



**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
MARCH 31-APRIL 3, 2025**

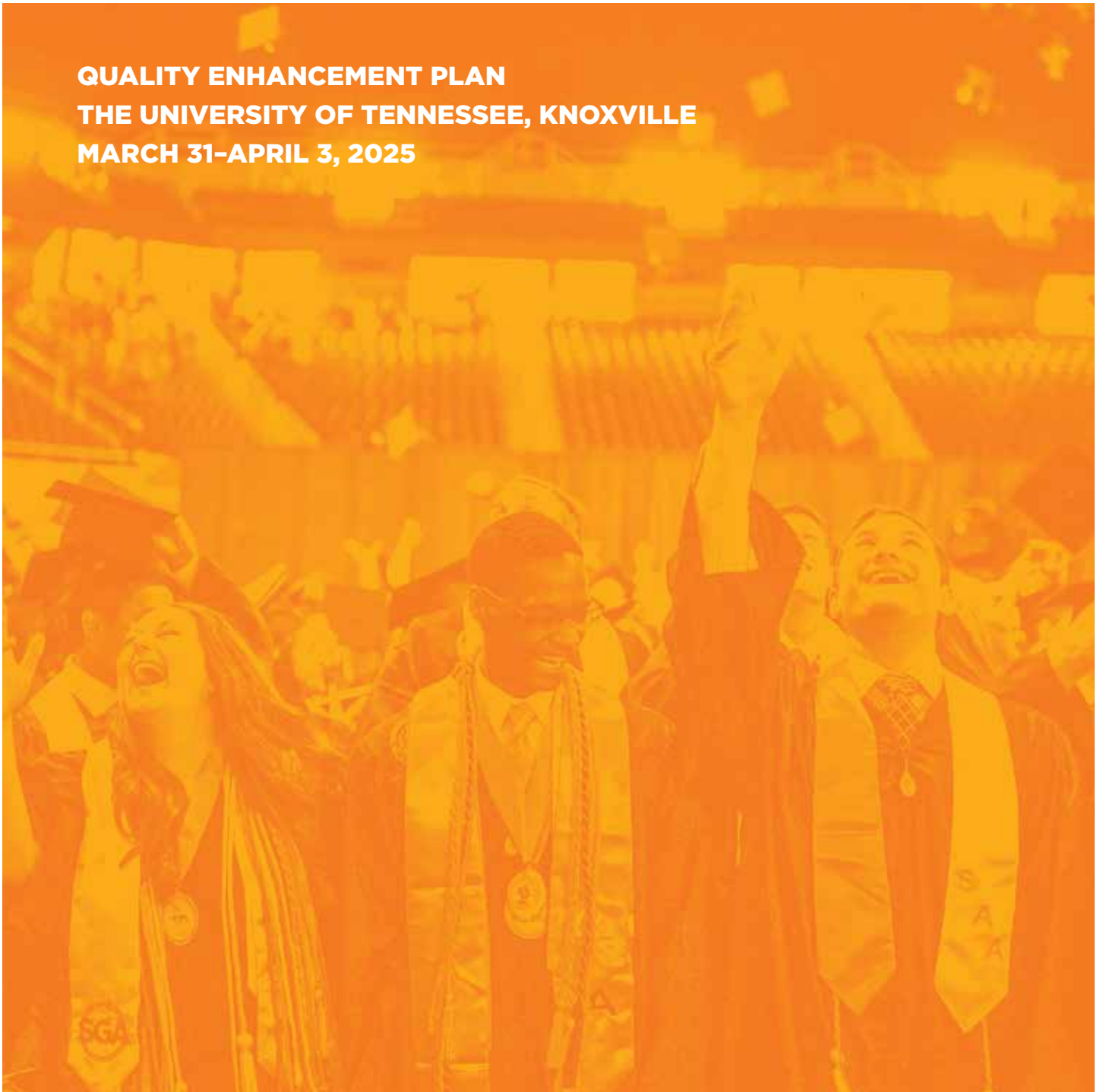


TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Executive Summary
4	Development of the Topic
19	Goals of the QEP
19	Development of the QEP
21	Background Research
28	Actions to Be Implemented
47	Student Outcomes and Assessment Plan
67	Timeline and Resources to Be Committed
70	Summary
71	References
75	Appendices
	A. Hidden Curriculum Survey
	B. Example Items for Student Experience Index (SEI)
	C. QEP Survey
	D. Are You Career Ready? Worksheet
	E. PERMA Survey Results
	F. Overall QEP Budget

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT Knoxville) is the flagship university in Tennessee, classified as producing very high research activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Doctoral Universities R1 category) and as a Carnegie Community Engaged University. Total enrollment across the institution's degree-granting units has increased by more than 26% since fall 2020, reaching 38,728 in fall 2024, including 6,804 new first-time full-time freshmen. The UT Knoxville is a university on the rise whose vision is "A world enriched by our ideas, improved through our action, and inspired by the Volunteer spirit of service and leadership."

We chose *Foundations for Learning, Well-Being, and Career* as the topic for the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) because research demonstrated that **although many of our students are succeeding, more can be done to help them thrive**. First-year retention rates (91.9%), six-year graduation rates (73.9%), and positive career outcomes (90%) are strong and often better than those of many peer institutions. Despite this, students at UT Knoxville, like many others across the nation, report high levels of anxiety, uncertainty, and isolation. By engaging large numbers of stakeholders across campus and diving deeply into our institutional data, we recognized that underlying students' learning, well-being, and career readiness is a need to better understand the *why* and *how* of the college experience (i.e., a need to uncover the "hidden curriculum"). We identified **three key interrelated needs** created by the hidden curriculum: (1) a need for a more consistent understanding of the broader competencies that students develop in college alongside discipline-specific knowledge, (2) a need for strategies to successfully navigate common challenges, and (3) a need for more robust networks to support belonging, professional development, and lifelong learning. Because the classroom is the only place where we can hope to engage 100% of our students, our QEP will focus on addressing these needs within the curriculum by supporting instructors at all levels. **By engaging instructors to meet these needs, our QEP will strengthen the foundations for learning, well-being, and career readiness and facilitate students' ability to deliberately find meaning and purpose in their college experiences, equipping them for success at UT Knoxville and beyond.**

We identified three goals, with subsequent student success outcomes, for our QEP:

1. Increase students' **awareness** of strategies for success, sources of support, and broad competencies that underlie their learning, well-being, and career readiness.
2. Increase students' **use** of these resources, strategies, and competencies.
3. Increase students' sense of **meaning and purpose**, of well-being and belonging, and of confidence to adapt to current and future opportunities.

Activities to achieve these goals include:

1. Introducing a suite of faculty engagement opportunities, including recruiting (a) Faculty Fellows to participate in the Student Experience Project Institute and create communities of practice among our instructors to change classroom culture through small, evidence-based changes, and (b) offering grant opportunities to fund development of discipline-specific resources and practices aligned with the QEP goals
2. Encouraging curricular integration by (a) creating ready-to-use resources related to strategies, supports, and competencies for instructors to embed in their courses and syllabi and (b) embedding training in intentional growth strategies into select first-year studies courses
3. Expanding our existing Vol Success Teams to assign a career coach to every student

We will use a range of strategies to evaluate specific learning outcomes, including tracking scores on validated measures of relevant constructs (e.g., well-being, growth mindset) over time and comparing them between students whose instructors have or have not participated in QEP activities, gathering qualitative data from students as part of mandatory advising sessions and through focus groups, and examining institutional data. Our QEP will support the continued success of students and foster their ability to thrive at UT Knoxville and beyond.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOPIC

We began the topic development process by **identifying and engaging important constituent groups**: faculty (both tenure-line [TL] and non-tenure track [NTT] or teaching faculty); professional advisors, staff (both administrative and student support); and graduate and undergraduate students. After identifying a Steering Committee lead, the QEP Steering Committee (hereafter “the committee”) was intentionally formed to include representatives of these key constituent groups to ensure adequate representation of and reciprocal communication with a broad base of stakeholders. Faculty were chosen to provide proportional representation from across all undergraduate student-serving academic units. Two undergraduate students were selected from the Student Government Association First-Year Leadership Academy, and another staff committee member is also a current doctoral student. This large representative committee (Table 1) was our first step in **ensuring broad-based support for the process**. As described below, we continued to engage the broader campus community throughout the topic selection process.

TABLE 1: QEP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SERVED AUGUST 2023–DECEMBER 2024, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN	
Katherine Ambroziak	<i>Associate Professor; Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Architecture</i>
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES	
Ali Brewer	<i>Associate Director of Advising Services</i>
Chuck Collins	<i>Executive Associate Dean</i>
Jed Diamond	<i>Associate Professor; Department of Theatre</i>
Erin Hardin	<i>Professor; Director of Undergraduate Studies; Associate Department Head, Department of Psychology</i>
Sally Harris	<i>Teaching Professor; Director of Online Programming, Department of English</i>
Nahla Abu Hatab	<i>Senior Lecturer; Director of General Chemistry</i>
Keerthi Krishnan	<i>Associate Professor; Department of Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology</i>
Brandon Prins	<i>Professor; Department Head, Department of Political Science</i>
Amadou Sall	<i>Director of Community and Global Engagement; Distinguished Lecturer, Department of Africana Studies</i>
Kim Sheldon	<i>Associate Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology</i>
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION	
Courtney Childers	<i>Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Success; Interim Director, Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations</i>
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES	
Jedediah Blanton	<i>Assistant Professor, Sport Psychology; Director of Teaching Development</i>
Lynn Hodge	<i>Professor; Department Head, Theory and Practice in Teacher Education</i>
Ashley Parks	<i>Assistant Professor of Practice, Public Health</i>
COLLEGE OF MUSIC	
Barbara Murphy	<i>Assistant Professor of Music Theory</i>
COLLEGE OF NURSING	
Noel Arring	<i>Associate Professor</i>
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK	
Kim Denton	<i>Associate Professor of Practice; Assistant Director of Field Education; BSSW Field Coordinator</i>

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

HASLAM COLLEGE OF BUSINESS	
Somer Chyz	<i>Senior Lecturer, Accounting and Information Management</i>
Amy Engstrom Clugg	<i>Lecturer, Marketing</i>
Michael Lane Morris	<i>John W. Fisher Professor of Innovative Learning; Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Student Affairs</i>
Allen Pannell	<i>Amy Foster Memorial Research Fellow, Business Analytics and Statistics</i>
HERBERT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE	
Cheryl Kojima	<i>Associate Professor, Animal Science</i>
Brent Lamons	<i>Assistant Professor of Practice, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications</i>
TICKLE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING	
Lisa Byrd	<i>Associate Director, Advising Office</i>
Jamie Coble	<i>Professor; Southern Company Faculty Fellow; Associate Department Head, Department of Nuclear Engineering</i>
Timothy Truster	<i>Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering</i>
ADMINISTRATION	
Michael Bookmyer	<i>Provost's Office Director of Academic Finance</i>
Melissa A. Brown	<i>Division of Student Life Director, Student Life Effectiveness</i>
Ashley M. Browning	<i>Institutional Effectiveness Compliance System Specialist</i>
Denise Gardner	<i>Institutional Research and Strategic Analysis Assistant Provost and Executive Director</i>
Chris Kilgore	<i>Teaching and Learning Innovation Director for the Scholarly Teaching and Special Initiatives</i>
Stephanie Kit	<i>Division of Student Success Executive Director, Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration</i>
Michael McFall	<i>Institutional Effectiveness Director of Academic Assessment</i>
Rachel Rui	<i>Center for Global Engagement Director, Global Research, Innovation, and Partnerships, Division of Student Life</i>
Anna Sandelli	<i>UT Libraries Associate Professor and Head of Teaching and Learning Programs</i>
Krystyne Savarese	<i>Division of Student Success Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director, Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration</i>
Virginia Stormer	<i>Division of Student Success Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives and Senior Advisor to the Vice Provost</i>
Teresa Walker	<i>UT Libraries Professor and Associate Dean (retired summer 2024)</i>
Adam White	<i>Student Success Director, First-Year Experience</i>
Jill Zambito	<i>Division of Student Life Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health and Well-Being</i>
STUDENTS	
Aastha Oza	<i>Student Government Association representative, First-year Leadership Council College of Arts and Sciences (pre-med)</i>
Aarya Patel	<i>Student Government Association representative, First-year Leadership Council Haslam College of Business</i>

The committee triangulated three sources of information to identify a topic: (1) examination of the chancellor's strategic vision, "It Takes a Volunteer"; (2) institutional data collected as part of the institution's ongoing planning and assessment processes; and (3) broad-based input from a range of institutional stakeholder constituencies. The full steering committee was divided into subcommittees, each charged with soliciting input from and engaging with a different set of stakeholders (Table 2). Throughout the semester-long process, the committee met monthly to discuss the institutional data and stakeholder input in the context of the institution's strategic vision. The committee lead provided regular updates to the provost's office, presented at the annual academic leadership retreat, and reported to the Faculty Senate each semester.

TABLE 2: FALL 2023 SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH	UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS	NTTF	TLF	STAFF	COMMUNITY
Noel Arring	Ali Brewer	Katherine Ambroziak	Jamie Coble	Lisa Byrd	Somer Chyz
Ashley Browning	Melissa Brown	Amy Engstrom Clugg	Jed Diamond	Chris Kilgore	Lynn Hodge
Chuck Collins	Kim Denton	Sally Harris	*Millie Gimmel	Stephanie Kit	
Michael McFall	Cheryl Kojima	Nahla Hatab	Barbara Murphy	Lane Morris	
*Tim Truster	*Keerthi Krishnan	*Brent Lamons	Teresa Walker	*Rachel Rui	AT LARGE
	Allen Pannell	Amadou Sall			Aastha Oza
	Brandon Prins			GRADUATE STUDENTS	Aarya Patel
	Krystyne Savarese			Erin Hardin	Kim Sheldon

*Indicates committee point person

The information from institutional data and stakeholder input was collected in two rounds, with broad information from the first round leading to a more targeted focus in the second round, as described below.

1.1 Institutional Data and Stakeholder Input, Round 1

In the first collection of institutional data and stakeholder input, the committee's goal was to start broad. Although the committee was intentionally broad and representative, we wanted to ensure that as many voices as possible contributed to the topic selection process. Thus, we initially sought to gather as much information and input as possible to help identify a range of possible topic areas.

1.1.a Chancellor's Strategic Vision: "It Takes a Volunteer"

Prior to the committee's first meeting, the committee lead reviewed the [strategic vision](#) to identify clear priorities and possible topic areas. Four of the institution's five strategic vision goals are directly relevant to the student experience:

1. Cultivating the Volunteer Experience, focused on high-quality educational opportunities with an emphasis on holistic well-being, excellence, and workforce readiness
2. Ensuring a Culture Where Vol Is a Verb, focused on nurturing
3. Making Ourselves Nimble and Adaptable, focused on innovation and collaboration to efficiently support students
4. Embodying the Modern R1 Land-Grant University, focused on creating meaningful, relevant learning experiences

As shown in Table 3, a number of possible topics emerged within each of these goals. For example, one of the priorities under Cultivating the Volunteer Experience is to "provide learners at all levels with opportunities to engage in rich learning and in scholarship that is collaborative, inquiry-based, experiential, affordable, and relevant." Thus, *Collaborative Learning* was identified as a possible topic named directly as a priority in the strategic vision. One of the five-year goals under this priority is that "positive psychology and well-being are infused across colleges and academic affairs units," highlighting *Well-Being* as a possible topic. Similarly, engagement is an explicit priority under Embodying the Modern R1 Land-Grant University ("Create and foster a campus-wide culture of service, engagement, extension, and outreach—reinforcing our Volunteer brand. . . . to align the university across its many parts, and with the needs of Tennessee communities,"). Thus, *Community Engagement / Engaged Learning* was identified as a possible topic named directly in the strategic vision under this goal and implied under several other goals (e.g., one form of experiential learning, a priority under Goal 1, is service-learning).

TABLE 3: STRATEGIC VISION MAPPING

Possible topics, drawn directly from language in strategic vision	STRATEGIC VISION: IT TAKES A VOLUNTEER					
	CULTIVATING THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE			ENSURING A CULTURE WHERE VOL IS A VERB	EMBODYING THE MODERN R1 LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY	MAKING OURSELVES NIMBLE AND ADAPTABLE
	Volunteer Experience	Innovative Interdisciplinary Curricula	Flexible Instructional Offerings			
Collaborative Learning	X	(X)		(X)		
Civil Discourse	X			X		
Inclusive Excellence	X			X		
Leadership & Service	X					
Preparing for a Global Workforce	X			(X)		
Well-Being	X			(X)		
Interdisciplinary Curricula	X	X	X			
Online Learning			X		X	X
Modular learning		X	X		X	X
Community Engagement / Engaged Learning	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	X	

Note: The remaining element of the strategic vision, Conducting Research That Makes Life and Lives Better, is focused on faculty and the institution, not undergraduate education.

Within these goals, there is a clear emphasis on holistic well-being, innovation, and career readiness. These relevant goals and themes were shared with the committee in its initial meeting and served as a source of reflection throughout the process.

1.1.b Institutional Data

The first round of institutional data review involved campus-wide data from internal reports generated as part of the institution's ongoing planning assessment practices and made available to the Institutional Data Subcommittee by the administration. These reports included data on student retention rates; courses with high percentages of students receiving grades of D, F, or W (DFW rates); and use of supplemental instruction support by students. The committee analyzed the data and reports to find needs and challenges exhibited by students, trends in those needs over time, and disparities exhibited by students identified at increased risk of poor academic outcomes (e.g., first-generation college students). From retention statistics, we found that first-year retention rates at the institution have increased from 87.4% in 2012 to 91.9% in 2023, outpacing both national averages (first-year same-institution retention rates rose from 64.9% in 2013 to only 68.2% in 2022) and many peer institutions (e.g., the University of Alabama, which like UT Knoxville is a Southeastern Conference school, reported that its first-year retention rate went from 87% in 2012 to 89% in 2023).

Despite this overall success in first-year retention, gaps at UT Knoxville remained: in fall 2021, retention rates for Pell Grant recipients were about 5 or more points below non-Pell recipients; first-generation students' retention rates were 10% lower than continuing-generation students. In addition, second-year retention rates were somewhat lower than first-year rates, up to 5% lower. UT Knoxville's six-year graduation rate has shown slight improvements: for the cohort that entered in fall 2014, 71% graduated within six years, compared to 73.9% for the cohort that entered in 2018. Although UT Knoxville has shown improvements in many key indicators of student success and outperforms national averages, there is still room for improvement, particularly with second-year retention and six-year graduation rates.

Finally, several courses with high DFW rates in academic year 2021–22 were in basic mathematics and chemistry, which are required for many STEM majors. In addition, often, but not always, students from some backgrounds (e.g., Pell Grant recipient) had higher DFW rates in those courses; this is despite other data showing that a higher percentage of these students sought supplemental instruction services compared to the overall percentage of students seeking this support. For all student groups, students who used academic support services more frequently achieved greater improvement in their grades. Lastly, the subcommittee also searched the institution's website broadly to find campus-level initiatives related to student success that were already part of the institution's ongoing planning in response to these data. Some of these initiatives were flagged for follow-up so that the QEP topic could be synergistic with campus initiatives rather than duplicating efforts.

1.1.c Stakeholder Engagement and Data Collection

One of the most important elements in the QEP topic development process was engaging key stakeholders and gathering their input and feedback. The committee was very intentional in facilitating this broad-based stakeholder engagement through varied and accessible methods, to ensure that university constituents were well informed and appropriately engaged. The first step was to solicit broad open-ended feedback by asking campus stakeholders to answer the following question in one or two words: "What is ONE thing we could change to improve undergraduate student learning and/or success at UT Knoxville?" The survey was disseminated via a pinned announcement in Canvas (the learning management system), as well as a direct message from the provost's office to all instructors, who were encouraged to share the survey link in class via provided slides.

We received 1,984 usable responses from stakeholders in every academic unit on campus¹ (71% of responses were from undergraduate students, 14% from graduate students, 8% from TL faculty, 3% from NTT faculty, 3% from staff, and 1% from other stakeholders, such as family members of current students). Subcommittees of the full steering committee (Table 2) reviewed data for their stakeholder groups (tenure-line faculty, non-tenure line faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, staff, other) and presented reports on themes in the data to the full steering committee on September 28, 2023. For example, the TL Faculty Committee report included: **Experiential Learning** was a strong theme with half of the responses focusing on career readiness. **Health & Wellness** was equally strong with topics ranging from mental health to food insecurity to debt minimization. Four responses were focused on **research** opportunities. **Belonging** was a strong theme. There were two mentions of a **writing** theme and two mentions of initiatives to support **critical thinking**. Topics such as parking, housing, and basic needs came up throughout the responses.

The Institutional Research Subcommittee also presented a report based on its review of institutional data, described above.

1.1.d Summary of Institutional Data and Stakeholder Input, Round 1

Discussion of these themes during and after the meeting, in the context of the institutional data and the goals of the chancellor's strategic vision, resulted in the identification of six broad topic areas for further consideration: *Belonging and Access*, *Career Readiness*, *Flexible Instructional Offerings*, *Focus on Teaching*, *Foundations for Learning*, and *Well-Being and Mental Health*. A follow-up survey of committee members showed overwhelming support for these topic areas based on our review of the data and their alignment with the strategic vision. See Figure 1 for the descriptions of each topic area used in the second round of the process.

1.2 Institutional Data and Stakeholder Input, Round 2

Having identified these six possible topic areas, our next step was to re-engage the campus community and examine additional institutional data to (a) ensure these topics accurately reflected needs and priorities and (b) seek additional input to help refine the topics so that we could go from six possible topics to one final topic. Thus, in Round 2, we again sought broad-based support by re-engaging significant numbers of stakeholder groups to give feedback on the six possible topics. We also examined additional institutional data relevant to these specific topics to help us refine and narrow down the topic possibilities.

¹ Except for the new Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs, which did not exist before fall 2023 and thus had very few faculty and students affiliated with it in fall 2023.

FIGURE 1: SHORT LIST OF POSSIBLE QEP TOPICS

	The QEP Steering Committee has identified six very broad topics the new QEP might focus on. These are based on an integration of feedback from small groups of stakeholders (students, instructors, and staff) from our prior survey, priorities of the Strategic Vision, and institutional data.
1	Belonging and Access Increase student learning and success by increasing access to community and belongingness, for students, faculty and staff; instructors teach better and students learn better when they feel valued and connected. (e.g., community, mentoring, physical spaces, access, engaging across differences)
2	Flexible Instructional Offerings Increase student learning and success by offering and supporting more flexible pathways to that success (e.g., flexible educational paths, more exploratory paths and paths to success in critical math/STEM and other courses, flexible modality/access options)
3	Well-Being and Mental Health Increase student learning and success by facilitating students' abilities to take advantage of learning opportunities. Students cannot thrive in the classroom (lab, studio) if they are not thriving outside the classroom (e.g., increased availability of and access to mental health and other wellness resources, reduced pressures from unmet basic needs [housing, food, health care, clothing]; shared culture of valuing and supporting well-being, work/life integration, resilience, personal growth in and out of the classroom)
4	Foundations for Learning Increase student learning and success by ensuring all students have access to foundational information and skills; "level the playing field" (e.g., creating shared expectations by intentional "onboarding" for new students (FTFTF *and* transfers) and regular faculty development; focus on basic learning, writing, thinking skills; clearer communication and expanded supports)
5	Focus on Teaching Increase student learning and success by increasing access to high quality, effective, engaged learning; situate focus of change less on individual students and more on the environment / context (e.g., develop and communicate shared institutional teaching values and standards, invest in teaching training, support for all instructors (including GTAs); increased opportunities for active, engaged learning across all disciplines and course levels)
6	Career Readiness Increase student learning at UT Knoxville and success beyond UT Knoxville by explicitly equipping students with the mindset and skills needed for an ever evolving world (e.g., helping students bridge toward their future career by having internships and other ways to connect classroom learning with future jobs; helping students articulate the value of their degree to future employers through an emphasis on skills, lifelong learning)

1.2.a Institutional Data

As in our first step, the institutional research subcommittee provided summaries of additional institutional data and their assessment of how each of our six topic areas would address needs identified by those data sources. These additional data were sought based on needs and themes found in the first round of stakeholder feedback; for example, since *Career Readiness* had emerged as one of the six possible topics, we sought additional data from the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration (CCD) to help us better understand needs in this area. These new data were provided by campus centers, departments, and divisions upon request from the committee, demonstrating broad institutional support for the process.

Key findings from these additional data were that, despite the focus from Round 1 on career readiness as a possible topic, data from the CCD showed 90% positive career outcomes for 2022 graduates and CCD interactions with at least 48% of students in each college, suggesting that career readiness needs might be more nuanced. Other data highlighted increasing financial hardship. Of particular concern were data from a recent UT Knoxville basic needs survey, to which approximately 9% of all students (about 2,900) responded. Survey results indicated that 59% (n = 1,682) of students had experienced at least one basic needs insecurity

in the previous year²; 51% (n = 1,454) of students had experienced anxiety or depression in the previous two weeks to the degree it would likely be clinically diagnosed. Although this is consistent with national data (e.g., Lipson et al., 2022, found that more than 60% of college students met criteria for a mental health diagnosis in 2021–2022), it is still highly concerning, especially in light of data from the university’s Student Counseling Center (SCC) showing that the number of intake appointments has decreased since 2018; despite this, the number of therapy appointments is slightly up. Meanwhile, the number of crisis appointments has increased from 10 a month to 30 a month in peak months. In summary, then, the data showed that 51% of students report clinically significant distress and typically only 1–3% of students are utilizing the counseling services annually. Meanwhile, Student Disability Services saw a fourfold increase in utilization from 2015 to 2022.

The Institutional Research Subcommittee used data such as these to roughly identify which of the six proposed topics would most holistically address the needs revealed in these datasets. As shown in Figure 2, *Well-Being and Mental Health* and *Foundations for Learning* were found to have the strongest correlations, followed by *Belonging and Access* and *Focus on Teaching*, then *Career Readiness* and *Flexible Instructional Offerings*.

² Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement, administered in spring 2024 and obtained after the topic selection process had concluded, was consistent with this data: UT Knoxville first-year students and seniors were significantly less likely to agree with the statement, “I have access to affordable, healthy food,” compared to the average across 22 other institutions whose students completed the same items, despite the fact that UT Knoxville students reported significantly less financial difficulties than students at the comparison institution. The largest effect sizes, however, were for the item about the extent to which the institution provides resources to find affordable housing for students: although all students rated their institution low, UT Knoxville students were significantly lower than comparison students.

