachman, a leader of the Lutheran church in the south, was also a renowned scholar and naturalist, and his life vividly combined critical thinking and vocation. His research challenged the popular ideas of classifying humans as different species according to biological differences. Bachman’s conclusions opened doors to more enlightened views of race.²⁰ His works and life continue to provide a model of spiritual guidance and of academic excellence for Newberry College.

Bachman’s combination of vocation and critical thinking also appears dramatically in an early Newberry president, the tireless Rev. Dr. Josiah P. Smeltzer, who kept the college alive through Civil War and Reconstruction. Smeltzer’s remarkable journal, now in the possession of Newberry College, serves as a valuable source for understanding nineteenth century Lutheranism. It also graphically narrates a life of vocation and calling. Early in his life after failure to learn a trade, Smeltzer followed his calling to enter the ministry and become an educator: “When studying theology I was deeply impressed with the solemn truth that man, to accomplish much in the ministry, must be an educated man.”²¹ Smeltzer’s life epitomizes the concept of vocation. During the Civil War the college quit paying Smeltzer a salary. The student body was depleted, and he had to learn the baking trade to support his family. However, he never lost faith in his calling as an educator. After the Civil War, Smeltzer pursued and realized another calling that he had before the war, the founding of a college for women: “I have now

¹⁸ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), 181-182.

¹⁹ Darrell Jodock, “The Lutheran Tradition and the Liberal Arts College: How Are They Related?”

²⁰ Leslie Stephens, *Science, Race and Religion in the America South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). For a fine account of Bachman’s influence on American Lutheranism and the founding of Newberry College, see *The History of Synod Committee, A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, 1971).

²¹ J.P. Smeltzer, *The Journal of Josiah P. Smeltzer*, trans. Edith Griesser, Newberry College Archive, 202.

determined to leave no stone unturned in the work before me. God helping me I will build here in this mountain town a female college, which will be a means of doing great good and aid greatly in building the Kingdom of Jesus.”²² Martin Marty’s essay on vocation in *Lutheran Questions, Lutheran Answers: Exploring Christian Faith* contains a concise argument that could serve as the summary of Smeltzer’s wartime experience: “Professions come and go, but vocations last.”²³

These historical and intellectual foundations of the college, most notably evident in the work of Bachman and Smeltzer, join vocation with critical thinking, a second pillar of *Habits of the Heart*. Richard Paul and Linda Elder defined critical thinking as “the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it,” and necessarily including “effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcoming our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.”²⁴ Paul and Elder explored the importance of nurturing and guiding critical thinking at an institutional level. If left alone without intellectual development, thinking becomes “biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or downright prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.”²⁵

The ELCA is in full communion with the Episcopal Church, and we also find literature of critical thinking in this Anglican tradition. The work of Richard Hooker (1554-1600), especially his classic *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Authority*, probed the connection between reason and faith. Hooker compared the study of scripture with the study of science, which normally assumes that a number of first principles were either taken as self-evident or taken for granted due to previous work: “There is as yet no way known how to dispute, or to determine of things disputed, without the use of natural reason.” He concluded that “if reason fail we fall into error.” Reason was the weapon which killed Goliath: but only when David used it.²⁶

²² Ibid., 260-261.

²³ Martin E. Marty, *Lutheran questions, Lutheran Answers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 137.

²⁴ Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools* (Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical thinking, 2009), 2.

²⁵ Ibid., *Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life* (Columbus, OH: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), xxii.

²⁶ Roger Steer, *Guarding the Holy Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 48-49.

The body of secular work on critical thinking is massive, but among the classic works, perhaps John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* most clearly defines the goals of *Habits of the Heart*. The proposed QEP seeks to instill in students a sense of self-worth that enables them to serve others, and critical thinking skills that better equip them as creative and enlightened citizens. Mill warned of the dangers of a stagnant "collective mediocrity" that threatened to render individuals powerless. Society had too many individuals feeling lost in a crowd, ones that took no inspiration from books because "their thinking is done for them by men much like themselves." Mill described a society in which people had lost the sense of vocation: "He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties."²⁷

Another pillar of *Habits of the Heart*, social responsibility, provides a focused goal of vocation and applies a high purpose to critical thinking. James Childs, the former Dean of Academic Affairs for Trinity Lutheran Seminary, served an African-American church in the South during the turbulent 1960s, and explained the connection between vocation and social service: "Occupation, seen through the lens of vocation, should lead persons toward seeing the dimension of service to neighbor in what we do rather than just getting ahead or accumulating wealth. It's not that we don't want to attain excellence in our jobs or be successful in our businesses but that we see this as subsidiary or instrumental to the possibility of service to the neighbor."²⁸ Childs' argument has deep roots in American culture. The French emissary Alexis de Tocqueville, whose work, as explained earlier, has given focus and a title to our QEP, travelled in America in the 1830s and observed the foundations of American democracy. Even in a surging, expanding America of rapid change, "all the citizens are independent and feeble; they can do hardly anything by themselves, and none of them can oblige his fellow-men to lend him their assistance. They all, therefore, fall into a state of incapacity if they do not learn voluntarily to help one another." Tocqueville explained that if the citizens of a country had no inclination to form political associations, they could retain wealth but lose independence.

²⁷ John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979), 1062-1072.

²⁸ James Childs, "A Table Talk on Lutheran Ethics," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998), 156.

However, “if they never acquired the habit of forming associations in everyday life, civilization itself would be endangered.”²⁹

A similar message appeared in the 1960s through the work of Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish refugee from Germany who preached a universal message of activism and reform in the name of spiritual rejuvenation. Heschel, who had worked in the civil rights movement in Alabama, argued that the strength of the world depended upon its spiritual well-being instead of its power and wealth. Religion historians Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt noted that “Heschel liked to tell the story of the blacksmith who learned everything there was to know about his trade: all the skills, all the tools, all the techniques of the true artisan. Only one thing he failed to learn: how to kindle a spark.” Vocation, then, could serve as a means of extending love and justice. Everything worthwhile in what we term civilization “depends on man’s sense for the sacredness of life, upon reverence for this spark of light in the darkness of selfishness.”³⁰ Ethics and philosophy professor Robert Audi applied Tocqueville’s observation on service to the crucial role of colleges and universities. Audi identified individuals as “pivotal agents in human history,” but institutions can mediate and magnify their deeds. “Moreover, given the place of institutions in the fabric of human culture, and given their role as both preservers of what is valued and agents of change, they are structural foundations for pluralistic democracy.” Colleges and universities can show “morality writ large” through structured collective action:

They preserve and communicate knowledge; they socialize young adults into responsible citizens; they provide both the stability of connections with the past and the impetus to organize change when we need it. In them, civic virtue is a complex balance of commitments: to the preservation and generation of knowledge; to the sympathetic presentation of alternative modes of thinking, feeling and living; to the development of intellectual and moral capacities among students, faculty, and the wider community.³¹

Habits of the Heart seeks to expand the social responsibility component already visible at Newberry College through its Values Based Learning Program. Founded by former Vice

²⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 597.

³⁰ Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002), 319-320.

³¹ Audi, 116.

President of Academic Affairs Frank McCoy, the program prepares students to be active, engaged citizens through service-learning experiences that celebrate Martin Luther's concept of vocation. Values Based Learning requires elements already explained in the bibliography, including collaboration among faculty, students, campus organizations, athletic teams, and community partners. It also promotes service-learning as a teaching and learning method to prepare for life-long community engagement through five characteristics:

1. Commitment to democracy
2. Openness to diverse points of view
3. Knowledge of current events
4. Willingness to work with others
5. Compassion and service to others.³²

We can see a basis for *Habits of the Heart's* expansion of Values Based Learning goals through Darrell Jodock's work on the Lutheran tradition in the liberal arts college. Jodock presents steps that higher education can take to halt the loss, described by Mill, of intellectual empowerment in the individual and community. Jodock argues that the community as a whole will benefit if people understand the course of human events enough to know what to seek and what to avoid: "What persons educated at these schools need in order to serve the community, according to Luther, is what I would call *wisdom* – that is, the ability to make proper judgments, to deal with knotty human issues, and to discern what can be said or done to be of help to individuals and/or communities." Jodock identifies five interlocking characteristics of the Lutheran college that also work as goals for *Habits of the Heart*:

1. It serves the community and educates community leaders.
2. It strives for academic excellence.
3. It honors freedom of inquiry.
4. It embraces the ideal of the liberal arts.
5. It organizes itself as a community of discourse.³³

Newberry College, while adhering to all five characteristics, seeks to enhance them through *Habits of the Heart*. This QEP also effectively seeks to develop the goals outlined in a 2005

³² Newberry College Values Based Learning website, <http://newberry.edu/academics/vbl/VBLmissionstatement.aspx>

³³ Jodok.

study, funded through the Lilly Endowment, that evaluated vocation programs of three of Newberry College's ELCA peer institutions. The *Called for Life* program concluded that vocation programs can significantly increase students' skills for discerning their vocations. In a recent issue of the journal *Intersections*, the authors of the study presented steps that colleges should take to most effectively develop their vocation programs:

1. Relationships with adults (professors, advisors, or others) who take an interest in the students.
2. Opportunities for experiential, hands-on learning and/or service outside the classroom.
3. Classes that introduce and build on the concept of vocation and its application.
4. Relationships with other students.
5. Survey tools can be effectively used to identify the vocational activities with which students engaged during their college careers, as well as a number of different kinds of vocational outcomes.³⁴

Again, Newberry College continuously seeks to meet these goals. *Habits of the Heart* seeks to build on these five concepts through its Lutheran heritage and the key components of vocation, critical thinking and social responsibility.

