MAKE AN IMPACT! @ SFA

Incorporating High-Impact Practices to Enhance Student Learning at Stephen F. Austin State University

A Quality Enhancement Plan
prepared for the Commission on Colleges
of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
As a Component of Reaffirmation for:

Stephen F. Austin State University
March 1-3, 2011
Baker Pattillo, President
Richard A. Berry, Provost and Accreditation Liaison

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Table of Contents

B. Direct Support Initiatives
    1. HIP Office
    2. Website
    3. Participation Incentives
    4. Implementation Grants
C. Sustainability Initiatives
    1. Annual Recruitment of FLC Members
    2. Faculty Recognition
    3. Interdepartmental Collaboration Project
D. Operational Support Initiatives
    1. Advisory Council
    2. Marketing Campaign

Make an Impact @ SFA!

Executive Summary

T
he Stephen F. Austin State University Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Make an Impact @ SFA!,* describes an initiative in which students can improve their higher order thinking skills and academic success. The QEP is designed to achieve a sustainable effect on higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) through selected freshman- and junior-level gateway courses. The faculty for the selected courses will be trained to incorporate high-impact practices (HIP), as modeled by Kuh (2008), into the delivery of the content to primarily improve the higher order thinking skills of students. In addition, the high-impact practices used in the course instruction will have a favorable impact on the institutional strategies relating to overall academic success, student persistence, and student engagement.

Focus on Higher Order Thinking
The definition of higher order thinking used to focus this work within the broader field of critical thinking comes from Thomas and Thorne (2008):

> Higher Order Thinking, or HOT for short, takes thinking to higher levels than just restating the facts. HOT requires that we do something with the facts. We must understand them, connect them to each other, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems (p. 1).

Higher order thinking is a key skill for college level student learning. Increasing higher order thinking skills will add value to decision-making for a lifetime. This research as well as related literature on student learning helped sharpen the focus for a QEP at SFA involving high-impact practices.

Make an Impact @ SFA! Focus Statement
The focus of the QEP is to improve students' higher order thinking skills and student success by incorporating high-impact practices into targeted undergraduate curricula.

Although Kuh (2008) writes about six HIP experiences that enhance student engagement and increase student success, three have been chosen here as learning platforms for improving higher order thinking. The three platforms are collaborative assignments and projects; mentored undergraduate research; and career-specific learning. The literature suggests that a minimum of two HIP experiences are necessary to reach a threshold of significant difference in higher order thinking skills and enhanced student success (Tinto, 2008). The intervention will begin early in the freshman year with one HIP experience followed with a second in the junior or senior year.

This initiative for improving students' higher order thinking skills and college success at SFA was separated into two quantifiable goals.

Goal 1: Student Learning – To improve higher order thinking skills by incorporating high-impact practices into targeted undergraduate curricula

Goal 2: Student Success – To improve institutional outcomes related to student academic success, student persistence, and student engagement

SFA Community Involvement

Our QEP is the product of campus-wide planning and community involvement. A variety of constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni, all participated in the selection of the topic. The programming and objectives for this QEP were developed from ideas submitted by members of the SFA community and a review of related best practices in the literature. This broad-based community involvement during the planning phase strengthens the promise that the programs will be tailored to the specific needs of our student population and garner wide participation and support all through the institution.

Institutional Capability

Successful QEP implementation is directly related to SFA's institutional capability to identify an appropriate QEP topic and then demonstrate the capacity to organize and sustain a comprehensive student learning project of this scale. As an institution we are capable of the challenge and embrace the opportunity this QEP offers to improve student success. The Quality Enhancement Plan will offer an opportunity to generate a movement toward developing an "SFA experience" for students, as well as faculty and staff. A cultural shift toward the incorporation of high-impact practices across campus is fully endorsed through the institution's commitment to providing sufficient resources to sustain the various initiatives associated with our QEP. A QEP Advisory Council composed of faculty, students, and staff will be responsible for ensuring that the QEP maintains its focus, directly advising the provost and president with progress reports. Campus-wide coordination of the QEP will be facilitated through a central office staffed with a QEP Director and tasked with oversight and assessment functions related to all phases of QEP programming. Related activities supported by the QEP budget and staff will be maintaining a website, awarding implementation grants, coordinating faculty development, recruiting faculty, and awarding participation incentives.

Assessment Plan

Assessment will consist of course-embedded and global assessments. The course embedded assessments will be conducted during class sessions. The Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT) and ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSPP) will be administered as global assessment instruments. A pilot study will be launched in Spring 2011 in four sections of SFA 101, a freshman success course designed to introduce students to both the academic rigor and co-curricular opportunities that lead to persistence. The QEP Design Team recommended this course because its curriculum offers collaborative exercises into which high-impact practices might be readily incorporated, and because the course enrollment is capped at 25, providing the smaller class sizes in which high-impact practices will be most effective in affecting higher order thinking. The pilot study will facilitate the formulation of a professional development syllabus for faculty and provide experience for the QEP management team with internal and external assessment.

Transforming the SFA Experience

Make an Impact @ SFA! creates many opportunities for students to improve their higher order thinking skills and have more success in their academic experience. Our QEP enables faculty to bring engaging experiences into the classroom and introduce students to the excitement of experiencing high-impact learning practices. As we embark on implementing the comprehensive programming outlined in this plan, we are committed to delivering its significant added value to our students' learning experiences and convinced that it will transform the culture of this institution.

II. Development of the QEP

Selection Timeline Overview

IAO Website
Developed
Spring 2008

Topic
Suggestion
Phase
Fall 2009

QEP Topic
Selection
Committee
Meets
November
2009

QEP
Steering
Committee
Formed
February
2009

Presidential
Picnic
November
2009

Topic
Review and
Ranking
Spring 2010
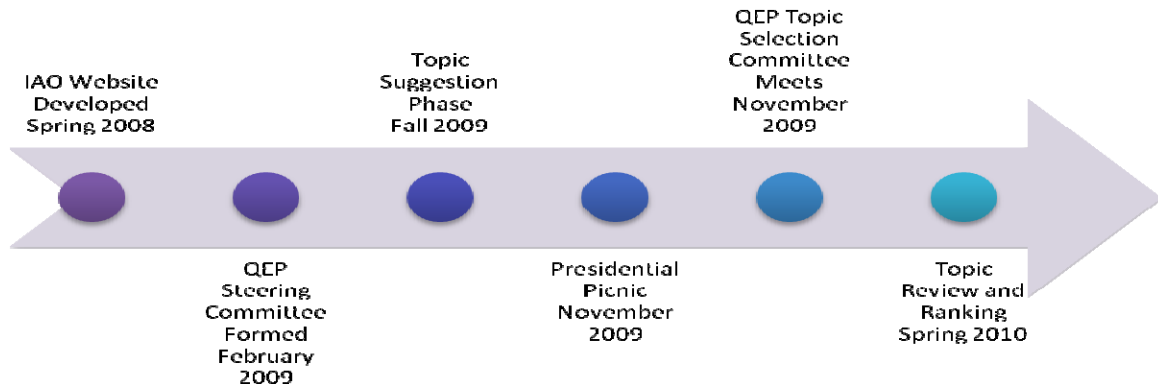
A. Broad-Based Campus Information Phase

In the spring and summer of 2008, Stephen F. Austin began the process of identifying a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that would address an identifiable gap in student learning. The Institutional Accreditation Office (IAO) was created to provide direction to the reaffirmation process. Information regarding the reaffirmation process was disseminated to the leadership of the University through the various councils and committees reporting to the key leaders. Special emphasis was given to how the process would differ from the reaffirmation completed in 2000, specifically in terms of the development of a QEP theme for the campus. To support this effort, IAO initiated a website with information concerning reaffirmation and published a bi-monthly newsletter for the campus community with a focus on the revised SACS/COC process of accreditation. The June 2008 issue of the newsletter included an article addressing how student learning at SFA might be enhanced through the development of a QEP. Additional announcements and efforts to raise awareness about the QEP continued through the fall of 2008.

A Steering Committee composed of faculty, staff, and administration formed in February of 2009 as part of the overall team approach to the research and writing to be completed for the Compliance Report. The QEP Steering Committee formulated a long-range plan to identify a topic that included strategies for providing information on the QEP process, identifying a QEP topic with broad involvement of the campus community, and planning the research and writing phase of the QEP to be completed by the end of the Fall 2010 semester.

Initially, the Steering Committee undertook an informational campaign to make the campus community more aware of the QEP concept and how a topic would be determined. This step involved members of the committee, the provost, and president going before key decision makers, faculty, and students at the university with the goal of creating awareness about the QEP concept and asking those groups to disseminate information throughout their reporting lines. The provost presented the QEP concept and process to the University Regents and received their enthusiastic support for using the process to improve student learning. The Steering Committee then met with all units

of the university following an endorsement by the vice presidents during their regular meetings with department heads and coordinators directly reporting to them. Using that opportunity, those reporting directly to vice presidents were informed about the QEP process and the potential it holds for adding value to SFA programs. Information was distributed in these meetings with directions to go to the QEP website for additional background concerning how the QEP topic would be selected. The line and staff supervisors were asked to make the topic an agenda item for those reporting to them.

Stephen F. Austin State University Reaffirmation Steering Committee	
Richard Berry, Chair	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mary Nelle Brunson	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Elementary Education
Heather Catton	Office of International Programs, International Programs Specialist
Danny Gallant	Vice President for Finance and Administration
Karyn Hall	Director of Institutional Research
Susan Jennings	Professor of General Business
Larry King	Professor of Communication Studies and Coordinator of Institutional Assessment
Roni Lias	Institutional Accreditation Webmaster
Tara Newman	Assistant Professor of Human Sciences
James Standley	Graduate Dean and Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation
Steve Westbrook	Vice President for University Affairs

B. Learning Needs of SFA Students

Throughout the 2009-2010 academic year, the QEP Steering Committee solicited input on choosing and developing the topic for the QEP. Once a topic was identified, the Steering Committee began to seek more information on high-impact practices.   What follows is an outline of the development initiatives utilized by the Steering Committee.

Stephen F. Austin State University QEP Steering Committee	
James Standley, Chair	Graduate Dean and Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation
Monique Cossich	Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Mel Finkenberg	Professor and Chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Health Science
Larry King	Professor of Communication Studies and Coordinator of Institutional Assessment

M. E. McWilliams	Director, Academic Assistance and Resource Center
Tara Newman	Assistant Professor of Human Sciences
Adam Peck	Dean of Student Affairs
Jerry Williams	Professor and Chair of the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis

Results from the ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSPP, a direct measure) drawn from SFA students from 2008 to 2009 show that a significant number of SFA students may benefit from a more "hands-on" approach to be academically successful. The body of literature cited for this proposal suggests that high-impact practices may be able to improve student success in the areas directly measured.

- Math = 36 Percentile
- Humanities =11 Percentile
- Social Sciences = 18 Percentile
- Natural Sciences = 44 Percentile
- Critical Thinking =14 Percentile [1]

[1] *Average scaled score of 108.94 – Of 154 institutions in test only 22 scored lower.*

Internal statistics gathered by the Office of Institutional Research at SFA offer several leading indicators suggesting that, due to their backgrounds, SFA students have a lower probability for success in college-level work when compared to peer institutions:

- 47% (at graduation) First student in family to attempt college
- 42% - SFA six-year graduation rate 2003-2009
- 65% - SFA one-year retention rate 2008-2009

Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, an indirect measure) administered to SFA students since 2008 show areas where student success at SFA might be improved:

- Writing - SFA students on average perceive that they write less than students from peer institutions.
- Active Learning - SFA rates comparably to the top 50% of peer institutions regarding collaborative learning. To reach the top 10%, SFA would need to improve in the following areas by 11.1 percentage points: participation in internships, field experiences, co-op experiences, and clinical experiences
- Student-Faculty Interaction - SFA students report relatively high levels of student-faculty interaction, within top 5%.

Table 1 displays the results of the NSSE question related to the higher order thinking skills addressed by SFA's QEP:

Table 1 Stephen F. Austin State University Student Responses to Selected NSSE Items *In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often*				
	SFA		**SFA Peer Institutions (Public)**	
	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
Integrating ideas or information from various sources	3.08	3.29	3.14	3.34
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	3.05	3.21	3.07	3.24
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	2.83	3.07	2.86	3.06
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods	2.89	3.09	2.94	3.05
Applying theories/concepts to practical problems or in new solutions	2.99	3.24	3.04	3.23

These results indicate that SFA students as a whole did not report being as engaged in these activities as did their peers at other public institutions. Note that while the differences seem small, the ranges of variation in these data were very small. This means that a .001 difference is meaningful.

C. Student Learning Topic Suggestion Phase
In the fall of 2009, the QEP Steering Committee solicited topic suggestions from the campus community, alumni, and the surrounding region. The requests for suggestions emphasized a theme of building on the importance of student learning, as emphasized in the mission statement of SFA, which was approved by the University Regents in "Strategic Plan 2013: Preparing for the Future" (2008). Participants in the topic suggestion process were requested to be mindful of the refined focus on student learning for SFA, as stipulated in the "Strategic Plan," as they responded to the following question: ***What campus-wide theme should SFA implement to enhance the things students know, do, and value when they graduate from SFA?***

On September 30, October 21, and November 11, 2009, an e-mail was sent to all faculty, staff, students, and alumni inviting participation in the process of topic identification. Press releases from the Steering Committee asking for suggestions were distributed to the local media. The first release appeared in the Nacogdoches *Daily Sentinel* on October 13, followed by a second in the campus newspaper, *The Pine Log*, on October 15, 2009. Additionally, appeals were made to students, faculty, and staff at various campus and community public events by members of the Steering Committee and university officers for QEP suggestions.

The final event to encourage topic submissions was held at the University president's home on November 3rd, 2009, when the president hosted a picnic for the campus community. The president and the QEP Steering Committee made a final public appeal for topic suggestions during the event. The Steering Committee and other University officials mingled with the large crowd wearing highly visible badges announcing the call for topics; a banner was displayed, and the president appealed to the crowd to join the topic suggestion phase process. The occasion created a sense of campus enthusiasm for achieving a goal with which the campus community was now much more familiar.

All submissions were submitted electronically to the Institutional Accreditation Office via the "QEP Suggestion Box" on the IAO website throughout the topic suggestion phase. The Committee's solicitations resulted in over 60 substantive submissions that sorted into 50 separate topic suggestions. The topic submission phase closed on November 6, 2009. Topic suggestions were printed and placed in a bound volume in preparation for the next phase of the process.