FIGURE 2: DATA AND TOPIC MAPPING

	Career Readiness	Well-Being & Mental Health	Foundations for Learning	Focus on Teaching	Belonging & Access	Flexible Instructional Offerings
Retention	✗	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
DFW Rates	○	◐	●	●	○	○
Career Center	●	✗	◐	◐	✗	✗
Basic Needs	○	●	○	✗	●	✗
Counseling Center	○	●	○	✗	◐	○
Bursar Past-Due	✗	●	✗	✗	●	○
Climate Survey	○	●	◐	◐	●	✗
Disabilities Services	◐	✗	●	◐	✗	◐
Study Center	○	○	◐	◐	○	○
 No correlation  Low correlation  Moderate correlation  High correlation						

1.2.b Stakeholder Engagement

We solicited additional feedback on the six proposed topic areas via a new survey, as well as more focused campus-wide listening sessions. The new survey asked participants to select their top two choices from among the six topics and offered an opportunity to elaborate on their choices. We received usable data from 3,878 individuals (Table 4):

- 2,441 undergraduates (8.45% of total undergraduate population)
- 523 staff
- 364 tenure-line faculty (~32% of all TL faculty)
- 248 non-tenure track faculty (~32% of all NTT faculty)
- 239 graduate students
- 95 administrators
- 71 undergraduate alumni
- 48 graduate alumni
- 25 other
- 19 family or community members
- 10 postdocs
- 8 employers of UT Knoxville undergraduates

TABLE 4: ROUND 2 SURVEY REPRESENTATION

COLLEGE/OFFICE/UNIT	ACTUAL NUMBERS		ROUND 2 SURVEY	
UNDERGRADUATES	University Fall 2023		Actual Respondents	
	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Architecture and Design	661	2.29%	35	1.44%
Arts and Sciences	7,011	24.27%	660	27.22%
Communication and Information	1,589	5.50%	131	5.40%
Education, Health, and Human Sciences	3,468	12.01%	233	9.61%
Emerging and Collaborative Studies	0	0.00%	1	0.04%
Haslam College of Business	8,263	28.61%	725	29.90%
Herbert College of Agriculture	1,632	5.65%	100	4.12%
Music	234	0.81%	13	0.54%
Nursing	987	3.42%	105	4.33%
Social Work	232	0.80%	93	3.84%
Tickle College of Engineering	3,817	13.22%	309	12.74%
University	989	3.42%	20	0.82%
TOTAL	28,883	100.00%	2,425	100.00%
TL FACULTY	FALL 2023 DATA			
Architecture and Design	36	3.16%	10	3.03%
Arts and Sciences	417	36.58%	107	32.42%
Baker School	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Communication and Information	56	4.91%	23	6.97%
Education, Health, and Human Sciences	113	9.91%	30	9.09%
Emerging and Collaborative Studies	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Haslam College of Business	100	8.77%	27	8.18%
Herbert College of Agriculture	39	3.42%	38	11.52%
UT Institute of Agriculture	0	0.00%	2	0.61%
Law	33	2.89%	0	0.00%
Libraries	43	3.77%	0	0.00%
Music	50	4.39%	12	3.64%
Nursing	23	2.02%	5	1.52%
Social Work	22	1.93%	5	1.52%
Tickle College of Engineering	162	14.21%	55	16.67%
Veterinary Medicine	46	4.04%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	16	4.85%
TOTAL	1,140	100.00%	330	100.00%

TABLE 4 CONTINUED

COLLEGE/OFFICE/UNIT	ACTUAL NUMBERS		ROUND 2 SURVEY	
NTTF	Fall 2023		Actual Respondents	
	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Architecture and Design	20	2.61%	6	2.69%
Arts and Sciences	310	40.52%	71	31.84%
Baker School	—	0.00%	1	0.45%
Communication and Information	27	3.53%	14	6.28%
Education, Health, and Human Sciences	65	8.50%	21	9.42%
Emerging and Collaborative Studies	—	0.00%	—	0.00%
Haslam College of Business	93	12.16%	33	14.80%
Herbert College of Agriculture	18	2.35%	9	4.04%
Law	7	0.92%	—	0.00%
Libraries	—	0.00%	—	0.00%
Music	—	0.00%	3	1.35%
Nursing	74	9.67%	18	8.07%
Social Work	28	3.66%	8	3.59%
Tickle College of Engineering	73	9.54%	25	11.21%
Veterinary Medicine	50	6.54%	—	0.00%
Other	—	0.00%	14	6.28%
TOTAL	765	100.00%	223	100.00%
STAFF	FALL 2023 DATA			
Access and Engagement	24	0.42%	12	2.30%
Advancement	—	0.00%	6	1.15%
Architecture and Design	21	0.37%	4	0.77%
Arts and Sciences	381	6.67%	40	7.68%
Athletics	312	5.47%	2	0.38%
Baker School	—	0.00%	3	0.58%
Chancellor's Office	23	0.40%	3	0.58%
Communication and Information	67	1.17%	14	2.69%
Communications and Marketing	56	0.98%	3	0.58%
Education, Health, and Human Sciences	200	3.50%	30	5.76%
Finance and Administration	1,004	17.59%	12	2.30%
Haslam College of Business	181	3.17%	49	9.40%
Herbert College of Agriculture	21	0.37%	26	4.99%
UT Institute of Agriculture	—	0.00%	55	100.00%

TABLE 4 CONTINUED

COLLEGE/OFFICE/UNIT	ACTUAL NUMBERS		ROUND 2 SURVEY	
STAFF CONTINUED	University Fall 2023		Actual Respondents	
	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL	ACTUAL COUNT	PERCENT OF TOTAL
IT and Digital Innovation	211	3.70%	3	0.58%
Music	—	0.00%	3	0.58%
Nursing	67	1.17%	7	1.34%
Provost's Office	2,036	35.67%	28	5.37%
Research	114	2.00%	21	4.03%
Social Work	139	2.44%	11	2.11%
Student Life	363	6.36%	67	12.86%
Tickle College of Engineering	329	5.76%	47	9.02%
Other	159	2.79%	75	14.40%
TOTAL	5,708	100.00%	521	100.00%

Responses were received from students, faculty, and staff in every college, as well as from staff in 11 administrative units (e.g., chancellor's office, Advancement, Student Life). Committee members also held 24 listening sessions (four staff-specific, three NTTf-specific, and 17 open) with both in-person and online options. The lead visited four standing staff meetings (e.g., Student Disability Services, Student Success leadership team). These sessions and meetings offered opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions about and offer input on the topics.

1.2.c Summary of Institutional Data and Stakeholder Input, Round 2

As in Round 1, subcommittees summarized the data and themes from the qualitative comments for their specific groups (from both the surveys and the listening sessions) for discussion by the full committee.

Although data were not consistent across stakeholder groups in terms of the top two choices, *Career Readiness* and *Well-Being and Mental Health* tended to be in the top three for all groups. In the total sample, *Career Readiness* received the most top-choice votes (1,259), followed by *Well-Being and Mental Health* (1,074). As shown in Table 5, each of these topics was the most chosen second choice for the other. For example, of the 1,259 people who selected *Career Readiness* as their topic choice, 351 chose *Well-Being and Mental Health* as their second choice.

Although *Career Readiness* was the most popular choice, institutional data indicate that our students do graduate career ready: as noted above, the most recent annual report from the UT Knoxville Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration showed that positive career outcomes for the Class of 2022 reached a record high of 90%, with *Employed* at 64% and *Continuing Education* at 26%. Discussion of the comments underlying votes for this topic highlighted the idea that it reflects early anxiety about career readiness as opposed to actual deficits in career readiness upon graduation, as the underlying need. Students reported feeling uncertain about the ways in which some of their coursework would prepare them for their careers as well as a more global anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Clearly, this anxiety relates to the second-most-popular choice, *Well-Being and Mental Health*, and, unlike *Career Readiness*, institutional data are consistent with this focus.

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF FIRST AND SECOND CHOICE VOTES BY TOPIC

FIRST CHOICE VOTES	SECOND CHOICE VOTES						Total
	Belonging & Access	Career Readiness	Flexible Instructional Offerings	Focus on Teaching	Foundations for Learning	Well-Being & Mental Health	
Belonging & Access	4	71	34	38	50	143	340
Career Readiness	136	16	199	304	253	351	1,259
Flexible Instructional Offerings	27	84	7	51	27	66	262
Focus on Teaching	43	195	70	4	96	129	537
Foundations for Learning	61	110	45	77	5	93	391
Well-Being & Mental Health	271	371	144	128	147	13	1,074
Total	542	847	499	602	578	795	3,863

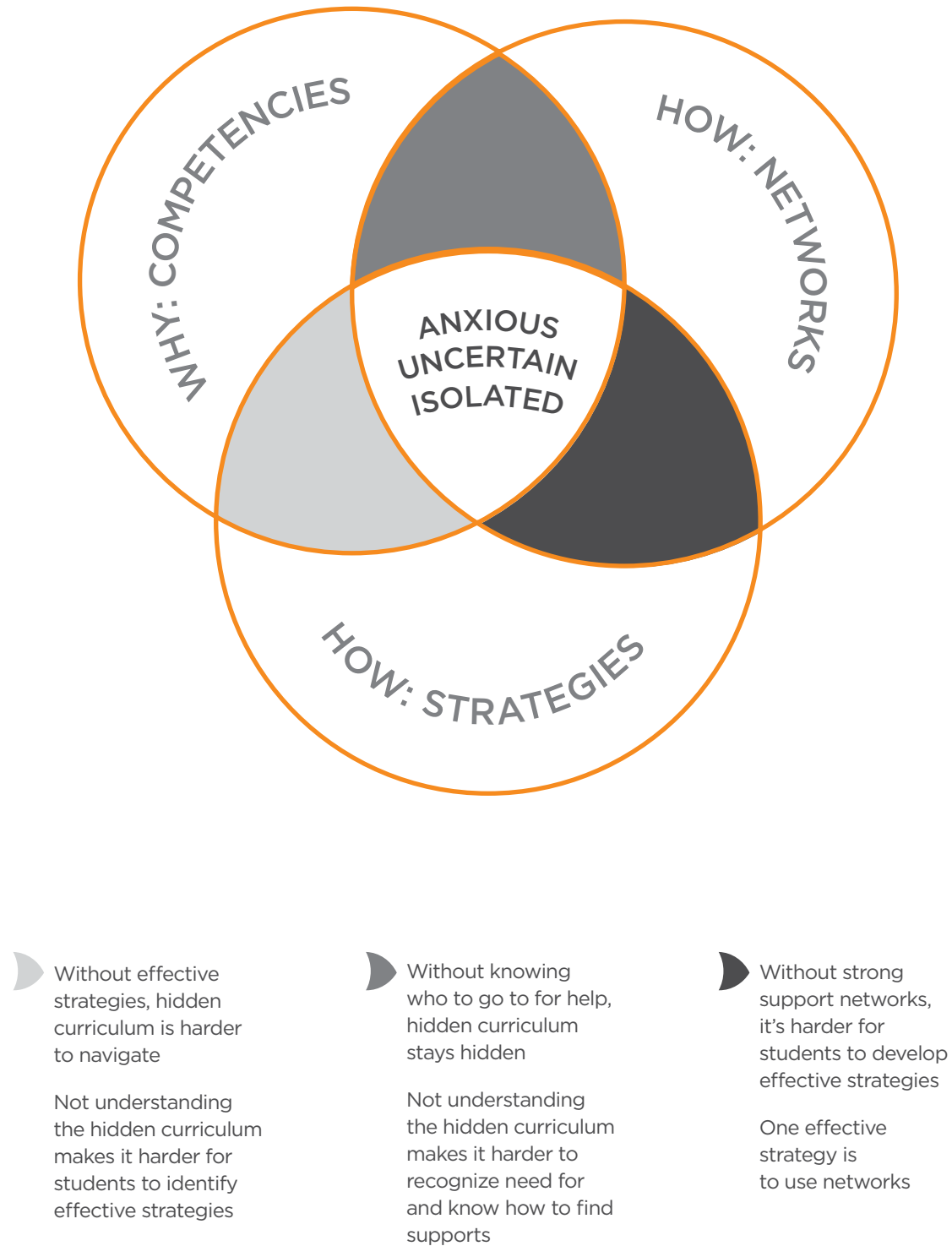
Moreover, it became clear as the committee discussed the data and comments that there was significant overlap among the topics. Anxiety about career readiness seemed to be part of a more global uncertainty about the future and what students should expect from their education, which feeds into many of their mental health concerns. For example, one survey participant commented, “*Well-being and mental health* is extremely important in order to allow for functional operation in all other areas. For the second option, I picked *foundations for learning*. I was leaning toward *career readiness* but having a good educational foundation I think sets one up to be career ready and if students are feeling like they are lacking a quality education, then they will feel [less] prepared in the working world.” Another said, “There is considerable overlap in some of these areas (this is not a negative, but rather a signal that these aspects have been considered thoroughly); that said, I think the *Belonging & Access* and *Well-Being & Mental Health* areas have a high likelihood of being domino-like focuses, meaning that achieving these goals lays the groundwork for the other goals to be achieved with greater ease and likelihood of success.” Underlying these interrelated concerns were several themes: (a) disconnection, isolation, and uncertainty, rooted in part in a lack of awareness of the available resources and how to ask for and access support for a range of concerns, from meeting basic needs to academic success and professional development; (b) limited understanding about the purpose and value of higher education beyond the credential; (c) an unclear sense of students’ future goals and how to achieve them; and (d) difficulty grasping how coursework and other experiences are relevant to these future goals. For example, one instructor commented, “Most of the students I am teaching . . . don’t understand what it is we’re doing here. . . . [We need to be] teaching students what’s different about college” so they can benefit more from “what could be a transformative college experience.”

A vibrant discussion in the committee distilled the comments and concerns into a **broad underlying need for students to have a clearer understanding of the *why* and *how* of the college experience**. More specifically, we saw **three underlying needs** (Figure 3):

1. A need for a more consistent understanding of the broader competencies that students develop in college in addition to discipline-specific knowledge (the *why* of college)
2. A need to better understand and use strategies to navigate common challenges (part of the *how* of college)
3. a need for more robust networks to support belonging, well-being, professional development, and lifelong learning (part of the *how* of college)

FIGURE 3: THREE UNDERLYING NEEDS

The topic selection process also made clear that three overlapping needs underlie these challenges, resulting in students feeling anxious, uncertain, and isolated.



Discussion highlighted how the kinds of anxiety, uncertainty, and isolation seen in many of our students' qualitative comments seem to represent the intersection of these overlapping needs. It is essential that the institution meet these needs to help students deliberately find meaning and purpose in their college experiences. In the words of one undergraduate student who completed our second-round survey, "When I feel like my curriculum is valuable and the classroom is dynamic and supportive, most of my personal issues seem to get left at the door. Meaningful work, in my opinion, is the greatest way to find belonging and gain confidence."

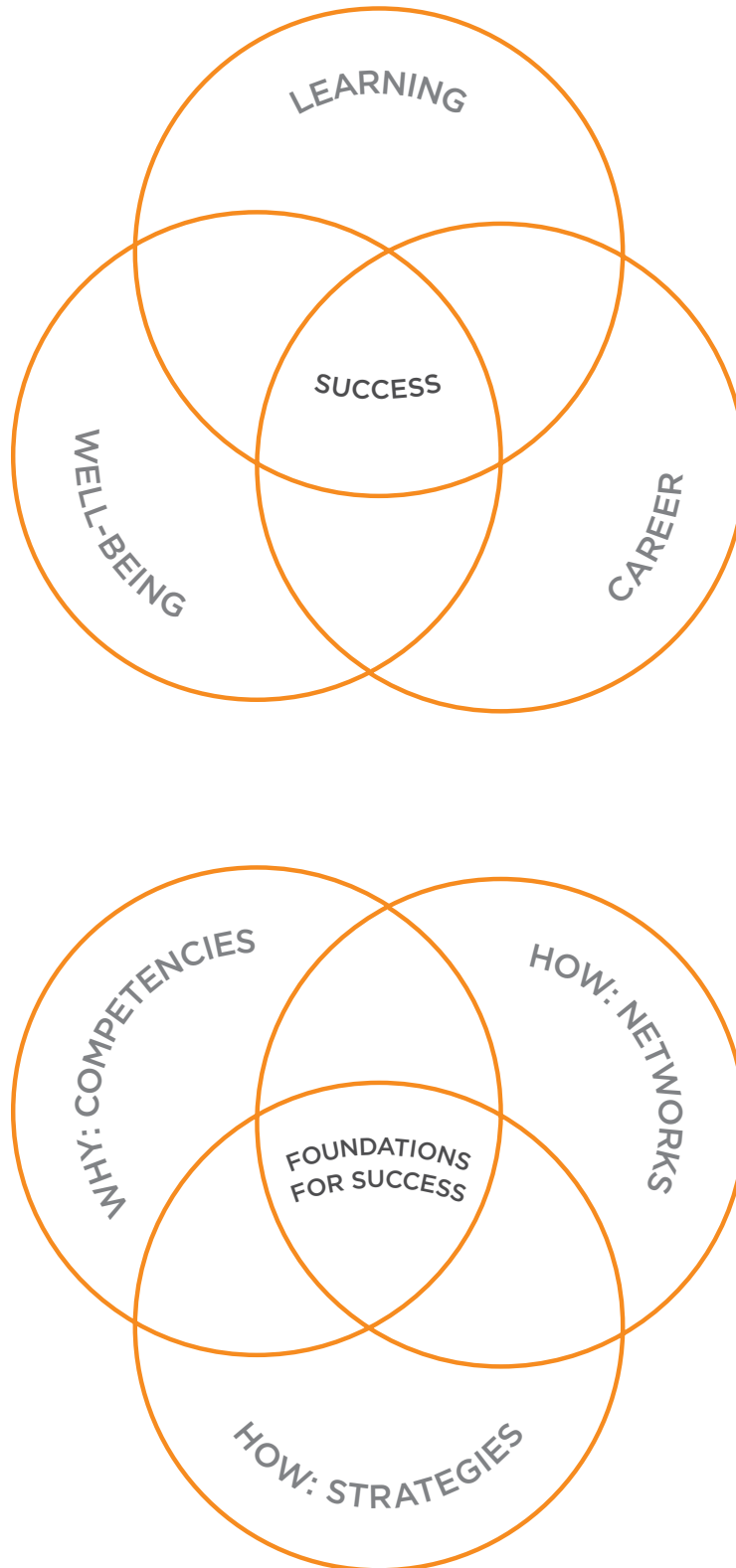
1.3 Final Topic Selection Process

A blind vote among committee members showed nearly equal support for the *Foundations for Learning* and *Well-Being and Mental Health* topics, followed by *Belonging and Access*. Further discussion solidified the sense that focusing on any one of these topics in isolation would not adequately address the key underlying needs that had emerged throughout the process. As we continued to focus on the underlying needs evident in our data, it became clear that students need a consistent understanding of the college experience so they can see how it is relevant to their learning, well-being, and future career. They need strong support networks to foster well-being, academic success, and career readiness. Finally, they need successful strategies to navigate challenges to their learning, well-being, and career readiness.

We thus identified *Foundations for Learning, Well-Being, and Career* as the overarching topic to address these underlying needs. Giving students a more consistent understanding of the why and how of their college experience will facilitate their ability to find meaning and purpose in their life and education and strengthen the foundations of learning, well-being, and career readiness, creating success at UT Knoxville and beyond. (Figure 4). This QEP topic emerged holistically as a result of a representative process that considered institutional needs and viability and included broad-based input from a wide range of campus constituencies. This clear topic is also directly related to institutional planning processes and is consistent with priorities in the institution's strategic vision. More specifically, this topic explicitly supports the goal of the strategic vision to *Cultivate the Volunteer Experience* through its focus on holistic well-being, community, meaningful educational experiences, and career readiness.

FIGURE 4: PREMISE OF OUR QEP

Meeting these underlying needs will foster learning, well-being, and career, resulting in holistic success.



2. GOALS OF THE QEP

UT Knoxville's QEP will be successful when students are aware of and use resources, evidence-based strategies, and broad career competencies to foster their learning, well-being, and career readiness. The committee situated two process goals—awareness and action—between the underlying needs we identified and our ultimate goal of helping students find increased meaning and purpose through strong foundations for learning, well-being, and career readiness. Below we describe these processes and final goals more fully. We will present specific measurable outcomes for each goal in Section 6 after describing the background research that informed specific operationalization of some of these goals and the specific activities we will use to meet these goals.

Process Goal 1: Awareness. Our first step is to increase students' awareness of strategies for success, sources of support, and broad competencies that underlie their learning, well-being, and career readiness.

Process Goal 2: Action. With increased awareness, students will be able to use resources, strategies, and competencies relevant to learning, well-being, and career readiness.

Final Goal 3: Meaning and Purpose. When through this process students strengthen their learning, well-being, and career readiness, the result will be a holistic success marked by an increased sense of meaning and purpose, of well-being and belonging, and of confidence to adapt to current and future experiences.

Related student outcomes are found in Section 6: Student Outcomes and Assessment Plan.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE QEP

Having identified the QEP topic and desired goals, the committee worked to identify the specific approach that would best achieve these goals. We continued to involve a wide range of constituent stakeholders throughout this process, both by adding new members to the committee (representing First-Year Studies and campus mental health services) and by providing regular opportunities for the larger campus to remain engaged. The committee was again divided into subcommittees, each charged with a specific activity: conducting an informal audit of existing initiatives and resources relevant to our topic; benchmarking with other institutions to assess how they were addressing foundations for learning, well-being, and career readiness; and exploring the research literature relevant to these topics (Table 6).

TABLE 6: SPRING 2024 SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

ASSESSMENT	RESEARCH		
SLOs	Existing Initiatives and Resources	Peer Examples	Literature Review
Nahla Abu Hatab Melissa Ann Brown Ashley Browning *Chuck Collins Amy Engstrom Clugg Sally Harris Keerthi Krishnan Michael McFall II Barb Murphy Ashley Parks	Katherine Ambroziak Ali Brewer Lisa Byrd Jed Diamond Stephanie Kit Cheryl Kojima Aarya Patel Rachel Rui *Krystyne Savarese Adam White Jill Zambito	*Noel Arring Jed Blanton Courtney Childers Jamie Coble Kimberly Denton Denise Gardner Aastha Oza Allen Pannell Jr. Kimberly Sheldon	Erin Hardin Lynn Liao Hodge *Chris Kilgore Brent Lamons Brandon Prins Tim Truster Teresa Walker

*Indicates committee point person

AT-LARGE MEMBERS: Somer Chyz, Lane Morris, Amadou Sall

3.1 Informal Audit of Existing Initiatives and Resources

We surveyed associate deans in each college about existing relevant initiatives and resources and received detailed responses from each unit. This information was combined with information about campus-wide initiatives and resources (e.g., those provided by the Academic Success Center and the new VolEdge Program, focused on career and leadership readiness). Key findings from this committee activity were that (a) while UT Knoxville has abundant resources and programming relevant to career, well-being, and learning, there is not a consistent place or way to navigate and maintain awareness of all that is available; (b) faculty are not consistently made aware of new resources as they launch; (c) though varying in scope, colleges reported more initiatives related to career than well-being; (d) learning support structures are content-specific; (e) there is inequitable access to resources across the colleges, particularly relevant to embedded career resources. In addition, this activity identified a number of opportunities:

- **Resource aggregation:** Develop centralized structures to organize and integrate resources.
- **Faculty engagement:** Develop broad and ongoing structures to communicate initiatives to the faculty, not isolated to new faculty onboarding.
- **Streamlined efforts:** Audit existing programming for opportunities to consolidate and eliminate redundancies.
- **Career opportunities:** While all colleges are offering instances of career readiness or career development, offering universal career-in-the-curriculum resources and faculty training may create synchronicity across the student experience regarding career readiness. In particular, embedding National Association of Colleges and Employers competencies could heighten students' understanding of the relevance of our general education curriculum, Volunteer Core, to their professional goals. Other suggestions were to include required career or capstone courses in the curriculum to facilitate more equitable access to career development and to point students to VolEdge, which can provide additional consistent resources for students in all colleges.

Discussion of these findings led the committee to two important conclusions about our QEP activities:

- **Faculty involvement.** The classroom (both in person and virtual) is the one place where we expect 100% of UT Knoxville students to be engaged—no other physical or virtual space is consistently accessed by all students. Thus, engaging instructors at all levels (graduate student instructors, instructional staff, teaching and tenure-line faculty) and in all modalities (in person, hybrid, online) is key.
- **Existing resources.** The institution already has a tremendous number of resources, but students and faculty are often unaware of their existence or when and how to access them. Thus, rather than creating something new, increasing awareness and integration of, and access to, existing initiatives and resources is also key.

3.2 Benchmarking with Other Institutions

We reviewed publicly available information for 59 institutions to gather ideas about how they are addressing needs and challenges relevant to our topic; these 59 institutions primarily comprised other large R1 and land-grant institutions (including six peer aspirational institutions and 10 peer comparative institutions designated by the UT Board of Trustees), as well as several other institutions in Tennessee. Broader web searches for QEPs and our topic keywords identified other institutions to include in this initial review. Given our desire to focus on faculty and classroom integration, we identified 10 institutions that described relevant classroom initiatives. Most of the classroom initiatives were either career- or research-focused. All institutions developed faculty resources to support the initiatives. These included training, incentives, and student resources. Training typically included online training and/or fellowship programs, which often included allocation of time for the program, specific goals (e.g., create and/or update a course or curriculum), and ongoing supports (many lasting one to two semesters). Incentives varied; some were monetary or time (e.g., course releases), but most were recognition-based. Finally, in terms of student resources, many of the initiatives created tools or resources that faculty members could easily adapt and include in their courses (e.g., Canvas modules, tools, and assessments).

Equitable learning was found to be a theme throughout several of the institutions. For example, the University of Iowa reported success with supporting equitable learning through their Three M (Mindset, Metacognition,

and Memory) program that helps students develop a growth mindset. This program was of particular interest, given that our literature review (see Section 4.2.b) also identified mindset and mindset culture as relevant.

3.3 Exploring the Research Literature

A broad initial literature review identified hundreds of possible constructs relevant to learning, well-being, and career, so we narrowed our focus to those constructs shown to relate to all three areas or to our identified underlying needs of understanding the college experience, navigating challenges, and building healthy networks. These included the hidden curriculum, Personal Growth Initiative, mindset and mindset culture, and career adaptability.

4. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

As described above, our topic selection process identified overlapping and interrelated needs underlying student learning, well-being, and career, particularly early in students' college careers. The idea that learning, well-being, and career are not separate outcomes but reciprocally intertwined is consistent with the literature on college student adjustment, which has been shown to be a multidimensional construct (Baker & Siryk, 1984; O'Donnell et al., 2018). Models of college student adjustment typically include academic or educational functioning, social or relational functioning, and personal-emotional or psychological functioning (Baker & Siryk, 1984; O'Donnell et al., 2018); some models also include institutional attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1984). Not only is college adjustment multidimensional, but there is also evidence that challenges with adjustment in one area can affect adjustment in others: "For example, a student's sense of loneliness (i.e., low social adjustment) is likely to isolate the student from peers who might be able to offer assistance on academic tasks and may also negatively affect the ability of the student to perform well academically as social concerns interfere with the ability or willingness of the student to prepare for tests. Similarly, poor personal-emotional adjustment may prevent students from engaging in effective help-seeking behavior when encountering academic difficulties," (Credé & Niehorster, 2012, pp. 139–140).

Of course, we don't want students to just adjust to college but to thrive at UT Knoxville. In thriving, students can go beyond college student success or surviving into understanding their college experience as deeply meaningful and transformational (Culshaw et al., 2022). Although universities are typically invested in supporting students' holistic academic and personal success, UT Knoxville has been particularly focused on fostering student well-being, most recently as part of the institution's "It Takes a Volunteer" strategic vision. For example, new student success initiatives have focused on helping promote the PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2002): **P**ositive emotion, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, and a sense of **M**eaning and **A**ccomplishment—for our students. Contemporary models of well-being, like PERMA, go beyond the simple presence of positive emotional experiences to include overall positive functioning (Brandel, et al., 2017). *Flourishing*, a term first introduced by Keyes (2002), captures this multidimensional idea of not only having good mental health and feeling happy and satisfied with life but also having good psychological and social functioning. Despite the increase in studies measuring flourishing over the past two decades, there is still no single agreed-upon definition of flourishing (Rule et al., 2024). The most common measures of flourishing, however, assess subjective perceptions of well-being (as opposed to objective indicators) along multiple dimensions and in multiple domains of functioning that are experienced over a sustained period of time (weeks to months; Rule et al., 2024).