B. Current Literature and Best Practices

"Higher education institutions have an educational and civic obligation to unapologetically teach for personal and social responsibility." AAC&U

"With all the controversy over the college curriculum, it is impressive to find faculty members agreeing almost unanimously that teaching students to think critically is the principal aim of undergraduate education." Derek Bok, former president of Harvard.

"...this emphasis [on vocation] in the curriculum means that a meaningful encounter with vocation is unavoidable on the Augsburg campus." Professor Mark Tranvik, Augsburg College

After grounding the focus of the QEP in the literature described above, we moved to an examination of two questions. One, what are others saying about the state of higher education: current concerns, ideas that are working, the needs of 21st century students in a 21st century world, and the strategy and shape of effective general education programs? Second, how are the ideas that we chose for our QEP grounded in current thinking and practices? These are

³⁴ Greg Owen, Ellen Shelton, and Brian Pittman, "Called for Life," in *Intercessions*, Winter 2010, 5-14.

important questions. We have to be confident that our QEP is important and achievable. Happily, the literature search for the QEP has coincided with work of the academic strategic planning committee so that both are grounded in current theory and practice.

As we have stated before, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has been a leading authority on creating a liberal arts curriculum relevant for today's students and the 21st century. They have created major initiatives on critical thinking and personal and social responsibility and have produced and collected resources to support the efforts of colleges to address these. Among the ones we found helpful for our QEP are:

- *College Learning for the New Global Century* (2008). This document outlines learning outcomes college graduates based on conversations with hundreds of colleges and the views of employers. Critical and creative thinking and personal and social responsibility comprise two of the four learning outcome areas. These learning outcomes, the report continues, are especially important for first-generation students. The set of outcomes is designed to prepare graduates for “the real-world demands of work, citizenship, and life in a complex and fast-changing society” (5). The report also lists “The Principles of Excellence,” including “Aim High – Make Excellence Inclusive, Engage the Big Questions, and Emphasize Personal and Social Responsibility.” We used this document to shape our understanding of how to integrate the three foci of our QEP with the needs of today's students and in the context of what constitutes a relevant curriculum today.
- *Practicing Liberal Education* (2003), by Carol Geary Schneider, the President of the AAC&U. Schneider outlines three major themes as the keys to higher education reform: intellectual judgments, social responsibility, and integrative learning. She describes intensive first year seminars on liberal arts topics and first-year learning communities as essential methods. The information in this article shaped some of our ideas for integrating the QEP into our COL 101 course and pairing it with another course to create learning communities.
- *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (2008), by George D. Kuh. Kuh has conducted research on practices that are effective in helping students reach their goals. The first practice he describes is First-Year Seminars. The highest-quality seminars “place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry ...” (9). He also includes learning communities among these best practices, especially ones that focus on the “big questions that matter beyond the classroom” (10).

Kuh's research findings convinced us of the need for a more robust first year seminar and the value of using it in a learning community.

- *Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility on College and University Campuses* (2005), by Richard Hersh and Carol Geary Schneider. The authors, in arguing for a more intentional focus on responsibility, state: "We know we can teach students organic chemistry; we know we can teach them Keynesian economics and the history of the Italian Renaissance. But if that is all we do, then we have failed them. If, in the process, we don't also teach students about passion and the relationship between passion and responsible action, then we leave them dulled. Our students will have all the knowledge and skill they need to act, but they will lack the focus or the motivation or the profound caring to direct the use of their skills. For that, our students will need passion with a conscience, passion imbued with a keen sense of responsibility" (3). We found the discussion of passion and action important in structuring a QEP that will have meaning for students and motivate them to use their knowledge productively. We will make this discussion a part of our training workshops for faculty (discussed in Section VI).
- *Educating for Personal and Social Responsibility: A Review of the Literature*, by Lynn Swaner (In *Liberal Education*, Summer/Fall 2005). Swaner reviews different theories and conceptions of personal and social responsibility. From a social learning perspective, educating for personal and social responsibility "primarily involves shaping a moral campus environment" (17). This involves students having good peer role models, training for faculty, strong honor codes and student conduct codes. She cites research from McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield which found higher levels of academic dishonesty at colleges without honor codes. This work reminds us of the need to expand our QEP beyond the classroom and to infuse it into campus culture. Our inclusion of the Office of Student Affairs in the QEP is based, in part, on the argument in this work.
- *Character Traits Associated with the Five Dimensions of Personal and Social Responsibility* (2010). This document is on the AAC&U website and enumerates and defines these five dimensions along with character traits associated with them and provides a detailed framework for thinking about issues of personal and social responsibility. We imported this work directly into our QEP, as indicated in our student learning outcomes.

As we looked at the final proposals we read a short essay by Parker Palmer entitled *Humility, Chutzpah, and the Future of Democracy* (2010) (referred to in Section III). Palmer argues that we need to “restore our capacity for civic community” and that educators and educational institutions must attend to this need. He says that students need to learn humility (knowing they must listen to others) and chutzpah (knowing their own voice and having the courage to speak it). American political institutions, he continues, “cannot work as intended unless they are inhabited by citizens who possess these qualities and the habits of the heart.” More than any of the other literature, it was this essay that convinced us of the appropriateness of the title “Habits of the Heart” for our QEP and of the connection among the three characteristics the QEP addresses.

We also read *Civic Identity: Locating Self in Community* (2008) by Lee Knefelkamp, an essay which examines the relationship between critical thinking, its development through engagement with others, the importance of rehearsing for the full development of discourse communities, and the resulting maturing of civic identity in students. This essay helped in the shaping of learning outcomes and in recognizing the importance of pairing promotion of critical thinking skills with issues of personal and social development.

Several books aided our thinking. Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, in his book *Our Underachieving Colleges* (2006) notes the failure of colleges to address critical thinking, character development, and civic education. Even though faculty members almost universally agree about the importance of critical thinking (see quote at beginning of this proposal), according to Bok they “rarely stop to consider what a full-blown commitment to critical thinking would entail ...” (110). He proposes a set of guidelines to facilitate this kind of commitment: specify the reasoning skills you want students to develop, challenge them with interesting questions, and use class discussion and other forms of active learning. His discussion helped us better understand the importance of integrating critical thinking with personal and social responsibility; we used his guidelines in thinking about teaching critical thinking.

A second book, published as we were writing this narrative, is *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, by Arum and Roksa. This is a study that found that 45 percent of college students learn little during their first two years of college. They also report that gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills are small or non-existent. Some have

found methodological problems with this book, but it supports our decision to focus our QEP on the first two years of our students' education.

A third book we studied was an empirical assessment of some of Tocqueville's contentions in *Democracy in America*. In *Habits of the Heart* (1985), Robert Bellah et al. use Tocqueville's analysis of the American character in the 1830s to examine the private-public issue in the 1980s. In their terminology this dichotomy is about individualism and commitment. Balancing the two, they say, can yield a "morally coherent life" (viii). They investigate "the extent to which private life either prepares people to take part in the public world or encourages them to find meaning exclusively in the private sphere, and the degree to which public life fulfills our private aspirations or discourages us so much that we withdraw from involvement in it" (ix). They argue that our colleges and universities can reaffirm "the classic role of education as a way to articulate private aspirations with common cultural meanings so that individuals simultaneously become more fully developed people and citizens of a free society" (293). Preparing students to use critical thinking within a discourse community in pursuit of the public good will also enhance their chances for vocational discernment. This book encouraged us to "think big" and to imagine an academic environment that is stimulating, exciting, and meaningful for all on campus.

As a Lutheran-affiliated college, Newberry is in regular dialogue with the other 25 ELCA schools. Our faculty and administrators regularly attend the annual Vocation of a Lutheran School conference and the Association of Lutheran College faculty annual meeting. We read *Intersections*, a Lutheran journal and follow what other Lutheran schools are doing. For the selection of our QEP we reread the ELCA Social Statement on Education (2007) posted on the ELCA website. This document addresses the character of Lutheran colleges: "At their best, they offer an excellent curriculum that aims at educating the whole person. Their emphasis on broad and integrated learning and critical thinking equips students for a whole life" (26). The document also lists the expectations of the ELCA for its colleges, including:

- ✓ "nurture an ongoing dialogue between the claims of the Christian faith and the claims of the many academic disciplines as well as explore issues at the crossroads of life" (27).
- ✓ "feature prominently the Lutheran teaching on vocation" (27).

