Quality Enhancement Plan

Enhancing Student Learning by Fostering Positive Attitudes toward Writing

March 22-24, 2011

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Presidential Endorsement of the Savannah State University Quality Enhancement Plan

January 16, 2011

Dr. Gwendolyn Hale and Lisa Yount
Quality Enhancement Plan Co-Chairs
College of Liberal Arts

Dear QEP Task Force:

I have read the Quality Enhancement Plan, The Write Attitude! proposed for Savannah State University very carefully to ensure that it will indeed enhance student learning on our campus. I have also examined it for feasibility, practicality, and integrity. Beyond that, it is firmly grounded in the institution's strategic plan and mission, and upholds SSU's mission as an HBCU committed to student growth and achievement as well as my personal mission of making SSU a value-added institution. It is with great pleasure that I am writing to you to fully endorse the plan.

First, the Quality Enhancement Plan is thorough, well-documented, and well-versed in current and historical theory and data. It provides a firm foundation and case as to why SSU would benefit from such an initiative. I especially appreciate the cross-disciplinary nature of the QEP as well as its ambitious but practical approach to evoking changes in attitudes across the campus community. Establishing a community and culture committed to writing in all disciplines will most certainly benefit not only our students but our faculty, staff, and surrounding community as well.

With not only a firm financial commitment but also a commitment of faculty, staff, and other resources, SSU is clearly invested in this initiative and fully intends for this initiative to be successful and sustained beyond the five years required by SACS. This is a plan that is worthy of time, attention, and resources as it impacts our students far beyond their tenure at Savannah State.

I am especially excited at how the initiative intends to improve student writing by first addressing attitudes, both positive and negative. This is an innovative way in which educators can meet students where they are and assist them in reaching and exceeding their potential.

Furthermore, the assessment plan is practical and thoroughly conceived. This, in my opinion, is an assessment plan that will be user-friendly to faculty and one that will assist the university in assessing its progress with this QEP.

As previously asserted, this plan, while not a simple one, is ambitious and student-centered; however, it is absolutely practical and executable. I firmly stand behind the Committee's proposal and the University stakeholders' endorsement of this Quality Enhancement Plan. The administration and I are profoundly excited by all the potential for growth and student learning that this proposal holds.

Sincerely,

Earl E. Yarbrough, Sr., Ph.D.
President

A unit of the University System of Georgia—an equal opportunity/Affirmative action employer.
Executive Summary

The Quality Enhancement Plan Focus

*The Write Attitude!: Enhancing Student Learning by Fostering Positive Attitudes toward Writing* is the focus for Savannah State University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This choice reflects a deliberative process that seriously considers the general challenges regarding writing, affecting not only Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), but also universities nationwide. Most importantly, this focus reflects the particular needs of the Savannah State University (SSU) student body, and our commitment to ensuring that students are prepared for the rigors of the classroom, success in the workplace, and an orientation toward life-long learning. Savannah State University’s QEP focuses not only on student learning outcomes but also on environmental factors to create a culture of writing that has a positive impact on student, faculty, and staff attitudes about writing. Our QEP aims to enhance student learning by providing: 1) cross-curricular requirements and initiatives for increased writing opportunities and 2) co-curricular activities to emphasize training in writing skills and competencies. Moreover, these interventions have the capacity to improve critical thinking and reading comprehension, as a writing-to-learn approach also holistically integrates these other important aptitudes. This, in turn, can positively impact aspects of retention and graduation at SSU.

Selection and Implementation Process

*The Write Attitude!* incorporates a broad-based consideration of institutional research data, stakeholder consultation and consensus, and scholarship on the best practices related to effective writing. Faculty, administration, students, staff, and community members have participated in shaping the QEP’s unique focus, and this constitutive collaboration promotes a wide base of support and investment in the project. There is a clear timeline, organization, budget, and management plan for implementation. Further, in executing *The Write Attitude!* many exciting new initiatives and opportunities will be enacted to reinforce positive writing attitudes and writing skills across campus.

Institutional Capability

The Office of the QEP will oversee and coordinate the activities of the QEP. Although some curricular changes will be mandated, most will be generated from a participatory *The Write Attitude!* Writing Across the Curriculum endeavor, designed to encourage faculty, programs, departments, and colleges to initiate curricular innovations focused on writing-intensive pedagogies, and co-curricular activities to promote a positive environment regarding writing. The Office of the QEP will be instrumental in: 1) administering the grants and stipends related to these ventures and 2) assisting instructors and staff in developing novel and relevant ways to incorporate writing in their classroom or office activities by organizing and promoting tutorials, workshops, and training seminars. Additionally, the Office of the QEP will collaborate with existing campus resources to oversee the integration and assessment of the QEP vision throughout campus.

Assessment Plan

The QEP operates in four main areas—curricula, students, faculty, and staff/services—over the next five years to involve and transform the campus at large. In order to assess *The Write Attitude!*, we have identified specific measures that correspond not only to the university’s strategic plan but also to student learning outcomes on writing and attitudinal changes at the university. These endeavors will include multiple means of assessment involving direct and indirect measures, consultations with external authorities who have expertise in constructing and evaluating Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing-to-Learn programs, a stronger unification of existing university resources to support the QEP, and training for faculty and staff. Specifically, our assessment measures will help us determine the extent to which we are meeting the student learning outcomes and the goals that we have formulated for the QEP, as well as how to revise our methods and strategies, if necessary.
Identification and Development of the Quality Enhancement Plan Focus and Goals

Topic Selection Considerations

Savannah State University’s Quality Enhancement Plan selection was influenced by two main considerations. First, the legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is an integral aspect of our identity, and SSU wanted a QEP that would address challenges facing HBCUs, as well as expand on the strengths of our university and its students. In part, SSU seeks to respond to the directive posed by Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and John Wilson, the Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs, which calls for HBCUs to build on their assets and continue to achieve better outcomes, despite the often problematic lack of preparation for many minority students in the public school system. Duncan further notes,

One of the challenges that HBCUs have faced...is that their students too often receive an inadequate education in high school and arrive on campus with poor skills. More than half of HBCU students are the first members of their families to attend college. They have little family tradition of being away from home, budgeting for studying time, and immersing themselves in researching and writing college-level papers.¹

Additionally, a 2006 summary from Education Sector Reports showed that only 37.9% percent of Black students attending HBCUs earn an undergraduate degree within six years, which is 4% lower than the national rate of college graduation for Black students at other institutions and 7% lower than the overall graduation rates

of predominately White institutions.\(^2\) Although these rates are less than optimal, they reflect important considerations that access institutions like HBCUs must adequately address to ensure the achievement of their students. To be sure, the function and supportive environment of HBCUs is singular in helping students succeed, but the demographic features of many HBCU students reveal that they often need strengthened skills to enhance their collegiate success.

Savannah State University students currently display characteristics directly in line with these aforementioned challenges. Many students attending SSU are first-generation college students, many are from low-income metro areas, and many are from rural areas. Each of these qualities can present challenges to adapting to the rigors and expectations of the university.

For instance, the six-year graduation rate for SSU has hovered in the range of 30-40% over the past few years (averaging about 33% over the past five years). Thus, on average, SSU’s recent graduation rate has been around 5% lower than the 38% average for the most recent cohort of a group of similar HBCUs (see Appendix I).\(^3\) Also, in examining the average SAT scores for incoming 2010 SSU Freshmen, it is revealed, when compared to the national averages for freshmen, SSU had the following deficiency gaps: reading scores = -10%; math scores = -14%; and writing scores = -17% (see Appendix II). Among other indicators, these data sources focused our attention on writing as the highest-priority area of skills-building needed by our students to aid in student learning, retention, progress, and matriculation. Further research also indicates that, while many SSU students are high achievers, SSU’s student scores on the Board


of Regents’ Essay Exam show that the SSU pass rate has been consistently below the overall University System of Georgia (USG) pass rate (see Appendix III).

Given these realities, coupled with our mission to support the USG’s Strategic Goal to “renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students’ 21st century education needs”4—as students whose academic readiness must include the ability to effectively communicate in a global market as leaders in their professions and the larger community—SSU’s QEP must be one that speaks to these multi-faceted needs.

Crafting a plan that acknowledges and addresses the particular challenges and strengths of SSU as an HBCU was our first consideration. The second important consideration for establishing the SSU QEP was to select a focus that involved the entire campus community—as we are all stakeholders in the success of our students. To that end, we engaged in activities such as: forming a QEP Task Force Committee, examining SSU institutional research data, surveying faculty and students, holding university-wide focus groups (see Appendix IV), involving staff, and conducting an extensive literature and best practices review. From our explorations and concern for a QEP that would be most productive in enhancing the learning of our students and that had the support of the community at large, we ultimately chose the following QEP focus: The Write Attitude! : Enhancing Student Learning by Fostering Positive Attitudes toward Writing.

Institutional Data Supporting a QEP Focused on Writing Attitudes

The cultivation of a positive attitude about writing is essential to student learning and success. Beginning with the students’ self-perceptions, one of the main reasons they cite for their inability to write on par with their peers, both at SSU and at comparator institutions, is a lack of interest and fewer opportunities for extended writing. For

4 Also part of this goal: “improve the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning.” See http://www.usg.edu/strategicplan/one/index.phtml for a complete list of the USG goals.
example, SSU freshmen report writing fewer papers of all essay lengths than do freshmen nationally (see Appendix V). Additionally, a major study from SSU’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment found that the more “literary focus” a SSU student engaged in, the more likely the student is to persist at SSU beyond the second year (see Appendix VI).\(^5\) For instance, freshmen experiencing maximal “literary focus” were 10-20% more likely to persist in college than students experiencing minimal “literary focus.”\(^6\) This finding documents that there is a relationship worth considering between the degree to which students are engaging in a “literary focus” on campus and the likelihood that they will remain in college, continuing their formal education. Although this is not the only possible variable for predicting drop-out or stop-out in a student’s career path, it is a meaningful correlation for analysis and action. Further, this indicates that improvement in negative perceptions of writing and the encouragement of those who already possess positive perceptions of writing is in order to ensure the enriched and continued education of SSU students.

Similarly, a formal study of ten years of student retention records at SSU suggests that the more students perceive that they have an “agency” level involvement with the academic literature of their fields, such that they are involved in determining the scope of their written assignments together with meaningful writing stimulated by their fields, the more likely they are to continue their studies at SSU and the less likely they are to either drop-out of higher education or transfer to another institution.\(^7\) The same study found that when students perceive high quality interpersonal relations related to

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\(^5\) For this study, “literary focus” was a statistical “factor” encompassing several discrete components: (a) the number of written papers; (b) the number of books assigned/year; (c) the hours per week of class preparation; (d) the number of problem sets requiring more than one hour/week; and (d) the number of non-assigned books read/year.

\(^6\) The variation between 10-20% is due to the type of students. The factor was more influential among full-time than part-time students; more important among males than females; more important among non-African American than African American students, and more important among adults than teen-agers (see Appendix VI).

their academic work, they are far more likely to persist and be successful in their academic work.\textsuperscript{8} Reports from the staff in the institution’s writing center (The ReWrite Connection) have demonstrated that when students develop positive attitudes toward their writing, their writing improves as a result of intrinsic motivation.\textsuperscript{9}

Students polled in this venue have also indicated that when they have engaged in writing opportunities that involve peer interaction, this helps them to develop more positive attitudes towards writing and more effective writing skills than students whose writing is undertaken in a solo manner (see Appendix V).

Thus, \textit{The Write Attitude!} is designed to cultivate and promote positive attitudes toward and expanded occasions for writing throughout the entire university community, especially since doing so can be expected to enhance student persistence in higher education. The QEP vision is rooted in the pedagogical tradition that directly connects success in proficient and effective writing to a positive attitude toward writing. By nurturing a campus culture that encourages favorable perceptions of the practice of writing, we will produce students who are more effective writers, who have a heightened opportunity to increase their critical thinking skills, reading skills, and who increase knowledge in their field of study.

\textbf{QEP Goals, Learning Outcomes, and University Strategic Plan Goals}

To achieve our vision, we have determined five student-centered goals to encourage confidence with writing. These goals are the cornerstone of our approach and guide our practical and procedural means for shaping new attitudes at the university. They are as follows:

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Selected student testimony about this issue is preserved on a video presentation, which can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2utxOZddOQ.
Table 1.1: QEP Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1</th>
<th>Students will be exposed to positive attitudes toward writing and will understand writing as an essential form of communication for their academic and professional success.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Students will experience a variety of writing opportunities, ranging in type and scope, at all levels of all disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Students will engage in activities that incorporate peer interaction with and feedback on their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4</td>
<td>Students will be motivated by faculty members who are committed to a pedagogy of learning through writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5</td>
<td>Students will interact with faculty and staff committed to providing writing occasions that emphasize professional-level writing components and competency in extra-curricular activities and university services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on our QEP goals, we have developed the following QEP student learning outcomes:

Table 1.2: QEP Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LO1</th>
<th>Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LO2</td>
<td>Students will be able to properly conduct academic research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO3</td>
<td>Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO4</td>
<td>Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO5</td>
<td>Students will be able to evaluate how their own attitudes regarding writing affect their writing ability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Write Attitude! was also developed with SSU’s Institutional Strategic Plan in mind (see table below).
Table 1.3: University Strategic Plan Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision 2018: A Value-Added Learning Experience¹⁰</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSU will maximize its comparative advantage through academic excellence, applied learning, effective educational support, and community involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSU will continue to build its institutional capacity through the continuous improvement and expansion of academic programs, student support, infrastructure, technology, and community relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSU will maximize its efforts to recruit and retain qualified students through effective use of scholarship funds, quality advising and mentoring, student development programs, and meaningful diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSU will maximize its efforts to create a positive image and to continuously improve internal and external communication through the implementation of best practices, community partnerships, effective customer service, and campus accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSU will maximize its efforts to ensure the continuous professional development of faculty and staff.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Importance of Writing and Its Relation to SSU’s Strategic Goals

This next section describes the intersections of the QEP with existing institutional foci and commitments, as they are represented in the SSU Strategic Plan. Savannah State University’s Strategic Plan emphasizes the need to expand and strengthen academic areas of excellence, which takes into consideration the unique and contextual advantages offered by an HBCU, such as a nurturing environment. In an effort to compete with other universities, and provide further comparative advantage (Strategic Goal 1), SSU must increase its emphasis on writing. This assures that students and graduates of SSU can compete in venues like graduate school and the professional sector.

Beyond comparative advantage, SSU’s Strategic Plan demands that faculty and staff expand active learning opportunities for students by continuing to create and develop a more student-centered environment (Strategic Goal 2). We will persist in striving to make our students the driving force of education by incorporating classroom models that de-emphasize instructors as the disseminators of knowledge and the students as passive receptacles, where these models are needed.11 In this way, SSU will assist its students in becoming active learners. One way the QEP will help accomplish this is through its Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing-to-Learn initiative. Again, if students are provided more opportunities for lower-stakes writing in many of their courses, their attitudes about writing can change and they can become more open to improving their writing skills, while they take the center stage in the learning activities of the classroom (Strategic Goal 1).

Furthermore, SSU’s Strategic Plan expects the university to change with the needs of the students and the community at large (Strategic Goal 4). Savannah State

11 See Paolo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed and his “banking concept of education” for the pitfalls of a top-down approach to learning.
University is continuing to develop external partnerships with organizations through resources, collaboration, internships, and employment. One key element to the success of such external partnerships lies within student, faculty, and staff capabilities to communicate effectively. Enhanced writing performance reflects the university’s commitment to nurturing an intellectual environment and preparing students for their chosen careers. Savannah State University’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, through ongoing surveys of organizations and businesses offering internships and/or employment to SSU students indicates employers want to see improved communication skills, especially in written form, from SSU students (see Appendix VII). Additionally, many students are becoming aware of the growing need for skillful written communication and have begun to take the skill more seriously, especially as they progress toward graduation. Savannah State University’s Strategic Plan indicates that faculty and staff should anticipate student demand for programs and skills; therefore, coupled with the professional demand for better communication, especially in the workforce, faculty and staff must offer students more opportunities to responsibly improve their writing skills. Savannah State University is committed to rigorous standards in writing across the disciplines so that all graduates can successfully compete in a global marketplace (Strategic Goal 2).