Clearly, the goals of our QEP are consistent with these contemporary models of flourishing, which focus on multiple aspects of well-being across multiple domains of functioning. More specifically, these models support the underlying premise of our QEP that by meeting students' needs to better understand and navigate the college experience and to build healthy networks, we will equip students for improved success across the intertwined domains of learning, well-being, and career (Figure 4). In the following sections, we synthesize the evidence we gathered that informed the selection of specific activities to best meet these needs, build a strong foundation, and promote multidimensional well-being. The sections presented below relate to (a) challenges to understanding the college experience (i.e., hidden curriculum) and (b) resources and skills for anticipating challenges, capitalizing on growth opportunities, and building healthy networks (i.e., Personal Growth Initiative, growth mindset, sense of belonging, and career adaptability).

4.1 Challenges to Understanding the College Experience: Hidden Curriculum

As described above and shown in Figure 3, we conceptualized a broad underlying need for students to better understand the why and how of the college experience, with three specific underlying needs for our QEP to address: recognizing the broad competencies developed in college, knowing strategies for navigating common challenges, and building robust support networks. Implicit is the idea that many of our students do not have consistent and equitable access to information about the value of college and how to successfully navigate college. The *hidden curriculum* has been defined as the unspoken or implicit academic, social, and other messages that students learn as they navigate college (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022). This can include unwritten rules around assignments or classroom behavior expectations, knowledge of what office hours are or how to seek help from a faculty member, and so on. Scholars have argued that some students (e.g., those with college-educated parents or who attended particularly well-resourced high schools) systematically have more access to these unwritten rules than other students, making the successful transition to college easier for those students (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022).

Importantly, research has shown that increasing transparency around these unwritten rules—uncovering the hidden curriculum—can reduce gaps and increase achievement for students (e.g., Ramirez et al., 2021; Stephens et al., 2014; Winkelmes et al., 2016), leading scholars to urge universities to “explicitly communicate the what, why, and how of these rules of the game to equalize differential advantages among students,” (Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022, p. 225) and the creation of national educational projects to promote transparency in teaching and learning in higher education (Winkelmes, <https://tilthighered.com>).

4.1.a Hidden Curriculum at UT Knoxville

To learn which aspects of the hidden curriculum are most salient for our students, in spring 2024 the committee created and deployed a survey for students and faculty/staff. We drew from published research on the hidden curriculum (Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022) as well as our own experience working with UT Knoxville students, to develop a list of 32 potential aspects of the hidden curriculum. We also included “None of these” and “Other” options for a total of 34 possible choices. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey and prompts. Respondents first selected as many items as they wanted; if more than five were selected, respondents were asked to select the top five items from their choices to help us identify the most important aspects of the hidden curriculum at UT Knoxville. We received usable responses from 1,686 undergraduate students and 258 faculty, staff, graduate students, and others (e.g., alumni and employers of UT Knoxville students). We counted how many times each item was listed in the top five by different groups, then rank ordered the items from 1 (most frequently listed in the top five) to 34 (least frequently listed in the top five).

The top 10 aspects of the hidden curriculum for students and for faculty/staff, overall, are shown in Table 7. Importantly, aspects of the hidden curriculum related to learning (e.g., how to study effectively), well-being (e.g., strategies for managing stress), and career (e.g., what is needed to get a good job besides doing well in one’s major) all emerged in the top 10. We also looked at the top five for various groups (e.g., rural students, first-generation students) and discovered strong consistency across groups. For example, the five most frequently listed aspects shown in Table 7 for students as a whole were in the top six most frequently listed aspects for every student group considered. The top 10 aspects were in the top 15 for all student groups. Moreover, seven of the 10 aspects chosen most often by students were also in the top 10 for faculty and staff. The exceptions in the student top 10 make sense given the different perspectives: students had *Budgeting money* and *Understanding Financial Aid* as No. 6 and No. 7, respectively, whereas they were No. 16 and No. 13 for faculty, who often are not privy to students’ financial situations. *Becoming involved in campus organizations*, No. 10 for students but No. 27 for faculty, is similarly something most faculty are not aware of on a daily basis; in contrast, the items in the top 10 for faculty but not for students reflect behaviors faculty have more opportunities to observe: *Taking good notes* (No. 6 for faculty, No. 13 for students), *Asking for help* (No. 5 for faculty, No. 21 for students), and *Knowing how to contribute in a classroom* (No. 10 for faculty, No. 33 for students). See Appendix A for more details.

TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF HIDDEN CURRICULUM SURVEY RESULTS

	UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS N = 1,686	FACULTY/STAFF/GRADUATE STUDENTS/OTHER N = 258
Knowing what I need to do to get a good job other than do well in my major	1	7
Networking to meet people, form connections for my career interests	2	9
Managing stress / Taking care of my mental health	3	2
Studying effectively	4	3
Managing my time	5	1
Budgeting money	6	16
Understanding financial aid	7	13
Understanding how courses outside my major are relevant to my future career	8	8
Knowing who to ask / where to go for help	9	4
Becoming involved in campus organizations	10	27
Finding people with shared interests	11	25
Joining a research lab	12	21
Taking good notes	13	6
Understanding what an advisor is and can do	14	17
Planning, preparing, and accessing food / meals	15	23
Finding leadership positions	16	30
Identifying a mentor	17	17
Understanding insurance	18	25
Identifying student resources on campus	19	12
Finding my way around campus	20	33
Asking for help	21	5
Knowing how to feel seen in very large classes	22	24
Finding academic support resources	23	13
Using Canvas	24	21
Being independent / doing things on my own	25	34
Forming study groups	26	28
Visiting faculty office hours	27	11
Understanding the academic calendar / schedule	28	32
Emailing professors	29	19
Helping my family understand what college is like	30	28
Using a course syllabus	31	13
Other	32	20
Knowing how to contribute in a classroom	33	10
None of these	34	31

4.1.b Elements of Successful Hidden Curriculum Interventions

Based on their review of published research, Laiduc and Covarrubias (2022) recommended that students need to know not just *what* resources are available, but *why* they might use them and *how* to access them. They also highlighted the importance of using personal stories to link students' identities to systemic, not individual, reasons for lack of information. For example, Stephens et al. (2014) described a panel of students sharing their struggles as first-year students and the resources that helped them. One group of panelists named their first-generation college student (FGCS) status as a reason for their challenges; the second group did not. FGCSs who heard the first panel were more likely to seek help later than FGCSs who heard the second panel. Similarly, Ramirez et al. (2021) created two types of brief videos to tell students about important resources on campus. In the *Resource-only* condition, students discussed resources and how to access them. In the *Resource + story* condition, students also discussed how their own identities affected their experiences at the university. Interestingly, both conditions led to positive outcomes for FGCS; the *Resource + story* condition led to better outcomes for continuing-generation (CG) students. This study was conducted at a Hispanic-serving Institution, which may explain this finding. However, both studies indicate that sharing personal stories as part of uncovering the hidden curriculum appears valuable. Laiduc and Covarrubias (2022) recommend these kinds of panels or videos, as well as sharing stories via highly trafficked platforms such as university websites. Within the classroom, the Transparency in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (TILT Higher Ed) project recommends that instructors explicitly communicate the purpose of each assignment, focusing on the knowledge and/or skills students can develop via the assignment; the specific task(s) students must do to successfully complete the assignment; and the criteria used to evaluate the students' work. In a large quasi-experiment, students who received these more transparent assignments "reported gains in three areas that are important predictors of students' success: academic confidence, sense of belonging, and mastery of the skills that employers value most when hiring" (Winkelmes et al., 2016, p. 33).

When students lack information about the hidden curriculum (competencies, strategies, and networks of support), they are often unprepared or underprepared for the challenges and growth opportunities inherent in the college experience. Uncovering the hidden curriculum is one approach to meeting these underlying needs, but it would be impossible to anticipate every challenge or opportunity students might encounter. Thus, equipping students with the skills needed to take advantage of opportunities more globally is also essential in helping our students build strong foundations for learning, well-being, and career.

4.2 Resources and Skills for Anticipating Challenges, Capitalizing on Growth Opportunities, and Building Healthy Networks

4.2.a Personal Growth Initiative

Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) (Robitschek, 1998; Robitschek et al., 2012) is a skill set underlying active, intentional involvement in growth and improvement. Although relevant across the lifespan and in a variety of domains, PGI has been studied extensively among college students; a recent meta-analysis included studies in 14 countries across four continents (Jiao et al., 2024). A strength of PGI theory is its broad relevance, as PGI skills may be implemented toward any individually determined goal (see Hardin et al., 2014). Indeed, this is what distinguishes the PGI perspective from other approaches: PGI focuses on the process of intentional growth rather than the outcomes of these growth processes.

More than two decades of research have demonstrated that people with higher PGI skills can more positively cope with life's everyday challenges, are better problem solvers, and have more choices and tools available when working to change and improve themselves (Robitschek & Anderson, 2011; Robitschek & Cook, 1999). More specifically, and importantly for our QEP, **higher PGI is associated with better academic (i.e., learning), well-being, and career outcomes among college students** (see Robitschek & Thoen, 2015, for a review). Students higher in PGI have higher grades, and aspects of PGI account for approximately 75% more variance in GPA than SAT scores (Robitschek & Anderson, 2011). People with high levels of PGI typically have high psychological, emotional, and social well-being (Robitschek, 1999; Robitschek & Keyes, 2009), including better interpersonal relationships (Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999; Robitschek & Keyes, 2009), higher levels of happiness, life satisfaction (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009), and positive affect (Hardin, et al., 2007, Robitschek & Keyes, 2009), and lower anxiety and negative affect (Hardin et al., 2007). Finally, higher PGI is associated with

better career development, including greater involvement in career exploration, and greater self-efficacy for and reduced anxiety about career decision-making (Bartley & Robitschek, 2000).

PGI comprises four skills (see Robitschek et al., 2012):

1. **Readiness for change** refers not only to the ability to identify something one wants to change but also an awareness of when the time is right to initiate change.
2. **Planfulness** refers to both general goal-setting skills and the ability to adapt those general skills to the specific domain of and context for change at the time.
3. **Use of resources** refers to the ability to identify sources of support outside oneself and use them effectively.
4. Finally, **intentional behavior** refers to actually following the plans one has made.

Importantly, although individuals differ in their levels of PGI, because it is a skill set, it can be taught. Direct increase of PGI was first demonstrated in 2010 (Martinez et al.) and laid the foundation for what is now known as Intentional Growth Training (IGT) (Thoen & Robitschek, 2013), an empirically supported, two-session manualized training that fosters the development of PGI. In developing IGT, Thoen and Robitschek conducted several experiments with college students to demonstrate both that IGT causes a significant increase in PGI and to identify engagement in a growth activity as a key component of the intervention that leads to these increases. The final IGT protocol involves (a) understanding the process of change through psychoeducation about PGI, (b) gaining insight into current life circumstances and emotional states, (c) exploring issues of stress and risk-taking (e.g., discussing stepping outside one's comfort zone), and (d) setting goals and developing action plans. Session 1 focuses on psychoeducational components, reflection on past growth attempts, brainstorming possible areas of personal growth to apply the PGI skills to, and identifying a personal growth goal and plan of action. One week later, in Session 2, participants return to discuss their experiences.

In addition to demonstrating that IGT increases PGI (Thoen & Robitschek, 2013), other research has shown that it can prevent worsening of depression. In a small randomized controlled trial (Pascual, Harmon, Curtis, & Robitschek, 2017), 222 undergraduates who reported elevated depressive symptoms at baseline screening were randomly assigned to either an IGT or control group. Depression was measured at Week 1 (Session 1 for IGT group participants), one week later at Week 2 (Session 2 for IGT group), and again two weeks later (Week 4).

The researchers hypothesized that because stress commonly increases for students as the semester progresses, students in the control condition might demonstrate increased depressive symptoms from baseline to Week 4, whereas the IGT participants would not. Results showed no effect of condition for students with clinical levels of depression at baseline; however, among students with subclinical levels of depression at baseline, IGT group participants showed no worsening of symptoms at Week 4, compared to control group participants, who reported significantly more depressive symptoms at Week 4. Similar results were found in a smaller RCT (Robitschek & Harmon, 2017), leading the authors to conclude that IGT does not appear to be an effective treatment for depression but does seem to be effective in preventing the onset of depression (primary prevention) and in preventing the worsening of subclinical depression (secondary prevention).

4.2.b Growth Mindset and Mindset Culture

Growth mindset is another construct related to students' ability to persist in the face of challenge. Growth mindset is the belief that intelligence and abilities are not unchangeable or innate traits, but can be continuously developed through effort, learning, and perseverance (Dweck, 1999). Carol Dweck pioneered this concept as it is understood today through her research on motivation and personality. Much of Dweck's work is rooted in the philosophy of the American progressive thinker, John Dewey. Dweck's research challenged traditional views that intelligence is fixed and argues that a growth mindset enhances learning outcomes and personal development (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck, 2007). Understanding that mindsets are fluid depending on situational cues, growth mindset is an important concept to this QEP because of its strong accents on embracing challenges, hard work, openness to learning, persistence through adversity, and resilience.

4.2.b.i Early research on theories of intelligence. Dweck's early work highlighted two implicit theories of intelligence, entity and incremental, and demonstrated how an incremental view fostered resilience and motivation (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). An *incremental* view of intelligence (now synonymous with a growth

mindset) is a belief that one's intellect or other abilities can be cultivated through hard work and seeking help; students who implicitly hold this view tend to possess learning goals, which motivate them to seek challenges to expand their ability. Further, because they perceive their ability as malleable, students with a growth mindset perceive effort as beneficial. Therefore, when such students encounter academic difficulties, they are more likely to attribute their difficulty to the task and to remain engaged with the task. These students expect to succeed even in the face of academic challenges and persist at difficult tasks. An *entity* view (also known as a fixed mindset), conversely, reflects the belief that intelligence is fixed and unchangeable. Students with a fixed mindset tend to possess performance goals, which motivate them to seek opportunities to demonstrate how much ability they have and to avoid challenges that might reveal how little they have. Because they perceive ability as immutable, these students perceive effort not only as unhelpful but also as evidence that they lack ability. Therefore, when these students encounter academic difficulties, they are more likely to attribute their difficulty to their own limitations rather than to the task's difficulty. As a result, their expectations for success rapidly diminish in the face of academic challenge and they readily disengage (Dweck, 1999; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Early research demonstrated that these implicit theories of intelligence, or mindsets, can be changed. Laboratory manipulations showed that promoting a fixed mindset leads to lower IQ test performance, whereas promoting a growth mindset leads to higher performance (Cury, Elliot, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006; Cury, Da Fonseca, Zahn, & Elliot, 2008). Moreover, these effects were partially mediated by effort, such that adolescents in the growth mindset condition did better in part because they spent more time practicing when given the opportunity than did adolescents in the fixed condition (Cury et al., 2008). Adolescents in the growth mindset condition also demonstrated more intrinsic motivation for the task than adolescents in the fixed mindset condition (Cury et al., 2006).

4.2.b.ii Contemporary research on mindset cultures. As research on these mindsets continued, it shifted to highlight the ways in which each person holds both mindsets and how the environment influences which mindset is predominant. Yeager et al. (2022) deployed a mindset intervention with 12,000 high school students and found improved GPA and greater enrollment in advanced courses for the sample as a whole, but only for those adolescents with challenge-seeking peers or teachers with more of a growth mindset. Results such as these highlight the importance of mindset culture—the practices, policies, and other interactions used by powerful people that (often unintentionally) communicate their beliefs about the abilities of those with whom they interact (e.g., Murphy & Dweck, 2010).

Most recently, researchers have examined the ways in which college and university instructors create and perpetuate mindset cultures and thus the considerable impact an instructor can have on students' experiences. In longitudinal experimental and natural classroom studies across multiple universities, Muenks et al. (2020) observed that students who perceived that their instructor espoused a fixed mindset (e.g., "Some people just aren't meant to be scientists") both anticipated *and* experienced greater psychological vulnerability. This psychological vulnerability included "lower in-the-moment belonging, greater evaluative concerns (i.e., feeling afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing), greater imposter feelings (i.e., feeling like a fraud), and more negative affect (i.e., nervousness, distress) in their STEM classes," (p. 2139). Importantly, these effects were observed regardless of students' personal mindset beliefs or their past performance, such as standardized test scores. In one of the largest studies to date of STEM faculty (150), courses (602), and students (15,000+), Canning et al. (2019) also observed that students performed worse in STEM courses taught by instructors whose self-reported beliefs belied a fixed mindset. Of note, the achievement gap for some students was twice as large in courses led by instructors with fixed mindset beliefs than in those who held growth mindsets. These data demonstrate that by focusing not only on students' own beliefs but also on faculty education and interventions, universities can create a growth-oriented classroom culture that empowers flourishing.

4.2.b.iii Student Experience Project. One large program that has adopted this approach is the Student Experience Project. "The Student Experience Project (SEP) is a collaborative of university leaders, faculty, researchers, and national education and improvement organizations who are committed to accelerating the adoption of innovative, evidence-based practices that improve student academic outcomes by transforming the college student experience and creating fair learning environments" (SEP, 2022). The SEP began with

six university partners who were taught about mindset cultures and created communities of practice among groups of faculty at their institutions to develop and implement evidence-based practices for how instructors can create a growth mindset culture in their classroom. For example, SEP researchers learned that students are able to readily identify statements and behaviors of professors as growth-minded or fixed-minded (Kroeper, Fried, & Murphy, 2022): professors that explain course material multiple ways to increase understanding reflect a growth mindset, whereas professors who encourage struggling students to drop a course reflect a fixed mindset. Findings such as these from the initial SEP cohorts led to the development of comprehensive online/digital libraries of resources.

The SEP has also created a Student Experience Index (SEI) that allows institutions to measure progress on four key indicators associated with reduced gaps in academic outcomes and increased academic engagement and persistence: (1) institutional growth mindset, (2) belonging and belonging uncertainty, (3) trust and fairness, and (4) self-efficacy. (See Appendix B for more information about the items). Importantly, these indicators are consistent with our QEP focus, as they all support students' needs to understand the college experience, navigate common challenges, and build robust networks. We would expect that as students feel an increased sense of belonging, safety, and trust, they are more likely to see their peers and instructors as part of their networks of support; as students experience a growth mindset culture, we would expect them to believe more strongly that challenge is an expected part of the college experience, which in turn, along with an increased sense of self-efficacy, equips them to more successfully navigate and persist through those challenges.

In the original SEP cohort (six institutions, 295 faculty, and around 30,000 students), significant increases in student experience as measured by the SEI were seen in all institutions. Faculty who improved student experiences dramatically more than average were identified so their best practices could be identified to inform resource development. Importantly, evidence from these original institutions demonstrated that as students' experiences improved (as measured by progress on the SEI indicators), they were more likely to earn an A or B (and less likely to earn a DFW grade) in their STEM course; these effects were true for students from all groups but were especially large for students from some groups (e.g., financially stressed students; SEP, n.d.; Murphy, 2024).

A report on this initial group of participants highlighted five key findings: (1) Faculty are essential and interested partners in efforts to improve student experience and create institutional change, (2) With the right resources and institutional support, faculty can meaningfully improve the student experience, (3) Improved student experience predicts improved academic outcomes and engagement, (4) Student experience has important implications for educational integrity, and (5) Efforts to improve student experience can also enhance instructor belonging and job satisfaction (SEP, n.d.).

Given the initial success of the SEP, it has expanded its reach, thanks in part to support from the National Science Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and several other foundations. Other universities can take part in an annual SEP Institute by sending cohorts of faculty to training workshops on using these resources and creating communities of practice at their institutions to adopt the feedback principles and best practices in their classrooms. The SEP advocates an iterative continuous improvement design that includes surveying students about their experience, the faculty member reviewing the feedback, looking up relevant practices from the library that intersect with the feedback, and tracking the improvement of student experience over time by continuing this cycle. As noted above, a key finding from the SEP is that both students and faculty benefit, which promotes faculty engagement. Beyond the fact that the SEP practices are so well grounded in strong research and have been tried and proven by many faculty, the SEP is likely so successful because its approach minimizes faculty burden and is easily scalable: many of the classroom interventions are simple, the online library is easily accessible, and the digital platforms for the surveys are easy to use, minimizing faculty burden. Moreover, by tracking data over time and seeing the student experience improving, the faculty member gains confidence in themselves and regains joy in the classroom experience.

4.2.c Career Adaptability

Both PGI and growth mindset equip students to tackle the variety of unknown challenges and to take advantage of the full range of growth opportunities they may encounter in college. Similarly, *Career Adaptability* (Savickas, 1997) is a set of competencies and skills theorized to be essential in the contemporary world of work where few people make a one-time career choice and stick with it to retirement. Earlier models tended to describe career development as following a predictable sequence of tasks from growing up and exploring careers in adolescence to making a career choice in early adulthood, then establishing and maintaining that career in middle to late adulthood, before experiencing a career decline toward retirement in later adulthood (Super, 1957). Such models invoked the concept of career maturity to indicate how well one was coping with the expected tasks at each developmental stage (Crites, 1965). Under these earlier models, college students were expected simply to explore their own interests and skills and the world of work to help them choose a career they would enter at graduation and (hopefully) persist with to retirement.

However, the world of work has changed rapidly, with few adults in any society making a single career choice. Contemporary models of career now focus on the “boundaryless” (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) or “protean” (Hall, 2002) nature of careers with seemingly infinite possibilities and a need to be self-directed. Careers are no longer chosen, they are constructed (Savickas, 1997; 2013). Rather than needing to approach a career decision with maturity, contemporary college students must approach the construction of their professional life, which will continue well beyond graduation, with adaptability. “Career adaptability denotes an individual’s psychosocial resources for coping with current and anticipated vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas” (Savickas, 1997). “Individuals draw on these self-regulation resources to solve the unfamiliar, complex, and ill-defined problems presented by the tasks, transitions, and traumas,” (Savickas, 2013, p. 157). Career adaptability is composed of four competencies:

1. **Concern** for one’s career and professional future, which allows one to engage in appropriate planning.
2. A sense of **control** over one’s career path, which allows one to be decisive, deliberate, and organized.
3. **Curiosity** about oneself and one’s career, which allows for exploration and appropriate risk-taking.
4. **Confidence** about one’s abilities to handle career and educational tasks and transitions effectively.

A meta-analysis of 90 studies (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017) found that higher career adaptability is associated not only with a variety of better career-related outcomes (career planning, exploration, decision self-efficacy, and identity; sense of “calling” to one’s work; career and job satisfaction; organizational commitment; employability; promotability; self-reported work performance; income; reduced job stress; and turnover intentions), but also with better educational (e.g., school satisfaction) and well-being (life satisfaction, higher positive and lower negative affect) outcomes as well. Thus, just as PGI and growth mindset support students’ abilities to take advantage of whatever academic, personal, or vocational challenges they encounter, career adaptability seems to represent a similar set of attitudes and skills that equips students not for success with a specific career or one-time choice, but for the kinds of unexpected challenges and opportunities that are inherent in the contemporary world of work.

5. ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

We are now ready to describe the evidence-based actions that we will undertake to lay a strong foundation for learning, well-being, and career by meeting students’ underlying needs to better understand the why and how of college. As described throughout this report, our goals for the QEP derive from data showing that, although many of our students are succeeding, we can do more to help them thrive. We have identified underlying needs for students to better understand the how and why of college by becoming aware of the broad competencies they are developing and the strategies and support networks that contribute to their success (Goal 1), which in turn will allow them to take action and use these competencies, strategies, and supports (Goal 2), which in turn will support their holistic success and ability to thrive by navigating their experiences at UT Knoxville intentionally, with meaning and purpose and an adaptable growth orientation (Goal 3). The conceptual premise for our QEP is in Figure 4 and a more explicit articulation of the goals is in Section 2.

Helping our students thrive means helping to ensure that they are aware of and take action to use campus, course, and interpersonal resources that support their well-being and increase their ability to adapt. Student

thriving, not just succeeding, has been the focus of some national discussions and research over the past several years coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic (Flaherty, 2023; Imad, Dewsbury, & Foote, 2023). The thriving student is one who is fully engaged “intellectually, socially, emotionally in the college experience” (Schreiner, 2010).

As described in Section 3.1, a key takeaway from our planning process is the importance of engaging instructors in our QEP. Faculty³ sit at the hub of large, continuously regenerating student networks in their classes and units, and across a wide variety of campus activities. They are thus structurally central to the dissemination and sustained success of any campus initiative or program. Active faculty involvement in the QEP will lead to curricular integration and a broad range of initiatives activating every aspect of the QEP: awareness and use of resources, modeling and building healthy networks, developing career competencies, and more.

Importantly, there is strong evidence that our faculty want to engage in opportunities to enhance the student experience. Our prior QEP, *Experience Learning*, was also curriculum-focused and garnered strong support from faculty. The most intensive activity was the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI), in which classes undertook projects in local communities, requiring faculty to propose a course for designation, identify projects, work with local governments, manage risks, and so on. A total of 26 different courses participated in some version of the SCI within the first two years of the QEP. Another 91 courses sought *Experience Learning* course designations during the five-year implementation.

More recently, as part of the chancellor’s strategic vision to focus on the Volunteer experience, the university initiated the Volunteer Experience (VE) Faculty Fellows program, which comprises faculty interested in learning about well-being pedagogy and promoting well-being constructs among the faculty in their respective departments. The program received 30 to 32 applications for the 18 VE Fellow roles each year for two cycles, with representation from both tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty across 11 colleges. Also, a Faculty Senate effort developed institutional Principles of Excellence in Teaching. These principles were developed by UT Knoxville faculty for UT Knoxville faculty. In fall 2024, the College of Arts and Sciences funded a new Community of Scholars to Advance Teaching Excellence. The group will use these new institutional principles to create resources to support faculty teaching and student learning over the next three semesters. The group had 34 faculty who attended an initial information session in fall 2024, 22 of whom committed to work on a semester-long project to advance the teaching principles without assurance of any additional compensation. Similarly, interest in the new Volunteer Faculty Launchpad (VFL) program offered through Teaching and Learning Innovation has exceeded expectations. The VFL program is a year-long experience of professional growth and camaraderie. First-year faculty become part of an exclusive cohort of three new-to-UT Knoxville faculty members paired with an experienced UT Knoxville faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in teaching. In its first year, the VFL program anticipated having 12 participants. However, it had such an overwhelming request from faculty to participate that it was able to secure additional funds to support all applicants. The initial cohort has 22 first-year faculty members (13 non-tenure-track and nine tenure-track) representing eight colleges.

Finally, UT Knoxville’s Teaching and Learning Innovation (TLI) unit regularly convenes optional uncompensated professional development opportunities as part of UT Knoxville’s onboarding process, which have garnered an average of about 93 faculty members each year during the past three years. TLI has also had success hosting custom activities focused on areas of interest to UT’s colleges and departments (with 310 participants in academic year 2022–23, 113 in 2023–24, and 208 in fall 2024), and learning communities gathering smaller groups around interests across the university (with 44 participants in 2023–24 and 65 in fall 2024). We have observed that partnership or advocacy by department or college leadership (strategic institutionalization of objectives) and framing around a topic of interest to faculty across the university (topic relevance) are key drivers for faculty participation in these opportunities. For the QEP, our topic development process has suggested that faculty do see the QEP’s topic as relevant.

³ *Faculty* includes all instructors: full-time tenure-line faculty, full- and part-time teaching faculty, graduate student instructors, and instructional staff. For simplicity, we will refer simply to *faculty* or *instructors* throughout the rest of this report.