Resources on vocation include three Lutheran colleges, Luther, Augsburg, and Augustana, which used Lilly grants to create centers for vocation that have served usefully as resources and

consultants for faculty, students, departments, and classes, providing workshops and literature. The Winter, 2010, issue of *Intersections*, a journal to promote dialogue among Lutheran colleges and universities, describes how these schools integrated vocational exploration into the curriculum and which activities were most effective in reaching students. This issue also included research at these three schools about the effectiveness of the vocation programs as reflected in student surveys.

VI. Action Plan

Overview

Our historical overview and best practices research described in Section V led us to a plan of action to implement our QEP. All steps involve a process that is inclusive and flexible and driven by faculty. The focus of the plan is on the First Year Experience and the Sophomore Year. The following narrative provides the template for implementing the QEP but leaves many of the details to the Implementation Team, several campus committees, and certain campus programs that will work in the spring and summer prior to the beginning of implementation and then continue during the first year of implementation and through the five years of the QEP. These committees and programs include the Office of Academic Affairs, the Academic Assessment Committee, the First Year Experience Steering Committee, the Academic Strategic Planning Committee, Athletics, and the Office of Student Affairs.

In creating this template, we have relied on the best practices literature reviewed above. We identify some of the links to this literature in the narrative.

The Action Steps

1. First Year Experience: "Entering the Gates of Newberry College"

To implement our QEP successfully, Newberry College must welcome new students immediately to a teaching and learning environment where critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection are interconnected and woven throughout their experiences and years. From the beginning students will understand that as they develop the skills and habits of critical thinking they also need to develop their personal characteristics and their social awareness as foundations for the critical thinking skills. They will then be able to combine their improved critical thinking skills with their growing

personal and social awareness to explore vocation - where their interests and passions and talents may lead them. The monograph *Practicing Liberal Education; College Learning for the New Global Century* was especially helpful in shaping our thinking about student learning outcomes and strategies for achieving them.

a. Orientation: "Taking the First Steps"

Students enter Newberry College through the gates of orientation. As the QEP committee was constructing its action plan for implementation, the Academic Strategic Planning Committee and the First Year Experience Steering Committee were also meeting. Because all three groups have an interest in orientation, they have shared ideas so that we chart a common pathway for our new students. This collaboration has included the Office of Student Affairs which coordinates and staffs much of the orientation process.

The QEP will begin in fall semester of 2012. Our template calls for incoming students to be introduced to the QEP during their orientation prior to the beginning of each fall semester. This will happen in several ways. First, the QEP Implementation Team, Orientation leaders, and the FYE Steering Committee will create a discussion plan, supported by a Power Point presentation, to be used during orientation by each instructor of our twenty sections of COL 101, the First Year Experience Seminar taken by all freshmen. The discussion will explain how Newberry College has devised an exciting plan to enhance students' education experiences in a way that will benefit them in the classroom and in their future roles as community, national, and international citizens. We will stress how each component of the QEP is important for their growth as students and responsible members of society. Second, the FYE Steering Committee, as part of a plan to strengthen the COL 101 experience, will select a book each year for all new students, to be given to them at orientation. We met with the FYE Steering Committee to discuss ways of coordinating this book with our QEP goals. We decided that the QEP Implementation Team, in conjunction with the FYE Steering Committee, will generate a set of questions, exercises, and writing prompts each year to help students make connections between the book and the QEP topics. This book will be chosen in the spring of each year at which time these committees will begin connecting it to the QEP. We will conduct a pilot test of this idea beginning in the fall of 2011. We have chosen the book *Clover* by Dori Sanders. We will ask four or five of the COL 101

instructors to connect its themes about diversity, racial conflict, and growing up to elements of personal and social responsibility; the analysis of its theme, structure, and value as literature to critical thinking; and its questions about finding meaning in life to vocational reflection. The Director of the QEP will hold two focus group meetings with these instructors during and at the end of the semester to determine how well the pilot test worked and how the pairing of the book with QEP themes can be improved.

Students will finish their orientation period with an awareness of the themes of our QEP and how each component will benefit them and enrich their classes. They will be ready, and hopefully eager, to begin addressing and refining these skills as they begin their first semester in college.

b. COL 101 and 102: "Making Our Way"

All entering students are enrolled in COL 101 and 102, a two semester course. During the spring of 2012, prior to the beginning of the implementation of our QEP, the Implementation Team, in consultation with the first-year experience director, first year mentors, and faculty with expertise in our QEP areas will compile a list of readings, exercises (oral and written), and discussion questions to help students and professors link the substance of the course directly to our QEP themes. The common book chosen for all freshmen and given to them during orientation will be assimilated into these plans, as described above.

In August, prior to the beginning of fall semester, the Implementation Team will host a workshop for COL 101 instructors. The workshop will focus on instructional methods and resources for critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. Resources will also be available on-line at the QEP webpage that will be part of the Newberry College website.

As students begin their COL 101 experience, we will use the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Survey (CIRP) and the ETS Profile Proficiency to assess the current status of their critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. We administered both of these surveys last year; the ETS assesses critical thinking and the CIRP address both critical thinking and personal and social responsibility. We will add questions about vocational reflection. The data from the

administration of these surveys will provide crucial information to the Implementation Team as they work with faculty to establish benchmarks and design the readings, exercises, and discussion questions, and identify areas where we need to place greater emphasis. We have written a draft of an in-house survey to tap into student attitudes and knowledge about the features of our QEP. We will select items from it to add to the CIRP and ETS this fall (during the first week of classes). This in-house survey can be viewed in Appendix D.

COL 101 has several important goals. It introduces students to the academic skills and personal characteristics necessary to succeed at Newberry College, nurtures these skills and characteristics, promotes writing and oral communication, and requires a service-learning component. The QEP will help us to focus these goals more clearly and systematically. In particular, the focus on critical thinking, which has not been strong in the past in this course, will help connect these goals. We will include lessons and exercises designed to strengthen critical thinking skills and will assess these skills as part of COL 101 assignments (we discuss rubrics that will be used for the assessment in Section X). We will do the same for personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. The QEP Implementation Team, the FYE Steering Committee, and faculty members teaching the courses will select a set of readings, exercises, activities, and discussions that focus attention on and are accompanied by well-defined learning outcomes for each of these elements of the QEP. The syllabus will reflect this focus. Professors in each section will be able to supplement the common readings with readings of particular interest to them. These common readings and experiences, and the fact that faculty members will be instrumental in the design, will contribute to a campus culture of shared interests and experiences and the creation of a discourse community that, as Parker Palmer points out, is essential for the habits of the heart necessary for sustaining democratic practices.

Clearly, the design of the program of readings, exercises, activities, and discussions is one of the keys to the success of the QEP. We discuss the responsibility for this design and how it will be a shared task of the Implementation Team, the First Year Experience Committee, and faculty in Section VIII on organizational structure.

c. Learning Communities: “Joining in a Common Journey”

Newberry College was awarded a grant from the Bringing Theory to Practice program of the AAC&U several years ago to pair some sections of FYE with a core course to establish learning communities. We found positive outcomes for bonding, interest in the college, attitudes about engaged learning, and retention. We ended this program when the grant expired. There is also extensive literature about the value of learning communities (see, e.g., *High-Impact Educational Practices* by George Kuh). For the QEP we want to revive this idea. At this point there are two ways we might do this. (1) Pair each section of COL 101 with a core course, as we did in the grant. We will phase this in over three years to allow the opportunity to assess results and make changes that reflect what has worked best. (2) If the work of the Academic Strategic Planning Committee is implemented, COL 101 will be paired with a new course, called a Commons Seminar. In either case, the same group of students will be part of two separate experiences, allowing for cross-fertilization of thought, discussion, and action. Because of our grant from AAC&U which supported the creation of learning communities in 2008-2010, we have the experience and understanding to implement them.

2. General Education Curriculum – Sophomore year: “Seeking Directions as We Continue the Journey toward habits of the heart”

As students enter their second year they will build upon the foundation from the first year experiences. They will be emerging critical thinkers, they will have had a year of activities, discussions, and readings that emphasize the importance of and the pathway to personal and social responsibility, and they will understand the difference between preparing for a job and reflecting on vocation. Beginning in the second year of the QEP (2013-4) the focus on critical thinking, personal and social development, and vocation will continue in second-year courses (and for our freshmen in the second year of the QEP and on, their core courses will compliment the first year focus). This continuation will reinforce the value of the first year experiences as students see how their work on critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection is connected to, and benefits them in, core courses. Their education becomes more holistic as a result. Students now see that critical thinking can be generalized to other courses, that

they can and must nurture the sense of personal and social responsibility in the context of different topics and issues, and that their vocational reflection is more robust because of these advancing skills.