Savannah State University’s QEP also works in conjunction with the university’s strategic goal of revising core curriculum pedagogy by reflecting state of the art technology, theory, and practices (Strategic Goal 2). The QEP underscores this goal by asserting the practice of writing-to-learn with an emphasis on active engagement of students in the learning process, inside and outside of the classroom, as mentioned previously. Students must be able to integrate and utilize the knowledge gleaned from classes, instead of merely committing the information to short term memory for the sake of a test grade—as is often the case with students who have utilized this strategy since
elementary school. Such a focus on writing will also assist students with their reading comprehension as they take notes and integrate material into their writing. As the university charges forward with technological advances for students, faculty, and staff, it is committed to reinvigorating the waning art of communication, especially in its written form. Still further, as more curricula occur in an online environment, the need for skillful written communication in an age of technology has never been more important.

Savannah State University and its strategic plan take into consideration the very real and pressing need for student recruitment and retention (Strategic Goal 3). With a current economy that offers no stability or certainty, SSU understands much of its survival depends on the tuition of students; nevertheless, its integrity depends on the retention and successful graduation of these students—an act deeply embedded in the university’s core mission. The QEP Task Force views writing as one of the factors on which the university can have some influence, especially given the institutional data that shows a correlation between exposure to maximal literary focus and retention (see Appendix VI). Therefore, the QEP takes this statistical information into consideration and aspires to help improve attitudes and frequency of low-stakes writing opportunities so that students can gain confidence in their own communication skills and potentially lead to higher student retention and successful matriculation toward graduation.

Along with retention and graduation comes achievement. As a student-centered university, SSU aspires to not only graduate a higher number of students, but a greater number of high-achieving students. Savannah State University is committed to graduating students who have presented academic work, published scholarly essays, engaged in internships, studied abroad, and attained academic goals of excellence. Savannah State University’s QEP is but one instrument in the university’s toolkit being used to assist students in reaching and exceeding such academic goals.
Yet another way the QEP will enhance the university’s Strategic Plan is assisting in image and communication (Strategic Goal 4). By promoting and focusing on better writing though increased opportunities for writing and more positive attitudes about writing, the QEP will assist SSU in enhancing effectiveness both internally on campus and in the external community. Communication by anyone associated with SSU is expected to be clear, concise, and professional. Further, by bolstering confidence in writing and the ability to write, the QEP will accommodate the university goal of publicizing more research and intellectual activities. In addition, in this technological age, skillful written communication has never been more important in conveying a positive image, whether through email and social-networking, or through online applications and publications. Savannah State University’s QEP should enhance the public image projected in communication from all constituencies of the university. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni will more strongly represent SSU as a university that highly values all intellectual activity, especially as it is represented through writing and the byproducts of effective writing, such as critical thinking and reading comprehension.

Finally, SSU and its QEP stress professional development, which is at the heart of much academic discourse (Strategic Goal 5). Savannah State University’s strategic plan stresses that all employees maintain currency with state of the art practices in their respective fields because learning is a lifelong process. Savannah State University will also ensure that faculty and staff increase attendance at conferences and receive continual training opportunities to enhance their writing skills, and to increase their incorporation of writing opportunities across the campus for students. By having faculty and staff who engage in writing on numerous levels, the institution will set the standard for all incoming faculty and staff, as well as students. Writing, by its very nature, is an expression of one’s knowledge and ability; therefore, SSU, through its QEP, intends to
have a community of well-written scholars who openly and honestly share their knowledge and skills with others.

**Input from the University Community**

In addition to the formation of the QEP Task Force Committee, who oversaw the progression and development of the topic selection and conducted and presented research (institutional, literature reviews, and best practices scholarship), there were twelve campus-wide focus group sessions scheduled by the QEP Task Force Committee (see Appendix IV) to refine and introduce *The Write Attitude!*

Contributing participants included constituents from all university populations, including faculty, staff, administration, and students. These sessions were productive in facilitating helpful feedback and generating many ideas on how to feature and promote positive attitudes about writing at SSU.

**Student Contributions**

Feedback indicated:

- Their favorite writing assignments are those where instructors ask for a student’s opinion.
- They like to see the real-world value in writing.
- They really do want to know the reasoning behind an assignment. How will it help with their major? How will it be relevant to their learning?
- If faculty members are excited and passionate about the subject, that often translates to the students, and they become excited as well.
- They prefer having a variety of options for topics to choose from when writing instead of merely one.
- They enjoy being engaged in a topic—one that is relevant to their lives like dormitory visitation hours, cafeteria food choices, and so forth.
- They want to be challenged and for the instructor to have high expectations.
• If they are bored, they produce poorly written papers.
• They like to engage in writing topics that affect people; they like the sense of empowerment and see the personal value.

Staff Contributions

Feedback indicated:

• They are willing to include more student-writing in services where it is relevant (for example, students may submit emails or letters regarding services they need, or to appeal a grade, to petition policies, etc.).
• They have a desire to enhance their own professional writing.

Faculty Contributions

Feedback indicated:

• They support a campaign featuring alumni from specific disciplines indicating how writing took them places in their career.
• They suggested having more campus competitions based on writing—poetry, essay contests, etc.
• They support attending more forums for sharing best teaching practices involving low-stakes writing (see Appendix VIII for sample assignments that were shared at Focus Group sessions).
• They support having more peer-to-peer writing encounters.
• They will promote campus writing resources, like the ReWrite Connection and the Center for Academic Success.

Elements of the QEP

Based on the stakeholders’ contributions and suggestions, in executing *The Write Attitude!* both curricular and co-curricular activities, programs, and services will provide additional reinforcement of positive writing attitudes and writing skills across campus. Some of these items include:

• Enacting minimum writing requirements for the core General Education courses, as well as introductory, and upper-division courses per discipline.
• Classroom-based pilot programs across the curriculum to introduce and assess the effectiveness of low-stakes writing in the learning process

• **The Write Attitude!** Faculty Development Seminar

• An annual Best Practices Writing Symposium for faculty

• Yearly Spring conferences to showcase student writing in each college

• A Summer Writing Workshop Series for staff every year

• A community/alumni Lunch and Learn Series that underscores the importance of writing in “the real world”

• Programs to establish Student Writing Fellows and Faculty Writing Fellows

• A community-outreach Educational Partnerships Program connecting SSU students with local primary and secondary students through writing initiatives

• Utilizing existing campus resources to reinforce the goals of the QEP

**Figure A: Elements of the QEP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing-Supportive Curriculum</th>
<th>Department-and College-Wide Initiatives</th>
<th>Co-Curricular Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education Core Writing Requirements</td>
<td>Essay Writing Contests</td>
<td>Faculty Best Practices Symposia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Course Writing Requirements</td>
<td>Student Writing Showcases</td>
<td>Staff Writing Workshop Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division Course Writing Requirements</td>
<td>Student Writing Fellows Program</td>
<td>Community/Alumni Lunch and Learn Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Write Attitude!</strong> Faculty Development Seminar</td>
<td>Faculty Writing Fellows Program</td>
<td><strong>The Write Attitude!</strong> Community Educational partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Stakes Writing Classroom Pilot Program</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Utilizing and Unifying Existing Campus Resources to Support the QEP Mission

Figure B: Institutional Capability

The following are existing campus resources that will be employed to support the QEP mission. In that united support of the QEP mission, the current disparate resources will take a stronger relation with one another, which enhances the strength and productivity of the university.

ReWrite Connection

The SSU ReWrite Connection (the university writing center) nurtures a community of scholars dedicated to the process of writing, revising, editing and the discovering of creative expression. By providing high quality tutoring by professional
writing tutors and trained peer writing tutors, the ReWrite Connection will continue to assist students in becoming better writers by enhancing their confidence and by assisting them with the writing process. The ReWrite Connection will enrich the campus and community by fostering an academic culture of writing that celebrates literacy, commitment to the writing process, and the love of language.

The ReWrite Connection provides qualified writing consultants who support the academic mission of the university so that writers can work confidently in an environment that is accessible, comfortable, and productive. Writing consultants help writers understand and practice writing-to-learn as well as the many strategies that effective writers use, from brainstorming to editing. The facility supports writers’ growth in their composing processes and provides the expertise, the resources, and the space and time to work with students on their writing. The ReWrite Connection:

- works on a one-to-one basis on any writing project – from brainstorming to revision to final touches, including but not limited to essays, lab reports, resumes, formal letters of all types, master’s theses, and work for publication.
- helps anyone on campus – from freshman to graduate students and from staff to faculty to administrators of SSU.
- identifies strong and not-so-strong writing habits and helps perfect strengths and improve potential strengths.
- focuses on Writing Across the Curriculum to include math, science, history, and other subjects. These functions certainly reflect the SSU QEP – The Write Attitude.

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Center for Academic Success

The Center for Academic Success (CAS) serves to advance the mission of the university community through the development of comprehensive strategies designed to enhance students’ academic achievement and success. As a comprehensive center, the strategies designed to improve academic achievement and advancement rates include: Academic Advisement, Individual and Small Group Academic Coaching/Tutoring, USG Testing and Preparation Classes, Developmental Skill building Classes and Supplemental Learning Activities. The Center for Academic Success offers assistance to students with their academic needs. The assistance may be in the form of general course planning, choosing a major, finding a tutor or organizing class notes. The CAS staff and faculty are ready and willing to help Savannah State University students increase their potential for academic success.14

With respect to writing, CAS offers peer tutoring and focuses on skills-building in the areas of grammar, syntax, and general language mechanics. This approach meshes nicely with the activities of the ReWrite Connection to provide a comprehensive resource for students and their individual writing challenges. The work of CAS in writing support and tutoring is crucial for the success of The Write Attitude!

Student Support Services

Student Support Services is designed to provide academic assistance to increase the retention and graduation rates of eligible students and to foster an institutional climate supportive for the success of low-income and first generation college students and individuals with disabilities through various services. Student Support

Services is a federally funded college academic support and retention program that serves 175 eligible Savannah State University students.\textsuperscript{15} Such assistance and support for these students work in collaboration with the goals and mission of the QEP.\textsuperscript{16}

**Career Services**

This campus resource provides services to all students and alumni seeking employment, graduate school information, cooperative education and internship opportunities. Career Services acts as a liaison between employers, academic programs, and students.\textsuperscript{17} Their mission is to assist students and alumni in developing, evaluating, and implementing career plans.\textsuperscript{18} Their work with resume-writing and their contacts with community employers are important activities that relate to the goals of the QEP—particularly in helping students to see how writing in the “real world” is vital to their success.\textsuperscript{19}

**Peer Tutoring Program**

This program begins with the foundational course ENGL 3800: Peer Writing Tutoring—Writing Center Theory and Practice (see Appendix IX). Students who complete this prerequisite have the opportunity to further apply the theoretical and practical components of writing center work by engaging in all facets of writing center consultation and administration in supervised hours of peer tutoring in the ReWrite


\textsuperscript{16} To view statement from Student Support Services describing how their mission and services reinforce the goals of the QEP, visit http://irp.savannahstate.edu/SACS/qep.htm.

\textsuperscript{17} “Career Services,” Savannah State University, http://www.savannahstate.edu/student-affairs/career-services.shtml.

\textsuperscript{18} View http://www.savannahstate.edu/student-affairs/docs/Career%20Resource%20Guide.pdf for additional services offered by this office.

\textsuperscript{19} To view a statement from Career Services describing how their mission and services reinforce the goals of the QEP, view http://irp.savannahstate.edu/SACS/qep.htm.
Connection. After much supervision and practice, the peer tutors may then begin tutoring independently. Students have additional hands-on learning opportunities which may include designing tutoring or instructional materials, leading workshops and seminars, assisting with design and tutoring in the online learning environment and/or engaging in further research and learning about writing center administration. Returning practicum students may also be asked to serve as mentors for new tutors and ENGL 3800 students. This provides students with peer-to-peer writing opportunities and mentoring, which is crucial to cultivating The Write Attitude! Both CAS tutors and students generally interested in peer tutoring will take this course before engaging in peer tutoring.

**Student Writing Fellows Program**

This is a direct corollary to the Peer Writing Tutoring Program. The students involved in this program are required to successfully complete ENGL 3800 and all its expectations. However, how this program differs is that most of the Peer Writing Tutors are English majors. In the Student Writing Fellows Program, instructors will recommend students from their particular disciplines to serve as Student Writing Fellows, indicating that these students are considered strong writers in their particular disciplines. These students will be very familiar with writing in that discipline and will serve as tutors for that particular discipline. These Fellows will hold tutoring hours during the hours of the ReWrite Connection, during times in which the library is open, or on location in their academic buildings. While Peer Writing Tutors provide more general assistance in any discipline, they still deal with Composition students. Alternatively, the Student Writing Fellows will be very discipline-specific in an effort to support those faculty integrating more writing opportunities in their courses.
Faculty Writing Fellows Program

The Faculty Writing Fellows Program is modeled after the Student Writing Fellows Program. Faculty will apply to be a Fellow based on recommendations from his/her chair and/or dean. Faculty will undergo training and education like that received in the ENGL 3800 course, but their training will be an intensive eight week-long advanced seminar. Faculty will receive a stipend for their participation and fulfilling all requirements of the Faculty Writing Fellows contract. They will receive constant reinforcement and assistance throughout their tenure as a Faculty Fellow from the Office of the QEP and the ReWrite Connection. Fellows will hold office hours in the ReWrite Connection and serve to assist students with any type of writing, but specifically, they will focus on their particular area of expertise. The Faculty Fellows will also serve to support the Writing across the Curriculum initiative when faculty in their particular disciplines begin or continue to offer more writing opportunities.

Freshman Year Experience Course

This course is designed to provide opportunities for students to receive additional practice, experience and knowledge in the following skills: goal-setting, decision-making, leadership training, career (interviewing skills and resume’ development) and academic major planning and exploration. Further, the course seeks to promote computer literacy and includes activities involving the use of e-mail and internet searches. Another aspect of the course covers an appreciation for service learning through active community involvement, and the inclusion of a student/faculty mentoring component designed to facilitate opportunities for interaction among these groups in out-of-class activities and experiences. In this class:

- Students are introduced to Savannah State University’s history and traditions, policies, procedures and resources.
Students make initial exploration of the general/or core curriculum, major studies, career choices, and academic study skills such as time management, note taking, test strategies, classroom etiquette, and other helpful skills.

Students develop an initial awareness of institutional expectations, including policies, programs and services.

Students develop their critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues and issues relevant to college life with an emphasis on understanding diversity among peers.

Students learn how to initiate interaction with faculty and are instructed on how to make the transition to a college advisor and major declaration.

Students learn how to research financial options for school and learn financial management as a way to stay in school and prosper as a U.S. citizen.

In addition to the learning activities and outcomes mentioned above, students are also introduced to the importance of writing. In this way, from the moment they begin their tenure at SSU, the practice of writing is underscored (see Appendix X for The Write Attitude! insert in the course textbook). In this curriculum, freshmen are also required to learn about responsible research techniques through library instruction, which contributes to their confidence as writers and their capabilities with information literacy.

Information Literacy Program

The Asa H. Gordon Library promotes the QEP with its outreach to students and faculty through library instruction and its commitment to promoting information literacy. Information literacy is the ability to know when information is needed, and to find, evaluate, and use the appropriate information ethically. Information literacy theory emerged because increased amounts of information became available through books,

journals, broadcast media, and the internet. However, the quality and reliability of such information varies. Information literacy skills enable students to effectively use and discern information they find from various sources not only during their academic careers but in a lifelong capacity.

The Information Literacy Program holds the potential to support the QEP in numerous ways, but the most intentional way is how it bolsters confidence in research skills. Confidence in one’s ability to effectively conduct research also supports one’s confidence in one’s own writing skills, or a more positive attitude about writing and one’s capability to write effectively.