Given this demonstrated faculty interest in professional development opportunities, both compensated and uncompensated, and the proven success of similar initiatives in recruiting faculty, we are confident that we will successfully recruit faculty to participate in our proposed QEP activities. Moreover, our activities include providing faculty with both ready-to-use resources and opportunities to develop new resources or participate in communities of practice. Thus, faculty with a range of motivations and time availability will have opportunities to engage with the QEP, further enhancing its reach.

In the following sections, we describe the specific activities the QEP will undertake in order to meet our identified goals; discuss cost implications and resource needs of each activity; and describe how we will formatively evaluate the implementation and success of each activity. Articulation of specific measurable outcomes aligned with each goal and descriptions of how we will assess the success of the QEP in meeting our desired outcomes follows in Section 6. A logic model of our inputs, activities, and goals is in Figure 5, and an integrated timeline of all activities is in Figure 6.

5.1 QEP Faculty Engagement Activities

Anchoring our QEP will be faculty engagement activities. These include implementing a robust Faculty Fellows program, offering small grants for faculty to develop activities aligned with QEP goals, and orienting faculty to the goals and activities of the QEP. These activities will be coordinated by the QEP faculty director and faculty consultant in collaboration with the QEP director (see Section 7.1 for descriptions of all personnel).

5.1.a QEP Faculty Fellows—Goals 1, 2, and 3b (and indirectly 3a and 3c)

A core activity that will address all three goals of the QEP will be a Faculty Fellows program. Modeled on UT's successful existing [Volunteer Experience Faculty Fellows program](#), the *QEP Faculty Fellows program* will solicit applications from interested faculty who will work within a cohort model. We envision two primary activities conducted by the QEP Fellows:

1. Student Experience Project Fellows. As described in section 4.2.b.iii, the Student Experience Project (SEP) is a collaborative committed to accelerating the adoption of innovative, evidence-based practices that transform the college student experience. Consistent with our QEP's focus, these evidence-based practices support students' needs to understand the college experience, navigate common challenges, and build robust networks. To bring the SEP to UT Knoxville, a team of up to eight faculty and staff will attend the SEP Institute in Year 1⁴. This initial team will include the QEP faculty director and QEP-focused faculty consultant as well as faculty actively engaged in undergraduate teaching in key disciplines. The first cohort of SEP Fellows will create an initial community of practice on campus as they implement the SEP practices in Year 2, engage in the ongoing assessment of student experience that is a key component of the SEP, and recruit peers to participate in future cohorts. The SEP Institute uses a train-the-trainer model, so the initial team that attends the institute will train other faculty to expand the SEP Fellows in Years 3–5. The QEP faculty director and TLI faculty consultant will take the lead in organizing and implementing these subsequent SEP trainings. To tend to the full scope of the QEP, the fellows will complete additional faculty development activities focused specifically on well-being, career readiness, and other pertinent topics, perhaps relying on or building from campus resources from UT Libraries and TLI in addition to those available from the SEP.
2. QEP Faculty Fellows will spend a semester of professional development focused on the core QEP topics of learning, well-being, and career readiness, and a second semester dedicated to content creation and dissemination. The fellows will develop a library of Canvas modules that cover topics such as stress management, time management, and study skills (see Section 5.2). The modules may include student-created peer resources (see Ramirez, Covarrubias, Jackson, & Son, 2021). These smaller teams of fellows will partner with associated offices on campus to understand existing resources and materials, and work

⁴ Applications for the 2026 SEP Institute will be due in December 2025; we inquired about the likelihood of being accepted into the 2026 institute with Samantha Levine, associate director, Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, liaison to the Student Experience Project, and identified contact for questions about the application process. In an email to UT Knoxville Provost John Zomchick on October 31, 2024, she stated, "Assuming that UT conveys [required information] through the application, and submits the application on time, I don't see any reason why UT would not be accepted to participate."

FIGURE 5: QEP SIMPLE LOGIC MODEL

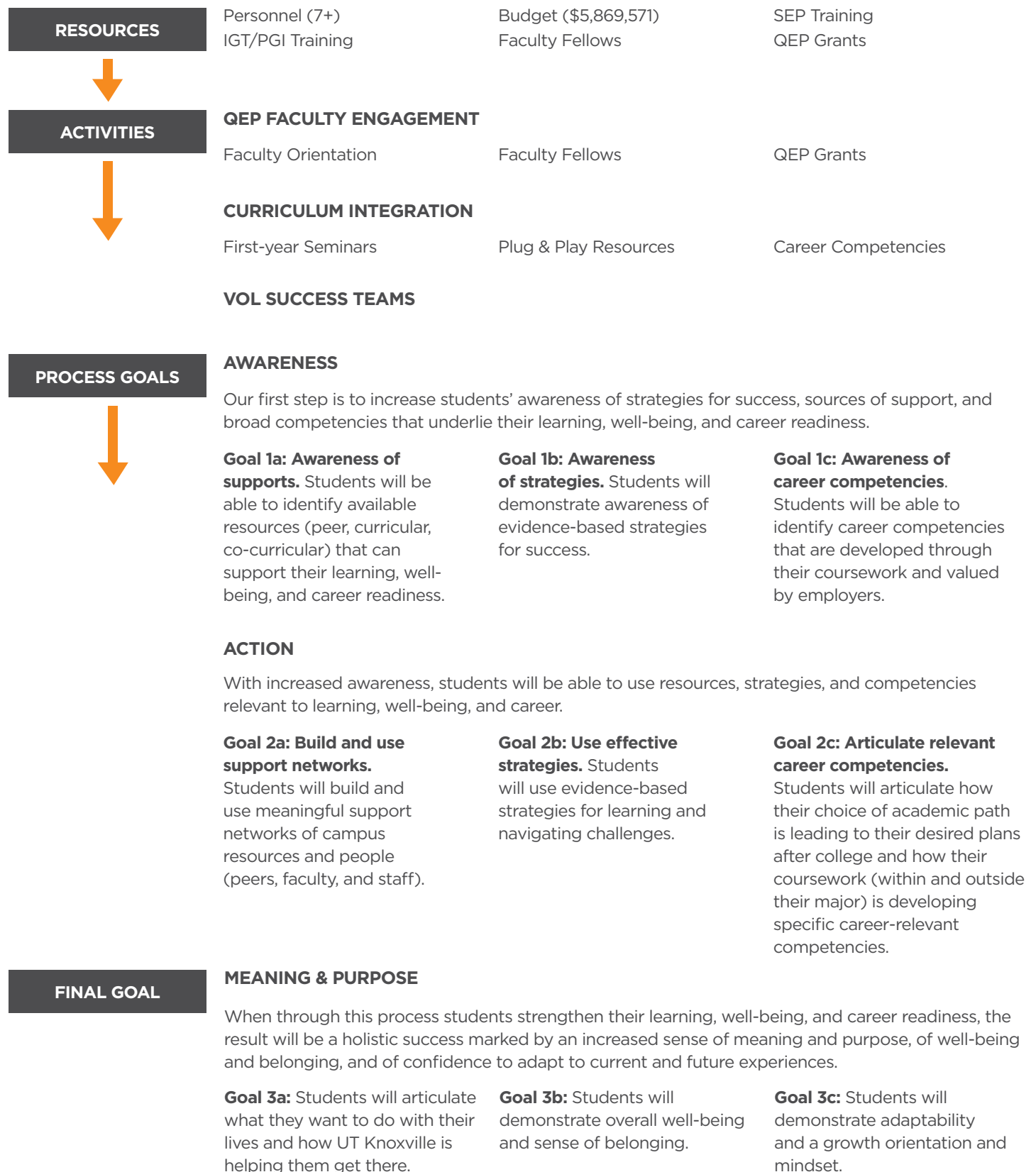


FIGURE 6: IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

		First-Year Seminar	Vol Success Team Expansion	Ready-to-Use Interventions	Faculty Fellow	Grants
2024-2025	Fall	QEP Plan drafted and submitted				
	Spring	Bring Chris Robitschek to provide IGT training to FYS team and a core group of QEP committee members		Identify topics and content to be integrated into course materials (syllabi, slide decks, etc.)		
	Summer	FYS director and team modify FYS 101 curriculum for a limited number of courses to pilot program				
		Select and train pilot instructor team				
2025-2026	Fall	Pilot FYS sessions implemented	Assess career coach staffing needs	QEP director partners with key partners to prioritize content to be integrated and develop faculty-facing intended outcomes	QEP director develops fellows program description	QEP director partners with Office of the Provost to develop grant program description, application, selection committee, process, assessment, timeline, and deliverables
		Assessment designed and implemented	Determine industries and majors requiring more 1:1 student support		QEP fellow PDs, application and selection process	
	Spring	Student participant assessment of IGT knowledge retention and application	Partner with DSS communications team to roll out a campaign to students	Produce materials for integration (icons, PPT templates, Canvas, etc)	Program advertised	Advertise program
		Revisions to syllabi made				
		Strategy for large-scale implementation developed				
		FYS curriculum revised and course materials developed			Applications due mid-spring. Cohort selected by end of term	Selection of grant recipients

FIGURE 6 CONTINUED

		First-Year Seminar	Vol Success Team Expansion	Ready-to-Use Interventions	Faculty Fellow	Grants
2025–2026	Summer	Robitschek returns for large-scale instructor training		Prepare communications materials	Prepare “curriculum” and meeting cadence for year ahead	Develop assessment and reporting structure
				Develop UT Hub site		
2026–2027	Fall	More broad integration of IGT into FYS curriculum implemented	Hire 2–3 new coaches	Disseminate materials to faculty in tandem with multi-tiered communication campaign and implementation instructions	First cohort launches and engages in professional development re: topic	Distribute grants
		Control group assessment	Update major and industry assignments and communicate new teams to students and colleges	Host town halls		Continued advertising of program
	Spring	Assessment of both students and instructors analyzed	Review opportunities for physically embedding coaches in the colleges	Provide ongoing support and track questions and implementation	Fellows select focus area, partner with associated units, and develop assigned content and submit by end of semester	Initial assessment of grant activities/ initiatives
					Determine need for returning fellows	Publication of grant activities to stakeholders and campus community
		Revisions made based on data			Select Cohort 2	Second application process
					Program assessment	
	Summer			Analyze assessment data and make revision to materials	Analyze assessment data and make revisions to program	Analyze assessment data
				Integrate work of Faculty Fellows		Make revisions
						Create communication campaign to share exemplars

FIGURE 6 CONTINUED

		First-Year Seminar	Vol Success Team Expansion	Ready-to-Use Interventions	Faculty Fellow	Grants
2027–2028	Fall	Implement full-scale integration of IGT into FYS 101	Assess capacity and needs; if need is demonstrated, hire 1–2 more coaches	Continue communication campaign highlighting successful examples	Implement Cohort 2	Cycle continues
		Determine efficacy of incorporating IGT into TRNS 201 (pending initial data)	Update industry assignments	Introduce any additional materials	Assess need for strategic solicitation of fellows from key departments	QEP director identifies patterns of usage and potential need to elevate key learning areas
	Spring	Ongoing assessment		Develop submission process and solicit artifacts	Cohort 2 designs additional resources and training for departments	Communicate exemplars to campus
	Summer			Content analysis	Assessment	
2028–2029	Fall	Continued implementation and assessment	Continue to refine services to students and role of the coach in partnership with colleges	Ongoing implementation	Continue cycle based on assessment outcomes	Continue cycle based on assessment outcomes
	Spring		Assessment	Roll out assessment of student recognition and use of symbols		Communicate exemplars to campus
						Assess learning outcomes
	Summer					
2029–2030	Fall	QEP director and team produce final report with assessment indicators				
	Spring					
	Summer					

on revisions or development of new content to align with QEP objectives. For example, UT Libraries offers existing self-paced tutorials and learning resources on topics such as understanding [academic jargon](#), [navigating the libraries](#), [citing sources](#), and [evaluating sources](#).

Both groups of Faculty Fellows will be asked to develop a departmental engagement plan to share their learning with faculty colleagues via peer-to-peer opportunities. Peer-to-peer engagement will broaden the presence of the QEP within faculty networks and across campus and enhance QEP quality and function. The Volunteer Experience Faculty Fellows program has demonstrated success in implementing this kind of peer-to-peer dissemination of resources and information. An iterative assessment cycle will also inform the rollout and development of the SEP train-the-trainer programs.

The QEP director, in consultation with the QEP faculty director, may decide it is most appropriate to have distinct lanes between QEP Fellows who are generating content and those who are facilitating peer-to-peer learning. Regardless, all would benefit from mutual training activities to foster relationships and interdisciplinary idea sharing. The QEP director can create tracks or pathways of these Faculty Fellows so that there will be representation across faculty levels and disciplines, such as STEM, applied science, health, arts and humanities, and social sciences.

5.1.a.i Formative evaluation of Faculty Fellows programs. Individual Faculty Fellow initiatives will carry a built-in expectation of assessment within an iterative system of development, review, and improvement. Utilizing the full resources of the SEP, SEP Faculty Fellows will engage in ongoing iterative assessment of their students' experiences throughout the semester using the Student Experience Index (SEI) described in Section 4.2.b.iii to survey students about their experience at several points in the semester. Faculty will be trained to review the feedback, look up relevant practices from the SEP library that intersect with the feedback, and track the improvement of student experience over time by continuing this cycle. We will therefore have access to robust ongoing data on the student experience that will allow us to formatively assess the success of the program and adjust as needed within each semester. We will also administer the SEI at the end of semester to comparison course sections (e.g., sections of the same course taught by an instructor who has not participated in the SEP) as a further evaluation of the activity's effectiveness. Additional formative evaluation of Faculty Fellows programs will include tracking the numbers of faculty who apply to the programs and assessing faculty satisfaction with the Fellows programs. If we find faculty interest in the programs (as evidenced by application numbers) or satisfaction with the programs is weak, we will seek additional feedback from faculty to identify ways to improve them, engaging the QEP communications specialist (see Section 7.1) to help enhance communication about the programs.

5.1.a.ii Implementation timeline for Faculty Fellows Programs

Year 0	Spring / Summer: QEP transition liaison (see Section 7.1) oversees search for QEP director and initial activities to identify and recruit other personnel once director is hired.
Year 1	Fall: QEP director and QEP transition liaison finalize recruitment and hiring of the QEP faculty director and faculty consultant, who together develop fellows program descriptions, and QEP Fellow professional development application and selection process. SEP Faculty Fellows are recruited and selected. Spring: SEP Faculty Fellows participate in the SEP Institute. The QEP Fellows Program is advertised; applications due mid-spring. Cohort selected by end of term. Summer: Prepare “curriculum” and meeting cadence for the year ahead.
Year 2	Fall: First QEP Fellows cohort launches and engages in professional development on QEP topic. SEP Fellows cohort continues community of practice and ongoing assessment. Spring: SEP Fellows engage in recruiting and training additional faculty in SEP practices. QEP Fellows select focus areas, partner with associated units, develop assigned content and submit by end of semester. QEP director determines need for returning fellows; selects Cohort 2; begins program assessment. Summer: QEP director and partners analyze assessment data and revise program as needed.
Year 3	Fall: Expanded SEP communities of practice meet. QEP Fellows Cohort 2 is selected and activates. QEP director assesses the need for strategic solicitation of fellows from key departments. Spring: Cohort 2 designs additional resources and training for departments. Summer: Assessment
Year 4	Fall-Spring: Continue cycle based on assessment outcomes.
Year 5	QEP director and team produce a final report with assessment indicators.

5.1.a.iii Resources needed to initiate, implement, and complete Faculty Fellows Programs.

Faculty Fellows: With an initial cohort goal of 16 faculty (eight in each Faculty Fellows group), the initial costs for the fellowships will be \$80,000. There will likely be costs associated with the program to provide content, support for initiatives, and other incidentals such as food or publication costs. Therefore, an annual estimate for this initiative would be approximately \$100,000. *SEP Attendance:* “Registration for the SEP Institute is \$650 per person. The registration fee covers program administration, meals during the in-person meeting, and all materials. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation during the in-person meeting.” Anticipated cost per participant for registration, flight, hotel, and per diem is approximately \$2,000:

- Registration: \$650
- Two Nights Hotel: \$500
- Flight: \$550
- Per Diem: \$300

The total anticipated one-time cost for a team of eight participants is \$16,000.

Incentivization for SEP Workshop Participation: To broaden the reach of the SEP, we will also recruit faculty to participate in on-campus workshops to learn about the SEP, using the SEP’s train-the-trainer model described earlier. These faculty will be invited to join communities of practice to maintain engagement with one another. Based on the growth in SEP participation described by other campuses, our goal is to recruit up to 100 new faculty each year to participate in these on-campus workshops. A one-time train-the-trainer participant incentive of \$250 to each of 100 faculty trained per year will cost \$25,000 annually.

5.1.b QEP Grants for Goal Alignment (Varies by Project)

The QEP will also engage faculty members to advance the goals of the QEP through purposeful grants. Offered at a range of funding levels, the grants would be available to tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and teaching assistants seeking to integrate intentional learning, well-being, or career pedagogy initiatives in courses or programs within their unit. For example, to help their faculty increase student awareness of career and mental health resources (Goals 1a and 1c) and to serve as key members of students' healthy networks (Goal 2b), a unit might request funds to pay their instructors to engage in the existing Career Advocates Program or mental health first aid training, coordinated through the Center for Care and Resilience. Another unit might want to help students develop industry-specific career competencies (Goals 1c and 2c) or a sense of purpose toward clear professional goals (Goal 3a) by developing discipline-specific resources, creating or redesigning a careers-focused course, or bringing in an outside speaker. These grants will range from \$2,000–\$3000 for individuals or up to \$10,000 for deans or unit leadership for college-wide initiatives. They will require an application and review process (with a focus on articulating how the proposed project would support one or more of the QEP goals), an expectation of information dissemination, and associated assessment aligned with the grant's intended outcomes, which in turn will be aligned with the QEP goals. Following the successful model used by the Volunteer Experience grant and Faculty Fellows Programs, QEP grants will be reviewed by QEP personnel, including the director, faculty director, and faculty consultant. While grants will be awarded on a semester basis, this model imagines a yearly cycle of application, program development, implementation, assessment, and publication.

5.1.b.i Formative evaluation of the QEP grants program. As described above, each grant project will be expected to carry out an assessment plan. The QEP director and coordinator of QEP assessment will review each award's assessment data at the conclusion of the project, and lessons learned about what worked more and less well from each project's assessment can be used to inform future projects. As with the Faculty Fellows programs, additional formative evaluation will include tracking the numbers of applications from different units on campus to help identify units that may need additional outreach or information to ensure broad representation of units from across campus.

5.1.b.ii Implementation timeline for QEP grants

Year 1	Fall: QEP director and faculty team (transition liaison, faculty director, faculty consultant) partner with the Office of the Provost to develop a grant program description, application, selection committee, process, assessment, timeline, and deliverables. Spring: Advertise program; review applications and select grant recipients. Summer: Develop assessment and reporting plan.
Year 2	Fall: Distribute grants; continue advertising program. Spring: Initiate assessment of grant activities and initiatives; publish grant activities to stakeholders and campus community; start second application process. Summer: Assess and analyze outcome data; revise program; create communication campaign to share exemplars.
Year 3	Fall-Spring: Continue cycle; QEP director identifies patterns of usage and potential need to elevate key learning areas; communicate exemplars across campus.
Year 4	Fall-Spring: Continue cycle based on assessment outcomes; communicate exemplars; assess ongoing outcomes.
Year 5	QEP director and team produce a final report with assessment indicators.

5.1.b.iii Resources needed to initiate, implement, and complete Faculty Fellows programs.

The anticipated cost of the Faculty Fellows programs is \$237,000:

- 25 individual grants per year, up to \$3,000 each (\$75,000 annually for three years)
- One team grant per degree-granting unit, up to \$10,000 each, with three for the distinct divisions in the College of Arts and Sciences: \$160,000 annually for three years
- Publication and marketing of efforts, coordinated by QEP communications specialist: \$2,000

5.1.c Faculty Orientation to and Communication about the QEP—Goals 1, 2

We will engage in a number of targeted communications activities to orient faculty to the QEP and facilitate engagement. A small set of slide decks or videos will be curated by the QEP director and transition liaison, in consultation with the QEP faculty director, faculty consultant and Faculty Fellows and created by the QEP communications specialist, to orient faculty to the QEP initiative and resources and best practices for learning support, well-being, and career integration in the classroom. Drawing on research on nudge interventions—subtle changes to the environment that affect choices and decision making (Beshears & Kosowsky, 2020; Thaler & Sunstein 2008)—instructors will be encouraged to consider how even very small interventions (e.g., taking two minutes in class to share information about campus resources or course-specific strategies) can make an impact. The QEP director will partner with the Office of the Provost and TLI to develop the best dissemination plan for this content. For example, the director may provide outreach to instructors via faculty meetings, graduate student teaching supervisors, etc. Faculty will be incentivized to take advantage of this content through applications to the QEP grant program, peer-to-peer training from the Student Experience Project, or college and departmental participation in other QEP activities. A further step will be an education campaign for faculty so that they understand the competencies and skills, and why identifying them for a course can increase student engagement and learning outcomes. The Faculty Fellows Program, described above, is one avenue to begin this process, as are presentations at college retreats or communication via university leadership and the QEP director. We will also utilize nudges (Beshears & Kosowsky, 2020; Thaler & Sunstein 2008) such as default loading of modules developed by our QEP Faculty Fellows into all course Canvas shells.

Other communication will focus on raising faculty awareness of competencies and resources so they can increase students' awareness and use of them. In addition to providing faculty with a set of icons for and descriptions of key career competencies (see Section 5.2.b), faculty and departments will be provided with readily available content (developed by the QEP director, in consultation with the QEP faculty consultant and Faculty Fellows) to quickly and easily identify skills that an assignment, an activity, or an entire course can develop. This content can include resource symbols for courses that have Supplemental Instruction or Vol Study Center support. Similarly, Canvas icons will convey this information, and standard PowerPoint templates for Vol Core classes can be created through the QEP director's interaction with campus partners such as TLI, the provost's office, central communications, and others.

Similarly, prepared slide decks will offer faculty a way to include a rotating slideshow of support resources as students are entering the classroom and settling into their seats or whenever and however faculty share announcements. These slide decks will be curated and shared by the provost's office and available on the QEP website. This was a successful strategy used during the topic development process to get faculty to share the survey links with their students. The slide decks will include information about campus resources, study skills, time management, well-being practices, and timely opportunities for networking with other students, faculty, campus partners such as the Center for Health Education and Wellness, and industry representatives. They will illuminate aspects of why and how to do college, thereby addressing the goals of increasing student awareness and action. While fairly low-tech, the slide decks will reach a broad audience of both faculty and students. Some of these types of resources already exist through TLI, and incorporating QEP content on that site will advertise existing resources and QEP topics.

While faculty orientation to the QEP and their use of QEP resources can certainly lead students to view faculty as members of their student success network, these actions primarily further the goals for student awareness of resources and their subsequent use. The identification of competencies gained in a course will help students make more informed and deliberate course selections and will lead to a greater sense of

ownership of their academic career. The identification of career competencies will highlight the marketable skills students gain through coursework and offer a vocabulary for students to communicate those skills to family, peers, and employers.

5.1.c.i Implementation timeline for faculty orientation to and communication about the QEP.

Year 1	Fall: QEP director and team (transition liaison, faculty director, faculty consultant) partner with the Office of the Provost to present to new faculty orientation, Faculty Senate, and elsewhere to inform faculty about the QEP, share career competency icons and nudge intervention strategies; initiate partnerships to curate resources and slides. Spring: Initial dissemination of classroom announcement slide decks and additional syllabus and Canvas icons; identification of QEP Fellows projects and grant recipients that are developing relevant resources. Summer: Develop assessment and reporting plan; identify opportunities for expanded communication strategies.
Year 2	Fall & Spring: Continue and expand communication to faculty broadly about QEP opportunities, resources, etc., including new resources developing in prior year. Summer: Assess and analyze outcome data; revise program.
Year 3	Fall-Spring: Continue cycle; QEP director identifies patterns of usage and potential need to elevate key learning areas; communicate exemplars across campus.
Year 4	Fall-Spring: Continue cycle based on assessment outcomes; communicate exemplars; assess ongoing outcomes.
Year 5	QEP director and team produce a final report with assessment indicators.

5.1.c.ii Formative Evaluation of QEP faculty communication and orientation activities. The QEP director and assessment coordinator will track how many QEP resources were available to faculty, and Canvas will allow tracking of opt-out numbers. Audits of Canvas course shells for inclusion of resources and tracking view and download rates (by students within Canvas and by faculty from QEP and provost websites) will also begin to show how integrated the resources become to academic courses. By assessing how students learned about various resources and what actions they took after learning of them, the QEP director can begin to gauge the extent to which faculty communications have reached the audience and how they have led to engagement.

5.1.c.iii Resources needed to initiate, implement, and complete orientation and communication efforts.

We do not anticipate any additional resources for these activities beyond the personnel and other activities' resources (see sections 5.1.a.iii, 5.2.c, and 7).

5.2 Curricular Integration

Whereas the previous section focused on activities designed to engage faculty in the QEP, this section focuses on activities that will directly address the QEP goals in the classroom. These include integration of Intentional Growth Training (IGT) into first-year seminars and development of a suite of plug-and-play resources, including Canvas modules and career competency icons.

5.2.a Integration into First-Year Seminars—Goals 1, 2, and 3c (and indirectly 3a, 3b)

Ensuring that students uncover the unwritten elements of “how to do college” is a core goal of the QEP. The curricular integration of this goal builds on an already-robust undergraduate onboarding program. The university scaffolds the onboarding process for new undergraduate students through several New Vol Experience steps. Vol 101 is an online introduction to the university through Canvas, Vol 102 is the required advising appointment, Vol 103 is an optional campus visit, Vol 104 is the Big Orange Welcome series of campus events kicking off the fall semester, Vol 105 is the FYS 101 or other first-year seminar, and Vol 106 is the Vols Start Back program to kick off the spring semester. The FYS 101 seminar course (or other similar

courses specific to colleges such as Business Administration 101 and Engineering Fundamentals 102) provides an extended introduction to campus support resources, students' CliftonStrengths, academic success strategies, well-being tips, financial wellness, and other topics.

Another way that the FYS courses help students succeed and thrive is by promoting healthy networks. Each FYS class has a peer mentor, a current UT student who can act as a peer model and who speaks to the student experience at the university. Thus the FYS 101 course already emphasizes the importance of building a network of support, whether academically, interpersonally, or both. Finally, the FYS course foregrounds planning early for careers by introducing students to the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration. During the course students begin engaging with platforms such as Handshake and PathwayU and exploring other resources designed to guide them to consider internships and other experiential learning opportunities. In addition, students learn what it means to focus on career readiness and are asked to highlight strategies to develop the necessary competencies to embark on their professional journey.

The structure of transition courses for students new to campus offers an excellent opportunity to introduce QEP topics early in a student's academic career. The QEP will pilot adding new content to the FYS 101 course that will move beyond informing students about available resources towards developing a mindset that allows them to see the value in those resources and to make use of them. More specifically, we will pilot the integration of Intentional Growth Training (Thoen & Robitschek, 2013) into a small number of First-Year Studies courses. As described in section 4.2.a, IGT is an empirically supported two-session manualized training that fosters the development of Personal Growth Initiative (Robitschek, 1998; Robitschek et al., 2012). PGI is a skill set comprising readiness for change, "planfulness," use of resources, and intentional behavior that has been studied in college students in 14 countries across four continents (Jiao et al., 2024). Higher PGI is associated with better academic, mental health, and career outcomes among college students (Robitschek & Thoen, 2015). The goal of the pilot program is to introduce students to PGI early in their academic career so they can build resilience and adaptability as they move through their curriculum.