D. Narrowing the Topic Submissions
The QEP Steering Committee recommended to the provost that a QEP Topic Selection Team be formed with representation from all the constituencies across campus and the community. The purpose of this team would be to review the suggested topics and narrow them to a smaller number from which a final selection could be made. The shorter list would be offered to all campus constituencies and the community to help narrow the choices to be presented to the campus leadership.

The QEP Topic Selection Team was formed through a nomination procedure which allowed all members of the Reaffirmation Steering Committee to submit names of potential candidates. Ultimately, 24 team members were identified, and all agreed to serve. The membership included faculty, staff, students, alumni, and representation from the Nacogdoches community. The Selection Team was provided with the bound volume of topic suggestions along with instructions regarding their task. Their first meeting was called on November 20, 2009. The meeting began with a charge to the team that included recounting events which preceded their direct involvement, especially noting the broad-based campus participation during the entire QEP process. The Selection Team was asked to take whatever time they required, with the expectation that several meetings might be needed to narrow the topics to a shorter list.

Stephen F. Austin State University QEP Topic Selection Team	
Gina Ajero	Administrative Assistant, Department of English
Marsha Bayless	Professor of General Business
John Branch	Assistant Director of Athletics
Ralph Busby	Director of Counseling and Career Services
Mable Cannings	Director of Mable Cannings International, Nacogdoches, Texas
Kim Childs	Interim Dean of Sciences and Mathematics

	and Professor of Mathematics and Statistics
Caleb Ericksen	Student
Dora Fuselier	Controller, SFA
Steven Galatas	Associate Professor of Government
Hollie Gammel-Smith	Director of Orientation, SFA
John Goodall	Associate Dean of Fine Arts and Professor of Music
Mary Harrison	Graduate Student
Jeff Husky	Associate Director of Student Recreation
Tom Judson	Associate Professor of Mathematics and Statistics
Charles Lopez	Director of Disability Services
Melane McCuller	Faculty Support Specialist, Distance Learning
Nina Norman	Student
Bruce Partain	Director, Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce
Michael Preston	Director of Student Affairs
Frank Shockley	Instructor, College of Forestry and Agriculture
Pat Spence	Director of Student Publications
Elizabeth Spradley	Lecturer, Communication Studies
Glenda Walker	Director of the School of Nursing and Professor of Nursing
Ronald Watson	Assistant Director, Physical Plant

As the team members began to focus on their assignment, they were randomly divided into five groups. A member of the QEP Steering Committee joined each of these groups to serve as a resource to the team and provide background when needed. The groups went through the bound volumes of suggestions, discussing which topic would be most appropriate for the university and would sharpen the focus of a Quality Enhancement Plan for SFA.

Each group was asked to report their findings following a lengthy discussion period. The overall group was surprised that the findings of each table were quite similar, though the wording of the themes had slight variations. A moderated discussion of the topics

among the Topic Selection Team followed the reports, and a list of four topics was approved by the group. Those topics were, in no particular order:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Active/Service/Experiential/High-Impact Learning
- Ethical Behavior
- Critical Skills for Living and Working in a Global Community (Society)

The consensus of the Topic Selection Team was that these were their final selections for a shortened list, and they recommended that their selections be taken to the next phase by the QEP Steering Committee, thereby concluding their work.

E. QEP Topic Selection

The QEP selection process then proceeded to the next phase: final topic selection. The Steering Committee designed a plan to survey the preferences of the campus community, alumni, and the regional community for each of the four final topics. The people who suggested each of the four topics identified by the Topic Selection Team were contacted and informed that their topic would go before the SFA community in a final selection phase. These individuals (all faculty or administrators) enthusiastically agreed to write 500-600-word statements that more completely outlined their ideas for the QEP. They were paid a stipend for the research and writing and were informed that their work would be posted for further review by faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the regional community.

The essays were collected, edited, and placed on the QEP website for review and ranking on December 1, 2009. An announcement went to all faculty, staff, students, and alumni on December 4th asking that they review the more complete treatment of the topics and rank them by responding via the Institutional Accreditation Office website. A reminder email was sent on January 22nd. There was an even greater familiarity with the significance of the QEP development process among the campus community by late fall 2009 and early 2010. This familiarity was reflected in the strong response to the topic ranking phase. Over 280 individual rankings were submitted through the Institutional Accreditation website. The QEP Steering Committee was encouraged by the participation and the response to the plan they designed to encourage participation. High-impact practices emerged as the clear topic of choice among those participating in the survey.

F. Development of HIP Initiatives

In October, 2010, a QEP Design Team of 17 members was appointed by the provost with broad representation of faculty, staff, and students. They were tasked with refining the draft plan developed from the literature review for implementation. Although this group contained a mix of academic experiences, team members' prior service with other campus decision making groups gave them an understanding of SFA governance structures as well as institutional processes and resources. All of these areas would be invaluable for operationalizing this campus-wide proposal to improve student learning.

The Design Team met weekly to discuss both the educational theory associated with the project as well as the practical matters that would be a necessity for implementation. Subcommittees on assessment, marketing, and professional development were formed and reported weekly with their recommendations. The Design Team served in an advisory role to the QEP Steering Committee as they reviewed and revised the drafted

plan. While planning and developing the QEP, the Design Team identified the personnel, facilities, equipment, and financial resources necessary for the successful implementation of *Make an Impact @ SFA!*

Specific high-impact initiatives that came forward from their discussions are expanded upon throughout this document. In summary, the Design Team:

- Developed an agenda for the two QEP Focus Forums with faculty, staff, and students
- Proposed incentives for faculty participation in the QEP learning communities
- Crafted an assessment plan for the measurement of higher order thinking skills
- Detailed a marketing plan for the implementation phase of *Make an Impact @ SFA!*
- Planned the responsibilities for the QEP project management office
- Reviewed and revised a financial resources plan for the QEP

The Design Team was keenly aware of the comprehensive nature of this QEP and the level of commitment it will require for full implementation. The magnitude of this student learning project will very likely be the beginning of a very positive change to the SFA experience. And as the plan is fully initiated, the Design Team will be the first line of ambassadors, leading the effort to facilitate the infusion of high-impact practices into the student learning experience at SFA.

Stephen F. Austin State University QEP Design Team	
James Standley, Chair	Graduate Dean and Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation
Jackson Brown	Writing and English Program Director, Academic Assistance and Resource Center
Todd Brown	Assistant Professor, Department of Finance
Aranda Cooper	Graduate Student
Amanda Horne	Coordinator of Student Activities
Keith Hubbard	Assistant Professor, Mathematics and Statistics
Larry King	Professor of Communication Studies and Coordinator of Institutional Assessment
M. E. McWilliams	Director, Academic Assistance and Resource Center
Tara Newman	Assistant Professor of Human Sciences
Lee Payne	Assistant Professor of Government
Adam Peck	Dean of Student Affairs
Michael Preston	Director of Student Affairs
Scott Robinson	Director, School of Art

Justin Saunders	Student
Deborah Sellman	Budget Director, SFA
Jay Thornton	Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and Health Science
Juan Carlos Ureña	Assistant Professor of Modern Languages

G. Non-Discrimination

The planning process for *Make an Impact @ SFA!* included consideration for providing equal opportunities in higher education to academically qualified students with disabilities who demonstrate a reasonable expectation of college success. Disabled students attending SFA will be integrated as completely as possible into the courses and activities associated with our QEP. Students with disabilities at Stephen F. Austin will be granted reasonable accommodations and have access to tools and resources that will assist them in managing the day-to-day demands of the high-impact programs focused on improving higher order thinking.

III. Literature Review and Best Practices

Decades of research point to the connection between student engagement and student success, persistence, and graduation. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and associates (2005) cite "voluminous research on college student development showing that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of learning and personal development" in college (p. 8). Astin (1984) proposes that positive effects of student engagement include a deeper sense of commitment to the institution, improved retention, better grades, and higher graduation rates.

At Stephen F. Austin, the goals of persistence, academic achievement, and student engagement are salient to both the University and its students. This review of relevant literature related to the success of high-impact programs is framed in the context of the institutional characteristics of Stephen F. Austin State University and both the institutional and learning outcome goals that guide this project. As each goal is addressed, support establishing the University's ability to meet these goals through high-impact programs is provided.

A. Institutional Context
The characteristics of students who attend Stephen F. Austin State University provide a challenge for both student success and persistence and also raise the stakes for helping students to succeed. According to the Office of Institutional Research, nearly half of the students in the graduating class of 2009 were the first in their immediate families to earn college degrees, and about one-third came from families who were below or near the poverty line.

With regard to college persistence and degree attainment, studies indicate that first-generation students are more likely than their continuing-generation peers (or students who have one or more parent who graduated from college) to leave a four-year institution during their first year and more likely to leave a four-year institution prior to graduation, even if they persist beyond the first year (Attinasi, 1989; Berkner, Billson, & Terry, 1982; Choy, 2000; Horn, 1998; Nunez & Carroll, 1998; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). In the long run only 26 percent of first-generation students who graduated from high school will earn a degree from an institution of higher education within eight years (Choy, 2001). This compares with 68 percent of continuing-generation students who will complete a higher education degree within the same eight years (Choy, 2001).

At Stephen F. Austin State University, first-generation status has been an important variable in attrition. According to the University's *One Year Retention Report* (2009) there is a strong connection between family degree attainment and a student's likelihood of staying enrolled at SFASU. Retention rates for first-year, first-generation students were 5.7 points lower than rates for students who were not first-generation. Improving the retention of first-time, full-time freshmen to 70% by 2012 is an important goal of the University's *Strategic Plan*. If this disparity between the retention of first-generation college students could be addressed, the University would meet this goal with almost no additional growth in the retention of other student groups.

B. SFA Student Profile
The SFA student profile indicates a significantly low performance in higher order thinking skills. Results from both the ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSPP) and the National Survey

of Student Engagement (NSSE) provide performance indicators of our students' abilities to think critically. These results showed our freshmen students at the 36th percentile in math, the 44th percentile in natural sciences, and the 14th percentile in critical thinking, according to the ETSPP. Of the 154 institutions across Texas using the ETSPP test to

measure critical thinking, only 22 of the institutions' students scored lower than those taking the test at Stephen F. Austin. An awareness of the profile of the entering freshmen students was influential among the campus

> **Critical Thinking** =
> Thinking that involves analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the concepts

community in the selection of our QEP topic. Moreover, the university was experiencing a loss of 35% of freshmen students after one year. The campus community noted the need for a teaching platform that would over time radically improve the analytical skills of our students and increase retention. The proposal for high-impact practices offered the most well-founded research on its success in improving the thinking abilities of students. Further, its "hands-on" approach to learning convinced our faculty and staff that high-impact practices at SFA would increase academic success for students in terms of both grades and retention.

Additionally, the University desires to increase its current retention and graduation rates. For example, Stephen F. Austin currently has a six-year graduation rate of 42%. A report produced by the Education Trust demonstrated that institutions with high graduation rates worked hard to connect students to campus, cared about the quality of teaching and learning, and actively sought to improve teaching effectiveness (Carey, 2004). One of the long-range recommendations made in 2005 by an SFA task force examining the undergraduate experience suggested that the University find means to increase faculty engagement with students through active learning strategies.

C. Pedagogy that Supports Higher Order Thinking

Higher order thinking skills include critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking. These skills are activated when individuals encounter unfamiliar problems, uncertainties, and dilemmas. When successfully applied, higher order thinking skills result in explanations, decisions, and behaviors valid within the context of available knowledge. Higher order thinking skills are grounded in lower order skills such as discriminations, simple application and analysis, and cognitive strategies and are linked to prior knowledge of subject matter content. Appropriate teaching strategies and learning environments facilitate the growth of these higher order skills, as do student persistence, self-monitoring, and open-mindedness, and flexible attitudes. (King, Goodson, & Rohani, 2010).

> **Higher Order Thinking** =
> The use of complex judgmental skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving.

In summary, this definition is consistent with current theories related to how higher order thinking skills. Higher order thinking skills are learned and can be refined with adapted teaching strategies. Different theorists and researchers use varying paradigms to describe higher order skills; however, all paradigmatic frameworks are in general agreement concerning the conditions under which these skills are improved.
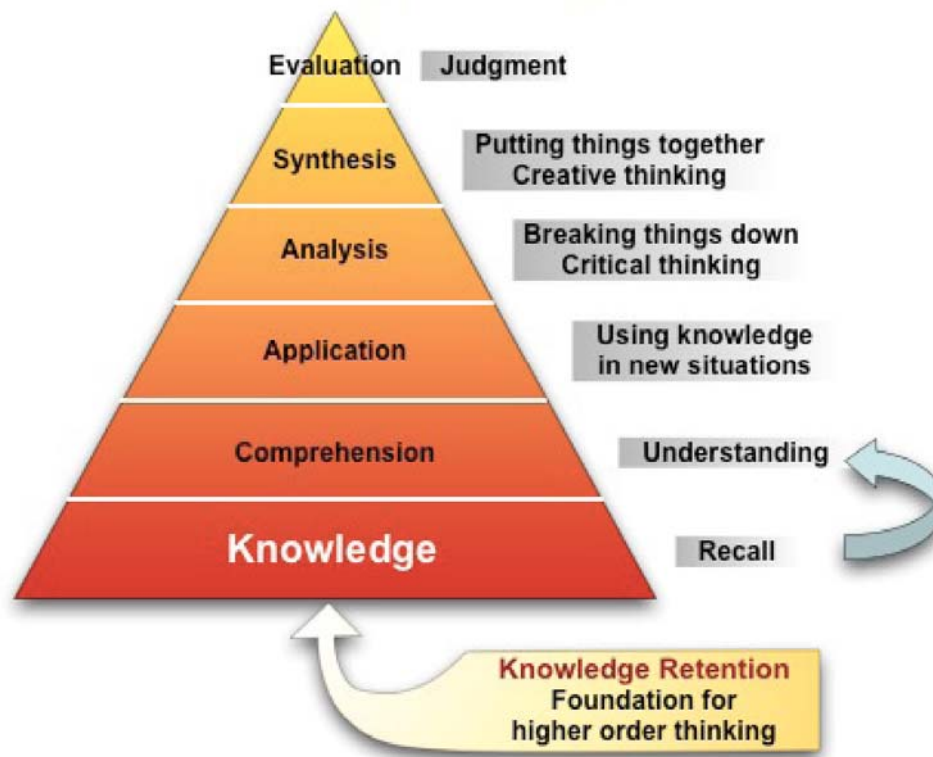
The definition of higher order thinking used to focus this work within the broader field of critical thinking comes from Thomas and Thorne (2008):

> Higher Order Thinking, or HOT for short, takes thinking to higher levels than just restating the facts. HOT requires that we do something with the facts. We must understand them, connect them to each other, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems (p. 1).