The QEP Implementation Team, assisted by faculty with expertise in critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection will design workshops each spring for instructors of core courses to help them integrate the QEP features into their syllabi and instructional methods and train them in the use of rubrics for assessment. Because of the work of our Academic Strategic Planning Committee to revise our core, we may phase this expansion of the QEP into students' sophomore year through core courses over several years. The Implementation Committee will coordinate the QEP with this new core.

What Impact Will This QEP Have on Students and Faculty?

- ✓ Impact on Students: This plan will introduce students to an exciting new teaching and learning environment and different expectations about a Newberry College education. The interconnected focus on critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection will improve our first year experience by offering students better preparation for success at Newberry and for development of life-long skills and interests which will help them plan their future. This plan also establishes a set of learning outcomes attached to assessment so that we can monitor the effectiveness of the plan on student learning and make changes when and where needed. Students will benefit from the learning communities in their first year. These communities will assist them in integrating into the Newberry community and give them a support network. The focus on and the concept of "habits of the heart" will reinforce the college's commitment to educating students to do well and do good (part of our current work on a new vision for the college) and to live lives of service and participation (part of our liberal arts and Lutheran heritage).
- ✓ Impact on Faculty: The plan will create a more meaningful focus for the way faculty teach COL 101 and 102, introduce learning-communities into the first year experience, and help faculty to link core courses to the QEP outcomes. The plan will have a beneficial impact on the preparation and teaching of all courses because

faculty will know that all students in the first year, and continuing into the second, will have had focused work on critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. This QEP also supports the philosophical commitment expressed in the work of the Academic Strategic Planning Committee, and supported by the faculty, to teaching and learning that is more participatory and engaged. The design and implementation of the QEP will take a lot of hard work from faculty but their willingness to undertake it should be bolstered by the expected benefits to their classes and students and their participation in the design. The QEP, when paired with the changes being proposed by the Academic Strategic Planning Committee, can be the beginning of a rejuvenated academic program at Newberry which makes our college a more vibrant and meaningful place to work.

The plan may have some impact on the selection of instructors for the COL 101; instructors will have to be invested in the goals of the QEP and the use of learning communities.

Faculty workloads will not be affected; COL 101 counts as one of the four classes faculty members are expected to teach each semester.

No new courses will be required.

What Resources will support this integration into the first year experience and the general curriculum?

We indicated above our recognition that the design of readings, exercises, and activities centered on the three features of the QEP is a key to success. A second key is the desire and ability of faculty members to integrate this design into their classes. We will offer them the following support.

- Professional Development: The Implementation Team will create a robust support program of training and on-line resources for faculty on critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection. In August, prior to the beginning of each Fall Semester, the Implementation Team will host a workshop for COL 101 instructors. The workshop will focus on instructional methods and resources for critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection and on

the best practices in constructing learning communities. Beginning in the second year, the Implementation Team will host spring workshops for instructors of general education courses to assist them in incorporating the three features of the QEP into their syllabi and instruction. We will enliven these workshops with food, activities, door prizes, and energetic conversation. The faculty members will become part of the design of the classroom application of the QEP plan through these workshops as they discuss ideas and methods.

- Materials: Readings, discussion prompts, activities, and exercises for students and instructors will be collected and distributed by the Implementation Team through workshops, consultations with instructors, and on-line sharing.
- Conferences: The Implementation Team will have a fund for faculty and student travel to relevant conferences on personal and social development, vocation, and critical thinking. The Team will be responsible for publicizing opportunities for conferences and for soliciting requests to attend conferences.

3. Student Affairs Component: The Office of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the QEP Implementation Team, will create opportunities during orientation for activities that introduce students to the focus of the QEP. Student Affairs will continue to offer supervision of student groups and promotion of student leadership which are important for personal and social development. As we shift COL 101 toward more academically rigorous goals, the Office of Student Affairs and the Center for Student Success will coordinate the “introduction” to college material that formerly was part of COL 101 (such as location of campus offices, getting along with roommates, alcohol awareness, etc.).

Note: As we implement the QEP, our assessment of results should provide guidance for possible extension of the features of the QEP to majors and to a culminating or capstone experience. Thus the QEP can be a launch mechanism for activities in the third and fourth years. The following are some possible directions beyond this QEP.

1. Departments and Majors

- Department members might decide how and where to contribute to critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection in major courses so that these features are interwoven through the curriculum.

- The college could provide development funds and stipends provided for departments for implementation.

2. Capstone or Keystone Courses

- Could be organized by majors or be interdisciplinary, demonstrating personal and social development, critical thinking, and vocational reflection.

VII. Time Line

Summer 2011

- May > Joe and Christy met with Sharon Lackey to discuss PR for the QEP (we currently have \$5000 for initial PR costs)
- June > PR work will continue. Joe, Christy, and Sharon met with Student Affairs to discuss the logo for QEP and various marketing venues. The logo is being developed.
- July/August > The QEP will be introduced to incoming students during Orientation weekends (July 15-17, 29-31; Aug 19-21)
 - o A draft proposal of the QEP will be completed by Aug 1
 - o The QEP Director will be chosen

Fall 2011

- August > administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
- September > QEP PR blitz (this will involved the QEP Director, Academic Dean, Dean of Students, and Associate Dean of Students)
 - o Final QEP proposal will be submitted on Sept 4
 - o Appointment of QEP Implementation Team
- October > Continue PR blitz
 - o Oct 25-27 – SACS QEP site visit
 - o Pilot test of initial survey and rubrics to be used during first year of QEP
- November > QEP Implementation Team takes control of the QEP
 - o Orientation to QEP for faculty/staff
 - o First meeting of the QEP Implementation Team
 - o Schedule a speaker for Fall 2012 (Parker Palmer)
- December > Plan contents of QEP Training Manual

Spring 2012

- January > Implementation team will choose the FYE book and begin to compile questions, exercises, and other common readings to connect with QEP themes
 - o Determine a QEP budget for 2012-2013
- February > continue work on QEP training manuals and FYE substance and initiate integration of the QEP with the co-curriculum (QEP Director, Dean of Students, Associate Dean of Students, Director of Student Life, Center for Student Success)
- March/April > The QEP Implementation team will complete and distribute faculty/staff training manuals for QEP implementation and assessment
 - o Begin development of QEP website
 - o Choose rubrics and surveys to be used in the first year of QEP

Summer 2012

- May > FYE faculty/staff training
 - o FYE faculty/staff will learn instructional methods and resources for critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection
 - o FYE faculty/staff will learn assessment techniques
- June > Creation of learning communities
 - o Creation of learning communities will be done in conjunction with formation of learning communities for new core curriculum
 - o Finalization of survey to be given to students in August and April
 - o Discuss further the integration of the QEP into the co-curriculum
- July/August > Introduce QEP at Orientation weekends
 - o Meet with FYE faculty to finalize QEP assessments for FYE classes
 - o Continue work on QEP website
 - o Brainstorm ideas for FAL events and speakers

YEAR 1

Fall 2012

- August/September > Launch QEP!
 - o Administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
 - o Begin integration of QEP into selected areas of the co-curriculum
 - o Work with FAL Committee to plan a QEP event in Spring 2013
- October > Parker Palmer speaks
 - o FYE learning communities should read writings by Parker Palmer in anticipation of his visit. Required attendance for all Freshmen.
 - o Check-in meeting with FYE faculty to discuss QEP progress
 - o Begin faculty manuals for second year of QEP
- November/December > gather assessment data
 - o Choose General Education courses in which to implement QEP components during second year of QEP

Spring 2013

- January > design courses, activities, and events for the general education of the QEP
 - o Choose a book for FYE
 - o Determine a budget for 2013-2014
- February > complete QEP manuals for faculty teaching general education courses in the second year of the QEP
 - o Analyze assessments from Fall 2012 and begin making appropriate changes for the second year of the QEP
- March/April > finalize assessments for use in general education courses for the second year of the QEP
 - o Hold faculty training workshop for general education faculty
 - o Hold faculty training workshop for FYE faculty/staff
 - o Work with FAL Committee to set speakers and events for 2013-2014
 - o Gather assessment data from Spring 2013

Summer 2013

- May/June > QEP Implementation team works in conjunction with FYE, All Campus Events (ACE), Student Affairs, FAL Committee, and Athletics to design comprehensive activities, readings, workshops for use with the co-curriculum
 - o Use ideas gathered during 2012-2013
 - o Begin implementation in Fall 2013
- July/August > QEP introduction at Orientation weekends
 - o More focused integration of the QEP with the new core curriculum
 - o Issue report to campus community about the first year of the QEP