**Conclusion**

The development of the QEP to improve attitudes on writing can greatly benefit Savannah State University. It can reinforce the already-existing institutional strategic goals; it can provide a platform for utilizing and unifying existing campus resources that are otherwise fairly disconnected and separate entities; it can strengthen reading and critical thinking capacities in students, as these skills accompany increased writing proficiency; and it can foster new networks and communities on campus focused on writing.
Where we’ve been:

- Some courses with writing components
- Some faculty volunteering at the university writing center (the ReWrite Connection)
- Some student/peer tutoring at the university writing center (the ReWrite Connection) and the Center for Academic Success
- Less than optimal Georgia Regents’ Exam scores on writing
- Less than optimal graduation rates

Where we’re going:

- A university-wide effort to develop a positive culture of writing in all campus areas
- Development of cross-curricular initiatives to increase writing opportunities
- An expansion of faculty development opportunities
- Workshops for staff to further develop and enhance writing skills
- Seminars and symposia for faculty to further develop and demonstrate best writing practices and pedagogies
- Showcases for students to develop and enhance writing skills
- A new Faculty and Student Writing Fellows program
- Increased peer tutors at the Center for Academic Success
- Opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to learn from community and alumni guest practitioners and scholars
- Integration and unification of existing campus resources in support of the QEP
- Improved Georgia Regents’ Exam scores
- Improved graduation rates
Review and Application of Literature and Best Practices

Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go.

—E. L. Doctorow

Writing is a core value of a modern civilized society and “[w]ithin academic circles, writing is widely accepted as a worthy aim of the learning process.”21 For some institutions, the writing process, much like critical thinking and critical reading, may be embedded within institutional mission and vision statements yet the practical application of these writing skills is painfully absent from the institutional climate. Many faculty members, while experts in their field, engage in traditional practices such as only administering multiple choice exams. This can serve to ignore students’ diverse and ever-evolving learning styles and interests. The neglect of students’ styles and interests is one of the areas that Thomas Newkirk and Richard Kent imagine transforming in Teaching the Neglected “R”: Rethinking Writing Instruction in Secondary Classrooms.22

In the “Introduction,” Thomas Newkirk writes:

We are in a period of unprecedented technological change that calls into question traditional ways of teaching writing. A whole new set of skills will be needed for students competing globally in the “flat world” of the twenty-first century. And the traditional organization of school itself—grading, taking subjects, the schedule of the day—will need to be changed. The very nature of writing is being transformed at a breathless rate…

Another area of concern is the fact that many distinguished teaching faculty, who are in the hard sciences and mathematics often (but not always), lack a clear understanding of

23 Ibid., 1.
the writing process themselves.\textsuperscript{24} Many times it is the case that faculty members know how to write well but lack the pedagogy to teach \textit{how} to write in their particular field.

In addition to a potential disconnect between an institution’s educational aspirations and its educational practice, the lack of a common definition for good writing and good writing processes presents a challenge for institutions who seek to develop skilled writers. No one will fail to argue that institutions want their students to be well-developed and skilled writers, but the current reality is that many instructors are saddled with larger class sizes or overloaded teaching schedules with little time for grading. Such realities often overshadow the need to have students engage in more writing that many instructors assume will have to be “graded.”\textsuperscript{25}

Within this review of the best practices and literature, issues related to a common definition of good writing, potential educational implementation models within higher education curricula and the assessment and evaluation of good writing and good writing practices and processes will be addressed. While many theories and articles have helped in shaping the theoretical framework being adapted in this proposed Quality Enhancement Plan, the theorists Tori Haring-Smith, Anne Ruggles Gere, Peter Elbow, Anne Walker, Mary Barr, Mary Healy, Paulo Freire, Sharon Sorenson, Thomas Newkirk, Richard Kent, Sharon Hamilton-Wieler, and Carol Gladstone have been particularly integral. The information from the International Writing in the Disciplines and Writing Across the Curriculum Conference at Indiana University (2010) that members of the QEP Task Force Committee attended are also explored here.

With a plethora of definitions of good writing, there is no single definition that is endorsed by or even followed by most scholars and instructors. With this lack of consensus, educators may operate as if they have a full understanding of good writing,

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 24.

\textsuperscript{25} To see the writing frequencies at the college levels at SSU, please refer to Appendix XI.
when, in fact, they have a divergent awareness of the essential elements of good writing, as compared to their colleagues. Moreover, if asked, most faculty will assert that they emphatically endorse programs that will assist students in becoming better writers, yet many faculty resist the idea of incorporating more writing into their courses or having to evaluate student writing, particularly if the faculty view such evaluation involving grammar and punctuation. Literature dealing with writing asserts time and again that a commitment to writing begins with a positive attitude towards writing, stimulated and reinforced by continual opportunities for expression and positive substantive feedback. Moreover, the more writing opportunities are reinforced with positive interpersonal interactions, the more positive attitudes towards writing will be fostered. With that, best practices within writing often indicate that having a singular, cross-disciplinary understanding of good writing assists not only faculty with their own writing but also help the faculty convey their expectations clearly and succinctly to their students. In fact, one of the prevalent concerns among students is not knowing what instructors expect within writing components in their classrooms as it varies from class to class within the very same discipline. The Writing in the Disciplines and Writing Across the Curriculum International Conference (2010) also touched on this concern and underscored the fact that it is a prevalent issue on campuses nationwide.

**Writing-to-Learn**

It should be asserted that writing-to-learn is not synonymous with learning to write. The two create a recursive and mutually reinforcing act, where you cannot have one without the other—you must learn to write before you can write-to-learn, but the activity of writing-to-learn is not exhausted in the activity of learning to write. This is because writing-to-learn is more expansive. As Anne Walker explains, when instructors

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in any discipline incorporate writing into the instruction, students benefit in three ways: they understand the content better; they are able to retain more knowledge; and they begin to write better.\textsuperscript{27} Writing Across the Curriculum, as many theorists note, assert that it assists in “removing students from their passivity.”\textsuperscript{28} When students are active in the classroom, they are, in essence, active participants in their education.\textsuperscript{29} Students often discover they have something to offer to the discussion, thus often removing the instructor as the center of the classroom and empowering students to better understand and make connections with the information. In fact, writing is, at base, the classic means of personal learning and expression and is best fostered in a student-centered context where authentic grappling with issues and expression of views is stimulated and appreciated. Moreover, it is not, ideally, an appropriate medium for regurgitating or mirroring known truths. Consequently, incorporating student “agency” in determining the nature of writing projects is critically important.\textsuperscript{30} Through writing, learning becomes a dialogue between learners and their surrounding contexts.

Deep learning is hard work and results from learners consciously integrating new information and ideas into prior understandings and mental models; knowledge is “fixed” as it finds expression in learners’ voices and responds to critical review. Therefore, as Sharon Sorenson concludes, “assuming that students gain new knowledge by making associations with prior knowledge, the writing activities commonly used across the curriculum give students the opportunity to make those connections.”\textsuperscript{31} especially within

\textsuperscript{29} Henry Steffens, “The Value and Difficulties of Teaching the History of Science and Technology in Secondary Schools” (presentation, annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Cincinnati, OH, 1988), quoted in Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement.”
\textsuperscript{30} Friere, \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}, 68-69.
\textsuperscript{31} Sharon Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement: Writing Across the Curriculum, last modified 1991, \url{http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9218/across.htm}. 
reading and class discussion. Students, with their active schedules, in order to learn the material and make sense of it, must have an opportunity to examine the material and work through what is still confusing and what makes sense for them. Sharon Hamilton-Wieler calls this kind of writing “a way into or means of learning, a way into understanding through articulating.” Students can navigate the information and process it in a way that proves to themselves they know it. Students may also use this writing-to-learn as an opportunity to illustrate to the instructor where the understanding of the material breaks down, just like in a math problem when one examines the work in the process or formula.

Grading of occasional papers alone is ineffective for stimulating positive attitudes toward writing behavior; instead, writers require continuous positive feedback about the substance of their writing. Newkirk and Kent insist that a marriage between traditional methods of teaching and contemporary students’ learning processes must occur for productive and engaged learning to take place. Since product writing alone often proves counter-intuitive to the learning process, and because many instructors outside of English departments either do not feel obliged or comfortable evaluating writing assignments, models of evaluated writing that are disciplinary-specific prove useful for the instructor. Utilizing models (writings that serve as a template or example for students who may be confused about how the final work should appear) are a preferred strategy for writing instruction. Many instructors choose to use examples from previous semesters with identifiers being removed. Further, these instructors often use the model writings to illustrate great writing for this particular assignment or writing that fell short of


33 Newkirk and Kent, *Teaching the Neglected "R,"* 8.

34 Product writing is when instructors look for errors in grammar and mechanics, for example, and aren’t concerned with the process of idea development, revision, etc., but overly emphasize the “final product.”
its intended goal for that particular assignment, thus assisting students prepare a more
fully fleshed-out response.35

A legitimate concern for instructors is how to make the most of class time while
still covering necessary material, as well as meeting learning outcomes and curriculum
requirements for students. While this is a real concern, when writing-to-learn and writing
opportunities are incorporated into a curriculum effectively, the need for re-teaching after
testing is generally reduced. Further, since teachers outside of English do not
necessarily grade for grammar and punctuation in expressive writing, this, too, reduces
the amount of grading instructors must take on. Again, such writing-to-learn activities
can improve reading comprehension and critical thinking skills by allowing students a
neutral arena within which to wrestle with and make sense of the subject matter.

Still, there will be those who doubt the efficacy of writing-to-learn in a variety of
disciplines. Carol Gladstone explains, “While hard statistical evidence is scarce, a few
studies show positive results. In one study, low-achieving math students using writing-to-
learn techniques improved their state competency test results to a greater percentage
than did average math students in a traditional classroom.”36 Although some other
studies indicate a lack of measurable quantitative data, they do report that students’
attitudes about writing changed tremendously. Many reported they felt “less
apprehension about writing and felt they were better writers—writing more varied and
complex, and more mature pieces—after only a year in a school-wide writing-across-the-

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Beyond attitudes and writing skills, writing-to-learn improves other student skills as well.

In addition to writing skills and knowledge retention, research such as that summarized by Syrene Forsman supports the idea that “writing is one of the most effective ways to develop thinking.” In Sorenson’s article, Mary Barr and Mary Healy assert that a “study of writing achievement across the curriculum attests to the fact that writing improves higher-order reasoning abilities.” Writing Across the Curriculum programs underscore and support this assertion in that such programs give students a sound foundation of information from that discipline and then allow the students to make sense of the data in a practical, tangible way.

Beyond the incorporation or implementation of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs, defining it for the community in which it will be incorporated sometimes proves problematic. Some institutions proclaim their WAC programs are housed in their writing centers. Others assert that WAC occurs when students write for the school newspaper. Still further, many WAC practitioners insist that WAC occurs when the English professor asks students to write a paper about another discipline. These aforementioned examples lack, as Walker argues, the essential “ingredients of Writing Across the Curriculum”. Writing Across the Curriculum proponents will assert that these key ingredients are simple but invaluable. Writing Across the Curriculum is merely offering numerous and varied opportunities for writing in any and all disciplines; as writing cannot be relegated to the Liberal Arts. Writing Across the Curriculum is an

37 Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement.”
40 Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement.”
initiative that involves all campus partners in creating a culture that reveres writing and the educational possibilities it possesses.

Deliberate and lasting organizational change is slow and painstaking; it proceeds in stages by uncovering discordant values and beliefs, developing appreciation for diversity, and fostering acceptance of alternative norms and practices congruent with desired culture and behavior. When instructors displace their defenses and embrace writing opportunities for students to learn, then Writing Across the Curriculum actually occurs. However, reaching this point where writing is an innate, daily part of the classroom learning opportunities, is always a difficult task. Just like students, some instructors outside of the discipline of English feel uncomfortable as writers even though they are well-versed in their particular fields. These instructors often feel even less comfortable evaluating student writing because this is perceived as the English instructors’ tasks. Moreover, for some, the implementation of Writing Across the Curriculum is seen as an insurmountable task regarding how to enact it. Sorenson writes:

To overcome these problems and address the issues—in short, to make teachers comfortable—most schools have found a year-long plan for in-service and group dialogue necessary for a successful program. In many cases, participation has been voluntary, but the rewards have come when participants, observing the enthusiasm and classroom success, have asked for information. In other cases, participation has been mandatory, but there is some question about a teacher’s success if he/she is an unwilling participant.

It becomes clear that success in such an endeavor only arises when all parties are invested and enthusiastic about the learning possibilities of Writing Across the Curriculum.

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42 Ibid., 97.
43 Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement.”
As Barr and Healy argue, “Schools succeed when the emphasis, by both teachers and students, is on writing and thinking about relevant and significant ideas within the subject areas. Writing Across the Curriculum accepts writing, the need to develop it, and its role in learning as a human function essential to thinking and communicating.”44 In short, organizational change emphasizing Writing Across the Curriculum will occur when students expect and faculty learn to satisfy student expectations with classroom learning arrangements.

**Effecting Change in Attitudes and Writing**

With countless theories and proposals, effecting change is not so easy or straight-forward. Tori Haring-Smith clearly outlines the trials, successes, and obstacles faced when trying to improve student writing on a university-wide scale.45 She asserts that for a Writing Across the Curriculum program to be successful, there must be “shared responsibility among the faculty for helping students learn to write and the association of writing with learning.”46 To create true change in the curriculum and, ultimately, student learning outcomes and performance, attitudes—both in the faculty and students—has to be altered and writing-to-learn has to be second nature in a classroom in order for writing to improve. While such an epiphany sheds light on the direction Savannah State University must take, it further underscores the old adage that change is not easy.

Haring-Smith explains that changing faculty attitudes is one of the more difficult tasks in implementing a cross-disciplines writing initiative: “[...] [F]aculty outside the

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44 Barr and Healy, “School and University Articulation,” 48, quoted in Sharon Sorenson, “Encouraging Writing Achievement”.


46 Ibid., 38.
English department did not feel it was their responsibility to teach writing.\textsuperscript{47} Denis Lawton also captures this notion when he states: 

It’s more difficult to convince teachers that writing is a learning process than it is to convince them that talk is, because so often teachers use writing as a way of testing. They use it to find out what students already know, rather than as a way of encouraging them to find out. The process of making the material their own—the process of writing—is demonstrably a process of learning.\textsuperscript{48}

While writing-to-learn undeniably allows students the opportunity to process what they have learned and determine what they need to focus on for mastery, getting and maintaining faculty buy-in and enthusiasm becomes the greatest obstacle. Most students rise to the expectations set for them. One of SSU’s biggest obstacles for the QEP will be to get faculty excited about setting these expectations for the students and maintaining the motivation to implement them consistently (see Appendix XII for stalled past attempts at writing initiatives at SSU).