This research as well as related literature on student learning helped sharpen the focus for a QEP at SFA involving high-impact practices.

Higher order thinking essentially involves thinking that takes place in the higher levels of the hierarchy of cognitive processing. Bloom's Taxonomy is the most widely accepted hierarchical arrangement of this sort in education, and it can be viewed as a continuum of thinking skills starting with knowledge-level thinking and moving eventually to evaluation-level of thinking. In Bloom's original work (1956) three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) are suggested as encompassing the learning process. The lower levels provide a base for higher levels of learning. Comprehension and application form linkages to higher order skills. The learner uses meaningful information such as abstractions, formulas, and equations in new applications and new situations. Higher order skills (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are then combined with lower level skills, such as applying routine rules to familiar or novel problems. The learner observes relationships, combines new and familiar information creatively, and makes judgments by combining and using all previous levels of learning. It should be noted here that some of the terminology in the Bloom paradigm has been modified since the original work was published.

Bloom's Taxonomy for Thinking

Evaluation — Judgment

Synthesis — Putting things together / Creative thinking

Analysis — Breaking things down / Critical thinking

Application — Using knowledge in new situations

Comprehension — Understanding

Knowledge — Recall

Knowledge Retention / Foundation for higher order thinking

Higher order thinking is taught using teaching methodologies that promote thinking that takes place at the higher levels of the hierarchy offered by Bloom, most notably application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The QEP proposes to promote these higher order thinking skills using the platforms of collaborative assignments and projects, mentored undergraduate research, and field-based learning.

A common example of the application of the major categories in Bloom's Taxonomy is used by Dr. Charles Weiderhold in an exercise involving the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Knowledge** statements ask the student to recite the pledge. Example: "Say the pledge."
- **Comprehension** statements ask the student to explain the meaning of words contained in the pledge. Example: "Explain what indivisible, liberty, and justice mean."
- **Application** statements ask the student to apply understandings. Example: "Create your own pledge to something you believe in."
- **Analysis** statements ask the student to interpret word meanings in relation to context. Example: "Discuss the meaning of 'and to the Republic for which it stands' in terms of its importance to the pledge."
- **Synthesis** statements ask the student to apply concepts in a new setting. Example: "Write a contract between yourself and a friend that includes an allegiance to a symbol for something you both believe in."
- **Evaluation** statements ask the student to judge the relative merits of the content and concepts contained in the subject. Example: "Describe the purpose of the pledge and assess how well it achieves that purpose. Suggest improvement."

(Wiederhold, C., 1997, p. 12-13)

Critical, creative, and constructive thinking are inseparable from higher order thinking. Critical, creative, and constructive thinking simply involves thinking processes that progress upward in the hierarchy. First, one critically analyzes the knowledge, information, or situation. Then one creatively considers possible next-step options, and then, finally, one constructs a new product, decision, direction, or value.

D. Pedagogy that Supports High-Impact Programs
In the 2007 report of the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), George Kuh, Executive Director of NSSE, addressed a question he is often asked, "What one thing can we do to enhance student engagement and increase student success?" He replied, "Make it possible for every student to participate in *at least two high-impact activities* during their undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one later related to their major field" (NSSE, 2007, p. 18).

These programs alone do not guarantee success in meeting desired learning outcomes for high-impact programs. The American Association of Colleges and Universities advanced six attributes of effective high-impact programs in *College Learning for a New Global Century*:

1. They demand that students devote considerable amounts of time and effort to purposeful tasks.

2. The nature of these high-impact activities puts students in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters.
3. Participating in one or more of these activities increases the likelihood that students will experience diversity through contact with people who are different than themselves.
4. Students get frequent feedback about their performance.
5. Participating in these activities provides opportunities for students to see how what they are learning works in different settings, on and off the campus.
6. Doing one or more of these activities in the context of a coherent, academically challenging curriculum that appropriately infuses opportunities for active, collaborative learning increases the odds that students will be prepared to connect (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007, p. 13).

While much of the research on high-impact programs tends to study the efficacy of individual programs types (see Table 2), it is really the preceding characteristics which appear to drive the impact of these programs. For this reason, we have chosen to take an outcomes-based rather than a program-based approach for enhancing quality at SFA and direct our efforts towards creating conditions that can drive the outcomes outlined in the sections that follow. From the six high-impact practices put forth by Kuh (2007) and others, SFA has selected the following three for platforms of student learning in the QEP: collaborative assignments and projects, mentored undergraduate research, and field-based learning.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of the selected high-impact practices selections and the level of student to whom they will be applied.

Figure 1
SFA QEP Platforms for Student Learning of Higher Order Thinking Skills
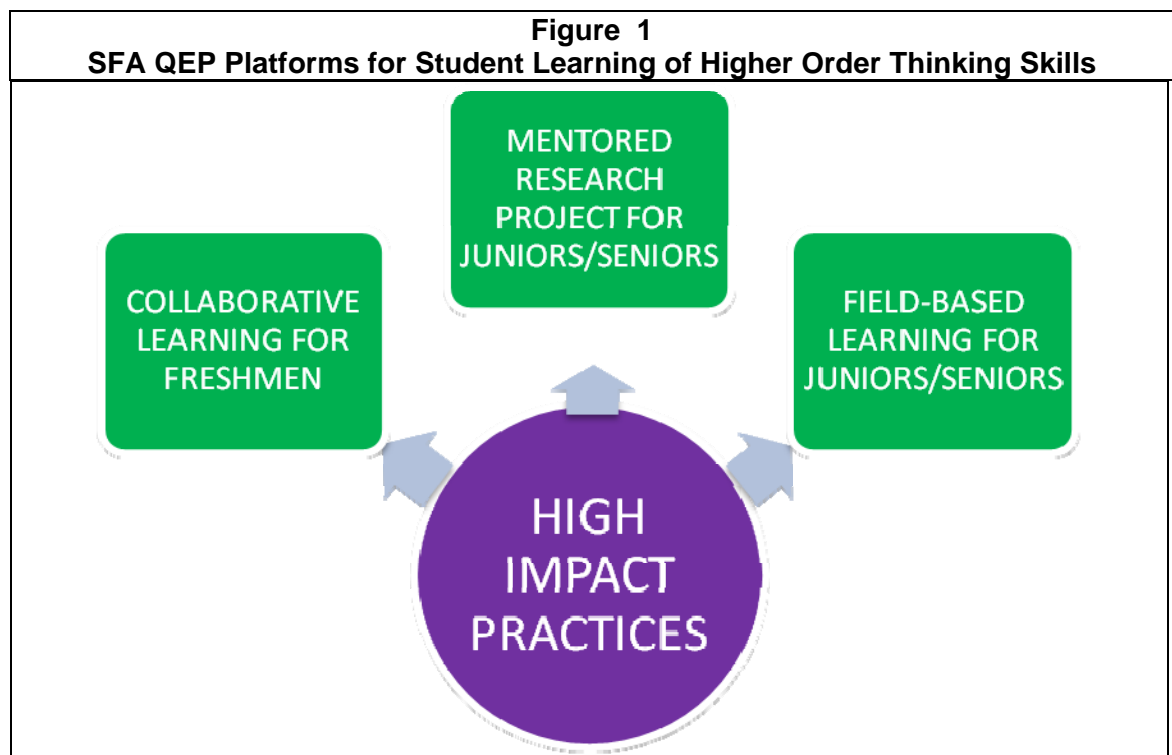
E. Academic Success and Persistence

The concepts of academic success, persistence, and student engagement are closely entwined. A student cannot persist unless his or her academic performance meets at least minimal standards. Additionally, a student may become dissatisfied with a perceived lack of success and withdraw even when that academic performance falls within an acceptable range for the institution. Conversely, a student who demonstrates strong academic performance may leave the institution if he or she is not sufficiently engaged. In fact, academic success may drive students to leave for other institutions to which they aspired but were previously not granted opportunities to attend. This dynamic connection underscores the importance of addressing each outcome with equal vigor and capability.

Academic Success

A number of high-impact practices have been demonstrated to improve academic success. For example, according to the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement, first-year students who performed varyingly well on the ACT all saw an increase in their first-semester GPA if they participated in high-impact programs. In addition, the largest effect was seen among students at lower levels of academic preparation. Among each group, the more high-impact programs in which they participated, the higher their first-semester GPAs were. This effect was even more significant among minority students, especially Latino and African American students. Given the characteristics of SFA students, as noted in section II. B. of this proposal, increasing the capacity of the institution to provide these experiences for our students should be given the highest institutional priority.

Persistence

Besides being critical for student success, retention has other practical consequences for an institution of higher education. Loss of enrollment is listed as second, behind decreasing fund appropriations, as the primary negative fiscal influence on an institution (Penn, 1999). Additionally, improving retention is an effective strategy for increasing overall enrollment without compromising academic quality. Tinto (1993) went so far as to state that institutions should "view retention of students as the only reasonable course of action to ensure their survival" (p. 22). The University's *Strategic Plan* (2008) calls for both "increas[ing] undergraduate and graduate enrollment" and "rais[ing] freshman admission standards to be effective no later than Fall 2012." Improved retention of students may be the only way to accomplish these somewhat conflicting goals.

According to Kuh (2007), "there is growing evidence that—when done well—a handful of selected programs and activities appear to engage participants at levels that boost their performance across a variety of educational activities and desired outcomes such as persistence" (NSSE, 2007, p. 7). Swaner and Brownell (2008) found evidence of increased persistence in their meta-analysis of literature pertaining to most common high-impact practices. (See Table 1.) Providing students opportunities with high-impact practices can improve not only year-to-year retention, but graduation rates as well. At the 2009 meeting of the Texas Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Kuh reported that, according to data collected as part of the NSSE, students who participate in high-impact programs graduate at rates at least two standard deviations above the mean. This impact was even greater in first-generation college students, minority students, and students who came to college less academically prepared than their peers.

Interestingly, these programs may actually only need to increase a students' *expectation* that they will persist in order to be effective. Porter and Sing (2006) conducted a multi-institutional study of forty-five colleges and universities and found that students' intent to persist tended to match their actual behavior. In other words, a student's rate of intended persistence matched his or her actual persistence rate at the schools these researchers studied.

Given the characteristics of SFA students, persistence is a key issue. A student who does not graduate from Stephen F. Austin is unlikely to graduate from another institution. By increasing persistence, we can make a significant impact on our students and also our region.

F. Active and Collaborative Learning or (Student Engagement)

Academic success and persistence are common learning outcomes because, as Swaner and Brownell (2008) suggest, persistence and grade point average are "the most simple outcomes to measure" (p. 20) and represent results that are important to both student and institutional success. The clarity with which these outcomes can be measured make them desirable goals. And yet, they only demonstrate a baseline for student success. Barefoot (2000) has challenged institutions to look beyond these characteristics as a measure of success, emphasizing student learning instead. But measuring student success can be notoriously difficult to track, measure, and operationalize.

The National Survey of Student Engagement, though an indirect measure, provides a way to determine the extent to which students perceive they are collaborating with their peers and engaging with faculty inside and outside of the classroom. The survey also measures how students perceive the support and the challenge of the institution, as well as students' overall engagement with the institution. It allows for comparisons against a large benchmarking group and the ability for individual institutions to track their progress over time as well.

According to Kuh (2008), students who participate in high-impact programs experience significantly improved engagement in terms of the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student/faculty interaction, and a supportive campus environment as measured on the NSSE. Stephen F. Austin has participated in NSSE for nearly eight years. The results of these surveys should provide ample data to track the effects of expanding high-impact practices on campus.

Tinto (2008) addressed the engagement advantages of learning communities, describing three primary benefits which would seem to apply to other high-impact programs as well. These advantages include shared knowledge, shared knowing, and shared responsibility. "Shared knowledge" refers to the ways that learning intersects across the curriculum. This practice allows for this knowledge to be augmented by having students engage one another:

> "By asking students to construct knowledge together, … [educators] involve students both socially and intellectually in ways that promote cognitive development as well as an appreciation for the many ways in which one's own knowing is enhanced when other voices are part of that learning experience." (Tinto, 2008, p. 2)

The concept of "shared knowing" refers to a particular cohort of students gaining this knowledge together as a common intellectual experience.

It is perhaps the aspect of "shared responsibility" that has the greatest impact on the persistence and success of at-risk students. When students "participate in collaborative groups which require students to be mutually dependent on one another…the learning of the group does not advance without each member doing her or his part" (Tinto, 2008, p. 4).

G. Hypotheses
Some of the most significant challenges facing Stephen F. Austin State University at this time include declining resources and raised stakes for student success, both for the student and for the institution. Our students face financial, family and social challenges as well, and, as it has been previously stated in this document, these challenges are often shared between the student and institution. High-impact programs have been shown to increase the engagement of students, increase their persistence to graduation, and raise their grades. These outcomes are found especially among students who belong to traditional "at-risk" groups, such as students of color, students of low socio-economic status, and students who have scored low on standardized tests, such as the ACT and SAT.

A desired learning outcome of our project to promote high-impact practices will be to promote collaborative learning amongst out students. Doing so successfully will require collaboration between a number of key stakeholders:

> Many colleges claim to provide high-quality learning environments for their students. As evidence, schools point to educationally enriching opportunities they make available, such as honors programs, cocurricular leadership development programs, and collaboration with faculty members on a research topic. Too often, however, such experiences are products of serendipity or efforts on the part of students themselves—the first component of engagement. Moreover, for every student who has such an experience, there are others who do not connect in meaningful ways with their teachers, their peers, or take advantage of learning opportunities. As a result, many students leave school prematurely, or put so little effort into their learning that they fall short of benefiting from college to the extent they should. (Kuh et al., 2005, pp. 9-10)

The success of this project will hinge on our ability as an institution to meet the institutional and learning outcome goals specified in this document. As in many things, quality and quantity will both matter. From the student learning perspective, the quality of these programs will be paramount. However, our collective capacity to provide high-impact opportunities for as broad a group of students as possible will determine our ability to meet institutional goals such as persistence. This plan, therefore, is designed to impact the campus culture at SFA both by gradually building interest and ability among faculty and staff to infuse both curricular and cocurricular programs with the attributes that put the "impact" in high-impact programs.