The pilot will integrate content for two course meetings of FYS 101. The director of First-Year Experience will work with the QEP transition liaison and director to craft the new content and integrate it into three to five sections of the FYS 101 course in fall 2025. If the pilot is successful, there is an opportunity to expand the effort to additional sections and to introduce IGT concepts into virtual modules that students encounter before arriving on campus. As currently only half of UT Knoxville students complete the FYS 101 series, virtual modules would be a way to expand the content to all incoming students. By introducing students to IGT and helping them develop PGI, the plan will work to create a growth mindset culture at UT Knoxville that will help students succeed and thrive.

5.2.a.i Formative assessment of FYS pilot. The pilot will be assessed at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the first year using several evaluation metrics. In addition to outcome measures already established by the FYS Experience, students enrolled in the pilot section as well as in other sections of FYS 101 that did not incorporate IGT will complete the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II; Robitschek et al., 2012). We expect that students in the pilot sections will score significantly higher on the PGIS-II, indicating that the training was successful in increasing Personal Growth Initiative. FYS faculty will also be surveyed about their experiences integrating the content. These formative data will be used to consider revisions to and scaling of the pilot. If successful, other opportunities to expand the reach of IGT training would be through academic courses, campus events, guest speakers, and various types of student- or faculty-focused programming.

5.2.a.ii Timeline for implementation of integration of IGT into FYS.

Year 0	Spring 25: QEP transition liaison brings Chris Robitschek to UT Knoxville to provide IGT training to FYS team and a core group of QEP Steering Committee members. Summer 25: FYS director and team modify FYS 101 curriculum for a limited number of courses to pilot program select and train a pilot instructor team.
Year 1	Fall 25: Implement pilot FYS sessions; design and implement assessment. Spring 26: Assess student participant knowledge, retention, and application of IGT; develop course materials and revise FYS curriculum and syllabi. Develop strategy for large-scale implementation. Summer 26: Bring Robitschek back for large-scale instructor training.
Year 2	Fall: Implement more broad integration of IGT into FYS curriculum; assess control group. Spring: Analyze assessment data of both students and instructors. Revise program accordingly.
Year 3	Fall: Implement full-scale integration of IGT into FYS 101. Pending initial data, determine efficacy of incorporating IGT into TRNS 201. Spring: Continue ongoing assessment.
Year 4	Yearlong: Continue implementation and assessment.
Year 5	QEP director and team produce a final report with assessment indicators.

5.2.a.iii Resources needed to initiate, implement, and complete the integration of IGT into FYS. The overall costs of this FYS PGI activity will be minimal as the FYS course is already fully funded. Start-up costs will be limited to training FYS instructors in IGT concepts and hosting Dr. Chris Robitschek on campus, which we estimate at \$5,000. Should the formative assessment support expansion of the content beyond the FYS course, the costs for such initiatives could be covered through QEP grants to faculty or campus units (see Faculty Engagement section above).

5.2.b Ready-to-Use Resources—Goals 1 & 2 (and indirectly 3)

Anecdotal data suggest that students are often unaware of effective strategies for academic success and well-being. For example, the number and popularity of workshops, books, and online resources on these topics that emerge in internet searches suggest a pervasive lack of awareness of effective strategies. In our hidden curriculum survey (see Section 4.1.a), UT Knoxville faculty reported believing that students needed more information about effective note-taking strategies. Informal data collected from thousands of UT Knoxville students at the end of PSYC 110 (General Psychology) consistently indicate that students find “effective stress management strategies” one of the most important topics covered. Empirically, Kornell and Bjork (2007) found that less than 20% of students reported that they had been taught how to study effectively. Thus, we will develop plug-and-play Canvas modules about study skills, well-being practices, building healthy networks, career readiness, and other topics, which will allow faculty to add links in Canvas to curated content addressing perceived student needs. This intentional integration of resources and success strategies into the classroom environment will reinforce the QEP goals of student awareness and action. Because one of the main pillars of the QEP is faculty engagement, the QEP envisions several ways for faculty and instructors to share how a student can be successful in a given class or major, the importance of healthy networks, and the career implications of a given course (for lower-division courses) or of a degree program (for upper-division courses).

To make the initiative practical for faculty and consistent for students, the committee proposes a series of easily implemented, readily available templates that can integrate into course management platforms such as Canvas, course lecture presentations such as PowerPoint or other platforms, and course overview documents such as course syllabi or descriptions. The content will be created through collaborations between QEP Faculty Fellows (see Section 5.1.a), campus partners such as Teaching and Learning Innovation, the

Center for Health Education and Wellness, the Center for Care and Resilience, units within the Division of Student Success, and UT Knoxville's Office of Communications and Marketing. Through such broad-ranging collaboration, the resulting content can be designed to apply to many disciplines and courses yet still offer students specific strategies for their personal academic path. As described in Section 5.1.c and drawing on research on nudge interventions (Beshears & Kosowsky, 2020; Thaler & Sunstein 2008), rather than relying on faculty to opt in to using these modules, many will be loaded into Canvas shells by default through a partnership with the Office of Innovative Technologies and the Office of the Provost to facilitate broad dissemination across campus.

While some of this content can be created through the Faculty Fellows cohort or through QEP small grant applications, the Student Experience Project (SEP) first-day toolbox provides a variety of resources appropriate for integration (see further information about the SEP above). Module content will also reinforce ideas and vocabulary in Intentional Growth Training and Personal Growth Initiative training in the First-Year Studies program. Furthermore, there will be an avenue for student-authored content and campus partners to be allies in identifying ways to facilitate and curate student messaging about study skills, time and stress management, etc. The "Vols Help Vols" slogan, already in use across campus, is one banner under which to consolidate and position this content within campus culture. Peer-to-peer content often carries more weight, and having students share their stories of success and growth will broaden the reach and enhance the impact of QEP content in student spaces. Ideally, these messages will be specific to individual fields, majors, or colleges to reflect each unit's strategies for success.

5.2.b.i Career competencies. One set of ready-to-use resources warrants particular attention. A key process goal of the QEP (Goal 2c) is to increase students' awareness of the career competencies their courses offer, helping students understand and articulate how their coursework is supporting their career objectives. These goals arise in part from the hidden curriculum survey conducted by the committee in spring 2024 (see Section 4.1.a), in which students identified a desire to better understand how courses outside their major are relevant to their career and professional goals. To this end, we will pilot a set of graphics that will be available for use on all undergraduate course syllabi to communicate to students which career competencies they can expect to develop through that course. Communication about the transferable skills that a particular course develops will help students understand how their degree requirements are structuring their development across a specific body of knowledge and how they are scaffolding skills for the world of work. Additionally, identifying career competencies or broader skills will help demystify both the Volunteer Core requirements and milestones in coursework for the major.

The syllabus has been identified as a key source of students' initial impressions of courses and instructors and thus as an important medium for communicating course and instructor values (e.g., Chandar et al., 2023). Highlighting career competencies is recommended by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) as one way to help faculty communicate about career with students (Gray, 2024). Although the syllabus graphic alone will not be sufficient to change students' thinking, it is a way to provide a unified message raising awareness about competencies across the curriculum. Importantly, there is evidence that changing the appearance or content of a course syllabus has positive impacts on students. For example, Nusbaum, Swindell, and Plemons (2021) demonstrated that a more visual syllabus can create better first impressions (i.e., that the instructor is kinder, more creative, and more approachable). Another study found that including identity safety cues can lead students to expect to be more engaged in the course (Maimon, Howansky, & Sanchez, 2023). More learner-centered language in syllabi has been associated with better impressions as well (Richmond, 2016).

The committee developed a preliminary list of competencies derived from NACE and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). Five of the eight NACE (2024) career competencies (e.g. communication, critical thinking, teamwork) are also reflected in the AACU essential learning outcomes (AACU, 2009) and are among the skills listed as most important in the most recent AACU survey of employers (Finley, 2023). In addition to the remaining three NACE competencies (career and self-development, leadership, and professionalism), we added four competencies from the AACU: digital/information literacy, ethical reasoning, integrative learning, and quantitative literacy (see Figure 7 for the complete list of 12 competencies and their descriptions).

FIGURE 7: CAREER COMPETENCIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

1	Career and Self-Development^N Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.
2	Communication^N Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
3	Critical Thinking^N Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
4	Digital / Information Literacy^{**} The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand; the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.
5	Engagement^N Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to engage and include people from different backgrounds.
6	Ethical Reasoning[*] Reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.
7	Integrative Learning[*] An understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.
8	Leadership^N Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
9	Professionalism^N Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
10	Quantitative Literacy[*] The ability to analyze and interpret data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).
11	Teamwork^N Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating varied viewpoints and shared responsibilities.
12	Technology^N Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.
	^N Competency taken from the NACE Career Competencies [*] Competency name and description derived from the AAC&U: AACU Employer Survey, AAC&U Values Rubrics [#] Competency description taken from American Library Association

To facilitate faculty buy-in and continue engaging stakeholders throughout the process of developing the QEP, in fall 2024 we surveyed undergraduate instructors about the applicability of these 12 competencies to their course outcomes and shared the 12 competencies with our Employer Advisory Board for feedback.

Instructor survey. We received responses from 369 instructors (185 tenure-line faculty, 133 teaching (non-tenure line) faculty, 23 graduate student instructors, 12 instructional staff, and four others) across nearly all academic units. Our two largest colleges, Arts and Sciences and the Haslam College of Business, were most represented. Only our newest and smallest units, the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs and the College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies, were not represented. Most respondents (93%) indicated that at least one of the 12 competencies was relevant to every undergraduate course they teach. Critical thinking was endorsed most often (by nearly 99% of respondents who answered this question, or 94% of the total sample); leadership was least endorsed, but still endorsed by more than half (54%) of the total sample.

Employer Advisory Board. On November 13, 2024, the QEP Steering Committee lead was invited to facilitate a discussion with the UT Knoxville Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration's (CCD) Employer Advisory Board. Two members of the QEP Steering Committee were also present due to their existing institutional roles. The Employer Advisory Board comprises representatives from organizations who tend to hire the largest number of UT Knoxville graduates and have a strong presence on campus. The board meets biannually with staff from the CCD to share insights and recommendations. The 18 individuals present at the fall 2024 meeting represented 15 different employers across a range of job sectors. Employers divided into self-selected groups (Business and Industry, Engineering and Tech, Government and Non-Profit) to discuss the list of 12 competencies, with a focus on the relevance of the competencies within their workplace and whether any critical competencies were missing. The employers were unanimous that all 12 are important and that they could not identify any missing competencies.

Based on this broad-based support from these different institutional constituencies, we decided to retain all 12 competencies for the QEP. A series of career competency icons will be developed for syllabus integration and distributed via the process described in the QEP faculty orientation in Section 5.1.a. These icons will provide another mechanism for aiding students to see the long-term meaning of their core courses and can foster a dialogue between faculty and students regarding the universal skills being developed in each course.

5.2.b.ii Formative evaluation of plug-and-play resources. As the resources are developed, feedback from faculty and small groups of students will be sought to help evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness. Once the QEP resources have been deployed, the QEP director and assessment coordinator will track how many were available to faculty, and Canvas will allow tracking of opt-out numbers. Tracking view and download rates and auditing Canvas course shells will also begin to show how integrated the resources become in academic courses and the extent to which some units or faculty may need additional support for using them.

5.2.b.iii Implementation timeline for plug-and-play resources.

Year 0	Spring: QEP transition liaison coordinates identification of topics and content to be integrated into course materials (icons, Canvas modules, syllabi, slide decks, etc.).
Year 1	Fall: QEP director works with key partners to prioritize content and develop faculty-facing intended outcomes. Spring: Produce materials. Summer: Develop communications materials; develop UT Knoxville intranet site.
Year 2	Fall: Disseminate materials to faculty in tandem with multi-tiered communication campaign and implementation instructions. Host town halls. Spring: Provide ongoing support and track questions and implementation. Summer: Analyze assessment data and make revision to materials; integrate work of Faculty Fellows.
Year 3	Fall: Continue communication campaign highlighting successes; introduce any additional materials. Spring: Develop submission process and solicit artifacts. Summer: Analyze content and revise accordingly.
Year 4	Fall-Spring: Continue implementation. Roll out assessment of student recognition of symbols and effectiveness of these interventions in fostering student action.
Year 5	QEP director and team produce a final report with assessment indicators.

5.2.c Resources Needed to Initiate, Implement, and Complete the Integration of Ready-to-Use Resources.

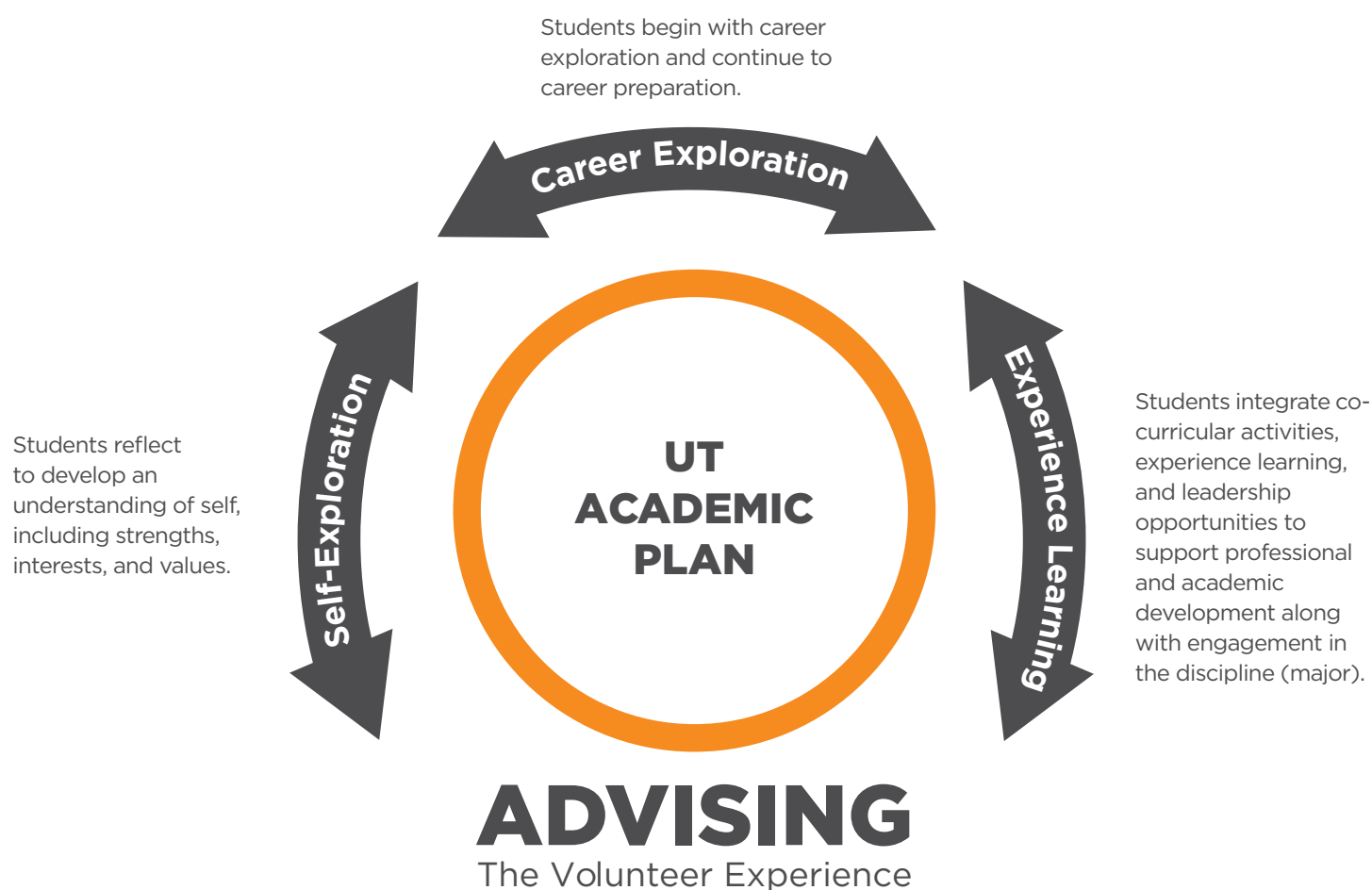
There will be costs relevant to creating the graphics, templates, and communication plan for faculty, but few costs after the initial launch. Many activities could be low cost or no cost. Some costs will be absorbed in the professional development budgets of the QEP Faculty Fellows programs, but there will be costs for development, publication, and distribution of initiatives. There could be publication costs if the QEP team chooses print media as a way to publicize. Estimate: \$25,000 a year for four years of:

- Personnel compensation for project management
- Time and materials for content development and production (conception, writing, recording, editing, etc.)
- Time and materials for promotion and distribution

5.3 Vol Success Teams—Goals 1, 2, 3

In late 2020, the institution created Vol Success Teams (VSTs) to support each incoming first-year student. VSTs model how healthy networks are a part of a successful undergraduate career. We emphasize to first-year students, even before they arrive on campus, that every Vol has a team of support upon which to rely and through which they can gather information to grow. Incoming students learn about their VST through email introductions, online orientation modules, their MyUTK page, and onboarding activities. The VSTs are a first step and ongoing support in helping students learn about campus resources.

Each VST consists of an assigned academic advisor, academic coach, and One Stop counselor (who can answer questions and provide resources related to enrollment, academic records, financial aid, and making payments). These success teams can evolve as students progress through their academic career and can extend to faculty, peers, family, and others within their network. As advisors meet with students, they rely on the institution's advising model (Figure 8), which includes development of a student's personal goals, career goals, and experiences to shape an academic and co-curricular plan. Similarly, academic coaches help students develop skills such as time management, goal setting, and a growth mindset to help students as they pursue their career goals.

FIGURE 8: UT KNOXVILLE ADVISING MODEL

This activity will augment the VSTs by adding a career coach to each team in the sophomore year as the academic success coaches roll off being listed on the team (but remain an important resource throughout the student's academic career). The designation of a career coach will expand the support network for student career preparation early in the college journey. With this structure VSTs will continue to support student academic performance while enhancing career preparation and providing a more robust model of how healthy networks engender success. The actions we expect students to take as a result of their interactions with their VSTs are increased help-seeking behavior, network building, and career competencies development.

5.3.a Formative Evaluation of Vol Success Teams

There are already assessment options in place for VSTs, but new software platforms are currently launching that can assist in gathering data about students' awareness and use of their VST.

5.3.b Implementation Timeline for Vol Success Team Expansion

- **Year 1:** Assess career coach staffing needs; determine industries and majors requiring more 1:1 student support; partner with dean of student success communications team to roll out a campaign.
- **Year 2:** Hire two to three new coaches, update major and industry assignments and communicate new teams to students and colleges; assess opportunities for physically embedding coaches in the colleges.
- **Year 3:** Assess capacity and needs; if need is demonstrated, hire one to two more coaches and update industry assignments.
- **Year 4:** Continue to refine services to students and the role of coaches in partnering with colleges; assess progress.
- **Year 5:** Complete implementation and assessment.

5.3.c Resources Needed to Initiate, Implement, and Complete the Expansion of the Vol Success Teams

As to costs, expanding VSTs to include career coaches will require increased staffing in the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration. The center currently has nine full-time career coaches. An initial study suggests an additional four to six would be required to meet the QEP enhanced VST structure. Funds are already being sought via the Office of the Provost external to the QEP. Additionally, making students aware of this new support structure will require a strategic communication campaign, funds for which are included in the materials budget for ready-to-use resources and personnel for communications (see Section 7.1).

6. STUDENT OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT PLAN

As detailed in Section 2 goals, the QEP will be successful if undergraduate students are able to navigate their experiences at UT Knoxville intentionally, with meaning and purpose. Ultimately, students will be able to articulate how UT Knoxville is helping them carry out their career and life goals, experience well-being and a sense of belonging during their time at UT Knoxville, and adopt or maintain adaptability and a growth orientation toward their work at UT Knoxville. We believe students can achieve those goals if they become aware of available support systems, strategies, and career competencies, and use them to navigate their college experience. The activities described in Section 5 are the mechanisms by which we will achieve those goals.

As mentioned earlier, this emphasis for our QEP responds to the circumstances revealed by our campus feedback process. On the one hand, UT Knoxville's traditional student success metrics are quite high, with a first-year retention rate of 91.9% in 2023, a second-year retention rate of 86.5% in 2022 (when the first-year rate was 91.1%), and a six-year graduation rate of 73.9% as of 2018 (UT Knoxville, 2024). On the other hand, and in line with national data, during our initial surveys and feedback processes students and faculty agreed that students experience uncertainty, stress, and anxiety at levels that interfere with their academic success. This discrepancy between traditional success metrics and students' underlying experience is the prime target of our QEP; thus, although we will monitor traditional success metrics (e.g., second-year retention), our primary outcome focus is on constructs we have identified as underlying needs to help students not only achieve academic success but also thrive at UT Knoxville and beyond (Figure 4).

6.1 Overview of the Assessment Process

Our assessment addresses the identified goals by collecting data in three ways. First, as detailed in the Activities section above, we will evaluate each activity for implementation fidelity and immediate effects. Second, we will collect time-sequenced cross-sectional data to determine whether the desired process goals of awareness and action are being achieved. The governing assessment questions for this will be:

- Are students aware of their support systems, strategies, and career competencies?
- Are students taking action by using support systems, strategies, and curricular paths toward career competencies?

Given the nature of the activities, the goals, and the related data analysis process, causality will be difficult to determine, but in combination, the program evaluation data and the time-sequenced cross-sectional data will inform QEP staff and university administrators whether the QEP is moving forward as expected. Third, we will collect semilongitudinal data by tracking successive cohorts of students through their first and second years, providing a clearer picture of whether student trajectories are indeed being influenced by the implemented activities and/or by the kinds of awareness and action that QEP activities are designed to promote. The governing assessment questions will be:

- Has student awareness about available support systems, strategies, and career competencies changed?
- Have students changed their behavior in relation to support systems, strategies, and curricular paths toward career competencies?
- Are students demonstrating increased meaning and purpose?

The program evaluation data and the time-sequenced cross-sectional data will be reported to QEP and campus administrators annually, beginning in the first year, to allow this feedback to be used when reviewing and renewing QEP activities. If the data do not indicate that the QEP is having a measurable effect, administrators will be able to redesign, suspend, or relaunch activities to enhance their impact. As described in the previous section, such feedback loops will be implemented for each of the activities on time scales that match their implementation cycle (e.g., by semester or by academic year).

A full assessment timeline is presented in Figure 9 and a logic model in Figure 5. In the following sections, we outline some of our assessment methods, consider each goal and its components; articulate specific measurable outcomes (Table 8), and describe the procedures that will put the data to use. As described below, assessment data will be gathered from a variety of sources including institutional data, national surveys in which UT Knoxville traditionally participates (e.g., the National Survey of Student Engagement), existing university-wide surveys (e.g., Pulse Survey, First-Year Experience Survey), QEP-specific surveys, an advising survey, and targeted focus groups. The latter three mechanisms are new to the QEP.

FIGURE 9: ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

Cohort	Year -1		Year 0		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Fall 2027	Spring 2028	Fall 2028	Spring 2029	Fall 2029	Spring 2030
-2						NSSE Senior								
-1		NSSE				Pulse Survey; Focus Groups (Goal 3 baseline) QEP Survey	Pulse Survey Goal 3 baseline							
0						QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2 baseline	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups Goal 3 (Preliminary)		Pulse Survey Goal 3					
1					QEP Survey baseline	QEP Survey Goal 1 / NSSE Goal 2a / Focus Groups Goal 1	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2	QEP Survey / Advising Survey Goal 3	QEP Survey / Advising Survey Goal 3		NSSE Senior	Pulse Survey Goal 3		
2							QEP Survey baseline	QEP Survey / Focus Groups Goal 1	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups Goal 3	Pulse Survey Goal 3		

First-year Sophomore Junior Senior

FIGURE 9 CONTINUED

Cohort	Year -1		Year 0		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Fall 2027	Spring 2028	Fall 2028	Spring 2029	Fall 2029	Spring 2030
3									QEP Survey baseline	QEP Survey / Focus Groups Goal 1		QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2	QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups Goal 3	
4											QEP Survey baseline	QEP Survey / Focus Groups Goal 1		QEP Survey / Advising Survey / Focus Groups / Institutional Data Goal 2
5													QEP Survey baseline	QEP Survey / Focus Groups Goal 1

First-year Sophomore Junior Senior

TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF GOALS AND OUTCOMES

PROCESS GOAL 1: AWARENESS
Our first step is to increase students' awareness of strategies for success, sources of support, and broad competencies that underlie their learning, well-being, and career readiness.
GOAL 1A: AWARENESS OF SUPPORTS
Students will be able to identify available resources (peer, curricular, co-curricular) that can support their learning, well-being, and career readiness.
Outcome 1ai: By the end of their first year, students will report awareness of at least five co-curricular support resources (e.g., the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, the Math Place, the services provided by the Academic Success Center, the UT Libraries).
Outcome 1aii: By the end of their first year, students will be able to identify at least one individual they could ask if they need additional help, including contacts among faculty and staff.
GOAL 1B: AWARENESS OF STRATEGIES
Students will demonstrate awareness of evidence-based strategies for success.
Outcome 1b: By the end of their first year, students will be able to distinguish more effective from less effective strategies for learning and time management.
GOAL 1C: AWARENESS OF CAREER COMPETENCIES
Students will be able to identify career competencies that are developed through their coursework and valued by employers.
Outcome 1c: By the end of their first year, students will be able to name at least six career competencies.
PROCESS GOAL 2: ACTION
With increased awareness, students will be able to use resources, strategies, and competencies relevant to learning, well-being, and career.
GOAL 2A: BUILD AND USE SUPPORT NETWORKS
Students will build and use meaningful support networks of campus resources and people (peers, faculty, and staff).
Outcome 2ai: By the end of their second year, students will report using at least one student support resource.
Outcome 2aii: Utilization of key campus resources will increase, particularly among first- and second-year students.
Outcome 2aiii: By the end of their second year, students will name at least two people and the types of mentoring support each can offer.
GOAL 2B: USE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
Students will use evidence-based strategies for learning and navigating challenges.
Outcome 2b: By the end of their second year, students will report using effective time management and study strategies.
GOAL 2C: ARTICULATE RELEVANT CAREER COMPETENCIES
Students will be able to articulate how their coursework (within and outside their major) is developing specific career-relevant competencies.
Outcome 2c: By the end of their second year, students will be able to identify which competencies they need to develop, are developing, and have developed and how they have done so.

FINAL GOAL 3: MEANING & PURPOSE

When through this process students strengthen their learning, well-being, and career readiness, the result will be a holistic success marked by an increased sense of meaning and purpose, of well-being and belonging, and of confidence to adapt to current and future experiences.

GOAL 3A:

Students can articulate what they want to do with their lives and how UT Knoxville is helping them get there.

Outcome 3a: By the start of their third year, students will be able to articulate their professional goal(s) and how UT Knoxville is helping them reach those goals.

GOAL 3B:

Students will demonstrate overall well-being and sense of belonging.

Outcome 3bi: By the start of their third year, students will report strong multidimensional well-being.

Outcome 3bii: By the start of their third year, students will report a strong sense of belonging at UT Knoxville and within their major.

GOAL 3C:

Students will demonstrate adaptability and a growth orientation.