YEAR 2

Fall 2013

- August > Administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
- September > analyze data from Spring 2013 and begin to make appropriate changes for Spring 2014
 - o Implement the QEP into selected parts of the co-curriculum
- October > FAL event, speaker, or workshop related to the QEP
- November > check progress of assessments for general education courses
- December > gather data from assessments in both FYE and general education courses

Spring 2014

- January > analyze both co-curricular and academic assessments and begin to make appropriate changes for Fall 2014
 - o Choose book for FYE
 - o Determine budget for 2014-2015
- February > make plans for a speaker in Fall 2014
 - o Update and distribute QEP training manuals for both FYE faculty/staff and general education faculty
 - o Choose more general education courses in which to incorporate QEP components
- March/April > faculty/staff training workshops
 - o FAL event, speaker, or workshop related to QEP
 - o Gather assessment data from Spring 2014
 - o Administer assessments for students who have completed QEP courses

Summer 2014

- May/June – discussion of assessments and effectiveness
 - o Implementation team to read and research new ideas and literature
 - o Discuss and assess incorporation of QEP into new core curriculum
- July/August > introduction of QEP at Orientation weekends
 - o QEP workshop for new faculty/staff

YEAR 3

Fall 2014

- August > Administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
- September > analyze assessment data from Spring 2014 and begin to make appropriate changes for Spring 2015
 - o Incorporate new ideas and literature into assessment plans for Spring 2015

- October > FAL event, speaker, or ACE activity related to QEP
 - o Intensive focus on QEP within the co-curriculum
- November > check in with faculty new to QEP
- December > gather assessment data for Fall 2014

Spring 2015

- January > analyze assessment data and begin to make appropriate changes for Fall 2015
 - o Choose FYE book
 - o Determine budget for 2015-2016
- February > update QEP training manuals and distribute to faculty/staff
 - o Plan FAL event, workshop, or speaker for Fall 2015
- March/April > gather assessments from Spring 2015
 - o Review first 3 years of QEP and begin discussions about the possibility of a Center for Vocational Reflection and/or other extensions of the QEP within the College
 - o FAL event, workshop, or speaker related to QEP
 - o Gather assessment data from Spring 2015
 - o Assessments for students completing QEP

Summer 2015

- May/June > continue discussions of possible extensions of QEP
 - o Assess incorporation of the QEP into new core curriculum and discuss appropriate changes
 - o Create an exit survey for 2016 graduates who have experienced all components of the QEP
- July/August > introduction of QEP at Orientation weekends
 - o QEP orientation for new faculty/staff

YEAR 4

Fall 2015

- August > Administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
- September > analyze assessment data from Spring 2015 and make appropriate changes for Spring 2016
 - o Follow through on outcomes of discussions about QEP extensions
- October > FAL event, speaker or ACE activity related to the QEP
- November > check in with faculty new to the QEP
- December > gather assessment data for Fall 2015

Spring 2016

- January > analyze assessment data and make appropriate changes for Fall 2016
 - o Choose FYE book
 - o Determine budget for 2016-2017
- February > begin to assemble a QEP Committee to create a new QEP for the next round of SACS accreditation
- March/April > FAL speaker, workshop, or ACE event related to QEP
 - o Gather assessment data from Spring 2016
 - o Assessments for students completing QEP

Summer 2016

- May/June > analyze data from exit survey from 2016 graduates
 - o Use data to assess overall effectiveness of the QEP
- July/August > introduce QEP at Orientation weekends
 - o QEP orientation for new faculty/staff
 - o Work with QEP Committee on 2017 QEP selection process

YEAR 5

Fall 2016

- August > Administer CIRP and ETS surveys to Freshmen
- September > analyze assessment data from Spring 2016 and make appropriate changes for Spring 2017
- October > FAL event, speaker or ACE activity related to the QEP
- November > check in with faculty new to the QEP
- December > gather assessment data for Fall 2016

Spring 2017

- January > analyze data from Fall 2016
- February > work with QEP Committee on 2017 QEP selection process
- March/April > wrap up QEP
 - o Final assessments
 - o Submit final reports
 - o Give exit survey to 2017 graduates

Summer 2017

- Analyze data from exit surveys
- Make necessary transitions to new QEP

VIII. Organizational Structure

In order to provide the most effective and broad-based institutional support for the QEP, a newly formed Implementation Team will be the governing body for the implementation of the QEP.

The Implementation Team will report to the Office of Academic Affairs, which is responsible for all academic programs at Newberry College. In conjunction with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Implementation Team will determine a budget for each year of the QEP and be responsible for adherence to the budget. The Implementation Team will monitor the progress and assessment of the QEP and modify the QEP as needed. The Team will consist of the QEP Director and eight members, representing a wide constituency of faculty and staff.

QEP Director

Qualifications: The designated QEP Director will be a tenure-track faculty member with broad knowledge of the institution, the curriculum, and the campus community. The Director will have experience with the academic areas most closely associated with the QEP: the core curriculum, and the First Year Experience. Compensation for the QEP Director will include course release time as well as an increased salary for the duration of the QEP (salary outlined in proposed budget).

Duties - The duties of the QEP Director will be as follows:

- Leader of the Implementation Team
- Oversee the daily implementation of the QEP and the work of the Team members
- Report to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Submit Quarterly reports to the Office of Academic Affairs, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Submit required paperwork to SACS
- Coordinate learning communities with the Director of First Year Experience
- Conduct information and training workshops for faculty, staff, and students
- Coordinate the design and content of QEP training manuals

Members

Qualifications: Members of the Implementation Team have been chosen because of their experience in the various areas of the QEP.

Critical Thinking: We recognize a variation in the application of critical thinking skills between the sciences and humanities. Consequently, we have chosen one faculty member from Science and one faculty member from Humanities to be on the Implementation Team. Their expertise in their respective disciplines will provide depth and breadth to the enhancement of critical thinking skills within the Newberry College curriculum.

Personal and Social Responsibility: While we envision certain aspects of personal and social responsibility, such as academic integrity, principled engagement, and a strong work ethic, to be assessed within the curriculum, we envision that much of this component of the QEP will be assessed within the co-curriculum. The two members of the Implementation Team assigned to oversee personal/social responsibility will be associated with the Offices of Athletics and Student Affairs because these offices are responsible for the majority of extra-curricular campus activities.

Vocational Reflection: The most unique component of the QEP encompasses all aspects of the student's life at Newberry College. Thus, the two members of the Implementation Team responsible for vocational reflection will have concentrated experience in shaping the whole person. The two offices that work to create engaged citizens who can articulate their life goals

and values are the Values Based Learning Program and the Center for Student Success; thus, they will be directly responsible for helping students engage in vocational reflection. NOTE: The directors of VBLP and Center for Student Success, as well as the QEP Director, will be well-versed in the Lutheran understanding of vocation (as noted in the definition on p. 9) so this dimension of vocational reflection will be present in the discussion.

Assessment: A pervasive component of the QEP is assessment. In order to facilitate proper and complete assessment of the QEP, we have chosen a member of our current Academic Assessment Committee to be a part of the Implementation Team. The Academic Assessment Committee has worked to ensure that Newberry College is in compliance with SACS assessment requirements, so a member of that committee has the qualifications needed to help assess the QEP properly and thoroughly. In addition, we have chosen a member of the Social Science faculty because of their expertise in survey methods and the generation and proper use of statistics.