**Methodology of Application**

The method of applying the writing theories\textsuperscript{49} that guide the QEP toward establishing The Write Attitude! at SSU will be four-fold in nature, applying to initiatives regarding curricula, students, faculty and staff/services. Please see the table below:

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 56.
\textsuperscript{49} See the SSU QEP Website for an additional selected annotated bibliography for current Writing in the Disciplines literature at http://irp.savannahstate.edu/SACS/qep.htm.
Table 2: Application of Best Practices/Literature Review to QEP Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>Area 1: Curricula-based Initiatives</th>
<th>Area 2: Student-based Initiatives</th>
<th>Area 3: Faculty-based Initiatives</th>
<th>Area 4: Staff/Services-based Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Definition of Good Writing in Disciplines</td>
<td>ENGL 1101/ENGL 1102 and the FYE courses will lay the foundation for good writing in all disciplines.</td>
<td>Students will be given access to a Writing in the Disciplines Guide that offers a common definition of good writing for different disciplines.</td>
<td>Faculty in each discipline will collaborate on a general idea of good writing for their discipline and publish samples and directions in the SSU Writing in the Disciplines Guide.</td>
<td>Staff will work on improving their writing and develop criteria and definitions of good writing within their areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in and Promote Writing-to-Learn</td>
<td>QEP Director will organize best-practice trainings for faculty in writing-to-learn theory and techniques and classroom-infusion of writing.</td>
<td>Students will be assisted by Faculty Writing Fellows in the ReWrite Connection to reinforce the importance of writing for knowledge acquisition and collegiate success.</td>
<td>Promotion of Information Literacy library instruction in a variety of courses.</td>
<td>Staff will offer writing opportunities for students to practice “real world” application of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in a More Student-Centered Classroom</td>
<td>Certain courses and instructors will be identified to participate in a pilot program for WAC and low-stakes writing inclusion. Curriculum changes will involve minimum writing requirements in the General Education courses and upper/lower division major courses.</td>
<td>Students will develop more confidence in their own abilities based on the foundations set for them in core classes and reinforced in upper level courses; thus, they will participate more in class.</td>
<td>Participating FYE courses will offer tools to students to overcome writer’s block. Faculty Development Seminar will offer techniques in student-centered pedagogies.</td>
<td>Students will be empowered to write for university services in a variety of formats that can effect change in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer More Writing Opportunities in All Disciplines</td>
<td>Expand faculty participation in the pilot program incrementally each year, which will involve more writing across the curriculum. As mentioned above, enact curriculum changes with writing requirement minimums across the curriculum.</td>
<td>Students will be given more writing opportunities not only inside but also outside of the classroom. Extra-curricular activities and student organizations can be instrumental toward this end (newsletter writing, creative writing, social networking, blogging, PR releases, etc.). Discipline-Specific Student Writing Showcases.</td>
<td>Foundations for good writing will be developed in the ENGL 1101/1102 and FYE courses. Workshops for faculty to learn to utilize low-stakes and low-stress writing opportunities.</td>
<td>Expand staff at the ReWrite Connection and Center for Academic Support to accommodate the anticipated higher number of student consultations from a variety of disciplines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Implementation and Assessment

**Implementation Actions**

The change in attitude which Savannah State University’s QEP aspires to achieve will take time to accomplish. Therefore, the QEP will operate in four main areas over the next five years in an effort to exact gradual change and create a culture of positive attitudes about writing. These areas are: curricula, students, faculty, and staff/services. Ultimately, it is the institution’s plan that all four areas will come together to create this positive culture of writing.

**Curricula:**

Student involvement and buy-in to this plan is essential for its success; therefore, faculty and staff must be strategic in the way in which they ask students to be involved. One such strategy is to identify certain courses and instructors, according to their interest in the plan, to be involved in the pilot program that infuses low-stakes writing across the curriculum. The QEP Director will have identified numerous faculty members in all disciplines who wish to infuse their classes with more writing opportunities for students. These faculty members will be well-trained and enthusiastic, as they will be involved in the pilot of the QEP as it pertains to curriculum. These faculty members will be dedicated to incorporating a specified amount of writing in these disciplines/courses (General Education, introductory and upper-division). These faculty/courses will then serve as the models for future faculty and courses aspiring to be more writing-intensive. Following the successful, incremental implementation of writing in this way, official curriculum changes will be introduced, requiring set writing minimums across the campus, as they are determined to be appropriate for each area, through consultation of faculty and administration in those areas.
Of course, faculty in ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102, and the Freshmen Year Experience courses will continue to put forth the basic foundations of writing and will emphasize transforming writing attitudes. Here students will engage writing by building on their high school experiences but also through learning the expectations of university-level writing and Information Literacy.

Students:

The cornerstone of the QEP is improved student learning, and the plan provides numerous occasions for writing and participation to engage all students within their areas of interest—both inside and outside of the classroom.

First, Student Writing Fellows will be chosen from high-performing student pools in the different colleges to support the enhanced load at the ReWrite Connection and to infuse more peer-editing into routine writing on campus. Student Writing Fellows will be extensively trained by enrolling in a Peer Writing Tutoring course, ENGL 3800 (see Appendix IX). Student Writing Fellows will hold consultations within academic buildings to ease access for students needing guidance on their writing and faculty members requiring initial feedback on students’ rough drafts. They will also operate from the ReWrite Connection. In addition, the staff of the ReWrite Connection and the Center for Academic Success will be expanded to accommodate the anticipated higher number of student consultations. This expanded workforce in the ReWrite Connection and the Center for Academic Success will allow the facility to be open increased hours to accommodate non-traditional students and will expand the areas of expertise in major-specific writing styles. Faculty Writing Fellows will also enhance the capabilities of the Rewrite Connection and broaden its reach of areas of expertise across the disciplines for students.

Students will also be given opportunities to write in numerous classes so they see the importance of writing, regardless of discipline. Again, these classes and faculty
will be strategically selected and trained so as to serve as the model for SSU’s Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. Ultimately, most students will take a senior seminar course in which all the writing they have engaged in will culminate in a senior project or paper.

While classroom engagement is essential, students will be encouraged to participate in writing opportunities outside of the classroom, as well. Some of these will include off-campus and on-campus conferences at which students present their writing and research. For instance, the QEP includes funding for all colleges to sponsor annual Spring Student Showcases. Further, there will be numerous writing contests at the department, college, and university level.

Community partnerships with primary and secondary schools in the area, centered around building bridges and mentoring through writing, will also be important for elevating attitudes about writing. Also, alumni and local businesses will be invited on campus to participate in the Lunch-and-Learn series, where they can discuss with students how writing has been integral to their success.

Other opportunities for writing, external to classroom, will be more publicized and encouraged and organizations such as the university newspaper, creative writing groups, the SSU literary magazine *Estuary* will benefit. Organizations and groups like these, whether they are already in existence or newly-formed, will be pivotal to these positive writing experiences.

Through all of these means, by improving student attitudes, students will begin to see the profound value of writing.

Faculty:

The Freshman Year Experience (FYE) instructors will be provided with a faculty development opportunity to receive training that introduces simple tools for students in the classroom to overcome writer’s block and writing anxiety. FYE faculty will also
coordinate with the library to give their students instruction on Information Literacy, so that all incoming students are familiar with the research resources available to them and how to access them. In these early stages of their undergraduate careers, students will also be strongly encouraged to visit the Rewrite Center to revise a writing assignment so that they will overcome any inhibitions in utilizing this campus resource.

Another opportunity for faculty will be the Faculty Development Seminar, where faculty members will have the chance to enroll in a sustained exchange of ideas and learn additional best practices regarding writing assignments for their courses. Participating faculty will be contracted to put into practice what they learn in the seminar in their teaching, and will receive a stipend for their participation. They will also present their experiences with writing-infusion at the annual SSU Faculty Best Practices The Write Attitude! Symposium. Furthermore, general workshops will be offered for faculty to learn to utilize low-stress/low-stakes writing assignments in their classrooms to enhance learning without adding to their workload. These workshops will be offered iteratively beginning with the annual Fall Faculty and Staff Institute, near mid-terms, and at the start of each new semester. New tricks and tools will be added each time and broad marketing and scheduling will occur during open campus meeting times, to expand participation.

Yet another area of faculty development is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Under this umbrella, grants will be made available through the Office of the QEP for building “Learning Communities” related to the mission of the QEP.

Beyond on-campus workshops for faculty, money has been budgeted for faculty attendance at off-campus workshops and conferences concerning writing in the disciplines, writing across the curriculum, writing assessment, assignment and curriculum development, improving attitudes about writing, student learning, and other
areas that relate to the QEP. Moreover, it would be expected that faculty attending these workshops or conferences would return and present what they learned or discovered to interested faculty and staff (e.g., at the annual SSU Faculty Best Practices *The Write Attitude!* Symposium).

**Staff/Services:**

Savannah State University’s QEP is unique in that it involves staff as well as students and faculty. Many students interact with faculty regularly and often perceive them as representatives of the “real world” in which the students aspire to become employed. While the QEP will encourage faculty and staff to enhance their own attitudes about writing, staff will also offer students a number of writing opportunities. For example, the Director of Auxiliary Services has already proposed that students who want to terminate their meal plan be required to write a letter explaining why they wish to do so. Writing opportunities such as these will allow students to engage in and see the importance of persuasive writing as not just a means to a grade but a means to gaining something they need, just as writing often functions beyond the academy.

Additionally, staff will be invited to attend Staff Summer Writing Workshops where they will determine the contents of the workshop topics, relative to their writing needs and interests.
Implementation Timeline

Implementation for the five years of our QEP is summarized in Table 3 below. The QEP Director will be hired in Fall 2011 in an effort to allow the Director to familiarize himself/herself with the QEP and begin setting up the procedural architecture for beginning successful implementation in Spring 2012. During Fall 2011, the Office of the QEP will be established (housed in the King Frazier Student Center, Office Suites 238), and will work with campus services, resources, colleges, and departments to craft policies and guidelines to govern the various QEP activities and initiatives. From there, in the preliminary phase (Spring 2012), the Office of QEP Director will begin to coordinate and administer the proposed programs. The Write Attitude! website will continue to be developed and enhanced, as it was already launched in Fall 2009. The website will continue to serve as a database for information and statistics concerning the QEP and its purpose. In collaboration with the Office of University Advancement, a marketing plan was constructed and implemented during Fall 2010 and Spring 2011. This plan not only created an awareness of the QEP but also of the opportunities and resources it would present to all university stakeholders. This marketing will continue throughout the life of the QEP.

The QEP Director, along with the QEP Advisory Board (representing the numerous disciplines and stakeholders), will develop the guidelines and funding criteria for items related to the QEP such as grants, travel funds, and stipends. The QEP Director and Advisory Board will develop a funding request form with which all faculty members will use to apply for funds. The bulk of faculty and staff development funds will become available for the QEP programs in Spring 2012. The QEP Director and Advisory Board will also coordinate with faculty to further develop, refine, and implement assessment tools proposed in the QEP.
Since SSU’s QEP is focused on impacting four fundamental aspects of the university—curriculum, students, faculty, and staff—the QEP Director will work with stakeholders to implement development in these particular arenas to positively impact attitudes regarding writing. Along with these developments, the QEP Director will also administer surveys to the community stakeholders and employers to assess SSU students’ writing skills. This will continue to establish assessment data to determine the impact of *The Write Attitude!* initiative. The QEP director will work closely with the Institute for Research, Planning, and Assessment to evaluate the data collected on the QEP activities, to monitor for effectiveness and improved student learning outcomes.
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRE-QEP</th>
<th>QEP YEAR 1</th>
<th>QEP YEAR 2</th>
<th>QEP YEAR 3</th>
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<td>AY 2010-2011</td>
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<td>1. Develop Marketing Plan</td>
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<td>2. Hire QEP Director to begin implementation</td>
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<td>3. Establish Office of the QEP</td>
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<td>4. Establish Funding Criteria/Guidelines (stipends/grants)</td>
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<td>5. Establish and Refine Assessment Criteria</td>
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<td>6. Extend and Enhance QEP Website</td>
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<td>7. Surveys to employers on graduate writing skills</td>
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<td>8. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Institute Minimum General Education Writing Requirements</td>
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<td>b. Institute Minimum Intro Courses/Discipline Writing Req.</td>
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<td>c. Institute Minimum Upper Division/Discipline Writing Req.</td>
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<td>d. Low-stakes Writing Classroom Pilot Program</td>
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<td>f. Freshman Year Experience Course Implementation of QEP</td>
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<td>9. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<td>a. Peer Writing Tutoring Course for Student Writing Fellows</td>
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<td>b. ReWrite Connection for Assistance</td>
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<td>c. Community Outreach Educational Partnerships</td>
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<td>d. Center for Academic Success Tutoring</td>
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<td>e. Alumni/Community Lunch-and-Learn Series</td>
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<td>f. Student Writing Fellows Program</td>
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<td>g. Student Essay writing contests (dept., college, univ.)</td>
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<td>h. Student Writing Showcases</td>
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<td>10. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<td>a. Faculty Development Seminar</td>
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<td>b. Best Practices Mini-Workshops from QEP Director</td>
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<td>c. Faculty Best Practices While Attitude/Symposium</td>
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<td>d. Faculty SoTL Learning Communities</td>
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<td>e. Faculty Writing Fellows Program</td>
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<td>f. Sponsor travel for QEP-related scholarship/presentations</td>
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<td>11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Staff Summer Writing Workshop Series</td>
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</table>
QEP Assessment

In addition to measuring success in terms of our identified goals and learning outcomes, assessment and evaluation will also focus on these more over-arching, general areas as they relate to the QEP, to provide a sense of context and vision for the initiative:

1. Have student attitudes regarding writing changed in a positive way?
2. Have faculty attitudes regarding writing changed in a positive way?
3. Have staff attitudes regarding writing changed in a positive way?
4. Has integration of increased writing opportunities in the curriculum resulted in enhanced student learning?
5. Have university services become more unified in their support of the QEP?

Before discussing the particular assessment tools and measures, it is important to illustrate how the goals and learning outcomes intersect. Please view Table 4.1 below:
### Table 4.1: Intersection of QEP Goals and QEP Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QEP Goal One: Students will be exposed to positive attitudes toward writing and will understand writing as an essential form of communication for their academic and professional success.</th>
<th>Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.</th>
<th>Learning Outcome 2: Students will be able to properly conduct appropriate academic research.</th>
<th>Learning Outcome 3: Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.</th>
<th>Learning Outcome 4: Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.</th>
<th>Learning Outcome 5: Students will be able to evaluate how their own attitudes regarding writing affect their own writing ability.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QEP Goal Two: Students will experience a variety of writing opportunities, ranging in type and scope, at all levels of all disciplines.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>QEP Goal Three: Students will engage in activities that incorporate peer interaction with and feedback on their writing.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>QEP Goal Four: Students will be motivated by faculty members who are committed to a pedagogy of learning through writing.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>QEP Goal Five: Students will interact with faculty and staff committed to providing writing occasions that emphasize professional-level writing components and competency in extracurricular activities and university services.</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
From this context, we can point to the specific measures (direct and indirect) that will be employed to analyze the success of the learning outcomes. We will gather data through items like attitudinal surveys (created locally as well as nationally recognized, like the Daly-Miller Test\textsuperscript{50}), writing inventories to measure the frequency and type of writing in the classrooms, embedded exam questions to test for student writing skills and comprehension, student participation in showcases that feature their writing, university-wide and discipline-specific writing rubrics, and the increase of cross-curricular changes (like gradual implementation of writing requirements in core and disciplinary courses) and the increase of and participation in co-curricular changes (like phasing in new programs to involve outside community partnerships, faculty and student occasions to present and discuss writing, etc.). The next table indicates the types of apparatuses that will be utilized across the campus for evaluation of each learning outcome:

\textsuperscript{50} For examples of the local attitudinal survey and the Daly-Miller Test, please visit Appendices XIV and XV, respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome 1:</th>
<th>Attitudinal Surveys</th>
<th>Writing Inventories</th>
<th>Embedded Exam Questions</th>
<th>Participation in Student Showcases</th>
<th>Writing Rubrics</th>
<th>Cross-Curricular Changes</th>
<th>Co-Curricular Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and disciplines.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Learning Outcome 2:</td>
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<td>Students will be able to properly conduct appropriate academic research.</td>
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<td>Learning Outcome 3:</td>
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<td>Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome 4:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Learning Outcome 5:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to evaluate how their own attitudes regarding writing affect their own writing ability.</td>
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</table>

Table 4.2: QEP Student Learning Outcomes and Means of Analysis (Direct and Indirect)
Overview of Assessment Approach

QEP GOAL ONE:

Challenge: Many students do not engage in writing or only write the minimal amount because they possess negative perceptions of and attitudes about writing.

Goal: Students will be exposed to positive attitudes toward writing and will understand writing as an essential form of communication for their academic and professional success.

Learning Outcome Linked to Goal:
(LO5) Students will be able to evaluate how their own attitudes about writing affect their writing ability.

Means of Analysis:
Students: Administer attitudinal surveys (Daly-Miller Test) and local surveys through focus groups, pilot projects, to Freshmen Year Experience (FYE) students, students with 60 hour degree credits, and senior seminar/capstone courses (or comparable classes) across the disciplines.

Faculty: Faculty attitudes about writing will be assessed through a report each semester. Survey data will include identifying those courses in which writing assignments are given, average number of writing assignments per course, average length of writing assignment, type of assignment (term paper, case analysis, document review, in class writing, online discussions, short response papers, and so forth), faculty perceptions about students’ writing abilities, and faculty perception regarding the usefulness of writing assignments in enhancing student learning and retention of information.