Outcome 3ci: By the start of their third year, students will report strong career adaptability (see Section 4.2.c)

Outcome 3cii: By the start of their third year, students will report strong Personal Growth Initiative (see Section 4.2.a)

6.1.a National Survey of Student Engagement

For over 20 years, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has assessed undergraduate experiences at more than 1,700 participating institutions. Institutions are provided with results from their own first-year and senior students and with comparisons to the NSSE sample as a whole (across all participating institutions), as well as to institutions within the same Carnegie class (i.e., other R1 institutions). Although the UT Knoxville sample is typically small and may not be fully representative, the data do provide some baseline information, especially in the context of peer comparisons. UT Knoxville administers the NSSE in conjunction with its Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) efforts. QAF runs on a five-year cycle, and NSSE is given in Years 1 and 4 of the QAF cycle. The NSSE was administered in spring 2024 (Year 4 of the current cycle). Assuming that the Tennessee Higher Educational Commission does not change its QAF requirements, UT Knoxville plans to administer the survey again in spring 2026 (Year 1 of our QEP) and 2029 (Year 4 of our QEP). The NSSE is generally considered to be **indirect assessment** of important outcomes.

6.1.b QEP-Specific Surveys

We will combine existing well-validated measures of key constructs with custom-designed assessments to **directly assess** our desired outcomes. As described below and shown in Figure 9, the complete QEP survey will be administered to students during their first semester at UT Knoxville and again near the end of their first year to provide baseline data for several outcomes and to directly assess outcomes related to our first goal. Surveys will be administered in sections of FYS and other courses that enroll large numbers of first-year students. One key source of data will be the PSYC 110 (General Psychology) course, which enrolls about 2,500 students annually across all academic units and typically from more than 100 different majors. Students enrolled in PSYC 110 are required to learn about research, with most choosing to participate in research studies. The QEP surveys can be included as a research option in this course as one source of a fairly representative sample of students. Subsets of items from the complete QEP survey will be administered at the end of students' second year and the beginning of their third year, and students will be recruited broadly from the entire campus to obtain representative samples. All items and measures to be included in the QEP survey are included in Appendix C.

We piloted a preliminary version of the QEP survey with a small group of students enrolled in PSYC 110 at the end of the fall 2024 semester. To reduce participant fatigue, students were randomly assigned to see some, but not all, of the included measures. Students represented 39 different majors across 11 different colleges; only 16 of the 194 students were psychology majors. Most participants (55.2%, $n = 107$) were first-year students, followed by sophomores (25.3%, $n = 49$), juniors (13.9%, $n = 27$) and seniors (5.7%, $n = 11$). Relevant baseline data from this pilot survey are reported in Sections 6.2–6.4.

6.1.c Advising Survey

All UT Knoxville students are assigned a professional advisor with whom they are expected to meet at least annually. The professional advisors who were members of the committee identified advising appointments as a key opportunity to gather data for our QEP. In collaboration with the university's professional advising staff, we will develop a brief advising survey that students will be asked to complete annually and submit prior to their annual advising appointment beginning in their second year. The surveys will be completed online; individual advisors will be able to integrate students' responses into their advising conversations as they desire, and the collated de-identified data will be shared with the coordinator of QEP assessment for further analysis. The advising survey will include **both direct and indirect assessments**. A random sample of surveys will be taken for assessment purposes.

6.1.d Targeted Focus Groups

To **directly assess** our outcomes more qualitatively, we will conduct a series of targeted focus groups with students who are directly affected by specific QEP activities. For example, we will conduct focus groups with students who enroll in the FYS sections that include Intentional Growth Training or in course sections with faculty who participate in the SEP. The interview protocol, to be developed in Year 1, will allow us to directly assess the extent to which the relevant QEP activities have led students to be more aware of and to use resources, evidence-based strategies, and relevant career competencies.

6.2 QEP Process Goal 1: Awareness

As described in Section 4.1, the hidden curriculum often means that some students have less access to information about the why and how of college; thus, raising awareness of the hidden curriculum has been identified as a critical need in promoting equitable college student success (Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022). Thus, the first goal of our QEP is to increase students' awareness of strategies for success, sources of support, and broad competencies that underlie their learning, well-being, and career readiness. By being aware of university resources and how their academics support them in achieving their goals, students build foundations for college, their well-being, and their careers. They will know where or to whom to go for support, what strategies and skills are the most helpful in the UT Knoxville environment, and that what they learn is essential to achieving their goals. Nearly all of the activities described in Section 5 will help us achieve this goal. For each of the specific measurable outcomes described below, we expect to see successive increases across the first year for students in Cohorts 1–4 (Figure 9), as each successive cohort is expected to experience more of the QEP activities. For example, Cohort 1 will not benefit from the majority of ready-to-use resources developed by the QEP Faculty Fellows or the classroom practices enacted by the SEP Faculty Fellows, whereas Cohort 4 will benefit from these accumulated resources and possible expansion of Intentional Growth Training in FYS.

Goal 1a: Awareness of Supports. Students will be able to identify available resources (peer, curricular, co-curricular) that can support their learning, well-being, and career readiness.

A recent survey found that students who leave college prematurely are significantly less likely to be aware of resources offered by their institution (Mowreader, 2024). Moreover, students who were “aware of five or more student support services are 13 percentage points more likely to say they would persist in higher education (77 percent), compared to their peers who are aware of one to four services (64 percent)” (para. 15). Beyond awareness of support services, we also know that awareness of supportive people is important: having one identifiable person to go to for support is associated with being twice as likely to return after the first year (Levitz & Noel, 1989). Thus, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following specific outcomes:

Outcome 1ai: By the end of their first year at UT Knoxville, students will report awareness of at least five co-curricular support resources (e.g., the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, the Math Place, the services provided by the Academic Success Center, the UT Libraries).

Outcome 1aii: By the end of their first year at UT Knoxville, students will be able to identify at least one individual they could ask if they need additional help, including contacts among faculty and staff.

We will use two items from the QEP survey, described above, to assess awareness of support opportunities at the beginning and end of the first year. The items will ask students to name as many student support resources as possible and to list the names of specific individuals they could ask for help and will be administered during the first few weeks of class by instructors of courses with large numbers of first-year students. We will compare responses to these two items from first-year students at the beginning and end of the academic year, which will allow for a near-term longitudinal assessment of whether awareness of resources has begun to change. As described above, we expect to see successive increases in students' awareness of resources across Cohorts 1-4.

Baseline Data: In our pilot QEP survey, students were presented with a list of 16 campus resources and asked to indicate if they knew about, had considered using, or had used each one (Table 9). First-year students at the end of their first semester reported being aware of an average of 14.5 of the 16 resources; more than 90% of students were aware of at least five resources. However, nearly 22% of first-year students were unaware of a faculty mentor as a resource. Because students' ability to spontaneously think of resources is likely a deeper level of awareness than simply recognizing resources in a list, our actual QEP survey will ask students to name resources rather than asking them which resources they recognize, to provide a stronger assessment of students' awareness of resources.

TABLE 9: RESOURCES BASELINE DATA

RESOURCE	FIRST YEARS		SOPHOMORES		JUNIORS		SENIORS	
	% AWARE	% HAVE USED	% AWARE	% HAVE USED	% AWARE	% HAVE USED	% AWARE	% HAVE USED
Student Counseling Center	96%	55.40%	93.50%	50%	96%	48%	81.80%	36.40%
Student Health Center	99%	71.30%	97.80%	71.70%	100%	60%	81.80%	63.60%
Academic Success Center	97%	73.30%	93.50%	78.30%	100%	48%	81.80%	63.60%
Academic Coach	98%	75.20%	97.80%	80.40%	92%	40%	81.80%	27.30%
Supplemental Instruction	79.20%	41.60%	80.40%	50%	80%	40%	72.70%	54.50%
Tutoring	96%	74.30%	93.50%	69.60%	100%	60%	81.80%	72.70%
Academic Advisor	100%	93.10%	97.80%	93.50%	100%	92%	81.80%	81.80%
Faculty Mentor	78.20%	49.50%	82.60%	45.70%	88%	48%	81.80%	54.50%
Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration	95%	60.40%	89.10%	60.90%	96%	48%	81.80%	63.60%
Library	99%	96%	100%	100%	100%	92%	81.80%	81.80%
Writing Center	98%	68.30%	91.30%	63%	100%	52%	81.80%	27.30%
Smokey's Pantry	88.10%	35.60%	76.10%	23.90%	84%	36%	63.60%	36.40%
Student Disability Services	87.10%	25.70%	93.50%	19.60%	84%	12%	81.80%	27.30%
Pride Center	81.20%	18.80%	82.60%	13%	72%	8%	81.80%	27.30%
Center for Health Education and Wellness	92.10%	49.50%	82.60%	34.80%	92%	24%	72.70%	45.50%
Center for Care and Resilience	68.30%	26.70%	65.20%	15.20%	60%	8%	54.50%	18.20%

In addition, at the end of fall 2024, the university deployed its First-Year Experience Survey to all first-year students. The survey asks questions around students' experiences during their first semester. Data from this fall 2024 survey will provide useful baseline data. Data collected in Year 1 of the QEP will also provide helpful baseline data for the QEP as a whole, as the first-year students (Cohort 1 in Figure 9) will have experienced very few of the QEP activities. In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in awareness of supports within each cohort.

Assessment Context: QEP survey, described above, administered to first-year students; annual focus groups of first-year students.

Assessment Timing: The QEP survey will be administered annually, near the beginning of the fall semester and near the end of the spring semester. Focus groups will occur during the spring semester.

Measurement: Short-term longitudinal quantitative data, with the capacity to indicate change in awareness. We expect that students will name significantly more resources and people at the end of the year than at the beginning. We also expect that students in focus groups will name activities such as their FYS classes, Canvas modules, and in-class slide deck announcements as key sources of information about available resources and supports.

Benchmarks: At least 70% of students can spontaneously name at least five student support services and one specific support person by the end of their first year. We anticipate meeting this metric by the end of Year 3 for Cohort 3 and maintaining or exceeding it for Cohorts 4 and 5.

Goal 1b: Awareness of Strategies. Students will demonstrate awareness of evidence-based strategies for success.

More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcome:

Outcome 1b: By the end of their first year at UT Knoxville, students will be able to distinguish more effective from less effective strategies for learning and time management.

Because the selected activities (Section 5) engage a broad range of faculty and staff in a broad range of awareness-raising efforts, we will assess this outcome using an existing well-validated survey, the Resource Management Inventory (ReMI; Trentephol et al., 2022; Waldeyer et al., 2019; 2022). The ReMI presents students with several scenarios and asks them to select the best strategy for handling the given situation. The situations assess their knowledge of appropriate strategies across five domains: time management, effort regulation, motivation regulation, help seeking, and workplace organization. After selecting a strategy, students are asked to rate their ability to use the selected strategy. Higher scores indicate awareness of the correct strategy for each situation as well as great likelihood and ability to successfully use the strategy. In past research, higher scores on each of these five dimensions were associated with higher GPA among college students, even after controlling for cognitive abilities and high school GPA (Waldeyer et al., 2022). To assess this outcome, we will use only the initial knowledge scores from the ReMI, which will be deployed as part of the QEP survey. As the QEP Faculty Fellows programs, QEP grants, and plug-and-play resources are created and debut, we plan to revisit the ReMI results and deploy additional metrics as appropriate to the kinds of strategies those programs emphasize.

Baseline Data: The 12-item short form of the ReMI was deployed as part of our QEP pilot survey in fall 2024. First-year students, on average, selected the correct strategy for only about five of the 12 scenarios (Table 10). Only 8% of first-year students selected the correct strategy on nine or more scenarios; only about 43% selected the correct strategy on at least half of the scenarios.

Data collected in Year 1 of the QEP will also provide helpful baseline data for the QEP as a whole, as the first-year students (Cohort 1 in Figure 9) will have experienced very few of the QEP activities. In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in awareness of supports within each cohort.

TABLE 10: STRATEGIES BASELINE DATA

YEAR	STATISTIC	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INVENTORY REMI			LEARNING TECHNIQUES SCALE		
		ReMI Correct	ReMI Total		LOW UTILITY	MODERATE UTILITY	HIGH UTILITY
1	Mean	5.08	0.75		3.98	4.18	4.17
	N	101	100		101	101	101
	SD	2.51	0.4		0.81	0.84	1.13
	Minimum	0	0		1.4	2	1
	Maximum	12	2		6	6	6
	Median	5	0.67		4	4	4
2	Mean	5.46	0.81		3.72	4.01	4.33
	N	46	46		46	46	46
	SD	2.83	0.48		0.87	0.98	0.93
	Minimum	0	0		2	2	2.5
	Maximum	11	1.83		5.6	6	6
	Median	5	0.83		3.9	4	4.25
3	Mean	5.68	0.84		3.94	4.08	3.86
	N	25	25		25	25	25
	SD	2.41	0.39		1.02	1.04	1.22
	Minimum	3	0.33		1.6	1.67	1.5
	Maximum	11	1.83		6	5.67	6
	Median	5	0.75		4	4	4
4	Mean	5.09	0.76		3.73	4.09	3.91
	N	11	11		11	11	11
	SD	2.91	0.48		1.32	1.41	1.69
	Minimum	1	0.17		1	1	1
	Maximum	9	1.5		6	6	6
	Median	4	0.67		3.6	4.67	4.5
Total	Mean	5.26	0.78		3.89	4.12	4.15
	N	183	182		183	183	183
	SD	2.59	0.42		0.89	0.94	1.13
	Minimum	0	0		1	1	1
	Maximum	12	2		6	6	6
	Median	5	0.75		4	4	4

Assessment Context: QEP survey and focus groups, described above, administered to first-year students.

Assessment Timing: Annually, near the beginning of the fall semester (survey only) and near the end of the spring semester (survey and focus groups).

Benchmarks: We expect to see a significant increase in awareness of effective strategies, with at least 70% of students correctly selecting the correct strategy in at least half of the scenarios. We anticipate meeting this metric by the end of Year 3 for Cohort 3 and maintaining or exceeding it for Cohorts 4 and 5.

Goal 1c: Awareness of Career Competencies. Students will be able to identify career competencies that are developed through their coursework and valued by employers.

More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcome:

Outcome 1c: By the end of their first year, students will be able to name at least six career competencies.

We will use two items from the QEP survey, described above, to assess awareness of career competencies. The first will be an open-ended item that asks students to name the broad skills or competencies they think employers look for. Students will also be shown the career competency syllabus icons described in Section 5.2.c and asked to describe each one.

Baseline Data: Data collected in Year 1 of the QEP will provide helpful baseline data for the QEP as a whole, as the first-year students (Cohort 1 in Figure 9) will have experienced very few of the QEP activities. In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in awareness of supports within each cohort.

Assessment Context: QEP survey and focus groups, described above, administered to first-year students.

Assessment Timing: Annually, near the beginning of the fall semester (survey only) and near the end of the spring semester (survey and focus groups).

Measurement: Quantitative time-sequenced cross-sectional data.

Benchmarks: At least 70% of students can identify at least six of the 12 career competencies. Because the career competency icons are expected to roll out in Year 1, we anticipate meeting this metric by the end of Year 2 for Cohort 2 and maintaining or exceeding it for Cohorts 3–5. We also expect our focus group participants to identify the career competency icons as a key source of awareness of these competencies.

Goal 1 Analysis

Data for this goal will be collected annually and used in two ways. First, QEP staff will collect and analyze these data and report on any visible trends during the first year and trends from year to year to inform implementation of activities. Qualitative data from student focus groups will be key in helping us better understand quantitative survey data. We aim to achieve continuous statistically significant improvements on all three measurements above (Goals 1a, 1b, and 1c) over baseline data collected during QEP year 1. If during the first two years of the QEP these benchmarks are not being met, QEP staff will work to update activities to aim for better results. If benchmarks are being met, we will aim to increase benchmarks to 80% by Year 5. Reports should therefore be delivered to key implementation drivers, including university administrators and relevant faculty.

Second, these analyses should make available trend lines across all five years of the QEP, showing whether or how awareness is achieving saturation within the student population. For example, if we observe an escalation in awareness followed by a plateau, we may have reached a saturation level representing the maximum that our intervention is able to achieve, whereas if we observe an ongoing increase, we may conclude that the intervention is still spreading awareness through the student population. Based on progress toward the above benchmarks across the full duration of the QEP, we may therefore adjust which interventions are maintained, which are revised or updated, and which are phased out.

6.3 QEP Process Goal 2: Action

With increased awareness, students will be able to use resources, strategies, and competencies relevant to learning, well-being, and career. If students become aware of the supports, strategies, and competencies available to them, we should be able to observe the resulting activity and its potential increase over the course of the QEP. Knowing where to turn should allow students to make use of resources and mentor networks, deploy effective academic success strategies, and articulate the relationship between their academic degree plans and their desired career paths. As in Goal 1, we aim to collect a variety of data, mostly through time-sequenced cross-sectional data, to determine whether students' activities are changing across the QEP period.

Goal 2a: Build and use support networks. Students will build and use meaningful support networks of campus resources and people (peers, faculty, and staff).

Data on usage of co-curricular resources and support networks will be collected semiannually throughout the QEP period. We recognize that awareness of resources and available support networks can be demonstrated on an equal footing in a quantitative survey instrument, but that use of co-curricular resources and use of mentor networks will need to be measured in different ways. Thus, when the QEP is successful, we expect three measurable outcomes:

Co-Curricular Resources

Outcome 2ai: By the end of their second year, students will report using at least two student support resources.

Outcome 2aii: Utilization of key campus resources will increase, particularly among first- and second year students.

An additional item in the QEP survey will ask students to name specific campus resources they have used in the past year. Second, we will examine institutional usage data from the Academic Success Center, the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, the Math Place, and other campus resources identified by the QEP leadership team. As shown in Figure 9, spring 2027 will be the end of the second year for the first cohort of students, so institutional data on usage will be examined beginning in Year 2 (the 2026–27 academic year). By collecting data semiannually and examining trendlines in usage by class year, we will be able to gauge the magnitude and maintenance of any increases in usage.

Baseline Data: Baseline utilization rates of key campus support resources during the 2023–24 academic year are shown in Table 11. In our fall 2024 pilot of the QEP survey, in which students were presented with a list of 16 campus resources and asked which they had used, the small number of second-year students reported having used an average of around four of the 16 resources. However, if we exclude resources assigned to students (academic advisor and academic coach) as well as the library, second-year students reported using only about two of the remaining resources, on average; 45% of the second-year students reported using none or only one of these other resources—compared to 51% of first-year students.

Baseline utilization rates among first- and second-year students will be gathered for Year 0 (2024–25) and Year 1 (2025–26). In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in use of supports within each cohort.

TABLE 11: CAMPUS RESOURCE UTILIZATION 2023-24

	Total Student Population*	Student Counseling Center		Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration (face-to-face users)		Center for Care and Resilience		Academic Success Center**	
	N	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total
First-Year	8,525	345	4.05%	2,952	34.63%	419	4.91%	--	--
Sophomore	6,926	361	5.21%	4,053	58.52%	343	4.95%	--	--
Junior	6,398	330	5.16%	3,303	51.63%	311	4.86%	--	--
Senior	6,914	304	4.40%	3,443	49.80%	323	4.67%	--	--
Graduate Student	7,421	348	4.69%	974	13.12%	160	2.16%	--	--
Total	36,304	1,688	4.65%	14,725	40.56%	1,560	4.30%	11,551	39.26%

*From the fall 2023 OIRA Factbook

**Includes study sessions and other activities at the Vol Study Center and academic coaching appointments. Data reflect unique users. Data on usage by class year were not available. Because the ASC serves undergraduate students, the percent reflects the percentage of all undergraduate students who used the ASC in 2023-24.

Assessment Context: Co-curricular support resources; QEP survey administered to and focus groups with second-year students; institutional data on utilization rates.

Assessment Timing: Collected at resource use throughout the year, collated and referred to the QEP staff at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

Measurement: Cross-sectional time-sequence quantitative data on resource use.

Benchmarks: At least 70% of second-year students will name at least two student support resources they currently use. We anticipate meeting this metric by the end of Year 3 for Cohort 2 and maintaining or exceeding it for Cohorts 3 and 4.

Mentor Networks

Outcome 2a.iii: By the end of their second year, students will name at least two people and the types of mentoring support each can offer.

An item in our advising survey will allow us to determine the extent to which students are using their mentor networks. This item will ask students to complete a mentor map detailing those to whom they turn for different types of advice and support. These mentor maps can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively for the presence of expected mentorship connections (e.g., with members of the Vol Success Teams) as well as for the number and type of connections that students list. Cohort 1 will benefit from the expansion of the Vol Success Teams in Year 2 of the QEP. As an indirect measure of improved mentor networks, we will also examine responses to question 3a (During the current school year, about how often have you . . . talked about career plans with a faculty member?) on the NSSE.

Baseline Data: Baseline data on the mentoring networks will be collected in Year 1 (spring 2026). This cohort of second-year students (Cohort 0) will have experienced few, if any, of the QEP activities. On the NSSE administered in spring 2024, 19% of first-year students and 16% of seniors reported never talking about career plans with a faculty member; only 33% of first-year students reported doing so often or very often. Average responses on this item were significantly below the average for Carnegie class peers.

Assessment Context: Advising appointments and advising survey.

Assessment Timing: Annually, for students in advising appointments during the spring semester of their second year at UT Knoxville.

Measurement: Cross-sectional time-sequence qualitative data.

Benchmarks: At least 70% of students can name at least two individuals in their mentoring networks. We anticipate meeting this metric by the end of Year 3 for Cohort 2 and maintaining or exceeding it for Cohorts 3 and 4.

Goal 2b: Use effective strategies. Students will use evidence-based strategies for learning and navigating challenges.

More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcome:

Outcome 2b: By the end of their second year at UT Knoxville, students will report using effective time management and study strategies.

This outcome will be assessed via three existing well-validated measures we will include in the QEP survey. The Resource Management Inventory (ReMI, Waldeyer et al., 2019) described above assesses both students' knowledge of different strategies and their abilities to use each strategy. Thus we will continue to use the ReMI as one of our assessment tools. We will also deploy a validated measure of students' use of different evidence-based learning strategies such as the Learning Techniques Scale (Bartoszewski & Gurung, 2015), which assesses students' use of 10 different learning strategies that Dunlosky et al. (2013) have characterized as low utility (highlighting/underlining, summarization, keyword mnemonic, imagery for text, and rereading), moderate utility (interleaved practice, elaborative interrogation, and self-explanation), and high utility (practice testing and distributed practice). In addition, we will assess students' metacognitive awareness of their learning processes, using the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). This scale measures two constructs related to how students approach their learning: their knowledge about their own cognitive processes and their ability to act on that knowledge to regulate those processes.

Baseline Data: As noted above, we included the short form of the ReMI in our fall 2024 pilot of the QEP survey. In addition to being asked to select the correct strategy in each scenario, students are asked to indicate their confidence in their ability to successfully use that strategy. Average total scores on the ReMI range between 0 and 2, with higher scores indicating a higher likelihood of using the correct strategy for each scenario. In prior research, college students scored, on average, between 0.61 (time management) to 1.07 (workplace organization; Waldeyer et al., 2022). In a subsequent study, students randomly assigned to learn about and practice time management strategies had average total scores of 0.98, significantly higher than students randomly assigned to only learn about time management strategies ($M = 0.77$), who in turn scored significantly higher than a control group ($M = 0.51$) who had received no information about effective time management. Consistent with this past research, first-year students in our pilot survey averaged 0.75 (Table 10).

We also included a shortened form of the LTS (students were randomly presented with one item from each of the 10 learning techniques, to produce a 10-item scale) in our pilot survey. As shown in Table 10, second-year students reported using high-utility strategies significantly more often than both moderate- and low-utility strategies, and moderate-utility strategies significantly more often than low-utility strategies (all $ps < .05$). However, 50% of second-year students still reported using low-utility strategies often or very often.

In Year 1, baseline scores among first-year (Cohort 1) and second-year (Cohort 0) students will be gathered. Since those students will have experienced few, if any, of the QEP activities, their responses will provide useful baselines. In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in use of strategies within each cohort.

Assessment Context: QEP survey and student focus groups.

Assessment Timing: Near the end of students' second year at UT Knoxville.

Measurement: Time-sequence cross-sectional quantitative data; qualitative data from focus groups.

Benchmarks: Significant change on all measures from beginning of first year to end of second year. Specific benchmarks will be determined after analyzing baseline data. We anticipate meeting our benchmark metrics in Year 3 (Cohort 2) and meeting or exceeding those metrics for Cohorts 3 and 4. We also anticipate that qualitative data from the student focus groups will show students reporting greater use of evidence-based strategies.

Goal 2c: Articulate relevant career competencies. Students will be able to articulate how their coursework (within and outside their major) is developing specific career-relevant competencies.

We don't want students to simply be aware of the broader career competencies employers value but to be able to use that awareness to link their coursework to their future careers. More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcome:

Outcome 2c: By the end of their second year at UT Knoxville, students will be able to identify which competencies they need to develop, are developing, and have developed and how they have done so.

In order to ascertain whether and how students are using their awareness of career competencies to take action, the advising survey students will complete midway through their second year will include a brief custom questionnaire that asks them to identify the ways their courses have contributed to skill and knowledge development necessary for their goals and to identify what skills they still need to develop in future coursework, using the 12 career competencies identified for our QEP. We will modify a worksheet already used by the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration (Appendix D) to include all 12 of the competencies highlighted by our QEP.

Baseline Data: We will begin implementing the advising survey with second-year students (Cohort 0) in Year 1 of the QEP (spring 2026), when the bulk of activities are not yet fully underway. This will provide a baseline for data collected in Years 2 through 5 from students who will have experienced many of the QEP activities. In addition, we will use the data collected each year at the beginning of students' first semester as baseline data for each cohort of students, allowing us to track the growth in integration of competencies within each cohort.

In our pilot QEP survey, students were randomly presented with one of their out-of-major classes that they reported taking that semester and were asked to rate the extent to which they felt they were developing each of our 12 career competencies in that class using a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A great deal). As shown in Table 12, students generally felt they were developing each competency somewhat. Across the total sample, students felt that leadership was being least developed ($M = 2.88$) and critical thinking was most developed ($M = 3.76$) in the specific class.

Assessment Context: Advising processes.

Assessment Timing: During spring term in students' second year at UT Knoxville.

Measurement: Time-sequence cross-sectional quantitative data.

Benchmarks: At least 70% of sampled students will be able to identify at least one course through which they have or could develop at least six of the competencies. Because Cohort 1 will experience two key activities for this goal (competency syllabus icons and expansion of the Vol Success Teams to include a career coach). We anticipate meeting this metric in Year 2 for this cohort, maintaining or exceeding this benchmark for Cohorts 2-4.