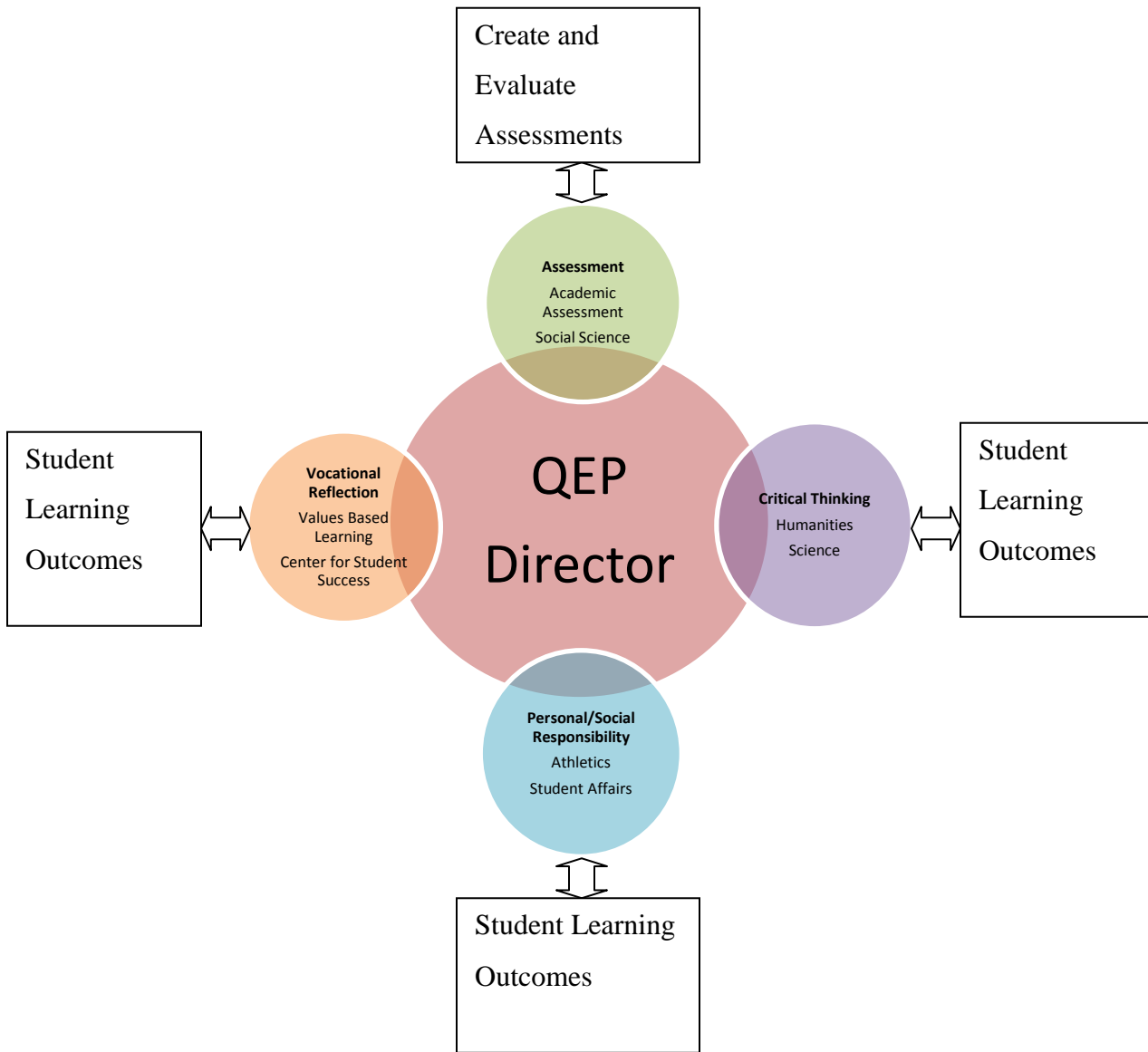
Duties - The duties of each of the eight members are as follows:

- Design assessments to be used in the classroom and co-curriculum to meet the learning goals of the QEP and re-configure learning goals if needed
- Research “best practices” for teaching critical thinking, personal/social responsibility, and vocational reflection
- Coordinate assessments with the Academic Assessment Committee
- Create portions of the QEP training manual that pertain to critical thinking, personal/social responsibility, and vocational reflection
- Gather assessments from the faculty/staff implementing the QEP
- Analyze data from the assessments

According to the Newberry College Faculty Policies Manual, faculty members are required to provide service to the College in part by serving on the committees of the College. Thus, faculty members of the QEP Implementation Team will serve as part of their service to the college, without monetary compensation. (It is important to note here that the Office of Academic Affairs is currently working to reduce the number of committees at Newberry College by giving some current committee responsibilities to College departments, thus reducing the committee workload of faculty members.)

It will be the responsibility of staff managers to adjust working conditions and time commitments for staff members on the Implementation Team.

The following is a pictorial representation of the QEP Implementation Team.



IX. Resources

The following budget is the result of discussions between the QEP Committee, the College President, and the Interim Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs. Approximately 70% of the proposed budget will come from existing funds. No extra funds will be needed for office space as the members of the Implementation Team will retain their own offices; the Director will move into an existing office in the administration building. The Director will also have access to an administrative support person.

Proposed yearly QEP Budget

Item	Current Funds [Re-allocated]	New Funds	Description
QEP Director	\$39,000	\$9,000	Re-allocation of current salary + additional funds for administrative duties
Adjuncts		\$4,000 (2 courses x \$2,000)	An adjunct will be required to teach courses left vacant by QEP Director
Speakers	\$4,500	\$5000 for first year \$2000 for following years	1 outside speaker/year + 1 faculty member/year are proposed, with some of the funds coming from the FAL budget.
Assessment	ETS = \$8,504.50 CIRP = \$3275	\$0	CIRP and ETS currently administered; other assessment will be done using internally designed assessment tools
Materials		Supplies = \$1,000 Printing = \$200 Telephone = \$50 (optional use of personal phone)	These budget items may be added to the departmental budget responsible for the QEP, i.e., Academic Affairs
Professional Development Training for faculty		\$4,000	Faculty participating in QEP courses will need training in assessment. Funds are also for travel and conference fees (AAC&U conference on critical thinking, ELCA conference on vocation).

Advertising		\$1,000	The pervasiveness of the QEP requires advertisement across campus in various forms.
TOTAL	\$55,279.50	\$24,250 (1st year) \$21,250 (following years)	

X. Assessment

The QEP Committee has crafted an assessment plan that will give the Implementation Team a roadmap to begin assessment and a process to augment and modify assessment based on findings. The roadmap contains a timeline for initial (benchmarking) and subsequent assessment, names of instruments and rubrics that can be used in initial assessment or subsequently, student learning outcomes and program outcomes to be assessed, a process to evaluate, publicize, and use assessment outcomes, and flexibility for the Implementation Team to rethink, modify, and thus improve the assessment plan. All assessment will be done in cooperation with the Academic Assessment Committee and the Office of Academic Affairs. The chair of the AAC and the Interim Executive Vice President Academic Affairs assisted in writing this section.

As a reminder, our Student Learning Outcomes are:

- ❖ **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to:
 - State and describe issues/problems clearly and comprehensively.
 - Assess and analyze evidence for a position.
 - Identify the influence of context and assumptions.
 - Develop their own perspectives and positions on issues.
 - Identify and assess conclusions.

- ❖ **Personal and Social Responsibility:** Students will be able to
 - Develop and display a strong work ethic to do their best
 - Understand and apply ethical standards in their academic work and campus behavior.
 - Recognize and act on their responsibility to the educational community and the wider society.

- Engage diverse and competing perspectives while demonstrating respect for the rights of others to express dissenting opinions.
 - Develop and display ethical and moral reasoning.
- ❖ Vocational Reflection: Students will be able to
- Analyze and communicate the steps through which they have gone to identify vocational strengths and interests.
 - Articulate a self-statement about their strengths and weaknesses as concerns vocational planning.
 - Identify and articulate their vocational goals.

The Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes

1. Benchmarking Our Assessment Prior to Beginning of the QEP

We will conduct pilot assessments of critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection during 2011-12, the year prior to beginning the QEP, using the CIRP Survey and the ETS Profile Proficiency and by using assignments in selected sections of COL 101. The CIRP and ETS address critical thinking and the CIRP also addresses personal and social responsibility. Up to twenty items can be added to the CIRP survey which will enable us to include measures of vocational reflection. The findings from these surveys will be used in planning the readings, activities, and assignments for the first year of our QEP and as benchmarks to set expectations for learning outcomes.

As stated earlier, we created an in-house survey to tap into student attitudes and knowledge about the features of our QEP and items from this survey will be selected for inclusion in the CIRP and ETS surveys (Appendix D).

2. Assessment in the First and Subsequent Years of QEP

Each fall, we will continue to administer the CIRP Survey and the ETS to freshmen and seniors at the beginning of the year and the end, giving us longitudinal data and enabling us to compare our results with peer institutions. We will use selected rubrics for assignments (see below).

3. Selection and Use of Rubrics for Specific Assignments as Part of COL 101

We researched a number of rubrics in outlining our assessment plan. These rubrics are listed in Appendix E. We are suggesting that the Implementation Team begin as follows:

Critical Thinking

For assessment of critical thinking, we suggest that the Implementation Team use the AAC&U rubric for one assignment at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. This first year will be a learning experience for using this and other rubrics so limiting the number of assignments will allow the Implementation Team and the instructors of COL 101 to adjust to rubric use. In the second, year, we can decide if we are ready to use this rubric for more assignments. This rubric is in Appendix F.

Personal and Social Responsibility

We also suggest the use of the AAC&U rubric on Personal and Social Responsibility in two ways: (1) to assess students' written and oral performances in conjunction with assignments and discussions where students are asked to reflect on how their behaviors, values, and moral positions have been affected by the service-learning component of the seminar or by what they have read and discussed as part of the seminar; and (2) to assess actual behavior related to how they act toward others in discussions. Are they respectful of differences, do they listen to perspectives that differ from their own, are they open to challenges to their thinking? The AAC&U rubric is in Appendix G.