In addition to gathering qualitative data based on faculty survey responses, the number of courses in which writing is utilized as a teaching method will be tracked annually based on semester reports. An increase in the number of courses implementing writing assignments will indicate an enhancement in faculty attitudes about writing.

Criteria for Success:
For this goal/outcome(s) to be considered successful:

1. Students will report improved attitudes about writing and create an understanding of how writing benefits students in their chosen majors.
2. Students will report an improved level of comfort with regards to writing.
3. Students will increase participation in co-curricular activities that emphasize professional writing (i.e., the Lunch-and-Learn series, Community Educational Partnerships, etc.)

4. Faculty will report improved attitudes about involving writing in their classrooms.

5. Faculty will increase the number of courses involving writing and frequencies of writing opportunities in individual courses.

QEP GOAL TWO:

Challenge: Students sometimes do not get varied writing opportunities (high-and low stakes) at all levels of all disciplines.

Goal: Students will experience a variety of writing opportunities, ranging in type and scope, at all levels of all disciplines.

Learning Outcomes Linked to Goal:

   LO1: Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.

   LO2: Students will be able to properly conduct appropriate academic research.

   LO3: Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.

   LO4: Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.

Means of Analysis:

Faculty writing inventories, Staff (Office/Service) writing inventories, writing rubrics, embedded exam questions, the number of cross-curriculum changes that become instituted, participation in student showcases.

Criteria for Success:

For this goal/outcome(s) to be considered successful:

1. Students will experience an increase in the number and variety of writing opportunities throughout their academic career in general education courses and courses in their disciplines.

2. The percentage of students scoring 70% or above using a university-wide writing rubric will increase each year.

3. The percentage of students reporting that writing assignments are useful or very useful in enhancing their learning and retention of information will increase each year.

4. The percentage of faculty reporting that writing assignments are useful or very useful in enhancing student learning and retention of information will increase each year.

5. Student writing in/for university services will increase where relevant.
QEP GOAL THREE:

Challenge: Students often do not perceive writing as recursive; students often do not perceive the value of peer feedback and revision.

Goal: Students will engage in activities that incorporate peer interaction with and feedback on their writing.

Learning Outcomes Linked to Goal:

- LO1: Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.
- LO3: Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.
- LO4: Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.

Means of Analysis:

Data will be collected regarding the number of students receiving assistance in the ReWrite Connection and the Center for Academic Success. Students receiving assistance will complete satisfaction surveys periodically. Data will be collected to monitor the instances of peer-reviewing/peer-writing activities in the classroom.

Criteria for Success:

For this goal/outcome(s) to be considered successful:

1. The number of student visits to the ReWrite Connection will increase.
2. The number of student visits to the Center for Academic Success will increase.
3. Overall instances of peer editing/review in classrooms will increase.

QEP GOAL FOUR:

Challenge: Generally, many faculty members avoid assigning or incorporating writing in their courses.

Goal: Students will be motivated by faculty members who are committed to a pedagogy of learning through writing.

Learning Outcomes Linked to Goal:

- LO1: Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.
- LO2: Students will be able to properly conduct appropriate academic research.
- LO3: Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.
- LO4: Students will be able to construct academic essays with appropriate content, purpose, and support.
Means of Analysis:
Surveys, course writing inventories, and number of faculty participating in academic writing conferences, the development seminar, pilot program, and SSU Faculty Best Practices Symposia

Criteria for Success:
For this goal/outcome(s) to be considered successful:

1. Interested faculty will enroll, on a participatory basis, in a SSU Faculty Development Seminar designed to address the specific needs of university stakeholders. From there, they will integrate the learned/shared methodologies into their courses and provide data about their experiences.
2. Participating faculty will conduct workshops or share their wisdom and best practices with other faculty through the Faculty Best Practices Symposia.
3. Faculty will also produce more engaging and better constructed writing assignments and will also increase the number of writing opportunities (high and/or low stakes) in their courses.
4. The number of faculty participating in scholarship and conferences related to the QEP (such as student learning, writing, etc.) will increase.

QEP GOAL FIVE:

Challenge: Students often do not see the value of or need for writing outside of the classroom.

Goal: Students will interact with faculty and staff committed to providing writing occasions that emphasize professional-level writing components and competency in extra-curricular activities and university services.

Learning Outcomes Linked to Goal:

LO1: Students will be able to produce college-level writing in a variety of situations and/or courses.

LO3: Students will be able to use appropriate rhetorical strategies in their writing.

Means of Analysis:
Writing rubrics, course/department/service writing inventories, and surveys.

Criteria for Success:
For this goal/outcome(s) to be considered successful:

1. The number of courses emphasizing professional-level writing components (such as technical writing) will increase.
2. The number of extracurricular activities involving writing (such as press releases, memos, service learning, newsletters, and so forth) will increase.
3. Student writing in/for university services will increase where relevant.

**Conclusion**

The QEP Task Force has developed an implementation timeline which it hopes will evoke gradual but lasting change on Savannah State’s campus. *The Write Attitude!* will operate under the notion of starting small, evaluating our efforts, being successful in that area, and then moving forward to ultimately create widespread, lasting, and positive change that results in enhanced student learning. By implementing strategies and initiatives that take into consideration all campus stakeholders, the QEP will have a lasting impact on not only SSU students but the community as well.

Assessment will be an ongoing process throughout the QEP implementation. The criteria for success previously identified will be monitored through a process that establishes initial benchmarks and compares subsequent data collection throughout the campus. In addition to the multiple means of assessment involving direct and indirect measures, consultations with external authorities who have expertise in constructing and evaluating Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing-to-Learn programs will be consulted. All of these activities will be carefully documented and evaluated to help us determine the extent to which we are meeting the QEP goals and learning outcomes that guide our vision, as well as how to revise our methods and strategies, where necessary.
Resources and Management Plan

Table 5: *The Write Attitude!* Management Organizational Chart

- **Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment**
  - Analyze QEP assessment data

- **Student Affairs**
  - Promote and publicize QEP (Student Development & Student Life)
  - Coordinate Lunch-and-Learn Series (Career Services)

- **University Advancement**
  - Coordinate Lunch-and-Learn Series (Alumni Affairs)
  - Produce QEP Marketing Materials (Marketing & Communications)

- **Human Resources**
  - Coordinate Staff Development workshops

- **QEP Advisory Board**
  - QEP Co-Chairs, representatives from: Humanities/Fine Arts, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Business, Science, Technology, Center for Academic Success; College Deans; Staff Council; Students; Business Partners; Alumni

- **QEP Director**
  - Coordinate QEP-related activities across campus
  - Manage grant/stipend/incentive activities
  - Coordinate faculty in QEP-related activities

- **Director, Academic Assessment**
  - Coordinate collection of assessment data

- **Center for Academic Success**
  - Tutor grammar/mechanics of writing (Peer English Tutors)

- **Rewrite Connection**
  - Tutor writing concepts/content/style (Professional Tutors)
  - Train/Supervise “Writing Fellows” (6 Students; 6 Faculty)
  - Train Faculty in 8-week course to become pilot instructors in QEP

- **Library**
  - Provide writing support (Information Literacy)
**Description of Roles and Duties**

The QEP Director will have oversight responsibility of the QEP. This is a newly created position, reporting to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Strategically located in the King-Frazier Student Center Room 238, a central point on campus, the Director will be a point of contact for colleges and departments in all aspects of implementation. The Director’s responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Overseeing and managing the QEP Budget
- Assisting colleges/departments in implementing the QEP through continuous communication and promoting participation
- Collecting and analyzing data, as well as monitoring results against benchmarks
- Communicating results to colleges and departments and assisting colleges and departments in revising plans to ensure continuous improvement
- Assisting colleges/departments in identifying writing enhanced courses, if needed
- Assisting in the implementation and assessment of cross-curricular and co-curricular activities
- Revising the comprehensive QEP assessment and implementation plan, if need arises, in order to maintain its course
- Remaining current on best practices related to the QEP
- Scheduling and coordinating offsite and onsite faculty training
- Soliciting nominations from departments for Faculty Writing Fellows
- Working closely with and collaborating with the ReWrite Connection Director who oversees the Writing Fellows Program, the Peer Writing tutoring program, and assists in the training and development of the Faculty Writing Fellows Program
• Creating and coordinating relationships with community partners

Working to assist the QEP Director is the QEP Advisory Board. This board will consist of the QEP Co-Chairs; representatives from the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Business, and Science/Technology; Center for Academic Success; College Deans, students, alumni, Staff Council, and business partners. Such an advisory board will serve to inform the QEP Director of the stakeholders’ interests while also serving to support the QEP Director as he/she becomes acclimated to the campus and the QEP.

The QEP Director will also work closely with Student Affairs, Human Resources, and University Advancement to continue to promote the QEP as well as coordinate activities that underscore the mission of the QEP. Along with these campus resources, the QEP Director will also work closely with the Library, especially with the Information Literacy program.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) will oversee the distribution and collection of surveys each semester. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment will summarize and evaluate data on an annual basis and provide reports to the QEP Director, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and College Deans. Reports will also be posted on the University QEP website. The QEP Director will work closely with IRPA as well as the Assessment Director with regards to data and assessment.

Colleges and departments are responsible for ongoing implementation. College Deans/Department Heads will:

1. Support and propose curriculum changes in their areas that will incorporate acceptable minimum writing requirements, relative to their disciplines.
2. Contribute to crafting protocols and procedures for programs and assessment regarding the QEP.

3. Require faculty compliance with QEP participation in surveys and assessment.

4. Nominate Faculty Writing Fellows.

5. Participate in coordinating and publicizing the Student Spring Showcases.

6. Identify faculty to participate in conferences related to the QEP mission.

Through continuous feedback, monitoring, and communication, the entire campus community will be working in collaboration to reach the QEP goals.

**Budget Narrative**

1. **QEP Director:** The QEP Director, who will oversee the implementation of the QEP as well as evaluate its assessment, will also coordinate with other existing campus services to ensure the QEP is delivered successfully and the students’ learning is truly enhanced by this endeavor. Given market values and research conducted with sister institutions, $65,000 annually with benefits and no cost of living increases is a fair salary that will draw qualified candidates to apply for the position.

2. **Part-Time Administrative Support:** The QEP Director, with all of his/her job requirements, will need an assistant to help him/her not only execute daily tasks within the office but to also assist with to the large task of coordinating all the facets of the QEP with the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and existing campus resources. The salary for the Administrative Assistant would be $11,400 annually (benefits not included). This person would work closely with the QEP Director.
3. Six Faculty Writing Fellows (Two from each college): Faculty will apply to be Writing Fellows and will be trained through a writing tutoring best practices workshop. Being a Faculty Writing Fellow will be competitive. Faculty will be compensated with a stipend of $1,500 per semester and commit five hours per week to the ReWrite Connection for two semesters. This, too, will be instrumental to the success of the QEP as it will demonstrate a commitment from faculty across the disciplines in enhancing student learning. Further, two faculty fellows from each college will assist in encompassing the breadth of writing opportunities and expertise in the three colleges.

4. Six Student Writing Fellows Tutors (Two from each college): These student tutors will be trained through the Peer Writing Tutoring course. For students to become Writing Fellows, they will be recommended by faculty who view the students as excellent writers within their respective majors/colleges. Once accepted to the Fellows program, these students may earn up to $3200 over the course of an academic year (This total stems from the understanding that each semester is sixteen weeks in length). These Fellows will earn $10/hour and work no more than ten hours per week. These Fellows will be instrumental in the success of SSU’s QEP. Moreover, these students will tutor their peers in upper division courses in their respective areas within the major/colleges. The Fellows will hold a prestigious title due to the fact that the student’s professor nominates him/her for the position, recognizing the student’s leadership qualities and excellence in writing. Duties include holding ten office hours per week in a specified and advertised location. Their tutoring will focus on upper division courses as well as higher order writing skills.

5. Two Part-Time Professional Tutors: Two professional tutors will be hired to further assist with the influx of more students seeking assistance with writing and
comprehension. These tutors will have backgrounds in Composition and/or Rhetoric as well as special consideration being given to those with expertise in English as Second Language and/or Reading/Literacy. These tutors will be allowed to work up to 20 hours per week at $15/hour. Both wages combined will equal $31,200 annually.

6. Increase in Salary of Existing Professional Tutors: The current professional tutors’ salaries need to be on par with the new hourly part-time positions we will hire in line five. This adjustment will reflect a $2,000 per year increase for each position. Both wages combined will total an increase of $4,000 annually.

7. Five Peer English Tutors: These peer tutors will be chosen from the very best students successfully completing the Peer Writing Tutoring Course. These students will work up to 20 hours/week in the ReWrite Connection or the Center for Academic Success. These students will earn $10/hour. These students will be instrumental in not only supporting the notion of The Write Attitude! but will also assist in tutoring the growing number of students seeking assistance in the ReWrite Connection or the Center for Academic Success, especially for students seeking assistance in Freshman Composition courses and/or preparation for the Georgia Regents’ exam, as well as lower-order writing skills.

8. The Write Attitude! Faculty Development Seminar: Six faculty will engage in a Faculty Development Seminar led by the ReWrite Connection Director. This eight week intensive course will meet once a week where participants will learn other best practices in creating writing assignments. Participants will be compensated with a $750 stipend upon successful completion of the course (Fall). However, the graduates will receive half of the stipend upon completion of their training and the other half upon successful submission of their assessment portfolios (including their research, ideas, best practices,
writing assignments and assessment) after the first semester of implementation in the classroom (Spring). It is further expected that graduates of this seminar will continue implementation of these writing best practices in their courses for another full academic year where they will then be expected to present their overall experiences and findings at the Faculty Best Practices Symposium the following Spring semester. The instructor of the Faculty Development seminar would be compensated with a $500 stipend. This would total $5000 overall annually for the development course. For the initial summer seminar, a budget of $3000 would be needed. The one-time summer version of the seminar would be a one-week intensive course enrolling faculty who are already committed to writing and enhancing attitudes. The compensation for this seminar for each participant would be $500 with the instructor requiring no compensation.

9. Faculty Best Practices Fall Symposium: This symposium will emerge directly from the Faculty Development Seminar. This will be a requirement for those who have successfully completed the seminar to showcase their best practices as well as the wonderful work they and their students have been engaging in. Of course, other faculty will be invited to participate in the Symposium as well. The annual $1000 is to cover symposium costs and awards.

Faculty Best Practices Symposium Keynote Speaker: In an effort to further enhance the Best Practices Symposium, an outside expert in the arena of writing in one or more disciplines will be invited to be the keynote speaker, as well as administer workshops. This speaker and expert will further educate faculty on other best practices. The $1500 for this speaker will be used for travel expenses as well as a modest stipend.

10. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Write Attitude! Learning Communities (Grants and Travel Funds): Building upon the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
initiative in CLASS, part of the QEP budget will be devoted to establishing Faculty
Learning Communities (FLC) that relate to and reinforce the mission of The Write
Atttitude! Grant proposals will be competitive in establishing FLC projects and discourse
communities to impact student learning on campus regarding improved writing attitudes,
and teaching and research related to this area. This is an important aspect of faculty
development as it relates to domains that support the QEP. Travel funds will be provided
to support scholarship and conference presentations from research that results from
these FLCs (e.g., presentations at SoTL conferences, etc.). These funds will assist
faculty in remaining competitive with other scholars and to continue to give students a
first-rate education. The annual $2500 will be divided up and made available to faculty
on a competitive basis.

11. Spring Student Showcases: To further support students’ positive attitudes toward
writing, Spring Student Showcases for each of the three colleges will be held. These
showcases will provide students with an opportunity not only to gain conference
presentation experience but to also demonstrate to others the important and excellent
work in which they have been engaging. The $1000/year will be divided up between the
three colleges. The money will be utilized to pay for conference costs and to give the
showcase coordinator a small stipend.

12. Student Essay Writing Contests: In order to get more students excited about
writing outside of the classroom, essay writing contests for students will be held annually
for the three colleges. The $900 annually will be divided up between the three colleges,
awarding each college $300 for prize money. For example, first place would win $150;
second place would win $100; and third place would win $50. Such monetary incentives,
although modest, would give students not only a tangible reward but these contests
would also provide them with resume material as well as an enhanced attitude about the power of writing.