TABLE 12: COMPETENCIES BASELINE

COMPETENCY	FIRST YEAR (N = 100)		SOPHOMORE (N = 46)		JUNIORS (N = 25)		SENIORS (N = 11)		TOTAL (N = 182)	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Career and Self Development	3.22	1.17	2.91	1.21	3.36	1.19	2.82	1.33	3.14	1.19
Communication	3.56	1.21	3.33	1.28	3.56	1.16	2.91	1.51	3.46	1.24
Critical Thinking	3.80	1.04	3.59	1.19	3.76	0.93	3.55	1.13	3.73	1.06
Digital Information Literacy	3.04	1.28	2.98	1.31	3.04	1.46	2.27	1.56	2.98	1.33
Engagement	3.21	1.23	3.09	1.46	3.68	1.28	2.82	1.54	3.22	1.32
Ethical Reasoning	3.25	1.37	3.09	1.47	3.92	1.04	3.27	1.62	3.30	1.38
Integrative Learning	3.35	1.18	3.15	1.35	3.80	1.04	3.36	1.36	3.36	1.23
Leadership	2.96	1.38	2.76	1.42	3.00	1.19	2.36	1.43	2.88	1.37
Professionalism	3.11	1.35	3.09	1.38	3.32	1.22	2.64	1.36	3.10	1.34
Quantitative Literacy	3.03	1.38	2.76	1.23	3.00	1.26	2.64	1.43	2.93	1.33
Teamwork	3.42	1.36	3.39	1.31	3.72	1.17	2.64	1.36	3.41	1.33
Technology	3.09	1.32	2.78	1.31	3.12	1.39	2.00	1.41	2.95	1.35

Goal 2 Analysis

Goal 2 data should furnish information along the two different trajectories sketched out at the beginning of this section. On the one hand, time-sequenced pre- and post-intervention data should give us a sense of how students' experience is changing across their degree progress through UT Knoxville, here pegged to their arrival and their completion of their second year, to allow for more than one cohort within the QEP period. On the other hand, this semi-longitudinal data will not provide a process assessment timely enough to guide ongoing implementation of activities, so these data will also furnish time-sequenced cross-sectional data: we can compare responses among new cohorts of students in each year of the QEP period to establish any observable trends. In terms of year-on-year trends, we hope to achieve statistically significant improvements in each of the above measurements. By themselves, these time-sequenced cross-sectional data would not necessarily suggest any QEP role in observed changes, but in concert with the qualitative data from the focus groups and with the assessments of Goal 1 and Goal 3, a clearer multi-point picture may emerge. In other words, if improved action data are correlated with improvements in awareness and data from program evaluations indicate high participation and treatment fidelity, we may conclude that the QEP is playing a role here.

6.4 QEP Final Goal 3: Meaning and Purpose

When through this process students strengthen their learning, well-being, and career readiness, the result will be a holistic success marked by an increased sense of meaning and purpose, of well-being and belonging, and of confidence to adapt to current and future experiences.

This aspirational goal will be evident if students can articulate how their experience at UT Knoxville is supporting their overall career and life goals, if they experience well-being and a sense of belonging during their time here, and if they maintain or develop a growth orientation and/or mindset.

Goal 3a: Students can articulate what they want to do with their lives and how UT Knoxville is helping them get there.

More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcome:

Outcome 3a: By the start of their third year at UT Knoxville, students will be able to articulate their professional goal(s) and how UT Knoxville is helping them reach those goals.

This is a complex outcome properly assessed through qualitative data, which we will obtain in two ways. First, the QEP will collect a brief narrative statement as part of the advising survey. Students will be asked to complete a prompt such as, “I am studying _____ because it will help me reach my professional goal of _____. Along the way, _____ is helping me achieve my goals.” QEP data analysts will develop a technique for automatically coding these narrative statements for the presence of positive or negative indicators about how students perceive and construe their academic trajectory and career path (beginning with preliminary hand coding but proceeding to automation in Atlas.ti software), and these data will be quantitatively analyzed through either basic count data or through epistemic network analysis (ENA; Shaffer et al., 2016). This will allow us to obtain data from a large, representative sample of students. We will also use data from student focus groups to supplement these narrative data, which will provide more robust and in-depth qualitative data from smaller numbers of students.

Baseline Data: During Year 1, we will be developing the specific assessment prompt and focus group protocols. In Year 2 (2026–27), we will collect baseline data from third-year students (Cohort 0; see Figure 9) who will not have participated in many of the QEP activities.

Assessment Context: Advising appointments and advising survey; student focus groups.

Assessment Timing: Annually, beginning in a student’s second year.

Measurement: Qualitative data, subjected to analysis for quantitative comparison.

Benchmarks: TBD, once a scoring process has been determined. We anticipate meeting our identified metric by Year 4 (Cohort 2).

Goal 3b: Students will demonstrate overall well-being and sense of belonging. As noted throughout this report, the goal of our QEP isn’t for students to simply succeed but to thrive. Although we anticipate that the QEP, if successful, will have a positive impact on traditional metrics such as second-year retention, and will examine such institutional data, our primary outcomes focus more on aspects of well-being. More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect the following outcomes:

Outcome 3bi: By the start of their third year, students will report strong multidimensional well-being.

Outcome 3bii: By the start of their third year, students will report a strong sense of belonging at UT Knoxville and within their major.

We will use the PERMA Profiler to assess student well-being, and elements from the Student Experience Project assessment structure to assess belonging.

Outcome 3bi: Well-Being

UT Knoxville has already begun using the PERMA Profiler. The PERMA Profiler measures the five pillars of well-being defined by Seligman (2011) and noted in Section 4: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Created to measure well-being in adults, the measure also includes the additional dimension of health (Butler & Kern, 2016). As a baseline measure of PERMA, the Division of Student Success incorporated elements of the PERMA Profiler into the 2024–25 Pulse Survey. The Pulse Survey is implemented over six administrations throughout the academic year (three times a semester), across the full undergraduate population, pulled into three samples. To align with the spirit of a pulse survey, the first five implementations include the scale for only one of the PERMA constructs, and the April 2025 implementation will include the full PERMA Profiler. A similar cycle of Pulse Survey administrations can continue in future years to measure outcomes over time.

Baseline Data: The data from the three fall 2024 implementations covered the constructs of positive emotions, relationships, and accomplishment (Appendix E). As shown there, about 90% of the surveyed students scored above the midpoint on all three facets of well-being. Examination of data in Years 1 (Cohort 1) and 2 (Cohort 0) will provide additional baseline data since these students will not have participated in many of the QEP activities.

Assessment Context: Semi-random sampling of well-being self-report data via the existing Pulse survey.

Assessment Timing: Three times per semester. Cohort 1 will be in their third year in Year 3 (2027–28).

Measurement: PERMA Profiler.

Benchmarks: At least 90% of third-year students score above the midpoint on all six facets of well-being. We anticipate meeting this metric in Year 4 for Cohort 2.

Outcome 3bii: Sense of Belonging

Students' sense of belonging will be assessed directly using items from existing well-validated measures and indirectly using data from the NSSE. First, we will use the same items used to evaluate the implementation of the Student Experience Project. The standard assessment includes four items that assess social belonging (e.g., *I feel comfortable in this class*), three items that assess social connectedness (e.g., *In this class, I can rely on other students for academic support*), and one item that assesses belonging certainty (*When thinking about this class, how often, if ever, do you wonder "Maybe I don't belong here"?*). Many of these items are similar to the items on the Sense of Belonging Scale developed by Good, Rattan, and Dweck (2012), which has been used to assess aspects of belonging to an institution, academic department, or field of study. These items will be included in our QEP survey to assess sense of belonging at UT Knoxville and within students' majors by modifying the items accordingly (e.g., *"I feel comfortable at this university / in this major."*) We will also examine data from the next NSSE administration on three key items: 15a *I feel comfortable being myself at this institution*, 15b *I feel valued by this institution* and 15c: *I feel like part of the community at this institution*.

Baseline Data: All of the items from the Student Experience Index were included in our fall 2024 QEP pilot survey, providing baseline data on belonging certainty, social belonging, and social connectedness. Students were asked to list all of the courses they were taking that semester, then one was randomly selected for which students completed the SEI items. As shown in Table 13, about 66% of students as a whole reported positive belongingness⁵ in the selected course. We also were able to obtain program evaluation data from the PSYC 110 course in fall 2024, which regularly administers the complete 12-item Sense of Belonging scale (Good et al., 2012) to students. Of the 549 students who completed the scale and consented to have their data used for research purposes, 64.66% reported an overall positive sense of belonging at UT Knoxville. The belonging items from the SEI, modified to refer to belonging at UT Knoxville as a whole, will be included in the QEP survey completed at the start of students' first year to provide baseline data.

As noted above, the NSSE was administered in spring 2024, and three NSSE items pertain to sense of belonging: *I feel comfortable being myself at this institution*, *I feel valued by this institution*, and *I feel like part of the community at this institution*. Responses are made on a four-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). In spring 2024, for first-year students at UT Knoxville, scores on all three items were at or above 3.0 (range 3.0–3.3), and scores on the first and third were significantly higher than scores on the same items completed by first-year students at comparison schools in the same Carnegie class. For seniors, scores on these items ranged from 2.8 to 3.3, which were comparable to scores on these items at our Carnegie class peers. However, those scores appear lower than scores for freshmen the same year. In addition, only 68% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt valued by the institution. (88% and 73% of seniors agreed or strongly agreed with the first and third items, respectively.)

⁵ The SEP considers responses of *agree* or *strongly agree* to indicate positive learning experiences.

TABLE 13: SEI BASELINE

SEP CONSTRUCT	FIRST-YEAR (N = 100)	SOPHOMORE (N = 46)	JUNIORS (N = 25)	SENIORS (N = 11)	TOTAL (N = 182)
Belonging Certainty	68%	65.20%	60%	63.70%	66%
Self Efficacy	37%	39.20%	44%	27.30%	37.80%
Institutional Growth Mindset	77%	76.10%	80%	81.80%	77.50%
Social Belonging	69%	63%	60%	63.60%	66%
Social Connectedness	64%	65.10%	48%	72.70%	62.60%
Trust and Fairness	90%	89.10%	76%	83.80%	87.40%

Percent of students perceiving positive learning conditions in the selected fall 2024 course at UT Knoxville.

Assessment Context: Multiple assessments per semester for students in courses taught by QEP Faculty Fellows and others who participate in the SEP communities of practice in addition to the QEP survey. Focus groups will also include questions about overall belongingness.

Assessment Timing: The belonging items on the QEP survey will be administered at the start of students' first and third year. Our first cohort of students will be in their third year in Year 3 (2027–2028). NSSE data from spring 2029 (Year 4) will be examined for seniors (Cohort 1).

Measurement: Quantitative and qualitative data.

Benchmarks: To be determined after baseline data are better established.

Goal 3c: Students will demonstrate adaptability and a growth orientation.

This goal suggests that students who develop a coherent sense of their college experience and the way it serves their future endeavors will achieve a degree of adaptability in responding to challenges and making plans.

More specifically, if our QEP activities are successful, we expect that by the start of students' third year, students will report strong results in two outcomes:

Outcome 3ci: career adaptability (see Section 4.2.c)

Outcome 3cii: Personal Growth Initiative (see Section 4.2.a)

We plan to measure these features of the student experience using existing well-validated instruments: the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (Robitschek et al., 2012). Those assessments will be administered to students as part of our QEP surveys at the pre-intervention timepoint near the beginning of their first semester and a post-intervention timepoint near the start of their third year at the university.

Baseline Data: Both the CAAS and the PGIS-II were included in our fall 2024 pilot of the QEP survey. As shown in Table 14, scores on both measures are in the moderate range, indicating room for growth on all constructs.

Data from third-year students collected in Year 1 (Cohort 1) will serve as baseline data, since those students will not have had experienced any of the QEP activities. We will also obtain baseline data for each cohort of students on both measures from the QEP survey administered near the beginning of students' first year. Focus groups will also assess students' adaptability and growth orientation.

Assessment Context: QEP survey and focus groups.

Assessment Timing: Near the beginning of students' first year and third year at UT Knoxville.

Measurement: Quantitative surveys with identification to allow for longitudinal analysis; qualitative focus group data to allow for more nuanced, direct assessment.

Benchmarks: To be determined after examination of baseline data. We expect to meet our target metric by Year 4 for Cohort 2.

TABLE 14: PGIS-II AND CAAS BASELINE

	FIRST-YEARS (N = 87)		SOPHOMORES (N = 43)		JUNIORS (N = 24)		SENIORS (N = 8)		TOTAL (N = 162)	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Readiness for Change	4.7	0.82	4.53	0.9	4.81	0.75	4.38	1.7	4.66	0.88
Planfulness	4.57	0.83	4.5	0.89	4.56	0.9	4.33	1.75	4.54	0.91
Use of Resources	4.06	1.11	3.85	1.23	3.92	1.11	3.83	1.94	3.97	1.18
Intentional Behavior	4.82	0.81	4.77	0.89	4.74	0.84	4.81	1.7	4.79	0.89
PGIS-II Total Score	4.54	0.74	4.41	0.8	4.51	0.76	4.34	1.64	4.49	0.82
	n = 79		n = 43		n = 24		n = 8		n = 154	
Concern	21.64	5.12	20.91	4.67	21.08	5.72	24.38	6.02	21.49	5.15
Control	21.57	5.07	21.79	4.58	22.17	5.04	23.75	5.09	21.84	4.91
Curiosity	20.68	4.6	20.27	4.24	20.54	5.08	23.25	6.14	20.68	4.66
Confidence	21.33	5.21	21.35	4.73	22.08	4.91	25.38	5.15	21.66	5.06
Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Total Score	21.3	4.57	21.08	3.9	21.47	4.65	24.19	5.15	21.42	4.44

Scores on the PGIS-II (subscales and total scores) can range from 1 to 6, with higher scores indicating stronger PGI skills. Scores on the CAAS can range from 6 to 36.

Goal 3 Analysis

These assessments represent the longest-term goals of the QEP, but as shown above, we will begin collecting these data in QEP Year 1, with the two goals stated at the beginning of this section. First, we will aim to collect semi-longitudinal data, showing changes across several cohorts of students, from their entry to the university in FYS courses to their selection of a major around the end of their second year. This set of changes, repeated across multiple cohorts, should show improvements as the QEP progresses. Second, we will also treat these data as time-sequenced cross-sectional data, allowing us to observe emerging trend-lines across the QEP period.

A summary of how and when each outcome will be assessed is in Table 15. Our QEP is focused on important outcomes related to student success, including students' awareness and use of critical supports and strategies that will support ultimate outcomes related to meaning and purpose, well-being, adaptability, and a growth orientation. Under each of our goals, we have articulated specific measurable outcomes, each of which has appropriate baseline data presented and analyzed, and specific and appropriate benchmarks identified.

TABLE 15: ASSESSMENT TIMELINE 2

OUTCOME	ASSESSMENT	BASELINE ASSESSMENT	FOCAL ASSESSMENT
1ai	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' first year
1aii	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' first year
1b	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' first year
1c	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' first year
2ai	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' second year (beginning 2026-27)
2aii	Institutional Data	Spring 2025	Beginning Spring 2027
2aiii	Advising Survey / Focus Group	Spring 2026	End of students' second year (beginning 2026-27)
2b	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	End of students' second year (beginning 2026-27)
2c	Advising Survey / Focus Group	Spring 2026	End of students' second year (beginning 2026-27)
3a	Advising Survey / Focus Group	2026-2027	Students' third year (beginning 2027-28)
3b	Pulse Survey	2024-2025	Students' third year (beginning 2027-28)
3cii	QEP Survey / Focus Group	Fall of students' first year	Students' third year (beginning 2027-28)

7. TIMELINE AND RESOURCES TO BE COMMITTED

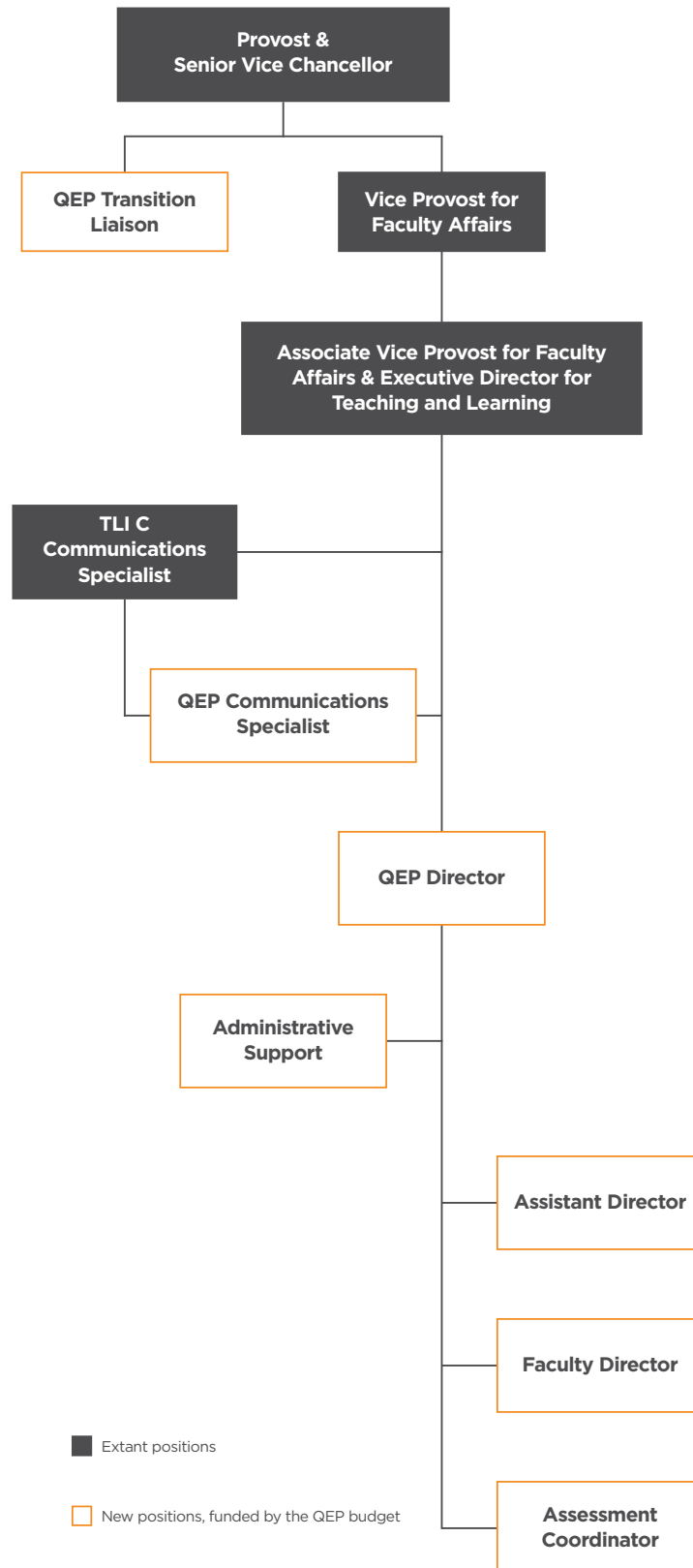
This section explains the resources needed to initiate, fully implement, and successfully complete the QEP. The QEP Resources Subcommittee was careful to allocate resources in ways that would advance the recommended activities across campus while providing the necessary personnel to properly support these activities. Such an arrangement is important and gives further evidence of the university's compliance with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2. The QEP director and coordinator of QEP assessment will also regularly update the provost's office on the progress toward the goals and findings from both the formative and summative assessment data as they emerge so that any needed adjustments to the resources needed may be made in a timely manner as the QEP is enacted.

7.1 Personnel (see Figure 10 for an organization chart)

Below is a description of each position and its primary responsibilities with the QEP. All positions are full-time except for the QEP transition liaison and faculty director roles.

- QEP Director:** The director is responsible for managing the QEP's performance, including its day-to-day operations, managing the QEP's resources, and supervising the QEP staff. The director will be a full-time staff member who serves as the lead in implementing the QEP's activities and reports to the associate vice provost for faculty affairs.
- Faculty Director for the QEP:** Due to the faculty focus of our QEP, and modeled on the success of the Volunteer Experience faculty director position, our QEP will include a 50% appointment for a full-time faculty member to serve as faculty director for the QEP. The faculty director will report to the QEP director and will oversee the faculty-focused activities associated with the QEP as described in Section 5.1. They will also work with the faculty consultant to oversee the SEP implementation and Faculty Fellows.
- Coordinator of QEP Assessment:** The coordinator is responsible for executing the QEP's assessment plan, providing regular reports and interpretation of data to help the QEP staff make informed

FIGURE 10: RESOURCES PERSONNEL SUMMARY



decisions. The coordinator will serve as the lead liaison between the QEP personnel and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The coordinator will report to the director.

4. **Faculty Consultant for the QEP:** The faculty consultant will serve as the lead staff member in faculty development activities for the QEP. They will report to Teaching and Learning Innovation (TLI), within the Division of Faculty Affairs, and serve as the lead liaison between TLI and the faculty director.
5. **QEP Transition Liaison:** The transition liaison is responsible for the initial implementation of the QEP, including overseeing the search for the director. The transition liaison will be a senior faculty member at the university who can serve as an opinion leader and advocate for the QEP during Years 0 and 1 to help build relationships and promote the plan to diverse constituents across campus. The implementation leader is a part-time (25%) position that reports directly to the provost and senior vice chancellor.
6. **QEP Communications Specialist:** The communications strategist is responsible for telling the QEP story to all stakeholders, internal and external. They will participate actively in the campus communications community and report to TLI's communications strategist.
7. **Administrative Support Personnel:** The administrative specialist will be responsible for overseeing all administrative processes related to the QEP. This position reports to the QEP director and provides direct administrative support for QEP personnel.
8. **Other Personnel Deemed Necessary:** A budget line was included for additional personnel that may be needed to successfully implement the QEP activities and programs.

7.2 Overall Budget

An overall budget can be seen in Appendix F. Activities were budgeted based on the following, and as described in Section 5:

First-Year Studies

- \$5,000 for Trainer Visit (Robitschek)

Content Development (Canvas Modules)

- \$25,000

Faculty Fellows Programs

- 16 faculty at \$5,000 = \$80,000 per cohort
- Operational needs, \$30,000
- \$110,000 per year per cohort (three to four cohorts)

Student Experience Project

- Anticipated SEP Institute cost per participant of approximately \$2,000:
 - Registration: \$650
 - Two nights hotel: \$500
 - Flight: \$550
 - Per diem: \$300
- Team of eight participants = \$16,000 one-time cost
- Train the trainer participant incentive of \$250 (one-time) x 100 a year = \$25,000 stipend annually

QEP Grants

- Assuming 25 individual grants per year, up to \$3,000: \$75,000 annually for three years
- One team grant per degree-granting unit, up to \$10K, with three for the distinct divisions in Arts and Sciences: \$160,000 annually for three years
- Publication and marketing of efforts: \$2,000
- Total: \$237,000

8. SUMMARY

Our topic selection process, which arose out of the institutional planning process and involved a wide range of constituents via a representative process that considered both institutional needs and viability, allowed us to arrive at a clear and well-defined topic: *Foundations for Learning, Well-Being, and Career*. By triangulating three sources of data—priorities from the university’s strategic vision, assessment of formal and informal institutional data, and analysis of input from thousands of stakeholders—it became clear to the QEP Committee that although traditional student success metrics showed many of our students were succeeding, other data indicated that UT Knoxville could do more to help students thrive. Thus, the **focus** of our QEP is on the kind of broad holistic **student success** that goes beyond traditional success metrics such as retention. We identified the hidden curriculum as a key barrier to students’ thriving, which results in three overlapping needs for our students to better understand the broad career competencies they acquire as part of their degree (the “why” of college) and the networks of support available to them and evidence-based success strategies (the “how” of college). We conceptualized these overlapping underlying needs as contributing to the generalized anxiety, uncertainty, and isolation many of our students report experiencing, which interfere not only with students’ academic success but also with their well-being and career readiness. On the other hand, when these underlying needs are met, students have a strong **foundation for learning, well-being, and career**, which are the pillars of their holistic success at UT Knoxville and beyond. We also identified faculty as key to meeting these needs for students, by virtue of the fact that the classroom is the only place where 100% of our students are engaged. By engaging instructors to meet these needs, our QEP will strengthen the foundations for learning, well-being, and career readiness and facilitate students’ ability to deliberately find meaning and purpose in their college experience, equipping them for success at UT Knoxville and beyond.

We identified two process goals and several specific activities to meet our ultimate goal of helping students find meaning and purpose. First, our QEP will increase students’ awareness of support networks, evidence-based success strategies, and foundational career competencies. Activities to foster this goal include the development of a range of ready-to-use resources that faculty can embed into their courses and course syllabi as well as new communication tools, Faculty Fellow communities of practice, and professional development opportunities to help faculty share awareness of support networks, strategies, and competencies with one another and their students. Second, by increasing students’ awareness of support networks, success strategies, and competencies, our QEP will increase students’ ability to take action and use the networks, strategies, and competencies. In addition to the activities already described, the integration of Intentional Growth Training into First-Year Studies courses will equip students with the personal growth initiative to planfully use their resources and strategies; the expansion of our Vol Success Teams to include a career coach will provide a new source of support to help students articulate and enact strategies to achieve their professional goals; and the QEP grant program will foster discipline- and major-specific initiatives to help students strengthen their foundation and achieve holistic success. Consistent with our other efforts during the topic selection process to seek **broad-based support, key stakeholders (including faculty, staff, and administration) remained engaged and informed throughout the development of these specific goals and activities. We have also clearly described formative assessment strategies for evaluating the success of each of these activities, including a timeline for these interim formative analyses for each activity.**

In addition to the broad goals we have laid out around awareness, action, and holistic success, **we have articulated specific and measurable outcomes for each goal, with clear timelines, analysis of existing baseline data or specific plans for obtaining baseline data, and specific benchmarks by which we will assess the success of our QEP.** Both direct and indirect assessment data will be gathered from a variety of sources including institutional data, national surveys in which UT Knoxville traditionally participates (e.g., the National Survey of Student Engagement), existing university-wide surveys (e.g., *Pulse Survey*, *First-Year Experience Survey*), focus groups, QEP-specific surveys, and an advising survey.

Finally, **we have considered the full range of human and financial resources that will be needed to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP.** This includes new personnel (e.g., QEP director, coordinator of QEP assessment) who will be responsible for gathering and analyzing assessment data; additional staff and

financial resources to support these assessment efforts; new personnel (QEP director, faculty director, and faculty consultant) to design, implement, and expand the Faculty Fellows programs and other curriculum integration activities; and generous financial resources to support all aspects of the project. Our detailed budget describes the allocation of these human and financial resources across the five-year QEP period. By situating our QEP director as a direct report to the associate vice provost for faculty affairs and the executive director of Teaching and Learning Innovation, we ensure both the ability to engage institutional leadership regularly and keep the provost and chancellor apprised of progress. **Thus, institutional stakeholders will be involved in ongoing planning and evaluation to adjust the resources as the plan proceeds, if necessary.**

This combination of **broad-based support**, a **topic focused** on specific identified needs related to student success, clear goals, evidence-based activities, **specific and measurable student-focused outcomes**, detailed **formative and summative assessment plans**, and thoughtful and generous **commitment of human and financial resources** will allow our QEP, *Foundations for Learning, Well-Being, and Career*, to succeed. Our successful QEP will enhance UT Knoxville's reputation as a university on the rise and will support the strategic vision of the university to cultivate the Volunteer experience by helping students not just succeed while a student but thrive at UT Knoxville and beyond.

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APPENDIX A: HIDDEN CURRICULUM SURVEY

Hidden Curriculum Survey (Student Version)

Are you a current UTK undergraduate student?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [ineligible to continue]

What do you wish you had known more about when you first started at UT? Select all that apply.
[Options presented in random order to each participant; other always last]

- Visiting faculty office hours
- Finding my way around campus
- Emailing professors
- Asking for help
- Networking to meet people, form connections for my career interests
- Joining a research lab
- Forming study groups
- Finding leadership positions
- Identifying student resources on campus
- Becoming involved in campus organizations
- Identifying a mentor
- Budgeting money
- Knowing how to contribute in a classroom
- Planning, preparing, and accessing food / meals
- Finding people with shared interests
- Managing my time
- Using a course syllabus
- Using Canvas
- Studying effectively
- Understanding the academic calendar / schedule
- Being independent / doing things on my own
- Helping my family understand what college is like
- Understanding how courses outside my major are relevant to my future career
- Knowing how to feel seen in very large classes
- Finding academic support resources
- Understanding what an advisor is and can do
- Knowing who to ask / where to go for help
- Understanding financial aid
- Understanding insurance
- Knowing what I need to do to get a good job other than do well in my major
- Taking good notes
- Managing stress / Taking care of my mental health
- None of these
- Other [Text entry option]

[If respondent selected more than 5]
Which are your top 5?