To summarize, these data would suggest that increasing students' higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) through the use of high-impact learning platforms such as collaborative learning, mentored undergraduate research, and field-based learning, could positively impact students' academic success. With that objective in mind, this project has been designed to create learning outcomes that map onto the top three tiers of Bloom's taxonomy (1956). The design set forth will provide information

regarding the level of influence high-impact practices are intended to have on a student's ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate.

This premise is best summarized in the statements of hypothesis relating to the relationship of the dependent (higher order thinking) and independent (high-impact program) variables.

The QEP is designed to investigate the following hypotheses:

HA 1: The availability of increased opportunities for high-impact programs in the classroom increases higher order thinking skills in SFA undergraduate students.

Null Hypothesis #1: Implementing high-impact practices in the classroom does not promote higher order thinking skills in SFA undergraduate students.

HA 2: Participating in high-impact programs in the classroom by SFA undergraduate students increases higher order thinking skills.

Null Hypothesis #2: Participation in high-impact practices by SFA undergraduate students does not promote higher order thinking skills.

IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes
One of the greatest advantages of focusing on high-impact practices is their potential for attaining desirable outcomes for both the student and the institution. A symbiosis exists between these outcomes that virtually ensures student success when the institution is meeting its goals and vice versa.

In its *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, SACS/COC (2005) describes the QEP as "a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning" (p. 21). The purpose of the QEP at Stephen F. Austin State University is to improve higher order thinking skills of students and improve student success.

QEP Focus:
To improve students' higher order thinking skills and student success by incorporating high impact practices into targeted undergraduate curricula

Goal 1: *Student Learning*
To improve higher order thinking skills

Goal 2: *Institutional*
To have a favorable impact on institutional outcomes relating to academic success, student persistence, and student engagement

A. QEP Goal 1: Student Learning - Higher Order Thinking Skills

Students will demonstrate a specific set of learning outcomes at the completion of at least two courses featuring these high-impact practices.

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  Student Learning   │
                        │  To improve higher  │
                        │ order thinking skills│
                        └─────────────────────┘
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Student Learning
To improve higher order thinking skills

Objective 1.0 The Evaluation of Information	Objective 2.0 Creative Thinking (Synthesis)	Objective 3.0 Problem Solving (Analysis)	Objective 4.0 Communication of Contextual Information
Learning Outcomes 1.01 Differentiate factual information from inferences	**Learning Outcomes** 2.01 Identify alternative interpretations for data or observations	**Learning Outcomes** 3.01 Differentiate relevant from irrelevant data	**Learning Outcome** 4.01 Organize ideas for effective communication
1.02 Interpret numerical relationships in graphs	2.02 Identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis	3.02 Apply information to solve problems	
1.03 Understand limitations of correlational data	2.03 Explain how new information can change a problem	3.03 Critique and apply new information	
1.04 Judge evidence and identify inappropriate conclusions		3.04 Solve real-world problems using mathematical skills	

Student Learning Objective #1 The Evaluation of Information (Analysis)

As a result of their engagement in high-impact practices in targeted courses, students will show improvement in their competency to evaluate information based on internal and external assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes - Objective #1

Students enrolled in targeted courses applying high-impact practices will show an average gain of 4% on the MAAP and CAT compared to the 2009-2010 baseline average of 55.2%. (2012 Target – 60.2%), in their ability to

1.01. Differentiate factual information from inferences
1.02. Interpret numerical relationships in graphs
1.03. Understand the limitations of correlational data
1.04. Judge evidence and identify inappropriate conclusions

Student Learning Objective #2 Creative Thinking (Synthesis)

As a result of their engagement in high-impact practices in targeted courses, students will show improvement in their ability to demonstrate creative thinking based on internal and external assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes - Objective #2
Students enrolled in targeted courses applying high-impact practices will show an average gain of 4% on the MAAP and CAT compared to the 2009-2010 baseline average of 55.2%. (2012 Target – 60.2%), in their ability to
2.01. Identify alternative interpretations for data or observations
2.02. Identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis
2.03. Explain how new information can change a problem

Student Learning Objective #3 Problem Solving (Evaluation)
As a result of their engagement in high-impact practices in targeted courses, students will show gains in their skills with problem solving based on internal and external assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes - Objective #3
Students enrolled in targeted courses applying high-impact practices will show an average gain of 4% on the MAAP and CAT compared to the 2009-2010 baseline average of 55.2%. (2012 Target – 60.2%), in their ability to
3.04. Differentiate relevant from irrelevant information
3.05. Apply information to solve problems
3.06. Critique and apply new information
3.07. Solve real-world problems using mathematical skills

Student Learning Objective #4   Communication of Contextual Information
As a result of their engagement in high-impact practices in targeted courses, students will show improvement in their ability to effectively communicate contextual information based on internal and external assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes - Objective #4
Students enrolled in targeted courses applying high-impact practices will show an average gain of 4% on the MAAP and CAT compared to the 2009-2010 baseline average of 55.2%. (2012 Target – 60.2%), in their ability to
4.01. Organize ideas for effective communication

B. QEP Goal 2: Institutional Outcomes – Student Success
In addition, high-impact practices implemented to achieve improvement in students' higher order thinking skills will have a favorable impact on the institutional outcomes relating to academic success, student persistence, and student engagement.   The following three favorable institutional outcomes are expected to result:

Institutional Objective #1 – Academic Success
Students involved in targeted courses using high-impact practices will demonstrate higher levels of academic success than their peers who have not had a similar experience, to be demonstrated by a higher composite GPA.
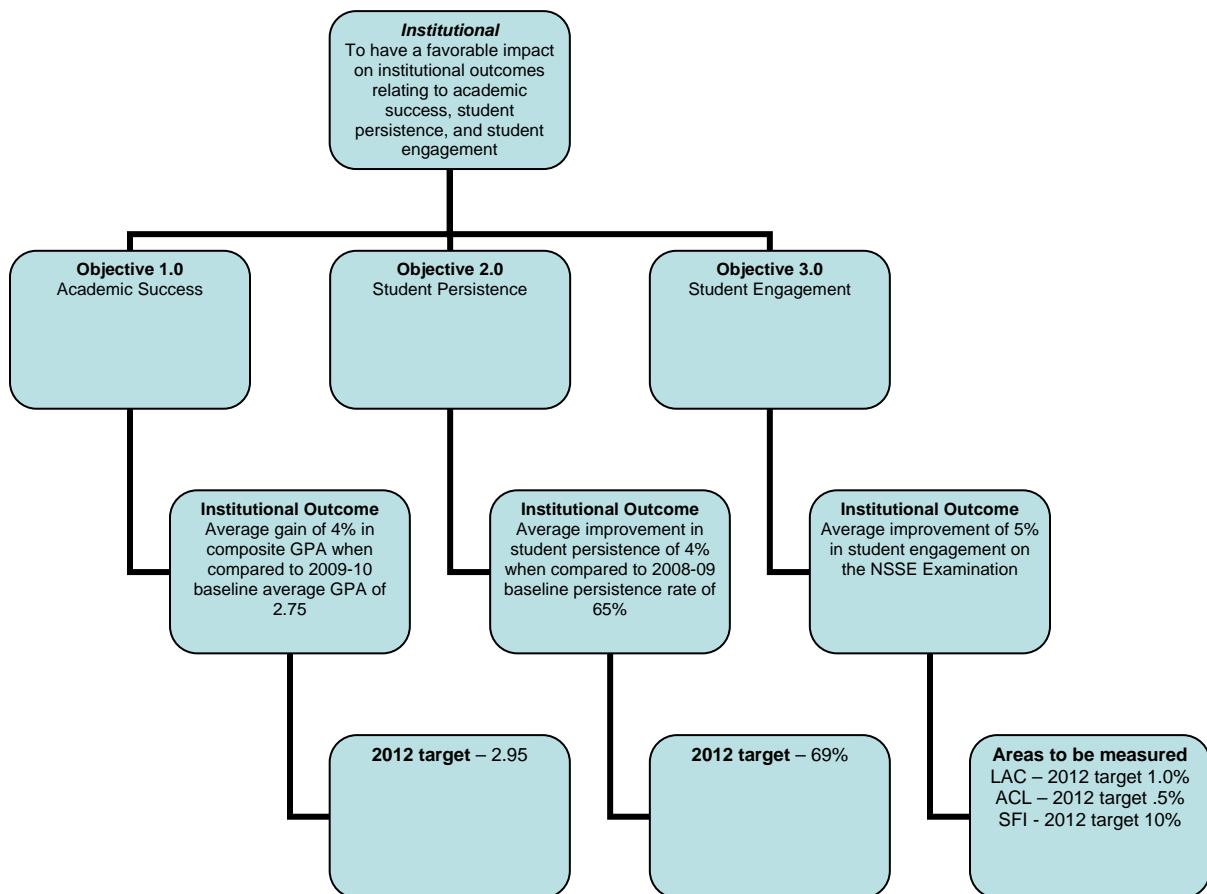
Institutional Outcome #1
Students enrolled in targeted courses applying high-impact practices will show an average gain of 4 % in the composite GPA when compared to the 2009-2010 baseline average GPA of 2.75. (2012 Target – 2.95).

Institutional Objective #2 – Student Persistence
Students involved in targeted courses using high-impact practices will demonstrate higher levels of retention after one year of enrollment compared to a similarly qualified group that has not had a comparable experience.

Institutional Objective #3 – Student Engagement
Students involved in targeted courses using high-impact practices will show gains in areas most often associated with measures of student engagement. The selected areas are 1) level of academic challenge, 2) active and collaborative learning, and 3) student-faculty interaction. These areas are often used to measure meaningful student commitment to routine college activities, such as attending class, submitting required work, and following directions.

Institutional
To have a favorable impact on institutional outcomes relating to academic success, student persistence, and student engagement

Objective 1.0
Academic Success

Objective 2.0
Student Persistence

Objective 3.0
Student Engagement

Institutional Outcome
Average gain of 4% in composite GPA when compared to 2009-10 baseline average GPA of 2.75

Institutional Outcome
Average improvement in student persistence of 4% when compared to 2008-09 baseline persistence rate of 65%

Institutional Outcome
Average improvement of 5% in student engagement on the NSSE Examination

2012 target – 2.95

2012 target – 69%

Areas to be measured
LAC – 2012 target 1.0%
ACL – 2012 target .5%
SFI - 2012 target 10%

C. Connection to the University Strategic Plan
The University's *Strategic Plan 2013: Preparing for the Future* identifies a number of initiatives which can be addressed through an emphasis on high-impact programs. Each initiative and strategy is listed below along with a description of how a QEP based on high-impact programs would help to accomplish them.

	Strategies	Connection to Strategic Plan
INITIATIVE 1: Enhance excellence in teaching and learning, research, scholarship, creative work, and service	• Strategy 5 - Increase the number of opportunities for student research and creative work • Strategy 6 - Expand collaboration between University Affairs and Academic Affairs to create resources and opportunities for increasing learning opportunities	Through an emphasis on increased undergraduate research and by facilitating collaboration between Academic and University Affairs, the university can focus on ensuring that both curricular and cocurricular (extra-curricular) programs function as "high impact" programs. Programs of this kind prepare students with the kinds of reasoning skills necessary for success in the 21st century.
INITIATIVE 3: Increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment	• Strategy 3 - Increase retention of first-time, full-time freshmen for one year to 70 percent by Fall 2012 • Strategy 4 - Organize a comprehensive university first-year experience by September 2010	Data from the National Survey for Student Engagement support the conclusion that high-impact programs tend to increase the likelihood of persistence toward graduation. For this reason, a focus on high-impact programs is a necessary element in the creation of a comprehensive first-year experience.
INITIATIVE 4: Develop a learner-centered environment	• Strategy 3 - Increase use of teaching technologies and strategies and active learning opportunities leading to greater student engagement	As an active learning strategy, high-impact programs are well-supported by longitudinal data suggesting that student engagement is significantly enhanced by these programs.
INITIATIVE 5: Create new learning opportunities through additional interdisciplinary, international, service learning, and civic engagement experiences	• Strategy 2 - Create more engagement opportunities between international students and domestic students to increase global awareness and understanding • Strategy 3 - Enhance reflective components of co-curricular community service and civic engagement projects to increase learning benefits • Strategy 4 - Increase study abroad opportunities and participation by 50 percent by 2011 • Strategy 5 - Increase service learning opportunities in each college	Through a connection to high-impact programs, SFA students will find more engagement opportunities with the growing number of international students enrolling at the main campus. The increasing need for diversity in the population will provide programming opportunities for students to find an expanded number of interdisciplinary and international service learning and civic engagement experiences.

V. Actions to be Implemented

High-impact practices cultivate the deep learning, practical skills, and experience that a twenty-first-century workforce demands of college graduates. High-impact practices often include community-based service and learning communities at the freshman level and performance experiences such as internships and capstone-course projects at the senior level. The research supports the expectation for increased student retention and graduation rates for those campuses employing an aggressive high-impact program.

Kuh's work in this field, most notably his report for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2008), establishes the correlation between high-impact practices and a myriad of positive academic outcomes for the student including persistence and good grades.   The NSSE 2007 reports a correlation between the number of high-impact programs and higher GPAs in the first semester.   The results are even more dramatic for first-generation and historically underserved students. such as students of color (especially Latino and African American students) and students of lower socio-economic statuses.

High-impact practices will provide an appropriate intervention measure at Stephen F. Austin State University. The Office of Institutional Research of SFA reports that 27% (n=2,593) of our undergraduate population consists of African American students and 10% (n=1,140) consists of Hispanic students. About one-third of our undergraduates come from families below or near the poverty line. Nearly half of the students in the graduating class of 2009 at Stephen F. Austin State University report being the first person in their immediate family to earn a college degree. At Stephen F. Austin, first-generation status has been an important variable in attrition. The university's *One Year Retention Report* posits a strong connection between family degree attainment and a student's likelihood of staying enrolled at SFA. Retention rates for first-year, first-generation students were 5.7 points lower than rates for students who were not first-generation. Improving the retention of first-time, full-time freshmen to 70% by 2012 is a goal outlined in the University's *Strategic Plan*.

Retention and ultimately graduation rates are further threatened at Stephen F. Austin by the suggested change in the "census date," on which funding is based for public Texas universities, from the twelfth day of classes to the final day of the semester. This change would essentially pay colleges and universities only for those students who complete the semester rather than for those who enroll in courses. The University's ability to provide students with the very best in teaching and services depends upon this funding.

On October 5, 2009, at the annual meeting of the Texas Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Kuh reported that according to data collected as part of the NSSE, students who participate in high-impact programs graduate at rates at least two standard deviations above the mean.