13. **Community/Alumni Lunch and Learn Series:** To further demonstrate the need for effective writing outside of the academic arena, SSU alumni and successful members of the community will be invited to speak at monthly brown bag luncheon seminars. The $150/year will be used over the course of the months to supply light refreshments (six monthly brown bag luncheons with each being given $25 for refreshments). This luncheons are critical for the QEP as they demonstrate broad-based support and community involvement.

14. **Staff Summer Writing Workshops:** To address staff writing needs and to improve staff writing attitudes, summer workshops will be conducted by the QEP Director and/or the ReWrite Connection director. In these workshops, staff can get instruction on how to improve their work-related written communication (e.g., inter-departmental memos, emailing, etc.) and other areas of interest related to writing. The $150/year will be used to provide light refreshments for six summer writing workshops.

15. **Best Practices Conferences for QEP Director:** It is imperative that the QEP Director stay current on SACS/COC policies and requirements as well as the latest trends and theories regarding writing. An annual amount of $2000 will be used to send the QEP director to his/her conferences or workshops of choice as long as they pertain to the goals of the QEP and SACS/COC policies.

16. **Marketing of the QEP:** It is vital for the success of the QEP that it remain at the fore of the campus community’s attention. Therefore, marketing of the QEP must continue for the duration of the QEP so that the movement maintains momentum and focus and that
all who attend or visit SSU will know that the university is committed to writing. The annual $3000 will be used for bookmarks, promotional items, sponsored events, brochures, banners, community commercials, and so forth. Promotion of SSU as a writing-focused campus will be a useful tool in the recruitment and retention of students.

17. **Assessment Software:** In order to successfully construct and complete the Five-Year Report required by SACS, assessment of the QEP is instrumental. One critical way of accomplishing this is through assessment software. It is crucial that we have some sort of mechanism in place that can be utilized and viewed by all stakeholders. The data accrued with this software would then be sent to IRPA where it would be studied and utilized for university statistics and assessment. An initial outlay of $20,000 is anticipated. The subsequent annual budget of $10,000 is an estimate for assessment software, with a five year budget totaling $60,000.

18. **Faculty Travel to Conferences:** In an effort to support faculty wishing to further expand their knowledge base in areas related to or supporting the mission of the QEP, faculty travel for conferences will be supported through a budget of $2500 annually. Faculty may even utilize these moneys to present papers they delivered at the Faculty Best Practices Symposium in other venues to draw attention to the scholarship and important work being undertaken at SSU.

19. **Office Supplies:** This money will be spent for the daily maintenance of the Office of the QEP, in terms of office materials. The annual budget of $3000 will cover not only day to day office costs but also copy paper, report copying, and other such items.

20. **Computers:** The QEP Director will be provided with a computer with two screens, and all other relevant hardware. The costs for computers will also include software and
other such items needed to execute daily operations. The budget allotted for this is $2400 every third year in order to maintain the function of the hardware and software upgrades.

21. Two Phone Lines: Two phone lines have been budgeted for the director and his/her administrative assistant. The budget for this is $400 annually.

22. Copier/Printer: A budget of $3,600 annually has been allotted for the QEP Director. This is with an estimate of the copier usage being at $60/month. The copier/printer will be utilized to execute daily operations and to send out important documents. It will also be used to maintain accurate records and data.
### Table 6: QEP Budget

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pre-QEP</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>$21,450</td>
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<td>$11,400</td>
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<td><strong>Six Faculty Writing Fellows (2 faculty from each college)</strong></td>
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<td>$18,000</td>
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<td><strong>Six Student Writing Fellows (10 hours per week at $10/hour)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$31,200</td>
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<td><strong>Increase in salary for two existing full time professional tutors at The ReWrite Connection (to bring them to the same pay level as line 5)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Five Peer English Tutors (20 hours per week at $10/hr.) — Center for Academic Success</strong></td>
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<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
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<td><strong>The Write Attitude! Faculty Development Seminar (each fall)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Writing Best Practices Fall Symposium (conference costs)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scholarship of Teaching and Learning — The Write Attitude! Faculty Learning communities (travel funds for conference presentations)</strong></td>
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<td>$2,500</td>
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<td>$900</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$900</td>
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<td>$150</td>
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<td><strong>Staff Summer Writing Workshops</strong></td>
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<td>$150</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<td>$750</td>
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<td><strong>Best Practice Conferences for QEP Director (to Stay Current — SACS and WAC/WID)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing of the QEP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assessment Software</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Computers</strong></td>
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<td>$3,600</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
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</table>

**Total QEP Funding:** | $7,900 | $255,225 | $245,225 | $247,625 | $245,225 | $245,225 | $1,246,425
Future Aspirations

Savannah State University is committed to enhancing writing attitudes across the entire campus community. In maintaining this expansive commitment, the university will continue to cultivate opportunities for writing-based practices at every level of college life. The writing culture will extend to all areas of campus—from the classroom to university services. In this way, the stakeholders in *The Write Attitude!* include every member of SSU.

An important feature of this approach is that it has the potential to unite facets of the university in stronger accord with a united mission of enhancing writing. Specifically, existing campus resources will work together to develop and maintain the QEP, while, at the same time, bolstering the missions of those programs.

Moreover, Savannah State University’s QEP is, without a doubt, an ambitious one but also one that is practical, strategic, and feasible. *The Write Attitude!* has carefully been situated so that it will outlast the five year implementation timeline of the QEP and become an invaluable and ingrained part of campus culture and learning. Because it is cross-disciplinary in nature, the QEP has been positioned to reach all stakeholders at all levels.

Savannah State University is clearly invested in the implementation and success of its QEP because, if successful, *The Write Attitude!* will have a lasting impact on all involved whether within the academic arena or without. The ultimate goal of any institution of learning should be to assist students in exceeding their potential, and the QEP is merely one way in which to achieve this.

*The Write Attitude!* only begins to address issues pertaining to writing on campus. The following are future directions the QEP may take to maintain institutional
standards and objectives, as well as to take on new challenges that shape the lives of our students and the broader campus community at Savannah State University:

- Extend the benefits of improving attitudes on writing to tackle other areas important for scholastic and professional success, such as reading and critical thinking—use the model of the QEP on writing to begin initiatives in these areas as well.
- Work to address the crucial relationship between academic honesty and writing to combat the prevalence of plagiarism in college classrooms.
- Analyze the frequency and effectiveness of writing in eLearning courses and how writing is a catalyst for knowledge in this type of specialized learning environment.
- Beyond attending conferences to learn more on the best practices in writing pedagogy, we hope to have faculty present and publish scholarship and research on the effectiveness of our writing enhancement activities.
- Elevate graduate student writing. It is especially important that graduate students display the more sophisticated, complex writing skills they need to write professional papers, theses, or publishable essays; our graduate student population is under-served in this respect.
- Review existing administrative campus communications to revise forms and documents to reflect strong writing.
- Offer writing instruction to staff to enhance writing-based professionalism.
- Establish an English as Second Language/Non-Native Speaker support through the hiring of a dedicated ESL/NNS Tutor for the ReWrite Connection. This will assist students, faculty, and staff who may need extra assistance with writing in order to express their ideas when English is not their first language.

While the implementation of The Write Attitude! will take time and resources, its possibilities for change and enhancement of student learning seem limitless. The enhancement of writing through the QEP at SSU involves all academic programs, as well as garners administrative and educational support through its campus services, and
is united by a shared idea—a vision that students will appreciate and practice intellectual exploration more completely if improved attitudes on writing become a cornerstone of their experience.
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APPENDIX I

Graduation Rates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

There are slightly fewer than 100 four-year historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the continental United States. They enroll about one out of every five black students attending a four-year institution and grant a similar proportion of all bachelor’s degrees awarded to black students. The aggregate six-year institutional graduation rate for HBCUs in 2006 was 37.9 percent, compared to 45 percent for non-HBCUs. It’s important to note, however, that HBCUs enroll a disproportionately large share of first-generation and low-income students, who tend to be at a higher risk of dropping out.

In fact, there is far more variation in graduation rate performance within the community of historically black institutions than there is between HBCUs and non-HBCUs. A few institutions with selective admissions policies, like Spelman College in Atlanta and Howard University in Washington, D.C., typically graduate two-thirds or more of their black students. Others that serve primarily at-risk students graduate less than 25 percent of black students within six years. The same variation occurs when HBCUs are compared to peer institutions, including non-HBCUs. A few have outstanding results, a few fare very poorly, and most are somewhere in between.

In addition to peer comparisons, the best way to judge improvement at HBCUs is to observe how black graduation rates change over time. The table below shows HBCUs that improved their black six-year graduation rate by more than five percentage points from 2002 to 2006.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSU: Institution Specific Graduation %</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>30.5*</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>31.7</td>
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<td>State Universities: Inst. Specific Graduation %</td>
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<td>SSU: System Wide Graduation %</td>
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<td>20.5</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Universities: System Wide Graduation %</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* SSU Graduation rate for 1998 cohort is artificially inflated due to erroneous reporting of 1998 SIRS data to BOR. Savannah State University under-reported enrollment by 198 cases; artificial depression in freshman “N” lowers denominator for calculation, raising rates.

Data Source: USG by the Numbers - Graduation Rate Reports

http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Graduation_Rate_Watch.pdf
APPENDIX II

AVERAGE SAT SCORES FOR FRESHMEN (2010)

There can be little dispute with the conventional wisdom argument that reading, math, and writing are among essential skills necessary for success in college. The proof is that virtually every college in the country, including all of Georgia’s 35 state institutions, requires test scores on these skills in conjunction with their entrance selection processes.

Compared with Freshmen nationally, SSU Freshmen are relatively more deficient in writing than they are in either reading or math, according to their average SAT scores. That is, the largest gap (labeled "deficiency gap" in the table above) between national scores and SSU scores is associated with writing scores submitted in conjunction with college admissions procedures. The writing gap is greater than reading or math in both absolute score and as a percentage of the national average score. Savannah State University Freshmen measure 17% lower than the national average in their writing skills.

While we have no firm national comparative data related to writing attitudes, we do know from our baseline data at SSU that the average Freshmen attitudes about writing are less than enthusiastic (see Appendix V). Many self report they are “bad writers” or “hate writing.” Moreover, many cannot see the intrinsic value of writing in their chosen career paths.

By improving these attitudes about writing we expect to enhance students' interests in and thereby attentiveness to competent writing. For it is clear that students have had extensive opportunities for writing in their curriculum in K-12. Writing in our primary feeder schools is emphasized throughout, but primarily more intensively in grades 9-12. Given this exposure, it is not lack of instruction, per se, but likely another disconnect that is impacting our college students’ ability to perform well at writing competencies. This is why our QEP takes up the attempt to alter attitudes about writing in an effort to determine if this intervention will increase student learning and outcomes.

Sources:
National Scores:

Savannah State University Scores: Registrar, Banner Data System Extract
APPENDIX III
GEORGIA REGENTS' ESSAY — PASSING PERCENTAGES COMPARISON

- Percentages of students who completed the Regents' Skill Requirement before earning 45 credit hours.

http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwrtp/passing.htm
## APPENDIX IV

### CAMPUS-WIDE QEP FOCUS GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 11, 2008</td>
<td>The Quality Enhancement Plan</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>At the Fall Faculty institute, the VPAA explained the QEP as part of the SACS reaccreditation process; began the process of topic selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6, 2009</td>
<td>QEP Update</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>At the Fall Faculty institute, the VPAA updated the faculty on the status of the QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21, 2010</td>
<td>What is the QEP? &amp; Selecting a Slogan</td>
<td>Faculty/ Administration</td>
<td>Unveiled the QEP topic and had faculty rank/write in slogans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28, 2010</td>
<td>Launching the QEP Slogan &amp; Promoting the QEP through Classroom and Campus Activities</td>
<td>Faculty/ Administration/ Staff</td>
<td>Discussed plans for upcoming contests; shared scavenger hunt assignment; had faculty brainstorm/share exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11, 2010</td>
<td>Assessing Faculty Attitudes and Uses of Writing in the Classroom</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Had faculty complete surveys; shared attitudes and types of writing in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25, 2010</td>
<td>Incorporating QEP in the Classroom: Adding Curriculum Enhancement while Avoiding Increased Workload</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Modeled examples of how to enhance current activities using writing; had faculty brainstorm how to modify existing assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11, 2010</td>
<td>Writing Fellows Program: Peer Tutors Per Discipline</td>
<td>Students/ Faculty/ Staff/ Administration</td>
<td>Discussed the inception of this new program idea to bolster discipline-based writing assistance; Handout materials from last session—ideas, strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23, 2010</td>
<td>Student/Presidential Forum on the QEP</td>
<td>Students/ Administration</td>
<td>Utilized the opportunity to further dialogue and raise awareness with students on the issue of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25, 2010</td>
<td>Assessing Student Attitudes on Writing</td>
<td>Students/ Faculty</td>
<td>Had faculty offer extra credit for student attendance at this event; had students fill out a survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8, 2010</td>
<td>Knowing and Embracing the QEP</td>
<td>Students/ Faculty/ Staff/ Administration</td>
<td>Explained the importance; discussed marketing strategies to raise awareness; had the group generate further ideas for disseminating the QEP message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20, 2010</td>
<td>Utilizing Existing Campus Resources to Support the QEP Mission</td>
<td>Faculty/ Staff/ Administration</td>
<td>Strengthened dialogue among campus entities that dovetail with the QEP mission (Information Literacy, Freshman Year Experience, Student Support Services, and Center for Academic Success) – how they can support the QEP and how the QEP reinforces their objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23, 2010</td>
<td>Staff Involvement in The Write Attitude!</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>This Staff Support Council Meeting focused on these goals: (1) Raise staff awareness of the QEP and how it is unique in involving staff in the university-wide mission to improve attitudes on writing; (2) Get baseline data for how writing is already utilized in staff settings (student and otherwise); (3) Brainstorm with staff on how to further reinforce student writing in staff settings and how to improve existing writing formats (student and otherwise); (4) Discuss idea of staff-focused writing workshops (e.g., composing an effective annual evaluation; improving written office correspondence, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX V

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDINAL SURVEYS ON WRITING PROFICIENCY

Comparison of SSU Writing Assignment Frequencies to Other Institutions (2005)

Writing Assignment Frequencies

For more information about how these frequencies relate to student attitudes and perceptions, please visit:
http://irp.savannahstate.edu/IRP/factbook/FB-1100.htm/1150.html

Student Qualitative Interviews on Writing Experiences — Fall 2009

In order to accomplish the Quality Enhancement Plan’s objective to achieve The Write Attitude!, it was necessary to gauge students’ current attitudes toward the writing process. One such informal measurement of attitude occurred in the Fall of 2009. The study involved a small sample of students who were asked a variety of questions and were filmed giving their responses. This group included a senior Business Management major, a junior Biology major, a junior English major, sophomore Chemistry major, a junior Social Work major and a sophomore Marketing major. When asked general questions about their views of writing, the students’ responses all gave credence to the QEP’s core aim to improve attitudes toward writing through a variety of measures across disciplines, not just formal, graded writing assignments.

Each interview began with the question, “How do you feel about writing?” Some of the students responded positively to the writing process; one shared, “I’ve always
enjoyed writing; I wrote my first story when I was nine.” However, most communicated adverse or neutral feelings toward writing. A Chemistry major stated, “I would describe [my feelings] as neutral. I wouldn’t say I like it, but I wouldn’t say I don’t like it.” Another shared, “I kind of like it, but at the same time I don’t.” The other students shared similar responses, which seem to be the casually observed consensus of Savannah State University students. The interviews revealed their apathy is more closely linked to negative responses to their writing rather than writing in general. Fortunately, the QEP offers suggestions for combating this disinterest.