Students will also be addressing issues of personal and social responsibility through activities organized through the Office of Student Affairs and through participation on athletic teams. The Implementation Team will have two members with responsibility for overseeing the area of personal and social responsibility and will work with Student Affairs and the Athletics Department during the first year of the QEP to gather data and make assessments. More details about the structure of the Implementation Team are included in Section VIII.

Vocation

We suggest that we assess progress made in vocational reflection using a rubric constructed from the work of the Lilly group of colleges (Luther College, Augsburg College, and Augustana College). They designed assessment based on three questions:

- Do students who are exposed to vocation programming gain a broader and deeper understanding of the concept of vocation?
- Do students who are exposed to vocation programming describe being better able to discern their own vocation?
- What aspects of vocation programming are most effective?

The Winter, 2010, issue of *Intersections* explains the methods used and questions asked in this assessment. Results are reported for the classes of 2005 and 2007. The Implementation Team, in conjunction with COL 101 instructors, will adapt this assessment plan to our QEP.

4. Learning Communities

Newberry College used focus groups to assess the effectiveness of learning communities in our COL 101 classes in 2008-10. Dr. Vinetta Witt, a professor of Sociology, created a structure and questions to assess the effects of pairing COL 101 and ENG 111. These were valuable in supplementing the surveys we conducted and gave us very useful qualitative data. That experience can be a foundation for focus groups as part of the assessment of this QEP.

5. Process for Reviewing Assessments, Distributing Results, and Implementing Changes in Implementation Strategy Based on Review of Assessments

Assessment of the QEP will be a joint effort of the Implementation Team, the Academic Assessment Committee, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and faculty members. The Implementation Team will plan the schedule for assessment. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will administer the CIRP and ETS Profile Surveys for freshmen

and seniors at the beginning of fall semester and the ETS for seniors at the end of the senior year. Faculty members in COL 101 and selected core courses will be responsible for assessing critical thinking, personal and social responsibility, and vocational reflection using rubrics provided by the Implementation Team. They will be instructed in the use of the rubrics through workshops each August.

The Implementation Team will collect all assessments and share them with the Academic Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The Implementation Team will share results with faculty through electronic reports, regular faculty meetings, and meetings of department chairs. The resulting conversations from this sharing of assessment results will assist the Implementation Team in making changes in the program where needed: in use of resources, teaching strategy, assignments, or focus. These changes will be implemented in the relevant courses and activities.

As faculty members receive assessment results, the results will also move upward. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will deliver them to the Leadership Team (consisting of the President, Vice Presidents, and Deans). Thus results will be disseminated throughout campus and used in a variety of ways to improve the learning environment.

At the end of each year, the Implementation Team will prepare and distribute a report about outcomes for the previous year and plan accordingly for the following year.

The Assessment Plan for Goals of the QEP and for Program Level Outcomes

The QEP Committee established student learning outcomes for the three focus areas of our QEP. We also have created goals related to implementation of the QEP plan and program level outcomes that we will assess as follows:

- Implementation Goals: First year and subsequent years: COL 101 and 102
 - Materials and teaching strategies related to the QEP will be in use in all sections.
 - Surveys and rubrics selected by the Implementation Team will be in use in all sections.

- At end of each year, all surveys and assessments will be analyzed and used to make improvements in the next year.
- All instructors will have received instruction in the goals and implementation of the QEP.
- At end of each year, a progress report about the QEP will be written and distributed to the campus community.

- Implementation Goals: Second year and subsequent: for General Education Courses
 - All general education courses that are included in the QEP will have learning outcomes related to the QEP in their syllabi.
 - All instructors of included general education courses will attend a workshop on integrating the QEP into their courses.
 - All instructors will use any materials, assignments, and rubrics designed for these courses by the Implementation Team.

- Program Level Outcomes

The benchmarking we do during the year preceding implementation will enable us to set criteria for success.

 - At the end of each year, ___ percent of FYE students will understand the meaning of vocation and be successful at developing their own perspectives and positions of an issue
 - At the end of each year, ___ percent of students will score 3 or higher (out of 4) on the AAC&U rubric for critical thinking for at least one assignment.
 - At the end of each year, ___ percent of students will 3 or higher (out of 4) on the AAC&U rubric on personal and social responsibility for at least one assignment.

XI. Appendices

Appendix A: Results from First Survey

Table 1

Responses to Survey Question # 4: “Indicate the Importance of each for Newberry grads”:

Percentage responding “Very Important”

	Faculty (44)	Students (186)	Graduate (289)	Adminis- trators (11)	Staff (28)	Board (8)	Community Members (16)	All (572)
Communicate Effectively	93.2	76.9	92.7	81.8	100	100.	93.8	87.9
Think critically	86.4	73.5	80.6	54.5	82.1	100.	75	78.5
Use information technology effectively	61.4	69.7	70.8	45.5	67.9	50.	68.8	68.5
Are prepared for career and/or admission to graduate school	65.9	80	75.1	63.6	75	75.	81.3	75.8
Demonstrate an understanding of content in the major	81.8	82.3	71.2	45.5	64.3	50.	81.3	74.4
Demonstrate social development and citizenship skills	43.2	66.7	67.2	54.5	81.5	12.5	75	65.3
Participate successfully in activities that promote physical well-being	22.7	48.9	33.8	18.2	51.9	12.5	25	38.
Demonstrate an understanding of Christian faith and its ethical implications	27.3	48.9	48.8	45.5	42.9	62.5	31.3	46.4

Table 2

Responses to Survey Question #5 - “To what extent does Newberry effectively prepare grads to”: Percentage responding “Very Effectively”

	Faculty (44)	Students (185)	Graduates (280)	Adminis- trators (11)	Staff (28)	Board (7)	Community Members (15)	All (565)
Communicate effectively	13.6	43.5	38.6	20.	10.7	14.3	53.3	36.8
Think critically	7.	41.5	33.2	20.	7.1	14.3	46.7	32.7
Use information technology effectively	11.4	37.3	23.9	0	14.8	0.	40.	26.7
Are prepared for a career and/or admission to graduate school	11.6	41.9	35.7	10.	11.1	14.3	53.3	34.6
Demonstrate an understanding of content in the major	27.9	48.9	44.1	20.	7.4	14.3	73.3	42.4
Demonstrate social development and citizenship skills	14.	39.5	39.	30.	18.5	14.3	46.7	36.
Participate successfully in activities that promote physical well-being	14.3	37.3	23.	18.2	18.5	0.	40.	27.
Demonstrate understanding of Christian faith and its ethical understanding	7.1	37	33.6	27.3	7.4	14.3	46.2	31.

Appendix B: Results from Second Survey

Table 1: Ranking of characteristics according to what percentage of each group placed it as No. 1 – highest to lowest (e.g., for faculty, critical thinking received

the most placements as #1, communication received the second highest placement as #1, etc.)

<u>Faculty (N = 43)</u>	<u>Students (59)</u>	<u>Grads (170)</u>	<u>Staff (23)</u>
Critical thinking	Career/voc	Personal Dev.	Personal Dev.
Communication	Personal Dev.	Career/voc	Critical Th.
Personal Dev.	Critical Th.	Critical Th.	Career/voc
Career/voc	Leadership	Communication	Technology
Technology	Technology	Leadership	Leadership
Leadership	Interns/Exp.	Technology	Communication
Pluralism	Communication	Community I.	Community I.
Community I.	Community I.	Interns/Exp.	Interns/Exp.
Interns/Exp.	Pluralism	Pluralism	Pluralism

<u>Administrator (5)</u>	<u>Community (12)</u>	<u>All (290)</u>
Interns/Exp.	Personal Dev.	Personal Dev.
Communication	Communication	Career/voc
Critical Th.	Critical Th.	Critical Th.
Leadership	Career/voc	Communication
<i>Personal Dev</i>	Technology	Leadership
<i>Technology</i>	Leadership	Technology
Community I.	Community I.	Interns/Exp.

Career/voc Interns/Exp. Community I.
 Pluralism Pluralism Pluralism

Appendix C: Rubric used to Evaluate Expanded Proposals

**Newberry College
 Quality Enhancement Plan Projects
 Rubric for Evaluating Proposals**

Project: _____ Reviewer: _____

Evaluate each proposal using the scale provided. Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Each item can earn a numeric score according to the descriptor that most appropriately fits the item. Note that some items are weighted.