[Only those items previously selected presented here; no more than 5 could be selected]

Optional: Please elaborate on any of your choices.

The questions on this page will help us know how representative the survey responses are.

When was your first semester at UTK?

[Drop down list of options from "Before Fall 2019" to "Spring 2024"]

Did you transfer to UTK from another school?

- Yes
- No

What year are you by credits?

- First year / freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

What is your primary major?

Dropdown selections for:

- College
- Department
- Major
- Concentration

Which of the following best describes you?

- I am an international student
- I was born outside of the US
- I was born in the US, but neither of my parents / guardians were
- I was born in the US and so was at least 1 of my parents / guardians
- Prefer not to answer

Please indicate your perception of where your home community falls on the dimension of very rural to very urban. For instance, New York City is considered very urban.



What is your race / ethnicity? [open-ended response]

What is your gender? [open-ended response]

Which of the following best describes you?

- Neither of my parents / guardians completed high school
- At least one of my parents / guardians completed high school or a GED, but neither went to school after that
- At least one of my parents / guardians attended school after high school, but did not earn a degree
- At least one of my parents / guardians has a 2-year community college degree (AA, AS)
- At least one of my parents / guardians has a 4-year college degree (BA, BS)
- At least one of my parents / guardians has a graduate or professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, PhD, MSW, MA)
- I don't know my parents' / guardians' educational level

Pell Are you Pell-eligible this year?

- Yes (full or partial)
- No
- I don't know

Hidden Curriculum Survey (Faculty and Staff Version)

Sometimes to be successful in college, students need to use certain lessons, values, or perspectives that are not explicitly taught by staff or faculty. They may be referred to as the “hidden curriculum,” or the unspoken (or implicit) academic, social, and cultural messages that students learn as they navigate college (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Laiduc & Covarrubias, 2022).

In your experience working with UTK undergraduates, which of these aspects of the hidden curriculum do you think students have struggled with the most? Put another way, which of the following things do you think students often don't know but most need to know?

[Options presented in random order to each participant; other always last]

- Visiting faculty office hours
- Finding their way around campus
- Emailing professors
- Asking for help
- Networking to meet people, form connections for their career interests
- Joining a research lab
- Forming study groups
- Finding leadership positions
- Identifying student resources on campus
- Becoming involved in campus organizations
- Identifying a mentor
- Budgeting money
- Knowing how to contribute in a classroom
- Planning, preparing, and accessing food / meals
- Finding people with shared interests
- Managing their time
- Using a course syllabus
- Using Canvas
- Studying effectively
- Understanding the academic calendar / schedule
- Being independent / doing things on their own
- Helping their family understand what college is like
- Understanding how courses outside their major are relevant to their future career
- Knowing how to feel seen in very large classes
- Finding academic support resources
- Understanding what an advisor is and can do
- Knowing who to ask / where to go for help
- Understanding financial aid
- Understanding insurance
- Knowing what they need to do to get a good job other than do well in their major
- Taking good notes
- Managing stress / Taking care of their mental health
- None of these
- Other [Text entry option]

[If respondent selected more than 5]
Which are your top 5?

[Only those items previously selected presented here; no more than 5 could be selected]

Optional: Please elaborate on any of your choices.

The questions on this page will help us know how representative the survey responses are.

Which of the following best describes your current role at or connection to UTK?

- Non-tenure line faculty
- Tenure-line faculty
- Graduate student
- Staff
- Post-doc
- Administrator
- Undergraduate Alumni
- Graduate Alumni
- Employer of UTK undergraduate alumni
- Family or community member
- Other

With which of the following units do you most identify?

[Drop down menu with administrative units, colleges, and departments]

Q17 Optional: Use this space to further identify your current unit or role, if desired (e.g., professional advisor, facilities, student success).

In which of the following ways do you currently work with undergraduate students? [Select all that apply]

- Teaching
- Research
- Extension
- Advising
- Other _____

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE ITEMS FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCE INDEX (SEI)

Please answer the following questions thinking about your _____ class this semester.

When thinking about this class, how often, if ever, do you wonder “Maybe I don’t belong here?”

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Hardly Ever
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Always

People here would be surprised if I, or someone like me, did well in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

This instructor seems to believe that students have a certain amount of intelligence, and they really can’t do much to change it.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

This instructor seems to believe that your intelligence is something that you can’t change very much.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel confident about my ability to do well in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I am confident that I can perform effectively in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Slightly Disagree
 - ☐ Slightly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
-

Remember, you should be answering all of the questions on this page with regards to your **#{e://Field/ClassName}** class this semester.

I feel comfortable in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel accepted in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel like I can be myself in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel like I belong in this class.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

In this class, I can rely on other students for academic support.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I receive clear academic feedback from this instructor.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I can communicate with this instructor about this class as needed

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

This instructor treats me with respect.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I trust this instructor to treat me fairly.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Disagree
- ☐ Slightly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C: QEP SURVEY

QEP Survey

Notes: All items will be administered to students at the beginning of their first year. Items corresponding to Goal 1 will be administered at the end of the first year. Items corresponding to Goal 2 will be administered at the end of the second year. Items corresponding to Goal 3 will be administered at the beginning of the third year.

1. What student support services does UTK offer? Please list as many as you can, and try to be as specific as possible in naming the specific office or support service. [Outcome 1ai]
2. If you needed help with something while you are a student here at UTK, is there anyone at the university you could ask? Please list their names below. [Outcome 1aii]
3. Beyond a specific major, what kinds of broad skills or competencies do you think employers look for? List as many as you can below. [Outcome 1c]
4. Below are some icons you may have seen on some of your syllabi this year. Each one corresponds to a specific career competency. For each one, please describe what you think this competency entails. [Outcome 1c]
5. Have you ever used any of the resources below? [Outcome 2ai]

RESOURCE	I do not know about this resource	No, and I have not considered using this resource.	No, but I have considered it.	Yes, I have used it before but I stopped.	Yes, and I still use this resource
Student Counseling Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student Health Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic Success Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic Coaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supplemental Instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tutoring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic advisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faculty mentor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Center for Career Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The library	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Writing Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smokey's Pantry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student Disability Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pride Center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Center for Health Education and Wellness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Center for Care and Resilience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Resource Management Inventory (ReMI) Short Form

[Outcome 1b]

In the following questionnaire, you will see familiar problem situations from the everyday life of students and ways of dealing with these situations. For each situation, different approaches are suggested for dealing with the situation. Each approach can be useful in itself. However, it is important to note that not every approach will directly contribute to solving the problem situation described. Therefore, choose only the approach that you feel is most useful for solving the problem described.

Situation 1: You are faced with the task of organizing your upcoming semester of studies (e.g. creating a timetable, choosing courses that are suitable in terms of time and subject matter, registering for the corresponding courses or exams, etc.). You have never done anything like this before and therefore do not know how to proceed.

What are you doing to best accomplish the task?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I ask someone to help me with this (e.g. fellow students, tutors or, if necessary, lecturers).	X
	b. I make a schedule for myself in which I specify exactly when I will choose what.	☐
	c. I am doing my best despite the difficult conditions.	☐
	d. I organize my documents so that I have a better overview of the task later on.	☐
	e. I am tackling the problem without outside help (e.g. internet or other people).	☐

Once the student has chosen an approach, he or she must decide the following (but only for that one approach):

	The following applies to this approach in the described situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I can't do that.	☐
	b. I can do that, but I wouldn't do it.	☐
	c. I would do that, but probably without success.	☐
	d. I would do that, probably with success.	☐

Situation 2: You are about to start preparing for an exam and realize that a lot of learning material has accumulated during the semester. Now you don't really know where to start.

What are you doing to best solve the problem?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I ask someone who is familiar with the situation (e.g. fellow students or lecturers).	☐
	b. I organize my documents so that I have a better overview of the task at hand.	X
	c. I set priorities and only take care of the most important things.	☐
	d. I prepare or review all learning content first.	☐
	e. I'll wait and see if the problem resolves itself.	☐

Situation 3: You are confronted with a lot of different and complex learning content in the various courses at university within a very short period of time. This means that you run the risk of being left behind.

What do you do to make sure you understand everything and don't get left behind?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I regularly prepare for and follow up on each course session.	X
	b. I ask someone who is familiar with the situation (e.g. fellow students or lecturers).	☐
	c. I realize how important it is for my studies to understand everything.	☐
	d. I am attending a tutorial or another course where I learn how to manage it.	☐
	e. I organize the situation so that I can study undisturbed.	☐

Situation 4: As part of your studies, you are attending a very complex and difficult course. Although you are paying close attention, you find it difficult to follow and understand the content.

What are you doing to understand the content anyway?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. Even if I don't understand the content, I do my best.	☐
	b. I realize how important it is for my studies to understand this content.	☐
	c. I create a schedule in which I specify exactly when to learn which content.	☐
	d. I look for help from fellow students, tutors or even lecturers.	☒
	e. I set priorities and only take care of the most important things.	☐

Situation 5: In some courses, you will be given homework or general exercises. These do not have to be completed. However, voluntarily completing the exercises usually leads to a better understanding of the topics.

What do you do in this situation?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I set priorities and only take care of the most important things.	☐
	b. Nevertheless, I make an effort, even if the circumstances are tempting.	☒
	c. I sort my documents, then it's easier to work on the topics.	☐
	d. I ask someone to help me (e.g. fellow students or tutors).	☐
	e. I create a schedule in which I specify exactly when to learn which content.	☐

Situation 6: As part of your studies, you are required to complete an internship of several weeks. At the same time, however, you also have other study-related and personal responsibilities.

How do you manage everything?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. In order to complete the internship, I regularly prepare and review the learning content.	☐
	b. I sort my documents directly so that I have a good overview of them at all times.	☐
	c. I ask someone for help or look on the internet to find out how to do it.	☐
	d. I create a schedule in which I specify exactly when I will complete which task.	☒
	e. I attend a tutorial or another course where I learn how to manage it.	☐

Situation 7: During the week, you have to complete many different tasks for your studies (e.g. homework, writing reports, preparing for and following up on exams, etc.). There is little time for each task.

How do you manage to get everything done?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I'm looking for someone to go through the situation with me.	☐
	b. I set priorities and only take care of the most important things.	☐
	c. I ask someone for help or look on the internet to find out how to do it.	☐
	d. I create a schedule in which I specify exactly when I will complete which task.	☒
	e. I arrange the situation so that I can study undisturbed.	☐

Situation 8: You notice that a course that is particularly relevant for your studies is scheduled at a very inconvenient time. You have to give up your day off just for this course, but you don't feel like it.

What do you do in this situation?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I realize how important it is for my studies to attend this course.	X
	b. I'd better stay at home so I can study undisturbed.	☐
	c. I create a schedule for myself in which I specify exactly which sessions of the course I attend.	☐
	d. I'll wait and see if the problem resolves itself.	☐
	e. I get some course materials, e.g. over the internet or from fellow students.	☐

Situation 9: Unlike at school, in university you cannot compensate for poor grades with other achievements. Imagine you are in such a situation and have not passed an exam on the first attempt.

What do you do in this situation?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I'm organizing my documents to make the next exam easier.	☐
	b. Next time, I'll prioritize and only do the most important things.	☐
	c. I stick to the schedule that I made beforehand.	☐
	d. I'll look it up on the internet to see how I can manage the situation.	☐
	e. I'll take this as an opportunity to try even harder.	X

Situation 10: Throughout your studies, you will regularly have to meet deadlines (e.g. registration deadlines for courses or exams, deadlines for submissions, etc.).

How do you plan to meet all these deadlines?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I stick to a specific schedule that I prepare in advance.	X
	b. I get the information I need from additional literature, the internet, or fellow students.	☐
	c. I arrange the situation so that I can prepare everything undisturbed.	☐
	d. I sort my documents immediately so that I have a better overview later.	☐
	e. I get help from someone or look it up on the internet to see how I can manage it.	☐

Situation 11: You are attending a course that seems promising at first. But now you realize that it does not meet your expectations at all (e.g. because you find the content uninteresting or irrelevant). However, you know that the course is compulsory.

What do you do in this situation?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
	a. I organize my documents to spark my interest in the topic.	☐
	b. I look for ways to make the course appear more attractive to me.	X
	c. I ask someone to help me in this situation (e.g. fellow students or tutors).	☐
	d. I look on the internet to find out what to do in this situation.	☐
	e. I set priorities and only take care of the most important things.	☐

Situation 12: As part of your studies, you are repeatedly required to create multimedia presentations (e.g. using PowerPoint). However, you know that you have never learned how to work properly with these programs.

How do you proceed in learning how to use these programs?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
a.	I create a schedule for myself so that I know exactly when to do it.	☐
b.	I ask someone for help or find out on the internet how something like this works.	X
c.	I always give my best in every situation, so I'll manage this too.	☐
d.	I arrange the situation so that I can concentrate on this challenge without being disturbed.	☐
e.	I realize how important this skill is for my studies.	☐

Situation 13: You are attending a course on a topic that you find very interesting. However, you do not like the lecturer, which reduces your interest in the course. You are not sure if you should continue the course.

What do you do in this situation?

	I find this approach most useful in this situation: Please select only one of the following answers:	
a.	I realize how important it is for my studies to attend this course.	X
b.	I get some course materials, e.g. over the internet or from fellow students.	☐
c.	I set priorities and take care of other things first.	☐
d.	I attend a tutorial or another course where I learn how to deal with the situation.	☐
e.	I'll wait and see if the problem resolves itself.	☐

Scoring: 0 (if the most useful approach was not chosen), 1 („I can't do that“), 2 („I can do that, but I wouldn't do it“), 3 (“I would do that, but probably without success”) 4 (“I would do that, probably with success”); Alternatively: (0, 1 → 0), (2, 3 → 1), (4 → 2)

Learning Techniques Scale [Outcome 2b]

The Ten Learning Techniques

Instructions: Please think about how often you utilize each of these techniques when studying where 1 represents strongly disagree and 6 represents strongly agree.

1. Within an assigned reading, I highlight or underline information.
2. I frequently highlight or underline the information within one page.
3. I prefer to use or study material in an assigned reading that has been previously highlighted or underlined by a previous user.
4. I look at or use the material I previously highlighted or underlined within a given week.
5. I find highlighting or underlining information in an assigned reading useful.
6. After assigned readings, I write summaries on the previous read material.
7. After lectures, I write summaries on the information discussed.
8. I am assigned to write summaries on lecture or reading materials.
9. I find writing summaries of recently learned materials useful.
10. I associate keywords with mental imagery to learn verbal material.
11. I use the strategy of associating keywords with mental imagery in relation to verbal material when taking an exam.
12. I find using keywords and mental imagery to associate verbal materials useful.
13. I form mental images of text materials while reading or listening.
14. I recall mental images of text images that were formed while reading or listening on an exam.
15. I find forming mental images of text materials while reading or listening useful.
16. I go back to reread the information I did not comprehend.
17. I go back to reread assigned readings when preparing for an exam.
18. I am able to recall information that I have reread when taking an exam.
19. I am able to understand the text material after the second time of rereading the initial reading.
20. I find rereading information that I have previously read useful.
21. I mix different kinds of problems, within a single study session.
22. I study different kinds of material, within a single study session.
23. I find using practice that mixes different kinds of problems, within a single study session useful.
24. I find studying different kinds of materials, within a single study session useful.
25. I create an explanation for why a straightforward fact or concept is true.
26. I am confident that creating an explanation for why a straightforward fact or concept is true helps me with learning the specific material.
27. I find creating an explanation for why a straightforward fact or concept is true useful.
28. I relate new information to previously known information.
29. I explain the steps taken during problem solving.
30. I am able to recall the new information I related to previously known information during an exam.
31. I am able to recall the steps I have taken during problem solving during an exam.
32. I find explaining how new information is related to known information useful.
33. I find explaining steps taken during problem solving useful.
34. I am confident that relating new information to previously known information helps me learn the material.
35. I am confident that explaining the steps taken during problem solving helps me learn the material.
36. I often self-test myself on the material learned in class within a given week.
37. I take quizzes for my class within a given week.
38. If allowed unlimited chances, I retake quizzes until I receive the score I desire.
39. I often am able to recall material on an exam from self-testing or practice tests.
40. I find self-testing or taking practice tests useful.
41. I am confident that self-testing or taking practice tests increases my exam grade.
42. I find taking quizzes every week for a class useful.
43. I space out my study activities over time.
44. I feel prepared when it comes time to taking an exam, due to spreading out my studying activities throughout the weeks.

- 45. I am confident that spacing out my study activities helps me with learning the specific material for class.
- 46. I am confident that spacing out my study activities increases my exam performance.
- 47. I spend at least one hour a week studying for a class.

Scoring

Highlighting/Underlining: 1-5

Summarization: 6-9

Keyword Mnemonic: 10-12

Imagery for text: 13-15

Rereading: 16-20

Interleaved Practice: 21-24

Elaborative Interrogation: 25-27

Self-Explanation: 28-35

Practice Testing: 36-42

Distributed Practice: 43-47

Source: Bartoszewski, B. L. & Gurung, R. A. R. (2015). Comparing the relationship of learning techniques and exam score. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 1(3), 219-228.

Metacognitive Awareness Inventory [Outcome 2b]

Check True or False for each statement below.

True False

1. I ask myself periodically if I am meeting my goals.
2. I consider several alternatives to a problem before I answer.
3. I try to use strategies that have worked in the past.
4. I pace myself while learning in order to have enough time.
5. I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses.
6. I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task.
7. I know how well I did once I finish a test.
8. I set specific goals before I begin a task.
9. I slow down when I encounter important information.
10. I know what kind of information is most important to learn.
11. I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving a problem.
12. I am good at organizing information.
13. I consciously focus my attention on important information.
14. I have a specific purpose for each strategy I use.
15. I learn best when I know something about the topic.
16. I know what the teacher expects me to learn.
17. I am good at remembering information.
18. I use different learning strategies depending on the situation.
19. I ask myself if there was an easier way to do things after I finish a task.
20. I have control over how well I learn.
21. I periodically review to help me understand important relationships.
22. I ask myself questions about the material before I begin.
23. I think of several ways to solve a problem and choose the best one.
24. I summarize what I've learned after I finish.
25. I ask others for help when I don't understand something.
26. I can motivate myself to learn when I need to.
27. I am aware of what strategies I use when I study.
28. I find myself analyzing the usefulness of strategies while I study.
29. I use my intellectual strengths to compensate for my weaknesses.
30. I focus on the meaning and significance of new information.
31. I create my own examples to make information more meaningful.
32. I am a good judge of how well I understand something.
33. I find myself using helpful learning strategies automatically.
34. I find myself pausing regularly to check my comprehension.
35. I know when each strategy I use will be most effective.
36. I ask myself how well I accomplish my goals once I'm finished.
37. I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand while learning.
38. I ask myself if I have considered all options after I solve a problem.
39. I try to translate new information into my own words.
40. I change strategies when I fail to understand.
41. I use the organizational structure of the text to help me learn.
42. I read instructions carefully before I begin a task.
43. I ask myself if what I'm reading is related to what I already know.
44. I reevaluate my assumptions when I get confused.
45. I organize my time to best accomplish my goals.
46. I learn more when I am interested in the topic.
47. I try to break studying down into smaller steps.
48. I focus on overall meaning rather than specifics.
49. I ask myself questions about how well I am doing while I am learning something new.
50. I ask myself if I learned as much as I could have once I finish a task.
51. I stop and go back over new information that is not clear.
52. I stop and reread when I get confused.

Personal Growth Initiative Scale – II © [Outcome 3c]

Christine Robitschek, Matthew W. Ashton, Cynthia C. Spering, Nathaniel Geiger, Danielle Byers, G. Christian Schotts, & Megan Thoen (2012)

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Use the following scale:

0 = Disagree Strongly

1 = Disagree Somewhat

2 = Disagree a Little

3 = Agree a Little

4 = Agree Somewhat

5 = Agree Strongly

1. I set realistic goals for what I want to change about myself.
2. I can tell when I am ready to make specific changes in myself.
3. I know how to make a realistic plan in order to change myself.
4. I take every opportunity to grow as it comes up.
5. When I try to change myself, I make a realistic plan for my personal growth.
6. I ask for help when I try to change myself.
7. I actively work to improve myself
8. I figure out what I need to change about myself.
9. I am constantly trying to grow as a person.
10. I know how to set realistic goals to make changes in myself.
11. I know when I need to make a specific change in myself.
12. I use resources when I try to grow.
13. I know steps I can take to make intentional changes in myself.
14. I actively seek out help when I try to change myself.
15. I look for opportunities to grow as a person.
16. I know when it's time to change specific things about myself.

Career Adapt-abilities Scale (CAAS) [Outcome 3c]

Different people use different strengths to build their careers. No one is good at everything, each of us emphasizes some strengths more than others. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

- 4 = Strongest
- 3 = Very Strong
- 2 = Strong
- 1 = Somewhat Strong
- 0 = Not Strong

1. Thinking about what my future will be like.
2. Realizing that today's choices shape my future.
3. Preparing for the future
4. Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make.
5. Planning how to achieve my goals.
6. Concerned about my career.
7. Keeping upbeat.
8. Making decisions by myself.
9. Taking responsibility for my actions.
10. Sticking up for my beliefs.
11. Counting on myself.
12. Doing what's right for me.
13. Exploring my surroundings.
14. Looking for opportunities to grow as a person.
15. Investigating options before making a choice.
16. Observing different ways of doing things.
17. Probing deeply into questions I have.
18. Becoming curious about new opportunities.
19. Performing tasks efficiently.
20. Taking care to do things well.
21. Learning new skills.
22. Working up to my ability.
23. Overcoming obstacles.
24. Solving problems.

APPENDIX D: ARE YOU CAREER READY? WORKSHEET

ARE YOU CAREER READY?

Competency	Definition	Readiness		
		Need to Develop	Currently Developing	Excelling
 Critical Thinking	Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information	☐	☐	☐
 Communication	Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.	☐	☐	☐
 Teamwork	Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐
 Technology	Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.	☐	☐	☐
 Leadership	Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.	☐	☐	☐
 Professionalism	Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.	☐	☐	☐
 Career & Self Development	Develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and building relationships	☐	☐	☐

Adapted from the NACE Career Readiness Competencies

Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.

<i>How have you developed this competency?</i>	Goals for developing this competency
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	
<i>Communication</i>	
<i>Teamwork</i>	
<i>Technology</i>	
<i>Leadership</i>	
<i>Professionalism</i>	
<i>Career & Self Development</i>	

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS - PULSE SURVEY - PERMA
Fall 2024

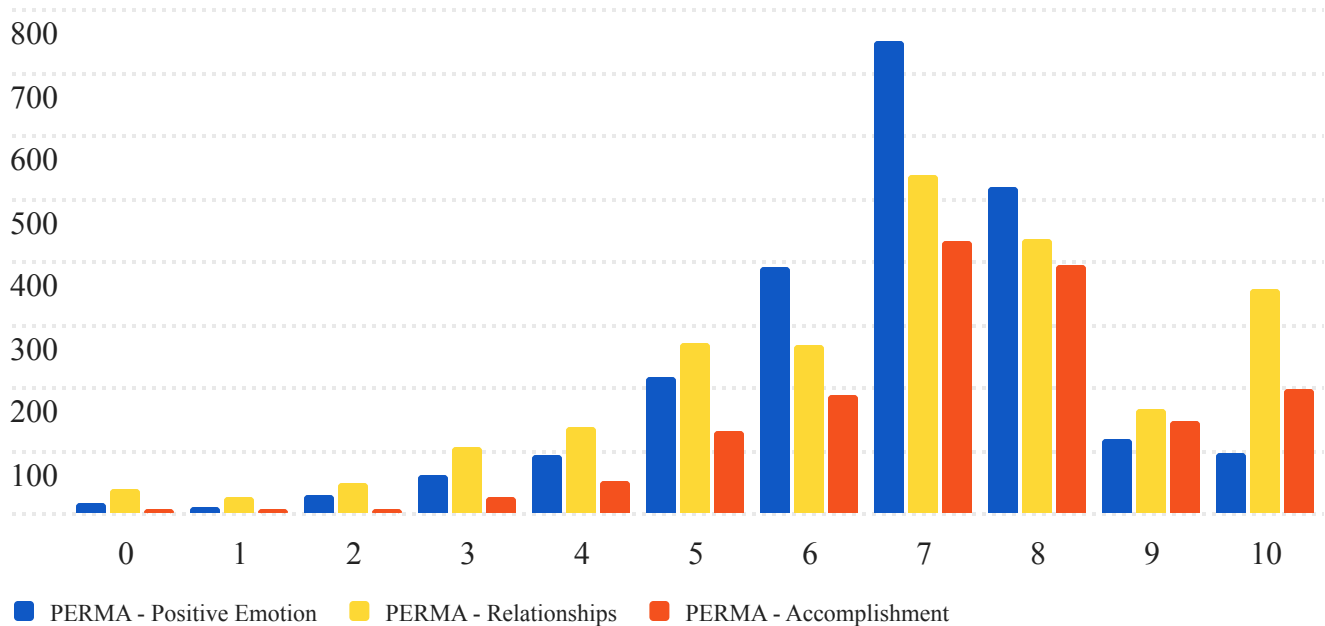
PERMA - Aggregate Mean by Letter

6249 Responses

Field	Mean
PERMA - Positive Emotion	6.73
PERMA - Relationships	6.80
PERMA - Accomplishment	7.30

PERMA - Spread of Rating

6249 Responses



APPENDIX F: OVERALL QEP BUDGET

	2024-2025 (Year 0)	2025-2026 (Year 1)	2026-2027 (Year 2)	2027-2028 (Year 3)	2028-2029 (Year 4)	2029-2030 (Year 5)
QEP Personnel						
QEP Director		\$150,000	\$154,500	\$159,135	\$163,909	\$168,826
Assistant Director		\$34,000	\$70,040	\$72,141	\$74,305	\$76,535
Faculty Director (Half-time Appointment)		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$103,000	\$106,090	\$109,273
Coordinator of Assessment		\$45,000	\$92,700	\$95,481	\$98,345	\$101,296
Communication Specialist		\$27,500	\$56,650	\$58,350	\$60,100	\$61,903
Administrative Support Personnel		\$22,500	\$46,350	\$47,741	\$49,173	\$50,648
Other Personnel Identified by Programs		\$0	\$55,000	\$56,650	\$58,350	\$60,100
Personnel Benefits Costs		\$115,808	\$208,237	\$220,409	\$233,124	\$246,403
Faculty QEP Transition Liaison	\$10,000	\$5,000				
Search Costs	\$8,000	\$12,000				
Equipment/Startup Costs	\$8,000	\$20,000				
Program Support						
Marketing & Communication		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Professional Development		\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Operating Budget		\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Assessment Costs		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Event Costs		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$10,000
Programs/Activities						
Faculty Fellows		\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Faculty Fellows Operating Support		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Faculty Development Grants/Awards		\$237,000	\$237,000	\$237,000		
Curriculum Integration Content Development		\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	
Intentional Growth Training Costs		\$5,000				
Student Experience Project (SEP)		\$16,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Other Programs Unknown/Inflation			\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total Recurring QEP Base	\$26,000	\$974,808	\$1,305,477	\$1,334,906	\$1,118,396	\$1,109,984
Additional New Dollars Per Year	\$26,000	\$948,808	\$330,669	\$29,429	-\$216,510	-\$8,412



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