The QEP’s endorsement for writing-to-learn, and not merely writing for a grade, was confirmed by the students’ expressions of enjoying writing when outside of the classroom. Several students mentioned poetry as their favorite genre when writing. One declared writing was a “freeing experience” for her. Conversely, when probed further about their trepidations about writing, they all pointed to unfamiliarity with what quality writing actually is. One student, when asked to elaborate about her most memorable writing experience, remarked, “It wasn’t exactly stressful, but what I thought was writing wasn’t.” Some students revealed their perception of their writing skills was tied to the negative feedback from professors. One stated, “You turn your paper in and think you did a good job, but you find out you didn’t. You just see all the grammar errors.” These responses highlight the benefit of low-stake writing opportunities across disciplines.

Campus-wide involvement is a key component in successfully realizing The Write Attitude! The students commented on factors that positively impacted their attitudes toward writing and most pointed to instruction from English professors and guidance from the university’s writing center. Specifically, a majority stated their English 1101 and 1102 courses boosted their confidence through varied, low-stake writing assignments. None of them mentioned writing opportunities in other disciplines as catalysts for improved attitudes. The noticeable absence of non-English course influence underscored the importance of support from the entire university community. Based on the positive response to consistent writing assignments, the QEP’s objective to engage students in writing across the curriculum should be well received and quite beneficial.

Clearly, the informal interviews substantiated one of the QEP’s central claims: This QEP is essential to student learning and success because, beginning with the students’ self-perceptions, one of the main reasons they cite for their inability to write on par with their peers, both at SSU and at sister institutions, is a lack of interest. Such an attitude, whether a reaction to an authority figure or cultivated by peer pressure, is prevalent on Savannah State’s campus.
The following are quotes from the interview. They have not been revised.

- “For me, writing is a freeing experience. I’ve always liked to write; I wrote my first story when I was nine.” –Ebony Freeman, junior English major.
- “I would describe [my feelings] as neutral. I wouldn’t say I like it, but I wouldn’t say I don’t like it.” –Taylor Edwards, sophomore Chemistry major
- “I kind of like it, but at the same time I don’t. You turn your paper in and think you did a good job, but you find out you didn’t. You just see all the grammar errors.” –Courtney Johnson, junior Social Work major
- “Writing is not very difficult for me. I enjoy writing, whether it’s research papers or leisure writing; I enjoy doing both.” –Carlos Wilson, senior Business Management major
- “I honestly do not care for writing. I prefer communicating verbally, rather than writing down.” –Gabriel Horton, sophomore Marketing major
- “I actually feel it is a very unique skill to have. Due to one being able to write has to have the talent for a reader to be able to understand what the writer is trying to get across.” –Rahja’ Sharp, junior Biology major

Savannah State University Student Writing Attitude Survey

During December 2010, freshman students were invited to participate in a survey that assessed the frequency with which participants engaged in writing activities. Several interesting trends emerged. First, a large percentage of respondents indicated that writing assists them in thinking about and understanding a topic. This underscores the SSU QEP’s secondary motive to increase writing-to-learn opportunities. Another important trend that emerged is that respondents recognize the value of writing in their future careers (65%) as well as for the success in their academic courses (86%); however, 43% of respondents either agreed or were neutral about formal writing being a waste of their time, especially with modern communication such as text messaging.

With technology, 58% of respondents agreed that when sending an email to a friend, the correspondence is rarely more than twelve words, thus indicating that many respondents write but their writing often lacks length and depth. Still, 44% of respondents agreed that writing has become a lost art, and 89% agreed that writing is a valuable skill to cultivate.

51 To view the survey questions, see Appendix XIV.
From the survey, it becomes clear students fully understand the importance of writing, but many respondents indicated that they do not write extensively, especially when it comes to formal writing. Respondents reported anxiety about writing. When asked if they became anxious when someone tells them they have to write something, 33% of respondents agreed. More telling is the data from the survey that asserts that 66% of respondents reported that they experience “writer’s block” when trying to compose something serious.

SSU students seem to have a clear understanding of the importance of writing but, like other students nationally, they either experience anxiety regarding writing or they simply do not engage in enough academic or formal writing to feel comfortable with their own skills.
APPENDIX VI

INFLUENCE OF LITERARY TYPES
Notes regarding the “Influence of ‘Literary Focus’ on Demographic Types” of SSU Students:

- The graphs displayed illustrate the relationship between different types of SSU students’ experience of “literary focus” and their probability of remaining enrolled at SSU beyond two years. These graphs are excerpted from a major study of student attrition at SSU based on ten years’ of collected student data.

- These graphs are “probability graphs” where the horizontal axis depicts a continuum running from a minimum to a maximum “literary focus” experience while the vertical axis depicts the probability of each of four possible enrollment outcomes: staying continuously enrolled (“Stayer”), stopping out temporarily (“Stop-Out”), transferring out (“Transfer”), and dropping out of higher education altogether (“Drop-Out”).

- “Literary Focus” is a statistical construct (an abstract generalization) that succinctly combines five specific variables: the number of written papers/year, the number of books assigned/year, the hours per week of class preparation, the number of problem sets requiring more than one hour/week, and the number of non-assigned books read/year.

- A separate graphic is displayed to illustrate the relationship individual groups of students, controlling for all other variables in the model: for males and females, Blacks and non-Blacks; adults and minors; for residential and commuter students, and for full-time and part-time students.

- It is clear from the graphs that there is no relationship whatsoever between stopping out and the experience of literary focus; the red line is flat in each graph for all types of students. The temporary stop out behavior is obviously related to other influences. Similarly, very little relationship exists between the degree of literary focus experience and the transfer out behavior—notice the near horizontal green line in each graph.

- But it is also clear that both the drop-out and the stayer behaviors are related to the “literary focus.” For each type of student, the greater the experience of literary focus, the greater the probability of staying enrolled—notice how the blue line rises from left to right on each graph. And for each type of student, the greater the experience of literary focus, the less the probability of dropping out of higher education—notice how the yellow line declines from left to right on each graph.

- Ultimately, the take away from this study with respect to SSU’s QEP is that the more students experience being engaged in “literary focus” the more likely they are to remain enrolled and the less likely they are to drop out of higher education. Thus, the empirical evidence among SSU students, perhaps counterintuitive, suggests that arranging for greater student involvement in the literary aspect of their college experience may encourage them to persist with their studies.

- In short, students who invested in their studies are more likely to persist than students who are not interested in their studies—and the general hypothesis is true for all types of SSU students.
APPENDIX VII

COMMUNITY EMPLOYERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SSU GRADUATES’ WRITING CAPABILITIES

In 2009, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) sent out surveys to employers of Savannah State University students. We received 14 completed surveys, representing a 29% response rate. While this response rate is statistically sound, the sample size is significantly small; therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Among other items, employers were asked to express their satisfaction with the general skills of SSU graduates by proving ratings on several attributes of the graduates working in their organizations. The data shows that employers are very satisfied with our graduates. Combining ratings for “Good” and “Excellent” provide evidence that employers are impressed with all components of our graduates’ general skills.

In particular, skills in technology, listening and verbal communication, knowledge in field of study, and diversity were rated highest among the general skills. Written communication skills fell behind those of listening and verbal. In other words, only 21% of the employers rated the written communication skills of SSU graduates as “Excellent,” 50% rated it “Good,” 7% provided “Fair” and “Poor” respectively, while 14% were not sure. These results also show that there is room for improvement in critical thinking, leadership, and problem solving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Skills</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Good + Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to others</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving ability</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge in field of study</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating diversity</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology application</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an open-ended question, we asked employers: “What improvements would you like to see in SSU employees?” Pertinent comments from the survey regarding writing and communication:

- “Social Work students still have below average written skills.”
- “More emphasis on communication skills [needed].”
APPENDIX VIII

SAMPLE LOW-STAKES WRITING ASSIGNMENTS\(^{52}\)

Low-Stakes Writing\(^{53}\)

How do I know what I think until I see what I say?
—E.M. Forster

Low stakes writing - informal, exploratory writing that is often ungraded can help instructors learn the classroom culture and can help students learn course ideas. Appropriate for ALL classes - no matter what the size. Examples:

**Quick Writes**

1 to 5-minute writes used at the beginning, during, and end of class to stimulate discussion, pose questions, discover answers, check understanding, and provide continuity

- Note a question or observation about a day’s lecture, reading, discussion, film, or activity.
- Summarize the key idea of a lecture, reading, discussion, film, or activity.
- Respond to a prompt (quotation, question, problem, scenario, data, exercise) provided by the instructor.
- Define a key term or concept
- Note the most significant/disturbing/surprising/interesting idea heard. Explain why.
- List lies or untruths about a particular topic.
- Note implications or consequences of an idea.
- Practice QHQ: Write down a **Question** – Write to **Hypothesize** an answer - Pose a new **Question**

**Framed Writes**

Guided writes based on leading frames and used to move thinking in a specific direction

- Given a title or beginning sentence, finish writing the paragraph or page.
- Given a concluding sentence, write the lead-in.
- Given a position statement, write the accompanying dialogue.
- Given an answer, write an appropriate question.
- Given a quotation, write a possible source.

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\(^{52}\) Both assignments come from the Western Washington University’s Writing Instruction Support Program, and can be accessed at: [http://www.wwu.edu/wis/Documents/Low%20stakes%20writing.doc](http://www.wwu.edu/wis/Documents/Low%20stakes%20writing.doc).

\(^{53}\) Designing Writing Assignments with Assessment in Mind,” a workshop with John Bean, May 1999.
Correspondence
*Letters or memos exchanged between class members/instructor/members outside classroom and used to supplement or reflect on class activities*
- Write a reflective cover memo/letter to instructor/classmates explaining the writing objective/process for a particular piece of writing and posing questions for their response.
- Write electronically to instructor/classmates as part of a class listserv
- Participate on an outside e-mail listserv pertinent to course content.
- Write a letter to someone outside the class in connection with a course project.

Journals/Notebooks
*Loosely connected entries written throughout the term in response to course ideas and used to extend understanding*
- Write weekly journal/log/chronicle entries on loose leaf paper; at end of term, re-read and use entries as basis of a brief, formal piece of writing requiring summary/synthesis of weekly entries.
- Keep a double-entry notebook by making first entry on one side of page, noting key ideas from readings, lectures, etc; then at a later time, write a second entry on other side of page, noting questions/comments in response to earlier entry.
- Keep a daybook which includes own writing plus related quotations, articles, notes from others.
- Keep a sketchbook recording both observations and visuals to illustrate ideas.
- Keep a triple-entry lab book: In one column, record “What I observed”; in another column, record “What questions/comments I have about what I observed,” and in the third column, record “What observations mean?”

Exploratory Drafts
*Quick versions of what will become fully developed pieces, used to record initial thoughts and preliminary thinking*
- Do a 15-minute instant draft with the goal of reaching a minimum page length or word count.
- Write to an audience different from the one the final piece is intended for.
  - Write in a genre or format different from the form the final piece will take.

Using Writing-To-Learn
*Write when it doesn't count, so it will when it does.*
—C. Werder

- **Write with students, when possible.**
  Doing the exploratory writing along with students keeps the instructor informed about the tasks assigned, opens up the instructor to discovering new ideas, and sends the message that this writing is worth doing. Writing in the company of students also
demystifies it and models writing as a challenging, ongoing process of meaning-making.

- **Create incentives for doing informal writing other than grades.**
  Integrate exploratory writing tasks into the normal routine and ongoing projects of a class, so that the writing serves to further discussion and understanding, rather than as something separate and unrelated. For example, using a question from a previous quick write on an essay exam conveys the value of the thinking done in the exploratory piece.

- **Explain the purpose of low stakes writing to students before assigning it.**
  Anticipate the fact that some students will see informal writing as busy work by telling them that the purpose of this kind of writing is to *think* on paper, rather than to display their already carefully thought-out ideas. Advise that you will not be paying attention to organization and editing, but rather to the quality and depth of their thinking. Also, emphasize that the informal writing will give you information about which ideas to review/extend, that it’s for your benefit, too.

- **Explain the writing task in terms of time or length requirements.**
  Some instructors say, “Write for 2-3 minutes,” while others say, “Write one full, single-spaced page of 12-point font.” Even though the purpose of this kind of writing is the informal exploration of ideas, the assignment still needs to be specific and clearly outlined.

- **For extended kinds of exploratory writing, such as journals or notebooks, provide models.**
  Giving students a range of models of other students’ informal writing, including effective and less effective samples, demonstrates what you are looking for in a way that simple instructions alone cannot.

- **Make the low stakes writing “count” for evaluation purposes.**
  Since the emphasis of writing to learn is on practicing thinking, instructors should avoid grading it on a regular basis. However, it should have some value in the overall grading scheme. Some instructors assign it a percentage of the overall course grade and then score selected pieces with either a check/plus/minus scale or a 5-point scale. Others require the exploratory writing as part of a larger, graded project so that it counts, but does not receive a separate grade.

- **Keep the promise implicit in low stakes writing, that is - writing to learn.**
  Treat exploratory writing as thinking-on-paper by not responding to it as if it were formal, revised writing. Students will learn to take chances in their exploratory writing only IF we resist judgment and respond to it as thinking in progress. One effective way of honoring the purpose of exploratory writing is to refuse to read it all, and instead, to sample it, and then to respond to it orally by commenting on common patterns that you noted in the class. Or write quickie, non-judgmental responses that pose questions, note other sources, and comment on interesting ideas. Students don’t need to have everything they write read, commented on thoroughly, and graded. They DO need to write to learn.
APPENDIX IX

PEER WRITING TUTORING SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 3800
Peer Writing Tutoring: Writing Center Theory and Practice

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify and incorporate writing center and composition theory into tutoring practice.
- undertake academic research.
- write an essay in MLA style with adequate and appropriate content.
- identify writing center theories and how they apply to students’ own writing.
- understand their roles and responsibilities as writing center consultants/tutors.

Goals
In this course, students will:

1. Examine the theoretical and practical components of writing center work.
2. Interrogate the theories of writing, education, and administration that shape writing center theory and consequently writing center practice.
3. Examine all facets of writing center consultations and administration, including but not limited to collaborative learning, approaches to consultation, consultant roles, the role of grammar instruction in the writing center, consulting strategies for ESL students and other diverse populations, the use of computers in the writing center, consultant training and evaluation, and research and scholarship in/ about the writing center.

Objectives

1. To help students think about and appreciate the development of writing center theories and practices over the past 30+ years.
2. To investigate the role of writing, education, and collaborative theories and research on writing center practice.
3. To investigate the role of writing center practices on writing theory and research.
4. To identify and interrogate the relationship between writing centers, writing programs, and writing across the curriculum or in the disciplines programs.
5. To identify current trends in writing centers and writing center research.
6. To help students design and conduct independent writing center research.
7. To develop theoretically-, as well as pedagogically-, informed writing center consultants.

Course Description
This course is designed to allow students who have successfully completed ENGL 3800 further opportunity to apply the theoretical and practical components of writing center
work. In particular, this course will deepen students' understanding of all facets of writing center consultation and administration by requiring at least 100 hours of peer tutoring in the ReWrite Connection. Students will have additional hands-on learning opportunities which may include designing tutoring or instructional materials, leading workshops and seminars, assisting with design and tutoring in the online learning environment and/or further research and learning about writing center administration. Returning practicum students may also be asked to serve as mentors for new tutors and ENGL 3800 students.

**Required Texts**

**Course Expectations:**
1. All students are expected to complete daily reading and writing assignments before class in order to participate in discussion and in-class exercises.
2. Students are encouraged to confer with the instructor at least twice during each semester, preferably once near the beginning of the semester and once after mid-semester. These conferences are intended to provide students with additional insight into their progress in reading and writing.
3. Students are required to write at least 35 pages of text. Essays may be of varying length, although out-of-class essays should generally be longer than in-class essays, and should follow the form specified by individual instructors. All essays written out of class should illustrate that students have completed each of the steps in the writing process (planning, drafting, and revising).
4. True revision—a re-thinking of the essay’s structure, content, purpose, and expression as opposed to correcting surface errors such as spelling and punctuation—leads to improvement in writing skills. With this in mind, students are encouraged to revise each of their essays and to share these revisions with their peers and their instructor. Instructors will determine how revisions affect students’ grades. Students are encouraged to read their essays aloud before submitting them. This practice will help students become more attuned to the sound of Standard English.
5. In addition to contributing to class discussions, students are required to make at least one oral presentation during the course, likely in conjunction with an essay assignment. These presentations may be individual reports on research or a collaborative project and may involve using PowerPoint or other presentation software.
6. Students are expected to show up for all scheduled tutoring sessions once he/ she is cleared to tutor. If a student does not seem ready to tutor on his/ her own, the instructor and assistant instructors reserve the right to continue tutoring with the student.
7. The final exam essay will count as 10% of the final grade in this class.