Score	Item	Comments
1	Title 0 Title does not grab the attention of the reader or is not included 1 Title does grab the attention of the reader	
1	Abstract 0 No abstract is provided 1 Abstract is provided	
2	Project Rationale (general qualities) -- Why should this project be selected? 0 Contains no definition of topic/statement of rationale 2 Rationale is stated only in general terms 4 Rationale is specific 6 Rationale is specific and provides a convincing case for the project	
2	Relationship to the College's Top 5 QEP Areas What is the relationship of the proposal to the College's QEP areas? 0 No clear relationship is demonstrated 1 Demonstrates a vague relationship to 1 or more QEP areas 2 Demonstrates a relationship to 1 QEP area 3 Demonstrates a clear and meaningful relationship to 1 or more QEP areas	
2	Review of Best Practice/Literature Related to the Topic 0 No discussion of literature/best practices is provided 1 Minimal discussion of literature/best practices is provided 2 Good discussion of literature/best practices is provided 3 Excellent discussion of literature/best practices is provided	

Score	Item	Comments
	<p>Project student learning outcomes -- What will students be expected to know or be able to do as a result of this project?</p> <p>0 Proposal does not address student learning outcomes</p> <p>2 Includes vague or inappropriately constructed student learning outcomes</p> <p>4 Provides appropriately constructed student learning outcomes</p> <p>6 Clearly describes appropriately constructed student learning outcomes</p>	
	<p>Identification of action steps to be implemented</p> <p>0 No clear plan of actions to be implemented is provided</p> <p>2 Plan of actions to be implemented is vague and not systematic</p> <p>4 Plan of actions to be developed is appropriate but not fully developed</p> <p>6 Well defined, systematic and fully developed plan of actions to be implemented</p>	
	<p>Timeline for project activities and events -- What is the sequence of project activities and events?</p> <p>0 Timeline is not provided</p> <p>1 Timeline is provided but is not specific and/or realistic</p> <p>2 Timeline is appropriate but not fully developed or convincing</p> <p>3 Timeline is specific, clear, and reasonable given scope of project and existing constraints</p>	
	<p>Resources needed -- What resources will be needed to carry out this project?</p> <p>0 Plan does not address resources needed or requires resources in excess of available funds for award</p> <p>1 Plan describes resource needs which are insufficient for scope of project or excessive for scope of project</p> <p>2 Plan describes resource needs that can be adapted to the project and are within the expected funding range</p> <p>3 Plan describes resource needs that are appropriate and sufficient to the project and are within the expected funding range</p>	
	<p>Assessment Plan for the Project: -- How will SLOs be measured?</p> <p>0 No assessment plan is provided</p> <p>2 Some assessment procedures are provided but the project focuses most heavily on indirect measures of student learning.</p> <p>4 Assessment procedures include direct measures of student learning but are described only in general terms</p> <p>6 Assessment procedures include direct measures that are clearly described and feasible.</p>	

Score	Item	Comments
Point Total:	I. Overall Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend reject <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend accept with revisions <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend accept	

Appendix D: Benchmarking Survey for COL 101 Students

A. Critical Thinking

- What do you think is the best definition of critical thinking?
 1. Using your thought process to criticize the thinking of others
 2. Thinking that tends to focus on negative thoughts
 3. Thinking that explores all aspects of an issue before accepting or formulating an opinion or *conclusion*

- How important is it to you to develop your ability to think clearly and rationally?
 1. Very important
 2. Somewhat important
 3. Unsure
 4. Somewhat unimportant
 5. Not important at all

- What is the best way to develop your critical thinking abilities?
 1. By reading challenging material
 2. By discussing ideas with others
 3. By writing papers about ideas
 4. All three ways are equally important

B. Personal and Social Responsibility

- Do you strive for excellence in all you do?
 1. Always
 2. Most of the time
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely

- How important is personal and academic integrity to you?
 1. They are not very important to me
 2. They are somewhat important to me
 3. They are very important to me
 4. They are crucial to me

- Do you think people have a responsibility to engage in community service?
 1. Definitely yes
 2. somewhat yes
 3. unsure
 4. somewhat no
 5. Definitely no

- Do you make an attempt to read or listen to opinions that differ from your own?
 1. Always
 2. Usually
 3. Sometimes
 4. Rarely

- What role should a college play in promoting ethics and moral reasoning in students?
 1. This should be one of the most important roles of a college
 2. This is a somewhat important role for a college
 3. This is not a very important role for a college
 4. A college should not play this role at all

C. Vocation

- I define vocation as
 1. Being able to find any work
 2. Finding work I like
 3. Exploring my strengths and weaknesses and passions and matching them to the work I choose

- The most important feature of work to me is
 1. How much satisfaction it brings me
 2. How much contribution it makes to the good of the community
 3. How much it pays
 4. How much prestige is attached to it

- Are you aware of Martin Luther's concept of Christian Vocation?
 1. Yes, I am very familiar with it.
 2. Yes, I am somewhat familiar with it
 3. Unsure, I may have heard about it
 4. No, I have never heard about it

Appendix E: Rubrics researched

- <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CriticalThinking.pdf> - Critical Thinking
- <http://openedpractices.org/files/Bismark%20State%20Multiple%20Critical%20Thinking%20Rubric.pdf> – Critical Thinking
- <http://openedpractices.org/files/Bloom%20North%20Hennepin%20CC%20Critical%20Thinking%20Rubric.pdf> – Critical Thinking
- <http://openedpractices.org/files/CT%20OK%20State%20Univ.%20Wash%20St.%20edit.pdf> – Critical Thinking
- <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CivicEngagement.pdf> - Personal/Social Responsibility
- <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/InterculturalKnowledge.pdf> - Personal/Social Responsibility

- http://www.d.umn.edu/~balbert/humandiversity/grading_rubric.html - Personal/Social Responsibility
- http://www.d.umn.edu/~balbert/humandiversity/grading_rubric.html - Vocation

Appendix F: Critical Thinking Rubric from AAC&U

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.

Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.
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Appendix G: Personal and Social Responsibility Rubric from AAC&U

Striving for Excellence

1. displays weak work ethic
2. displays work ethic but settles for less than best work
3. displays strong work ethic but could do better
4. outstanding work ethic

Cultivating personal and academic integrity

1. Displays little sense of honor
2. Displays some sense of honor but not consistently applied in different circumstances
3. Displays strong sense of honor but needs
4. Outstanding sense of honor in all areas

Contributing to a larger community

1. Displays little recognition of responsibility to larger community (academic and wider society)
2. Displays some recognition
3. Displays strong recognition and acts on it
4. Outstanding recognition and action

Taking seriously the perspective of others

1. Not tolerant of perspectives differing from one's own
2. Somewhat tolerant of different perspectives
3. Tolerant but not fully respectful of different perspectives
4. Fully respects the right of other individuals to have varying perspectives

Ethical and Moral Reasoning

1. Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues and apply ethical reasoning but fails to grasp complexity or interrelationships
2. Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues with incomplete understanding of complexity and interrelationships
3. Student can recognize ethical issues when issues are presented in a complex, multilayered context OR can grasp cross-relationships among the issues
4. Student can recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered context AND can recognize cross-relationships among the issues.

Appendix H: Letter soliciting proposals for a QEP from campus community

Call for QEP Proposals

We invite members of the campus community to send us QEP proposals
by Friday, October 1

\$100 gift cards will be awarded to the top ten proposals

As a reminder, the QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) is a significant part of the upcoming SACS accreditation. SACS describes the QEP as “a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning.” SACS expects the plan to evolve out of ideas collected from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community

members. The role of the QEP committee is to solicit the ideas, narrow the focus, and continue to ask for your opinion until one topic is chosen.

This request for proposals follows from the two surveys we sent out during the summer. The first survey described eight learning goals connected to the Newberry College mission statement and asked you to rate the importance of each for Newberry graduates, then to evaluate a list of QEP proposals from other schools, and then to suggest other possible QEP topics for Newberry College. Our analysis of the survey resulted in a list of characteristics related to student learning that received the most support across all the constituencies responding. We sent out a second survey that asked you to rank these characteristics.

We have analyzed the results of that survey and the following are your top five choices for a QEP topic:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Personal and Social Development
- Career/Vocation
- Leadership

With this call, we are asking you to take one of these topics, or a combination of these topics, and put together a plan to enhance student learning in the area or areas of the topic. These proposals should be 1-2 pages in length and include a description of your idea, the student learning goals the plan addresses, and action steps to be implemented. The proposals will be assessed according to the attached rubric.

We understand that we have just begun a new school year and that finding time to craft a proposal may be difficult. So, In appreciation for your participation we are going to award \$100 gift cards to the top ten proposals submitted.

Please send the proposals as an attachment to an email to Dr. Wayne Kannaday. Do not put your name on the proposal. Dr. Kannaday will forward the proposals to members of the committee for evaluation.

Thank you for participating in this QEP process. It is vital that the QEP be based on your input so that it has broad support and appeal.

The QEP Committee: : Bret Clark, Gregory Cole, Kim Franklin, Cindy Johnson-Taylor, Kayla Knight, Joe McDonald, Barry McGinnis, Karl Rohr, Christy Wendland, Reggie Wicker