With their proven record of improving student learning, high-impact practices have the potential for meeting the academic challenges at SFA. Through an emphasis on increased undergraduate research and by facilitating collaboration between Academic and University Affairs, the University can focus on ensuring that both curricular and cocurricular (extra-curricular) programs function as "high-impact" programs. Programs of this kind prepare students with the kinds of reasoning skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

A. QEP Content

1. Instructional Enhancement

Stephen F. Austin State University's QEP proposes to increase student learning and student success by incorporating the use of high-impact practices into targeted undergraduate courses. The research cited for this proposal indicates that faculty must strongly support high-impact practices in these areas if the University is to elicit the participation of large numbers of students. The first step toward that objective is for faculty to understand the components of high-impact practices. A comprehensive campus-wide initiative has been developed to disseminate information about high-impact practices and provide support for their implementation.

2. Faculty Development

Faculty will engage in a variety of activities to support their understanding of high-impact practices and to elicit their input as the high-impact program of this university is further developed. The Teaching Excellence Center will provide ongoing workshops which would provide instruction and a forum for discussing the skills and competencies necessary for facilitating high-impact projects. Summer Seminars will provide opportunities to introduce faculty to the research and practice of high-impact strategies. Participants will learn what these strategies are and why they matter.

A Faculty Learning Community (FLC) will be established to support faculty as they study high-impact practices. Faculty will spend a year working with their colleagues to find appropriate platforms to support their high-impact activities. New Faculty Orientation will showcase professors who are enthusiastic about high-impact practices. New faculty will recognize that high-impact practices are part of our intellectual culture at Stephen F. Austin.

The High-Impact Practice Office will provide funding for faculty and staff to attend national conferences on the topic of high-impact learning. Those sent to represent our university at these conferences will return to the campus to share their findings with other interested faculty. The proposed high-impact plan will involve both utilizing our current resources and creating new resources for faculty to learn how to enrich their teaching through high-impact practices.

3. Faculty Support

Faculty will receive a variety of meaningful support systems as they work towards implementing high-impact practices:

- Access to high-impact practice specialists, who answer questions, offer support, locate partnerships, and provide helpful resources to aid participating faculty
- A comprehensive website that integrates research and resources for this topic
- Release time to account for the additional time spent developing and implementing projects
- Stipends to reward faculty for their contributions to scholarship and creativity
- Implementation grants to secure the necessary materials and people to develop the objectives of the faculty

4. Recognition

Faculty will receive recognition for their contribution to the high-impact initiative of this university. Such rewards include
- Annual awards in prominent venues among faculty peers with corresponding publicity
- Key components for promotion and tenure packets
- Recognition on the High-Impact Practice website, including photos and featured profiles of faculty and their projects

Implementation Calendar

Phase I – 2010-2011 Academic Year

	Action	Results	Responsible
Fall 2010	Appoint QEP Design Team Members	QEP Design Team formed, with broad representation	Provost
Fall 2010	Weekly Design Team meetings	Developed QEP implementation plan	Director of Institutional Accreditation Office (IAO)
Fall 2010	Host two Faculty Forums to discuss QEP	Two faculty forums held with broad attendance	QEP Steering Committee
Fall 2010	Begin design plans for the HIP Web site	Framework for HIP Web site developed	Dean of Student Affairs and Ad Hoc (student group)
Spring 2011	Identify QEP Director	QEP Director identified	Provost
Spring 2011	Identify FLC I	FLC I, comprised of SFA 101 Instructors, is identified	QEP Director
Spring 2011	Conduct pilot study of assessment measures	The internally-developed rubrics will be tested and finalized	Director of IAO and Pilot faculty
Spring 2011	Prepare and submit articles to the Pine Log student newspaper regarding QEP and the On-site visit	Reinforce QEP project outcomes concerning the culture of the SFA Experience	QEP Director
Spring 2011	Prepare and submit articles to the Daily Sentinel Nacogdoches newspaper regarding the QEP and the On-site visit	Reinforce QEP project outcomes concerning the culture of the SFA Experience. Increase community awareness of QEP.	QEP Director
Spring 2011	Post yard signs and banners	Increase community awareness of and	Graduate Assistant

		enthusiasm for the QEP	
Spring 2011	Host informational tables and distribute t-shirts and buttons	Reinforce QEP project outcomes concerning the culture of the SFA Experience. Increase community awareness of QEP	Graduate Assistant
Spring 2011	FLC I Development Semester	FLC I members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2011	Faculty attend CAT training	Faculty members receive training to administer and score the CAT	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2011	Administer the NSSE to freshmen and seniors	NSSE administered	Institutional Research Office

Phase II – 2011-2012 Academic Year

	Action	Results	Responsible
Fall 2011	FLC I Kickoff	Enthusiasm for first semester of classroom implementation	QEP Director
Fall 2011	FLC I Implementation Semester	FLC I members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2011	FLC II Development Semester	FLC II members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2011	Offer TEC Workshop	One HIP/HOTS workshop offered through the Teaching Excellence Center	QEP Director
Fall 2011	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2011	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2011	Evaluate assignments	Assignments evaluated using the	FLC Coordinator

	evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	internally-created rubrics	
Fall 2011	Administer the ETSPP to freshmen	ETSPP administered	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2011	Identify FLC III	FLC III identified	QEP Director
Spring 2012	FLC II Implementation Semester	FLC II members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2012	FLC III Development Semester	FLC II members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2012	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2012	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2012	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2012	Administer the ETSPP to seniors	ETSPP administered	Assessment Coordinator

Phase III – 2012-2013 Academic Year

	Action	Results	Responsible
Fall 2012	FLC III Implementation Semester	FLC III members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2012	Identify FLC IV	FLC IV identified	QEP Director
Fall 2012	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2012	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2012	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator

Fall 2012	Administer the ETSPP to freshmen	ETSPP administered	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2013	FLC IV Development Semester	FLC IV members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2013	Identify FLC V	FLC V identified	QEP Director
Spring 2013	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2013	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2013	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2013	Administer the ETSPP to seniors	ETSPP administered to seniors	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2013	Administer the NSSE to freshmen and seniors	NSSE administered	Institutional Research Office

Phase IV – 2013-2014 Academic Year

	Action	Results	Responsible
Fall 2013	FLC IV Implementation Semester	FLC IV members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2013	FLC V Development Semester	FLC V members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2013	Identify FLC VI	FLC VI identified	QEP Director
Fall 2013	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2013	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2013	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2013	Administer the ETSPP	ETSPP administered	Assessment

			Coordinator
Spring 2014	FLC V Implementation Semester	FLC V members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2014	FLC VI Development Semester	FLC VI members develop high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Spring 2014	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2014	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2014	Administer the ETSPP to seniors	ETSPP administered	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2014	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator

Phase V – 2014-2015 Academic Year

	Action	Results	Responsible
Fall 2014	FLC VI Implement Semester	FLC VI members implement high-impact class revisions fostering HOTS	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2014	Administer CAT	CAT Administered and scored on campus	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2014	Send samples of CAT to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Samples of CAT sent to Tennessee Tech to score for inter-rater reliability	Assessment Coordinator
Fall 2014	Evaluate assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	Assignments evaluated using the internally-created rubrics	FLC Coordinator
Fall 2014	Administer the ETSPP to freshmen	ETSPP administered	Assessment Coordinator
Spring 2015	Complete Five-Year Report	Five-Year Report Completed	QEP Director

VI. QEP Timeline for High-Impact Practices

The focus of the QEP is improving students' higher order thinking skills and student success by incorporating high-impact practices into targeted undergraduate curricula. To accomplish this objective, a team of faculty and staff have crafted a comprehensive professional development plan designed to incrementally involve a majority of faculty members at this university.

Using a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) model, faculty members will engage in a year-long exploration of high-impact practices with the ultimate goal of designing or redesigning course methodology and delivery for a single course. FLCs are increasingly being incorporated in colleges and universities as a significant component of institution-wide professional development efforts (Petrone & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2004). At Stephen F. Austin, FLC members will participate in a cross-disciplinary investigation of one of three high-impact platforms selected for the QEP: collaborative learning, mentored undergraduate research, or field-based learning. The first FLC participants will be assigned in early spring 2011, and applications will be accepted each semester thereafter.

As a part of the FLC, faculty members will participate in a biweekly, semester-long FLC to engage in the following: a Kickoff Retreat, a semester-long study of high-impact practices, support for developing and implementing course enhancements and/or modifications based on this study, and institutional recognition for their efforts. Four initiatives have been designed to facilitate this project: faculty development, direct support, sustainability, and operational support. What follows is an explanation of each of the specific initiatives of the QEP.

A. Faculty Development Initiatives
Faculty development is a key component of the QEP, as it is faculty members' direct incorporation of high-impact practices that will result in the desired student learning outcomes in goals one and two. Faculty development will occur both internally and externally to the institution.

1. Internal Professional Development

a. Faculty Learning Communities
FLC members will participate in a year-long, cross-disciplinary group of twelve faculty members to examine one of three platforms identified as being high-impact practices. The objective of the QEP is to have every student experience at least two high-impact courses during their time at SFA, one of those experiences occurring in the freshmen year and the other in the junior or senior year. Collaborative learning, which serves as a basis for the other two platforms, is the targeted experience for freshmen students. The remaining two platforms, undergraduate research and field-based learning, will be incorporated into upper-level coursework that is specific to the major. By implementing "gateway courses" during students' freshman year, we increase the probability that each student will have the minimum two experiences during their completion of a degree at SFA.
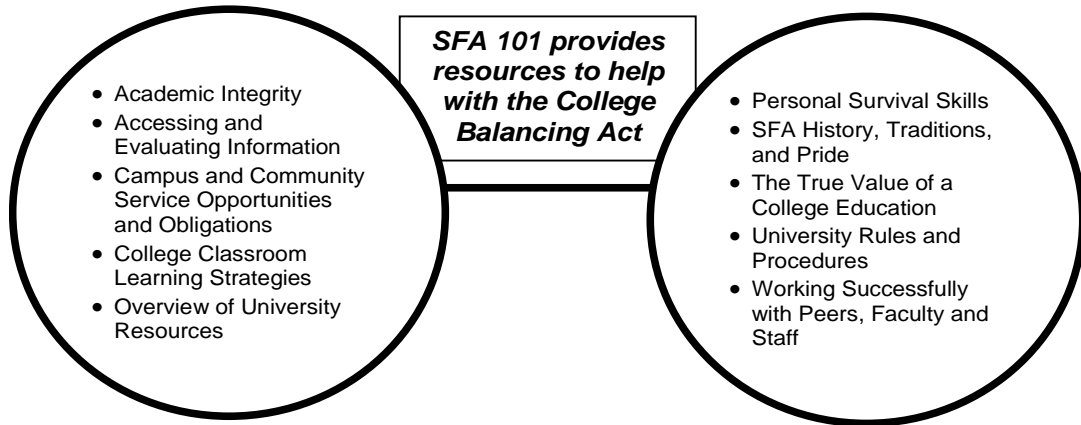
b. Gateway I: Entrance to the University (Collaborative Learning)
Each spring, a group of 12 SFA 101 instructors will join the Collaborative Learning FLC. Approximately 70% of freshmen enroll in the SFA 101 course, so this partnership is a

natural fit for the project. The instructors will be identified in January 2011 and begin their professional development as a cohort in March 2011. Various outside readings will be assigned, and participants will be encouraged to locate additional resources on collaborative learning best fitting their teaching style and the topics within the course.

The cohort will have four face-to-face discussions (two in March and two in April) and will observe at least one in-class example of collaborative learning on SFA's campus. FLC members will continue their reading into the summer and participate in a two-day Kickoff Retreat. During this time period, FLC members will discuss ways they can enhance their current SFA 101 course with high-impact practices relating to higher order thinking skills and develop a plan to do so. The diversity of the academic backgrounds of FLC members will allow for interdepartmental collaborations as well as expose participants to a variety of perspectives within the group. Proposed course enhancements will be developed by the end of the summer, which will be implemented in the following fall semester. Each FLC meeting will be guided by a designated facilitator, who will serve as the contact person for the group.

SFA 101 provides resources to help with the College Balancing Act

- Academic Integrity
- Accessing and Evaluating Information
- Campus and Community Service Opportunities and Obligations
- College Classroom Learning Strategies
- Overview of University Resources

- Personal Survival Skills
- SFA History, Traditions, and Pride
- The True Value of a College Education
- University Rules and Procedures
- Working Successfully with Peers, Faculty and Staff

c. Gateway II: Entrance to the Major or Workplace

Two faculty members from each college (a total of 12 faculty members) will be selected each August to form a second Faculty Learning Community (FLC). The FLC will embark on a year-long exploration of high-impact practices through participation in a two-day Kickoff Retreat (described below) and frequent group meetings that include the study of various literature on high-impact practices. During the Fall semester, the FLC will engage in biweekly discussions of academic readings on a specific platform (either mentored undergraduate research or field-based learning). Also during the fall, FLC members will discuss ways they can enhance their current courses with high-impact practices and develop a plan to do so. The diversity of the academic backgrounds of FLC members will allow for interdepartmental collaborations when desired, as well as exposure to a variety of perspectives. Proposed course enhancements will be developed by the end of the fall semester, with implementation in the following spring semester. Each FLC meeting will be guided by a designated facilitator, who will serve as the contact person for the group.