**Grades are determined by:**
Writing Assistance Journal (15%)
Teaching in the Round (10%)
Conference Paper or Journal Article (25%)
WC Session and Reflection as a Writer (20%—10% each)
Weekly Reading Responses (20%)
Class Participation (10%)
APPENDIX X

FRESHMAN YEAR EXPERIENCE TEXTBOOK INSERT—“THE WRITE ATTITUDE!”

The written word is a powerful tool, and SSU prepares you to have command of written communication to compete in today’s world. Regardless of whether you are majoring in Music or Political Science or Engineering Technology — you must write well to succeed in your college career, your chosen profession and, perhaps most importantly, in life. Sometimes a well-written letter can secure you an important job interview or provide a persuasive argument in a legal matter.

The act of writing makes you organize your thoughts in a cohesive, compelling way. Exercising your writing “muscle” on a consistent basis strengthens your critical thinking skills, reinforces your knowledge of a topic, and allows you to express your unique viewpoint on a topic.

But what if you don’t like to write? It’s probably because you think you’re not a good writer, or you’ve had a negative experience with a writing assignment. If you don’t have confidence in your writing skills, you probably don’t like to write and consequently you avoid any opportunities to write. But at Savannah State University, we are creating a campus culture that cultivates a positive attitude towards the practice of writing, which will, in turn, help you become a better writer. The Write Attitude! is the name of the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a campus-wide initiative to enhance student learning by improving attitudes about writing.

So how do you learn to enjoy writing? You’ll cultivate The Write Attitude! as you write about subjects you are passionate about, or receive helpful feedback that tells when you are on the right track and where you need assistance. You will have plenty of support along the way from the “Writing Fellows” program and the ReWrite Connection (the campus writing center). As you build confidence in your writing skills, you are more likely to embrace the opportunity to express yourself in writing. And the more your writing opportunities are reinforced with positive interactions with faculty, staff and other students, the more likely you will improve your attitude about writing.

The English 1101 and 1102 composition courses reinforce basic writing skills in your first year. But that is just the beginning. You will build on those skills as you move into other courses, preparing you to write within your major discipline. During your academic career, instructors will certainly require you to submit papers and essays within your classes, where you will be graded for content and grammar (“high-stakes” writing). But you also may be asked to summarize a textbook chapter, or describe how you solved a math problem, not for a grade, but for the exercise of writing to learn (“low-stakes” writing). Faculty and staff will expect you to exercise your writing skills at every turn. For example, you may be asked to submit an appeal to Student Services in writing, and you’ll be expected to compose your letter in a thoughtful, professional manner. Texting jargon (e.g. LOL or L8tr) is not acceptable when communicating in writing with faculty or staff, and certainly not when submitting any assignment to an instructor. Get the “Write Attitude” and learn to write effectively, and you will be prepared to communicate in the real world.
APPENDIX XI

SSU WRITING INVENTORIES

Results of Curriculum Writing Inventories (2010)

This data resulted from a survey completed by faculty/chairs in each discipline. The results represent the number of courses in the entire college offering this particular type of writing opportunity per semester.

It should also be noted that some of the data can be perceived as inflated. Some of the perceived inflation may be attributable to faculty misunderstanding the definitions of these types of writing. For example, a colleague in Critical Thinking reported utilizing lab reports, which is unusual for that course's curriculum. Also, some colleagues in Math reported engaging students in eight drafts of essays over a semester, a number larger than even Composition courses reported. Such perceptions indicate that when we distribute these inventories in the future, a glossary defining these types of writing will be necessary.
APPENDIX XII

THE STALLED EVOLUTION OF WRITING INITIATIVES AT SSU

In Spring of 2002, the university launched a Reading and Writing across the Curriculum initiative. A series of workshops on Reading and Writing across the Curriculum (RWAC) were planned. With financial support from the Distinguished Professor fund of Dr. Matt Gilligan, the university hired a consultant, Dr. Angela Williams of the Citadel, to come for three days of workshops and meetings with administrators. The workshops were designed to provide both an overview of the goals of a program in RWAC and specific suggestions on types of writing that have proven useful in different disciplines. A total of over 40 faculty members attended the sessions, with all three colleges and Learning Support well represented. The meetings with administrators were intended to win their support for such a program by showing them the advantages.

Subsequently, the university formed a committee to attempt to establish a program with a WAC director, regular faculty development activities, and writing-enhanced classes in each academic program. Writing-enhanced courses were defined as follows:

According to Savannah State’s Writing Across the Curriculum Committee, Writing Enhanced course is one in which the instructor assigns at least 25 pages of writing, fifteen of which are revised under the instructor's direction. Not all of this writing necessarily receives a grade. For example, some of this writing could be journal entries, in-class responses to questions, and position statements. Nevertheless, any graded writing is to be spaced over the semester and assigned early enough in the term for the instructor to comment on drafts and for the students to revise their texts. Additionally, for in-class graded writing such as essay examinations, teachers should provide and discuss models of effectively written responses. Those who teach Writing Enhanced courses will have participated in WAC workshops and submitted WE course proposals, which will be reviewed by the WAC Committee.

Unfortunately, the committee lost its motivation when the grant funding came to an end.

Then, in March 2008, Dr. Gwendolyn Hale took on the initiative to reinvigorate the Writing Across the Curriculum/ Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID) initiative at Savannah State University. Representatives were invited from all disciplines and colleges for an initial meeting in which the virtues and benefits of writing in a variety of courses were espoused. The committee also took on the task of creating The Savannah State University Writing in the Disciplines Guide. However, in spite of everyone’s
commitment to and admittance of the importance of writing, submissions from each
discipline were still sparse. Nevertheless, the submissions that were received
demonstrated an investment in writing by some faculty.

After much consideration regarding the starts and stops of the WAC/WID
initiative at SSU and taking into consideration the importance of writing for the students,
faculty, and staff at the university, the QEP Task Force agreed that the missing
ingredient in these previous initiatives was ownership and excitement by faculty, staff,
and students. With that, the current QEP committee has taken on the onus of continuing
this Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines initiative by presenting it in a
way that sparks excitement and interest by developing more positive attitudes.

To the committee’s knowledge and based on the university’s institutional
memory, there has never been a Writing across the Disciplines initiative that deals
specifically with attitudes regarding writing. The QEP Task Force believes this is where
profound changes will be forged on campus. By addressing the attitudes of students,
faculty, and staff, the QEP intends to foster a nurturing environment where mistakes are
made as they provide opportunities for knowledge and growth for the writer. Further, the
QEP intends to cultivate a culture of writing in which writing is not a task completed
alongside the actual learning in a discipline; rather, the writing works in tandem and
reinforces the learning in a discipline.
## APPENDIX XIII
### SSU UNIVERSITY-WIDE WRITING RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENTS</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>No Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>❑ The topic is appropriate for the assignment.</td>
<td>❑ Topic is not appropriate for the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ The paper, as a whole, has a clear sense of purpose.</td>
<td>❑ Individual paragraphs and/or paper, as a whole, lack a clear sense of purpose. It may lack a thesis, controlling idea, or introduction and conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Evidence or information presented in the paper is relevant, accurate, necessary, and complete.</td>
<td>❑ Substantial parts of the writing may be irrelevant, inaccurate, or only weakly connected to the purpose. There may be insufficient evidence or information, or little effort to limit information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content overall:</td>
<td>Pass: ❑</td>
<td>No Pass: ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning</strong></td>
<td>❑ The claims, ideas, and purpose are significant.</td>
<td>❑ The claims and ideas in the paper may be self-evident, simplistic, or underdeveloped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Claims and ideas are supported by appropriate evidence and sources.</td>
<td>❑ Claims and ideas are not supported by evidence or only by weak evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Assumptions are recognized and made explicit.</td>
<td>❑ The analysis may rest on unstated or unexamined assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Analysis and interpretation show some combination of the following:</td>
<td>❑ Analysis and interpretation are underdeveloped, vague, or overly general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>depth of thinking, logical reasoning, complex reasoning, accurate conclusions, and/or informed recommendations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning overall:</td>
<td>Pass: ❑</td>
<td>No Pass: ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>❑ Overall organization fits the paper’s purpose.</td>
<td>❑ The paper may seem haphazard and may be difficult to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ The paper uses appropriate headings, transitions, and other signposts to guide the reader.</td>
<td>❑ Paper lacks adequate signposting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ The paper’s parts are connected to each other and to the overall purpose.</td>
<td>❑ The progression of thought is unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Visual elements, if used, are integrated with verbal elements.</td>
<td>❑ Purpose of visual elements is unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization overall:</td>
<td>Pass: ❑</td>
<td>No Pass: ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhetoric of the Discipline (optional for Gen. Ed.)</strong></td>
<td>❑ Demonstrates knowledge of the subject.</td>
<td>❑ Knowledge of the subject flawed or limited or it is not possible to determine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Use of specialized concepts demonstrates understanding.</td>
<td>❑ Use of specialized concepts inappropriate or inadequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ The paper’s genre, format, language, and tone are appropriate to the discipline.</td>
<td>❑ Shows little or no awareness of genre, format, language, and tone used in the discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ The paper shows evidence of disciplinary ways of thinking and awareness of audience.</td>
<td>❑ Little evidence of disciplinary ways of thinking and/or awareness of audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric of the Discipline overall:</td>
<td>Pass: ❑</td>
<td>No Pass: ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions and Presentation</strong></td>
<td>❑ The text shows evidence of crafting, editing, and proofreading. Errors may be present, but they do not impede meaning.</td>
<td>❑ Frequent errors and/or insufficient variety and complexity of sentences. Errors may impede meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Information is cited accurately and completely.</td>
<td>❑ Citation is incomplete or there are serious flaws in documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❑ Format of paper, including any visuals or diagrams, is effective.</td>
<td>❑ Format is inappropriate and/or visuals and diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions and Presentation overall:</td>
<td>Pass: ❑</td>
<td>No Pass: ❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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54 Central Washington University university-wide writing rubric. [http://www.cwu.edu/~gen_ed/docs/WritingRubric.docx](http://www.cwu.edu/~gen_ed/docs/WritingRubric.docx)
APPENDIX XIV

SSU WRITING ATTITUINAL SURVEY

Dear Tiger Family Member:

SSU needs your help in gathering some information for its QEP. Please assist us by quickly answering the following survey items, circling the number that best reflects your own attitude about the statement (+2 is Strongly Agree/Very Likely and -2 is Strongly Disagree/Very Unlikely). Your views are very important to our project. Thank you in advance for your help.

NOTE: For purposes of this survey, the term “writing” DOES NOT include texting, tweeting, or social networking.

PART 1: Attitudes

1. I really enjoy writing.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

2. When writing, I like to ponder word choices seeking the right word to express my meaning.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

3. Writing is useful for me to learn what I think about a topic.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

4. Formal writing is a waste of time now with modern communication (text messaging, etc.).
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

5. In writing, correct grammar (verb forms, plurals, possessives, etc.) is important to convey exact meaning.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

6. I often write to clarify my thoughts even when writing is not part of a formal learning experience.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

7. I often send correspondence longer than one paragraph (paper or electronic) to friends and family.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

8. I often write for myself to keep a record of my thoughts even if not part of a formal learning experience.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

9. When I write, I dash off quick notes with the basic idea and pay little attention to style or nuance.
   [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

10. When I read something important, I like to write down my thoughts to keep track of my ideas.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

11. In trying to write something serious, more often than not I experience “writer’s block” and have trouble starting.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

12. Writing has become a lost art.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

13. Writing is a valuable skill to cultivate.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

14. To be really clear, it’s better to talk to people rather than write to them.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

15. I am provided with many writing opportunities (formal and informal) on a daily basis.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

16. I like to keep a diary or journal about my activities.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

17. It’s fun to write using paper and a fine pen.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

18. Writing summaries of things does not help me learn about them.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

19. When I write, I like to hunt for just the right word to express my thought exactly.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

20. I enjoy sending letters (paper or electronic) to family and friends.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

21. Writing is more fun with a computer than by handwriting.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

22. If I send an e-mail to a friend, it’s usually a quick casual note—no more than a dozen words.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

23. Within the next two weeks, I’m very likely to write down some thoughts on paper.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

24. I’ve started writing a book which I expect to publish within the next three years.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

25. Writing is a bother and I’d much rather talk through my ideas.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]

26. I’m impatient with anyone who corrects my writing.
    [Strongly Agree] +2  0  -1  -2  [Strongly Disagree]
27. I keep up a regular correspondence with someone important to me.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

28. Writing is very important in my life.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

29. I think of writing as a fine craft that I constantly try to improve.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

30. I’ve noticed that writing helps me think more clearly.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

31. Within the next two years, I expect to publish an article or story.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

32. It would be fun to be a famous writer.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

33. There is far too much already written; I hate to add to the mess.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

34. When someone tells me I have to write something, I become very anxious.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

35. My thoughts aren’t worth writing down.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

36. I’d rather write than talk because writing makes me think more clearly.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

37. I enjoy getting feedback and ideas from others about how to improve my writing.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

38. Writing is really important for my own career plans.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

39. Writing well is really valuable for academic success in classes.
   (Strongly Agree) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Strongly Disagree)

40. In the coming month, how likely are you to write a page or more describing your inner feelings?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

41. In the coming month, how likely are you to write a page or more describing your personal beliefs?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

42. In the coming month, how likely are you to write a page or more describing an idea of your own?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

43. Within the next six months, how likely are you to write a story for fun?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

44. Over the next two weeks, how likely are you to write a letter (paper or electronic) to a friend or family member?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

45. Within the next five years, how likely are you to publish a book?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

46. When studying for a test, how likely are you to write down your own ideas about the subject before the test?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

47. Within the next month, how likely are you to write a poem for fun?
   (Very Likely) +2  +1  0  -1  -2  (Very Unlikely)

Part III: Identity Group

(Note: The survey is anonymous but it is important for analytical purposes to establish the group identity of respondents. Therefore, you are asked to identify in the following items the groups to which you belong.)

48. What is your primary relationship to SSU?
   a. Student  b. Faculty  c. Support Staff  d. Administrator
e. President’s Cabinet  f. Other

49. What is your sex?
   a. Female  b. Male

50. What is your race?
   f. Two or more races

51. Where are you from originally?
   a. Georgia  b. USA (outside Georgia)  c. International (outside USA)

52. With what part of the university are you most closely associated? (or what is the college of your major)?
   a. CLASS  b. COBA  c. COT  d. University College/Center for Academic Success
   e. Central Administration/Services

53. For how many years have you been associated with SSU? (Please enter a number of years) ______

54. For Students only: What is your class level?
   e. Senior  f. Graduate

55. For Faculty only: What is your academic rank?
   a. Adjunct Faculty  b. Instructor  c. Assistant Professor
   d. Associate Professor  e. Professor

56. Are you a published* author at this time? (“Published” commercially by other than your own school, your own church or organization, or yourself or family members.)
   a. No  b. Yes

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Quality Enhancement Plan
APPENDIX XV

DALY-MILLER TEST\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{Remember:} There are no correct answers, only give your honest response to each item.
(5 Strongly Disagree 4 Disagree 3 Uncertain 2 Agree 1 Strongly Agree)

1. I avoid writing.
2. I have no fear of my writing's being evaluated.
3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.
5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.
6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.
7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.
8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.
9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
10. I like to write down my ideas.
11. I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing.
12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.
13. I'm nervous about writing.
14. People seem to enjoy what I write.
15. I enjoy writing.
16. I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.
17. Writing is a lot of fun.
18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.
19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.
20. Discussing my writing with others is enjoyable.
21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.
    When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.
22. It's easy for me to write good compositions.
23. I don't think I write as well as most other people.
24. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.
25. I'm not good at writing.