FLC Rotation (Spring 2011 – Fall 2013)					
Spring 2011	**Fall 2011**	**Spring 2012**	**Fall 2012**	**Spring 2013**	**Fall 2013**
Assessment Pilot (4)	FLC I Implementation Semester (Collaborative Learning)	FLC II Implementation Semester (Field- Based Learning)	FLC III Implementation Semester (Collaborative Learning)	FLC IV Implementation Semester (Undergraduate Research)	FLC V Implementation Semester (Collaborative Learning)
FLC I Development Semester (Collaborative Learning)	FLC II Development Semester (Field-Based Learning)	FLC III Development Semester (Collaborative Learning)	FLC IV Development Semester (Undergraduate Research)	FLC V Development Semester (Collaborative Learning)	FLC VII Development Semester (Field-Based Learning)

d. Kickoff Retreat

As the commencement activity for FLC members, the Kickoff Retreat plays an important role in the faculty development initiative. FLC members will attend a two-day retreat prior to the beginning of the HIP Development Semester, either in early August or January (for fall and spring Development Semesters, respectively). During this Kickoff Retreat, the six components of high-impact practices will be introduced and teambuilding activities will be conducted to begin the work of the FLC.

e. Teaching Excellence Center Workshops

SFA has an active and highly respected Teaching Excellence Center (TEC), which hosts a variety of optional workshops and training sessions for faculty each semester. As a component of the QEP, two workshops on high-impact practices will be sponsored each semester for all faculty interested in learning more about the topic. These sessions are separate from the Faculty Learning Community; however, current and former FLC members will likely serve as presenters at these workshops. The sessions, co-sponsored by the TEC and HIP Office, will play an important role as we strive to shift the culture of SFA to one that emphasizes learning opportunities that are meaningful and relevant to our students.

f. New Faculty Orientation

Each fall, an orientation is conducted to welcome new faculty and introduce them to various important aspects of being a part of the SFA team. A representative of the HIP Office (described in Direct Support, below) will attend New Faculty Orientation each fall and conduct a brief session introducing new faculty to the concept of high-impact practices.   This session will significantly contribute to our evolving culture shift by establishing an expectation that new faculty will incorporate high-impact practices into their courses. All new faculty will be personally invited to the TEC workshops offered each semester as a means of providing support during their first year.

2. External Professional Development

FLC members and HIP Office staff will participate in external professional development, such as conferences and workshops that relate to relevant high-impact practices. For example, those working on the platform of undergraduate research might attend meetings and workshops offered by the National Conference on Undergraduate Research or Council on Undergraduate Research. Those working on the platform of collaborative learning might attend The International Association for the Study of

Cooperation in Education's annual conference. Those pursuing the field-based learning platform might attend conferences sponsored by the National Society on Experiential Education. Any of the FLC members might be interested in attending workshops presented by the American Association of Colleges and University that are specific to HIP. FLC members might also attend these conferences with a student as a component of the implementation semester to disseminate research findings or other relevant educational experience.

B. Direct Support Initiatives

Successful QEP implementation is an important consideration as the desired outcomes involve the enriched learning experience of SFA students. To ensure that faculty members have every opportunity to successfully undertake the development initiative, the following direct support initiatives have been developed:

1. High-Impact Practices (HIP) Office

A designated HIP Office will serve as a central location to disseminate information about high-impact practices, coordinate various workshops (such as the TEC workshops and new faculty orientation described above), conduct assessment, and provide support for all faculty desiring to incorporate high-impact practices in their courses. Additionally, the HIP Office will specifically serve as a base for each FLC by housing relevant literature and other resources concerning the three chosen platforms.

Several key personnel will be affiliated with the HIP Office to ensure the QEP implementation is successful. The QEP Director will have the responsibility to oversee management of all QEP strategies, including analyzing assessment data that is collected each semester. The director will be expected to contribute to marketing high-impact practices, recruiting faculty, and offering faculty support. Finally, the director will supervise the other employees in the HIP Office.

A current SFA employee will be reassigned to work on a quarter-time basis in the area of assessment. This QEP Assessment Specialist will be primarily responsible for organizing and interpreting data collected each semester from participating faculty members.

In order to provide the HIP Office with the support needed to function, an administrative assistant will be hired. The administrative assistant will be responsible for managing the general operation of the HIP office, including arrangement of details for meeting times, spaces, and rooms for FLC retreats and workshops; coordinating travel and registration details for conferences; securing materials and resources for FLC participants; and assisting the director with duties as needed. Finally, the HIP Office will have a graduate assistant who is primarily responsible for maintaining the HIP website, ensuring that all information is current and accurate, and fulfilling other duties as assigned.

2. Website

The website has been designed by Ad Hoc, a student marketing group at SFA. The opening page will customize the information by providing a link for students and another for faculty and staff. Each of the two mirrored pages will provide an overview of the project from those two perspectives. All initial marketing efforts—including yard signs, banners, and T-shirts—will function to drive students, faculty, and staff to this website. The website will be used on an ongoing basis to disseminate information about the progress of the QEP and high-impact practices in general, as well as to highlight the

work of faculty members and their students. The website will be regularly updated and will serve as an conduit for idea exchange, networking, and general information about high-impact practices and the QEP.

3. Participation Incentives (Development Semester)

SFA values the dedication of its faculty members and desires to be supportive of those who are willing to invest the time and effort required to participate in the FLC. The Design Team discussed possible incentives and determined that the needs of faculty vary significantly and that no one incentive would serve the needs of all FLC participants. To ensure that the incentive would be of the greatest value to the work of each FLC member, it was decided that all participating FLC members will select one of the following incentives to receive at the end of the Development Semester: 3-hour course release time, additional compensation, or a graduate assistant. Additionally, all FLC members will be eligible to apply for a mini-grant to support the first implementation of the course redesigned during the Development Semester.

4. Implementation Grants (Implementation Semester)

It is expected that some faculty members interested in incorporating high-impact practices into their courses would require additional funding. For example, if a faculty member were to choose mentored undergraduate research as his or her platform, funding for supplies and travel would support the implementation and dissemination of the project. Faculty members who are implementing high-impact practices will be able to apply for implementation grants to support their efforts at the end of the Development Semester. The QEP budget will have some limited funding available for this purpose.

C. Sustainability Initiatives

1. Annual Recruitment of FLC Members

The HIP Office staff and current FLC members will actively recruit new faculty to apply for participation in the FLC. Similarly, the HIP Office staff will engage in marketing and dissemination of information on high-impact practices through workshops, their website, and other venues.

2. Faculty Recognition

Too often faculty report feeling overworked and under-recognized. Occasionally, faculty who incorporate new initiatives are not commended for their work. SFA values the efforts of its faculty and will demonstrate appreciation through several venues. Recognition for expemplary participation in the QEP will become part of the initial planning in two ways. First, faculty work will be highlighted on the HIP website and in the daily newsletter, *SFA Today*. Second, annual awards will be presented to faculty who have demonstrated outstanding performance in their efforts to incorporate high-impact practices. Finally, special commendation will be given to all faculty who incorporate high-impact practices into their teaching as they seek promotion and/or tenure.

3. Interdepartmental Collaboration Project

Because a goal of the QEP is to expand collaboration between University Affairs and Academic Affairs, the QEP director will be responsible for encouraging interaction between departments to ensure success in this area. Collaborations will be encouraged among faculty with different areas of expertise as well as between Academic and University Affairs. The expectation is that such collaboration will create resources and opportunities for increasingly active learning opportunities.

D. Operational Support Initiatives

The Quality Enhancement Plan will offer an opportunity to generate a movement toward developing an "SFA Experience" for students, as well as faculty and staff. As the QEP is implemented, it will serve as a keystone for an emerging culture of meaningful instructional practices. A cultural shift toward the incorporation of high-impact practices across campus will require deliberate and sustained initiatives. A variety of operational support initiatives will be implemented to monitor and guide the project, as the university pursues the development of the "SFA Experience" through the QEP.

1. QEP Advisory Council

A QEP Advisory Council will be developed, composed of faculty, students, and others to provide guidance on the project. The QEP Advisory Council will be responsible for ensuring that the QEP maintains its focus. The Council will assist with the review of applications for the biannual FLC groups, as well as proposals for implementation grants. In addition, through quarterly meetings, the Council will review progress on the QEP.

The membership of the council will include:

- Director of QEP, Chair
- QEP Assessment Specialist
- One faculty member from each college
- Student Government Association representative
- Chair(s) of the Teaching Excellence Center
- SFA SACS-COC Accreditation Liaison (Ex Officio)

2. Marketing Campaign

Active marketing the SFA QEP will be a primary activity embedded in *Make an Impact @ SFA!* The marketing strategy will be an awareness effort focused on delivering information about high-impact programs and the benefits for students who have engaged in two high-impact experiences while at SFA, specifically: 1) added value to the SFA degree, 2) a means for rising above the competition, 3) improved in preparation for further studies, and 4) skills for connecting with mentors and professionals. The marketing plan, developed in cooperation with SFA's Marketing Office and tailored specifically to our QEP, will be initiated in January 2011.

Two major challenges of marketing *Make an Impact at SFA!* are that the message we need to get across to our stakeholders is complex and also our stakeholders have very different perspectives on the message. Therefore, the Design Team has recommended targeting marketing efforts toward driving individuals to our website. This strategy allows for customization of the message and employs a medium that provides more in-depth information. Each element of the campaign will utilize the tagline, *Make an Impact at SFA!*

The website has been designed by a student marketing group called Ad Hoc. The site customizes the information by providing one link for students and another for faculty and staff. Each of the two mirrored pages provides an overview of the project from those two perspectives. The web address is www.sfasu.edu/hip.

Yard signs and banners provide repeated exposure to our branded message. They are intended to create interest and drive traffic to the website. Banners are planned for high-traffic locations throughout campus, including over Vista Drive (the major entry into campus), in the Baker Pattillo Student Center, on the Rusk Building (a highly visible campus building), and in the Student Recreation Center. These banners carry the message, "MAKE AN IMPACT AT SFA: FIND OUT HOW AT SFASU.EDU/HIP."

Along with purchased space in the campus newspaper, *The Pine Log*, T-shirts and buttons will be distributed in locations where our more detailed, graphical printed handout will be given to passersby. These handouts can also be distributed at the information tables in the Student Center and Student Recreation Center as well as at QEP events to students, faculty and staff who speak with us about the program.

Figure 2 notes the various marketing methods to be used and the approximate launch date of each.

Figure 2
QEP Marketing Campaign Rollout
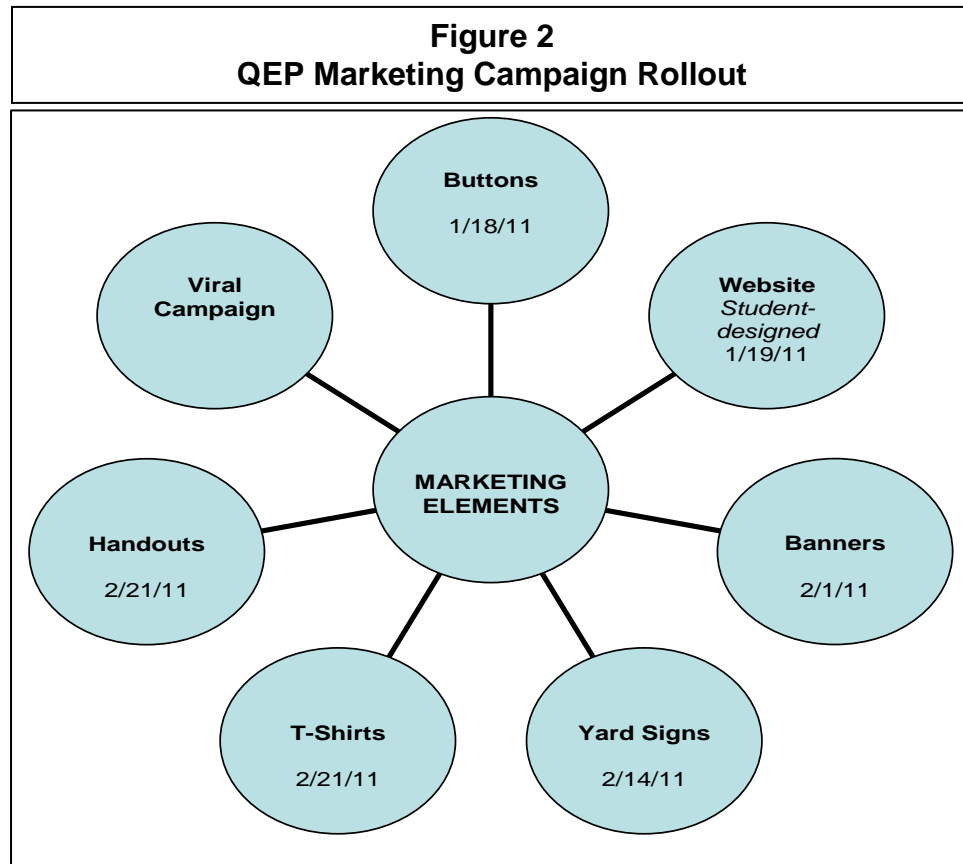
VII. Assessment

A. Procedures
Because the target intervention HIP classes will be selected on a voluntary basis, it is important that assessment not be perceived as an additional instructional task. If this were the case, instructors might be discouraged from participation in the project. In order to avoid this perception, assessment for the QEP will be supported by the HIP office with advisory support from faculty. Instructors will only be asked to schedule time for the assessment to take place. The QEP Director, QEP Steering Committee, and the Office of University Assessment will collaborate in collecting, analyzing, and scoring data. To the extent possible, SFA students will be employed in this process.

Selection of students
The target group will consist of identified freshman classes. Instructors of these courses will receive development in high-impact practices and will agree to incorporate HIP into their course plans and syllabi. Selection of freshman courses will be done on a voluntary basis; however, effort will be made by the QEP assessment office to make sure that a true cross-section of instructors and classes will participate. Once the course is selected and the students have completed the course, students will be added to a database together with their assessment scores, academic data, and demographic information.

A control group of students who do not receive instruction using high-impact practices will be selected by drawing a multi-stage cluster sample. These students will also be added to a database together with their assessment scores, academic data, and demographic information.

The level of intervention
The exact number and types of high-impact practices employed in each course in the target groups will be recorded so as to determine the specific level of intervention in each course. Additionally, over the period of the project the number of HIP courses taken by each student will be recorded. Student and instructor surveys will also be given at the end of the course to see if the actual level of intervention was equivalent to the planned level of intervention.

B. Goal 1: Student Learning – Higher Order Thinking
The QEP proceeds with two methods of intervention. The first is to introduce high-impact practices into targeted classes in order to improve the higher order thinking skills (HOTS) of the impacted students and, consequently, their graduation and retention rates. The second intervention involves creating and promoting a high-impact climate on campus, therefore improving institutional outcomes. The assessment of these interventions is outlined below.

Measuring HOTS
An internally developed rubric will be used in HIP-designated courses at least three points throughout the semester as a means of formative assessment. Students' progress will be monitored formally at these points, and informally at other points throughout the semester to guide and refine instructional interactions as needed.

The Critical thinking Analysis Test (CAT) will be administered as a pretest and posttest to all freshmen participating in the targeted classes to provide a pre-treatment and post-

treatment level of HOTS. The same is true of the freshmen members of the control groups. Scores obtained from all groups will be recorded in the assessment database and then compared. The CAT will be administered to juniors or seniors in the last week of their second HIP class. As a result, longitudinal data will be collected for target students providing data about the impact the number of HIP classes has on higher order thinking skills.

Scoring of the CAT will be conducted by a panel of trained faculty and staff. Instructors of HIP courses will not be asked to participate in order to eliminate any potential bias they might introduce as a result of having taught these courses.

HOTS will also be measured using the critical thinking section of the ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSPP). This is a nationally normed exam and will be used for pre- and post-testing freshmen and seniors in the selected courses identified for the QEP project. Data regarding students' critical thinking skills will be extracted and added to the project database each year.

In addition to the CAT and ETSPP, locally developed standardized rubrics will be used as formative assessment tools in the HIP classes. These rubrics will be used to evaluate student work samples intended to demonstrate HOTS. Results provided by the use of these rubrics will allow instructors to make needed changes in course instruction or design, and allow the QEP team to make adjustments to the implementation as needed.

Data Analysis
Statistical analysis will be conducted to determine the unique impact (if any) HIP practices have on higher order thinking skills. Control variables such as ACT/SAT scores, GPA, and demographic variables may also be considered.

Make an Impact @ SFA! Assessment Plan QEP Goal 1: Improved Student Learning – Higher Order Thinking Skills							
Assessment Question	Type of Assessment		Assessment Methods	Frequency		Base Line Performance	First Assessment Results	Second Assessment Results
	Form/ Sum	Direct/ Indirect						
What effect does incorporating high-impact practices have on student learning (analyzing information, thinking creatively, problem-solving, and communicating contextual information)?	F	D	CAT	First and last week of Freshman HIP-designated course	Last week of 2nd HIP-designated course	To be collected Spring 2011 (Freshmen/Seniors)	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	S	D	ETS Proficiency Profile	Annually		Fall 2010 (Freshmen) Spring 2011 (Seniors)	Fall 2011 Spring 2012	Fall 2012 Spring 2013
	F	D	Internally Created Rubrics	Every Semester (5th, 10th, and 15th week of semester of HIP-designated courses)		To be collected Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Fall 2012

C. Goal 2: Student Success - Institutional Outcomes

Institutional Effort Measures
The QEP will attempt to have an impact upon institutional outcomes by creating and promoting a culture of high-impact practices. These outcomes include improving students' critical thinking skills, the student body's average GPA, and the University's retention and graduation rates. In order to track these outcomes, data for SFA students will be collected on the following schedule.

The QEP will put in place development, resources, and promotional programs to encourage the adoption of high-impact practices throughout the campus. Detailed records will be kept by the HIP office concerning these efforts to document the level of intervention. In order to understand how widely these efforts are felt on campus, two regularly scheduled surveys will be conducted. The first is the locally developed annual HIP Knowledge Survey of University instructors to ask them how much they know about high-impact practices and to what extent (if any) they incorporated them in their classes. The second survey is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a nationally normed survey of student engagement administered to students biannually. The University has been using NSSE to study trends of student perception since 2004, and therefore it provides an effective baseline from which to compare students' experiences as we progress through the QEP. As a strategy for measuring institutional effort, a count of faculty attending the HIP Workshops offered through the Teaching Excellence Center (or other on-campus meetings) will be recorded. In addition, hits to the HIP website will be tracked and recorded.

Data Analysis
Data collected for the institutional assessment will be analyzed using ordinary least squares regression (OLS), t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). OLS is a technique that allows quantitative data, such as those collected here, to be analyzed in a way that provides information about the relationship between variables, the strength of these relationships, and to rule out alternative explanations. T-tests and ANOVA analyses allow for statistical comparisons of treatment and control group assessment results, GPAs, retention rates, and graduation rates.

Make an Impact @ SFA! Assessment Plan QEP Goal 2:Student Success – Institutional Outcomes								
Assessment Questions	Type of Assessment		Assessment Methods	Target Group	Frequency	Base Line Performance	First Assessment Results	Second Assessment Results
	Form/ Sum	Direct/ Indirect						
Student Success								
How do high impact practices affect student success at SFA?	S	D	GPA	All students by classification	Annually	To be collected Spring 2011 (Freshmen/Seniors)	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
	S	D	Graduation Rate	All graduating students	Annually	6 year graduation rate – Fall 2010 (Fall 2004 First-time, full-time freshmen graduating by 8/31/10) – 44.5%	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
	S	D	Retention Rate	All students by classification	Annual	Freshmen Retention – Fall 2010 (2009 First-time, full-time Freshmen returning 2010) – 64.1%	Spring 2011	Fall 2012
Institutional Effort								
Assessment Questions	Type of Assessment		Assessment Methods	Target Group	Frequency	Base Line Performance	First Assessment Results	Second Assessment Results
	Form/ Sum	Direct/ Indirect						
How widely are HIP efforts felt on the SFA campus?	F	D	HIP Knowledge Survey	Faculty	Annually	To be collected Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
	S	D	NSSE	Students	Biannually (Freshmen & Sophomores)	To be collected Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
	F	I	Teaching Excellence Center Records	TEC Participants in HIP Workshops	Every Semester	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012

			(Count)					
	F	D	Student Survey	Students of FLC participants	Every Semester	To be collected Spring 2011	Fall 2011	
	F	D	FLC Members' Syllabi	FLC members	Every Semester	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
	F	D	Website Hits	SFA Community	Monthly (with an average for each semester)	To be collected Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012

VIII. Institutional Resources

Make an Impact @ SFA! is resourced with a management plan addressing the human and financial requirements for the project. The resources allocated to this project support the Task Plan and the Assessment Plan, both of which are outlined in this proposal.

A. Institutional Capability and Capacity
Successful QEP implementation is directly related to SFA's institutional capability to identify an appropriate QEP topic and then demonstrate the capacity to organize and sustain a comprehensive student learning project on that scale. As an institution we are capable of the challenge and embrace the opportunity the QEP offers to improve student success. Beginning in early 2009, the vice presidents, president, and the Board of Regents were briefed on the financial and systemic commitment necessary to deploy such a broadly based student learning initiative. Key leaders of the University have participated in the Commission on Colleges Annual Meeting and Summer Institutes with the goal of learning best practice recommendations associated with the management of their respective divisions for sustaining a QEP effort. When the Reaffirmation Steering Committee was formed and the tasks were assigned, the QEP was ever present as an agenda item in the discussions. All divisions of the University were represented on the Steering Committee. QEP-focused budgets for topic development, proposal writing, and the QEP pilot project to begin in spring 2011were recommended by the administration and approved by the Regents. A QEP Director, Dr. James Standley, was named in fall 2010, and this position will have continuing funding for the duration. Funding and staffing for QEP coordination have been approved for the duration of the QEP, through 2016.

Directed by SFA president Dr. Baker Pattillo, the vice presidents and deans have been active in preparing their divisions for the culture change that *Make an Impact @ SFA!* will bring to SFA. The QEP process and progress have been highlighted in addresses to faculty and staff and in briefings by the QEP Steering Committee to the colleges and division.. Two QEP Focus Forums attended by faculty, staff, and students were held in the Fall of 2010 for the purpose of providing information and getting suggestions for QEP implementation strategies. The approach fostered by the campus leadership has been from the viewpoint that the Quality Enhancement Plan topic adopted for proposal to the Commission on Colleges is a good match for the needs of SFA students and will offer the opportunity to generate a cultural shift toward developing an "SFA experience" for our students, faculty, and staff. A movement toward and support for incorporating high-impact practices across campus is fully endorsed by the institution's commitment to providing sufficient resources to sustain the various initiatives associated with our QEP. nt resources to sustain the various initiatives associated with our QEP.

B. Management Plan – Human Resources
The QEP Office will be staffed by the QEP Director, a high-impact practices learning specialist, an assessment specialist, an administrative assistant, and a graduate assistant.

The QEP Director will be an individual of faculty rank with academic management experience, an understanding of higher order thinking, and a commitment to the implementation of the three student learning platforms integral to this project: collaborative assignments and projects, mentored undergraduate research, and field-

based learning. The director will be responsible for managing the day-to-day functioning of the QEP programs. This responsibility will include building relationships with other programs and departments on campus, promoting the program on campus and within the community, effectively implementing the QEP task plan, monitoring the budget, and supervising the other QEP Office staff. Dr. James Standley, Dean of Graduate Studies, has been appointed QEP Director.

Both specialists will be responsible for providing support to faculty as they engage in professional development on high-impact practices and work through the development and implementation phases of the program. Specialists will facilitate the Faculty Learning Communities each fall semester, and with the director, will be responsible for conducting the Summer Seminar. Dr. Standley was Dean of Applied Arts and Sciences and Dean of Liberal Arts for 27 years before taking his present role in the Graduate School. He reports directly to the provost and is a member of the Academic Affairs Council and the Council of Deans. Dr. Standley is keenly familiar with the SACS *Principles of Accreditation*, and he regularly attends SACS meetings and institutes on quality enhancement.

The administrative assistant will be responsible for assisting the director and specialists in a variety of ways, including maintaining departmental bookkeeping and accounting, including billing; preparing special and routine reports and maintaining office records; handling routine and confidential correspondence; compiling statistical data and preparing various studies of QEP activities; and assisting in counseling students and providing information relating to the function of the office. Additionally, the administrative assistant may act on an administrator's behalf in his or her absence.

The graduate assistant will be responsible for developing and maintaining of the HIP website, which will involve ensuring that all information is current and accurate. Additional responsibilities may include assisting with the preparation of special and routine reports and maintaining records of the office; compiling statistical data and preparing various studies of QEP activities; and assisting with counseling students and providing information relating to the function of the office.

Stephen F. Austin's QEP is focused on providing support to faculty and students desiring to engage in High-Impact Practices. To this end, a High-Impact Practices (HIP) Advisory Council will be formed consisting of experienced faculty, staff, and student leaders who are involved with high-impact practices on campus. The QEP Office Director will serve as Chair, and the Council will meet quarterly to review progress. Proposed membership in the Advisory Council includes:

- QEP Office Director (Chair)
- 2 Faculty Learning Community (FLC) Members (beginning in Year 2, after the completion of one QEP cycle
- 2 Student Leaders
- Faculty Senate Representative
- Representative from Teaching Excellence Center
- SACS Liaison (Ex-Officio)

C. Budget Development

Formulating and projecting the QEP budget through 2016 has been a combination of art and science tempered with university management experience. A commitment to having adequate resources for the QEP was pledged by the administration during the early exploratory phases with the caveat that the initiative be appropriate to the needs of our students and within the fiscal means of the institution. There were two visits to other universities that had completed reaffirmation, Baylor University and the University of Texas at Arlington. Both visits had representation from the SFA Finance and Administration division. These one-on-one discussions with financial officers on other campuses gave some indications of the magnitude and scope of financial resources to be allocated for the development and sustainability of the QEP.
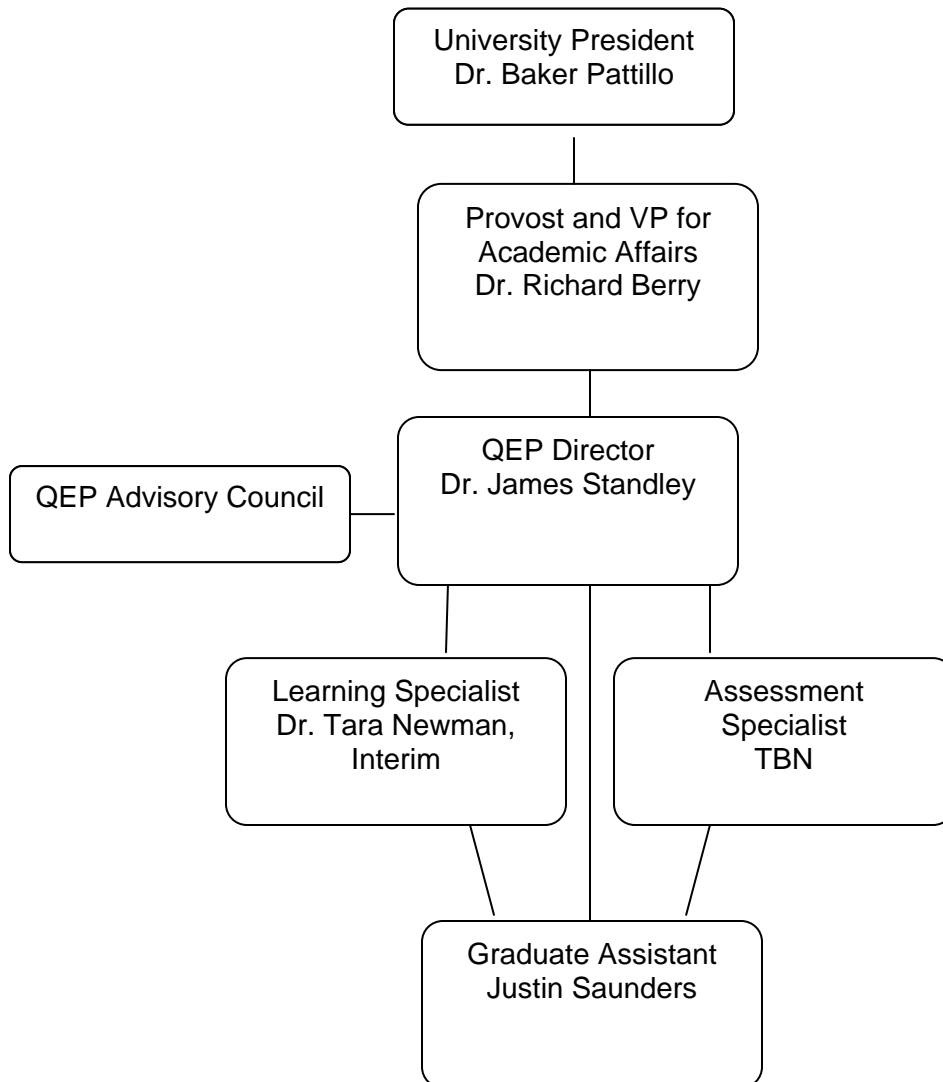
Also involved in the budget planning process were members of the SFA campus community who had experience in creating budgets for grants and contracts. They were consulted regarding the degrees of similarities of planning like programmatic efforts and the development of the financial plan for the QEP. When the Design Team (See Appendix XX) began meeting in October 2010, the strategies for implementation of *Make an Impact @ SFA!* began to be operationalized. From those discussions emerged clearly identified categories of effort, positions, timelines, and support needs. Using formulas from human resources, sampling costs for infrastructure needs, and positions to be funded, a draft budget projecting through 2016 was forwarded to the provost as well as the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

The funding phase has not come at a good time for Texas institutions. SFA and all the other 31 Texas upper-level institutions have been asked to cut budgets by approximately ten percent for the next biennium with probably more cuts to come. This atmosphere notwithstanding, the institution has committed to the fiscal needs of the QEP and plans to fund the initiative with designated tuition revenue. The prospect of setting aside monies for the QEP has had the attention of the University leadership from 2008 until the present. The budget presented in this proposal has been accepted by the University administration for recommendation and final approval by the Board of Regents with the fiscal 2012 University budget. Funding in subsequent years is subject to Regents approval with the recommendation of the administration. The current year budget has $157,000 of funding for QEP planning and pilot phases.

QEP Proposed Budget

Personnel	Fiscal Year					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
	8 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months	12 months
Salaries & Wages HIP Office						
QEP Director	30,000	45,000	45,000	45,900	46,818	47,754
Assessment Specialist	14,000	30,000	30,000	30,600	31,212	31,836
Administrative Assist.	16,700	25,050	25,050	25,551	26,062	26,583
HIP Office Graduate Assistant	9,225	9,225	9,225	9,225	9,225	9,225
Participant Incentives	16,500	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000	66,000
Total Salaries & Wages	86,425	175,275	175,275	177,276	179,317	181,398
Benefits	22,471	45,572	45,572	46,092	46,622	47,164
Training & Travel	3,850	4,250	4,250	5,000	5,250	5,250
Student Project Implementation	19,200	19,200	19,200	19,200	19,200	19,200
O&M						
Faculty Development	1,200	2,250	2,000	1,750	1,200	1,200
Printing/Publications	4,500	2,500	2,500	1,750		
Consultants	2,000	2,000	1,250			
Conference Registrations	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
Office Expenses	4,754	6,650	6,650	7,200	7,200	7,850
Instructional Materials	1,250	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,500	1,500
Assessment						
Instrument (CAT) & Pre-Test	850	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Graders	1,250	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
Total O&M	37,254	39,400	38,400	36,700	34,150	34,800
Total QEP Budget	150,000	264,497	263,497	265,068	265,339	268,612

IX. Organizational Structure

University President
Dr. Baker Pattillo

Provost and VP for
Academic Affairs
Dr. Richard Berry

QEP Director
Dr. James Standley

QEP Advisory Council

Learning Specialist
Dr. Tara Newman,
Interim

Assessment
Specialist
TBN

Graduate Assistant
Justin Saunders

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XI. Appendices

APPENDIX I
ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Academic Indicators Relating to SFA Students*
  *Results of MAPP (direct) and NSSE (indirect) measurements, 2008-2009

Some leading indicators that SFA students are not well prepared for college-level work when compared to our peer institutions include
47% (at college graduation) - First student in family to attempt college
42% - SFA six-year graduation rate, 2003-2009
65% - SFA one-year retention rate, 2008-2009

These MAPP data show that a good number of SFA students may benefit from a more "hands-on" approach to be academically successful. The literature suggests that high-impact programs may be able to improve student success.

- Math - 36 Percentile
- Humanities - 11 Percentile
- Social Sciences - 18 Percentile
- Natural Sciences - 44 Percentile
- Critical Thinking - 14 Percentile [1]

The literature suggests that high-impact practices may be able to improve student success in these areas.

[1] Average scaled score of 108.94 – Of 154 institutions in test, only 22 scored lower.

NSSE data shows areas for improvement at SFA:
- Writing - SFA students on average write less than students from peer institutions.

- Active Learning - SFA is comparable to the top 50% of peer institutions regarding collaborative learning, To reach the top 10%, SFA would need to improve by 11.1%. Areas of improvement - SFA students report less frequent participation in internships, field experiences, co-op experiences, or clinical experiences than students at peer institutions.

- Student-Faculty Interaction - SFA students report relatively high levels of faculty-student interaction, within top 5%.

How do we get there?
Improving student success and reaching institutional goals by using high-impact practices to increase higher order thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, creativity) will be realized through innovative structural features marked by high-impact practices and pedagogical practices emphasizing highly engaged experiences, both of which lead to:

Deeper learning:
- Focus on the underlying meaning of information as well as content.
- Integrate and synthesize ideas and information.
- Discern patterns in evidence or phenomena.
- Apply knowledge in different situations.
- View issues from multiple perspectives

Make an Impact @ SFA! is based on the concept that students having two experiences involving high-impact practices during their university experience will show enhanced student learning, improved higher order thinking, and favorable student success gains for the institution.

Student Learning Gains –QEP Goal 1
- General Education – writing, speaking clearly; improved gen. ed. performance, critical thinking.
- Practical Competence – working with others, solving real problems, work-related knowledge.

APPENDIX II
QEP TIMELINE

Timeline of Key Events in the Development of the QEP Spring 2008 to Spring 2013

Spring/Summer 2008
- Form reaffirmation Steering Committee.   - Organize and present workshops with administration and staff on SACS Principles and Quality Enhancement Plan expectations by Commission on Colleges.   - Develop reaffirmation website with QEP information and newsletter.
Fall 2008
- Select Compliance Report and QEP research and writing groups.   - Conduct organizational meeting for Compliance Report/QEP research and writing groups.   - Present an overview of the reaffirmation process and Quality Enhancement Plan to the Board of Regents.   - Introduce the Reaffirmation Steering Committee to Board of Regents.   - Attend SACS Annual Meeting.
Spring/Summer 2009
- Conduct orientation for Compliance Report Core Teams.   - Constitute a QEP Steering Committee with broad representation.   - Develop a campus wide process for eliciting QEP topics directly related to the SFA Strategic Plan 2013.   - Attend SACS Institute for Quality Enhancement.   - Increase visibility and awareness of QEP process across SFA campus and solicit university feedback with newsletter and website.
Fall 2009
- Initiate QEP Topic suggestions.   - Send two campus wide emails to faculty and staff providing overview of the topic solicitation process.   - Mail two postcards sent to faculty and staff as reminder to participate in the QEP topic selection process.   - Solicit QEP topics suggestions throughout Fall Semester.   - Showcase the QEP topic selection process at the President's picnic (Nov. 3).   - Narrow QEP topic suggestions into four categories.   - Schedule and conduct meeting of the QEP Topic Identification Team (Nov. 20)   - Attend SACS Annual Meeting.

Spring/Summer 2010
- Attend at AAC&U Conference on High-Impact Practices.   - Announce the QEP topic to campus community (May 2010).   - Conduct conference call between the QEP Steering Committee and consultant (June 30).   - Begin literature review and assessment research on QEP topic.   - Attend SACS Institute for Quality Enhancement   - Divide writing assignments by Table of Contents for QEP draft.   - Attend all-day, off-site workshop with two Steering Committee members and consultant (Aug. 26-27).

Fall 2010
- Conduct conference call between QEP Steering Committee & consultant (Oct 8).   - Name QEP Director and Design Team.   - Design Team begins weekly meeting to refine QEP proposal (Oct 15).   - Host workshop with Design Team and consultant (Oct 26-27).   - Attend SACS Annual Meeting.   - Meet with Teaching Excellence Center Staff.   - Conduct campus QEP Focus Forums (Nov. 1 and Nov. 30)   - Met with Chairs' Forum to provide QEP development report.   - Provide Faculty Senate with QEP progress report.   - Submit 2 names to SACS for On-Site QEP Reviewer (December)   - Meet with Deans' Council/Chairs' Forum to update on QEP and solicit support.   - Meet with department/college/school to update QEP, solicit support.   - Attend CAT Training   - Finalize QEP Budget for administrative review.

Spring 2011
Submit QEP proposal to SACS January 18, 2011   - Launch HIP Office.   - Identify pilot faculty participants (7members, 1 from each College and 1 from Student Affairs.   - Initiate campus awareness/marketing initiative about QEP.   **Facilitate SACS On-Site Team visits (Mar. 1- 3).**   - Collect pilot assessment.   - Identify **Faculty Learning Community** (FLC) I - (FLC=12 faculty member participants, 2 from each College and 1 program leader from Student Affairs.

Summer 2011
FLC I attends HIP Retreat just prior to fall semester.

Fall 2011

- FLC I meets weekly/studies HIP.
- FLC I develops a HIP plan to incorporate into ONE course (freshman level) - Collaborative Learning.

Spring 2012

- FLC I implements HIP plan, Collaborative Learning.
- Identify FLC II.

Summer 2012

- FLC II attends HIP Retreat, just prior to fall semester

Fall 2012

- FLC II meets weekly and studies HIP.
- FLC II develops HIP plan to incorporate into ONE course (upper level – Undergraduate Research).
- Identify FLC III.

Spring 2013

- FLC II implements plan, Undergraduate Research.
- FLC III attends HIP Retreat.
- FLC III meets weekly and studies HIP.
- FLC III develops a HIP plan to incorporate into ONE course (upper level course – Career-specific Learning aka. Internships).
- FLC IV identified.

Fall 2013

- FLC III implements HIP plan.
- FLC IV meets weekly and studies HIP.
- FLC IV develops HIP plan to incorporate into ONE course (upper level – Collaborative Learning).
- Identify FLC V

Spring 2014

- FLC IV implements plan.
- FLC V attends HIP Retreat.
- FLC V meets weekly and studies HIP.
- FLC V develops a HIP plan to incorporate into ONE course (upper level course – Undergraduate Research).

APPENDIX III
JOB DESCRIPTIONS

QEP Director

General Qualifications: To be selected for QEP Director the successful applicant must hold the terminal degree in his/her discipline, be a current member of the SFA faculty in one of the academic departments, have evidence of a minimum five (5) years effective teaching at the university level, have experience in the supervision of other educational professionals, and be able to articulate a keen interest in innovative student learning. An ability to demonstrate a working knowledge of *Make and Impact @ SFA!* is required. Specifically, the successful applicant will be able to demonstrate an understanding of higher order thinking, and a commitment to the implementation of the three student learning platforms integral to this project: collaborative assignments and projects; mentored undergraduate research; and career-specific learning.

Responsibilities: The director will be responsible for managing the day to day functioning of the QEP programs. This responsibility includes building relationships with other programs and departments on campus, promoting *Make an Impact @ SFA!* on campus and within the community, and effective implementation of the QEP task plan, monitoring the budget and supervising the other QEP office staff.

Compensation: Competitive

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) Members

Description: The FLC provides specialized faculty development opportunities on high-impact practices. Faculty who are selected for the FLC will participate during the long semester preceding the implementation of their project.

Requirements: To be selected for the FLC, faculty must be scheduled to teach either a section of SFA 101 in the Fall 2011 semester or an upper-division course during the Spring 2012 semester. Faculty must meet the qualifications to teach that are established by the academic program offering the course.

Responsibilities: Participants will be responsible for implementing a high impact practice in their course in the first long semester following their participation in the FLC. The scope and content of the project must be approved by the QEP director. Projects in first-year courses must focus on collaborative learning. Upper-division courses must focus on field-based learning or mentored undergraduate research.

Development for and evaluation of these projects will include:

- Development
  Conducting class observations of HIP SFA 101 sections in Spring 2011
  Attending a week-long seminar in Summer 2011

Developing a timeline for implementation and evaluation of HIP projects

- Evaluation
  Periodically administering assessment instruments associated with the project
  Providing student samples for evaluation by QEP Office

Incentives: Faculty selected for the FLC will be able to choose the resource that is most beneficial to them. They may choose between a one-course release, a graduate assistant or a stipend.

Other Benefits: One of the most frequent issues for today's faculty are motivating and engaging today's learner. High-impact practices have a demonstrated impact on the motivation of students. Students engaged in these kinds of experiences tend to be more self-motivating and ultimately more successful. As student success is our ultimately our greatest goal, this program should assist you in meeting that goal.

APPENDIX IV
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Active Learning – An educational technique designed to involves students in discovering, processing, and applying information. The essential practices of the method are talking and listening, writing, reading, and reflecting. The method places less emphasis on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills and involving students in higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), through reading discussing, and writing, with a greater emphasis placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values. (Bonwell & Eiason 1991; Meyers & Jones, 1993)

Assessment – A systematic and ongoing effort to collect, analyze, and interpret evidence that describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or program effectiveness, ultimately to improve student learning and development.

CAT – Critical thinking Assessment Test

Collaborative Learning – An instruction method in which learners work in groups toward a common academic goal

Critical Thinking – Items that involve analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the concepts

Design Team – a group with campus-wide representation tasked with making suggestion, revisions, and application strategies for the implementation of *Making an Impact @ SFA!*

ETS – Educational Testing Service

ETS - Proficiency Profile (ETSPP)

First Generation Student – Students who self-report that their parents did not graduate from college.

FLC – Faculty Learning Community

Gateway Courses – Courses of study that initiate the student to basic university level academic work and initial courses of study that acquaint the student to foundations of the major. Ideally, these courses introduce students to analytical thinking and problem-solving, to develop inquisitiveness that leads to lifelong inquiry and to collaboration.

GPA - grade point average

Graduation Rate (Six Year) – The percent of those students classified as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates, who earn a baccalaureate degree within six years of their entrance as undergraduates.

High Impact Practices – Intellectually active educational practices shown to be effective in increasing the success of students in college by deepening student learning and raising the level of performance, engagement, retention, and persistence. The

practices include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, community based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. (Kuh, 2008)

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) – Following Bloom's Taxonomy of Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement

Persistence/Retention Rate – The percent of those students classified as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates, who continue to be enrolled at the institution after one year.

PLO – Program Learning Outcome

Persistence/Retention Rate – The percent of those students classified as first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates, who continue to be enrolled at the institution after one year.

PLO – Program Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes – Intended outcomes of instruction, stated in general terms, further defined by a set of specific (observable and measurable) student learning outcomes. Program learning outcomes reflect institution-wide goals and the program's mission.

Student Engagement – Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning. (NSSE, 2010)

SLO - Student Learning Outcome

Student Learning – Knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values students attain as a result of their involvement in a particular set of educational experiences

Student Learning Outcome – Specific, observable, and measurable knowledge or skill that the student gains/develops as a result of a specific course or co-curricular activity. Thus, these outcomes are clearly stated in the activity syllabus. There are three categories of student learning outcomes.

Cognitive Outcome – What students KNOW; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, & evaluation.

Affective Outcome – What students CARE ABOUT; students' feelings, attitudes, interests, and preferences.

Performance Outcome – What students CAN DO; skilled performance, production of something new (e.g. a paper, project, piece of artwork), critical thinking shills (e.g. analysis and evaluation).

QEP – Quality Enhancement Plan

Strategic Outcome – measurable institutional change