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EXPERIENCE LEARNING

QEP Impact Report 2020



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



EXPERIENCE LEARNING

The University of Tennessee's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) addresses a comprehensive strategic campus initiative that has involved an all-inclusive stakeholders' process. This report will provide a detailed description of specific actions to be implemented; the timeline for implementing and evaluating these actions; organizational structure for adequately staffing and executing the QEP; and a thorough review of the resources, including human, financial, physical, and budgetary, for operationalizing the QEP. The plan identifies clear goals and measurable objectives, as well as detailed plans to assess student learning outcomes, the student learning environment, and the role of the QEP in helping to accomplish the mission of the university.

Our QEP topic is **experiential learning**, which is engaged student learning through direct experience and intense reflection to increase knowledge, acquire lifelong learning and problem-solving skills, and elucidate values. This topic is in alignment with our university mission, which promotes excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and engagement. It also is in alignment with our university vision of the Volunteer Spirit, which promotes value creation, the generation of new ideas, and the preparation of capable and ethical leaders. This QEP, titled Experience Learning, brings exciting opportunities to make significant changes in student learning and student experiences and will play a vital role in meeting our Vol Vision strategic plan, which includes priorities related to undergraduate education, graduate education, faculty, and research.

The QEP interdisciplinary development team was formed in April and May 2013. The members of the committee were selected with broad-based representation of key academic and administrative areas, student support units, and current and former students. The development team and subgroups met regularly as part of an institutional process that identified key issues emerging from institutional assessment. The team considered potential topics and gained student, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders' input through surveys, forums, presentations, focus group interviews, and a website page until experiential learning was identified as the QEP topic through an all-encompassing institutional process. Experiential learning strengthens our commitment to the Vol Vision to provide a better learning environment for our students. At our university there is a growing need, voiced by students and various task forces and reports, that students need more opportunities to be involved in civic engagement, solving complex real-world problems, and contributing to the welfare of their communities as part of their regular course work. The results of national comparisons with peer institutions concur with these campus assessments.

From 2015 to 2020, this QEP will implement three initiatives as core actions: (1) faculty development programs, (2) Smart Communities Initiatives, and (3) faculty-staff-student support initiatives. The student learning outcomes measure that students will (1) value the importance of engaged scholarship and lifelong learning; (2) apply knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems; (3) work collaboratively with others; and (4) engage in structured reflection as part of the inquiry process. We will implement both direct and indirect assessment activities. We will rely on rubrics adapted from Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics as a direct assessment to evaluate the student level of competence across the identified student learning outcomes and their accompanying benchmarks. We will also implement surveys to evaluate the QEP's influence on the campus community and the environment for student learning.

Overall, the University of Tennessee's QEP was developed to enhance the quality of its educational programming by focusing on student learning, and specifically experiential learning, as well as the environment supporting that learning, including faculty training, as part of our Vol Vision goal of being one of the top 25 public universities in the United States.

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University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Impact Report

Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT Knoxville) QEP focused on Experience Learning (EL). The plan was designed to enhance the quality of student learning through experiential learning, which is included as part of the institution's [strategic planning priority](#) to recruit, enrich, and graduate undergraduate students who are prepared to enter the global community as lifelong learners and authentic leaders, and to create support for this type of learning with professional development. Efforts were centered in the Teaching and Learning Innovation (TLI) unit.

Goal 1 – Enhance Student Learning Through Experiential Education. Early in QEP development, students and other campus constituents shared the desire to have more experiential learning opportunities included in the curriculum with students involved more in civic engagement and solving complex problems in real-world contexts as part of their coursework. As a result, a large portion of our efforts focused on standardizing and broadly identifying opportunities within the curriculum, as well as equipping faculty, staff, and others who engage with students, to understand and communicate the benefits of EL to students whom they support on a regular basis.

Goal 2 - Offer Effective Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty. The primary strategy for enhancing EL opportunities for students was to increase support and training offered to faculty and staff.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The four related SLOs connected to these goals are, Students will:

1. value the importance of engaged scholarship and lifelong learning;
2. apply knowledge, values, and skills in solving real world problems;
3. work collaboratively with each other; and
4. engage in structured reflection as part of the inquiry process.

Changes Made to the QEP and Reasons for Those Changes

QEP Initiatives. The three initiatives outlined on page 5 of the institution's [original QEP](#) were implemented:

1. **Faculty Development:** Workshops and presentations, Faculty Fellows program, Faculty Leaders program, faculty-to-faculty mentoring, and consulting by the institution's Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (TennTLC)
2. **Smart Communities Initiative (SCI):** Academic courses across the institution designed to engage students in real-world problem solving applicable to the course and tied directly to the needs of a local community
3. **Faculty/Staff/Student (FSS) Support:** a multifaceted approach to promote, enhance, and expand EL activities and projects, identifying and promoting EL, supporting faculty in the initiation or expansion of EL, supporting and recognizing EL outside the classroom, and documenting student participation in EL (co-curricular transcript)

Unanticipated Challenges

Unfilled Positions. Resources were a factor in the implementation of this QEP, particularly in the SCI initiative. In fiscal year 2015-16, no budget was allocated to the QEP, as there was no QEP Director until academic year (AY) 2016-17. The next year, due to a number of senior leadership changes, the planned budget was largely diverted to support national searches. This reallocation of funds led to unfunded items, including the following staff positions: Assistant Director of Service-Learning, Faculty Development Coordinator, and graduate research assistants (GRAs) to support the SCI and faculty development initiatives. In AY 2018-19, the Director of Service-Learning resigned. At the beginning of AY 2019-20 the Risk Manager for EL, and Faculty Consultant for Service-Learning resigned from their positions as well. Subsequently, four faculty members were invited to become Faculty Innovators: Two faculty members offered service-learning programming in fall 2019, and two offered programming related to unique approaches to EL pedagogy in spring 2020. An Assistant Director for Experiential Learning was hired in April 2020.

Unfunded Programs. The third QEP initiative, which included Faculty/Staff/Student (FSS) grant programs, Undergraduate Research Grants, and Professional Development Travel Grants, was delayed by the budget reallocation.

Year 1 (AY 2015-16) had been dedicated to planning, then grants were supported in AY 2016-17. In AY 2017-18, the Teaching and Learning Innovation (TLI) unit was engaged in a substantial reorganization. Since AY 2018-19, funding has been allocated to support faculty, staff, and GRAs with the Teaching Support Awards (TSA) program.

Discontinued Initiative. While early results were promising, in AY 2017-18, the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI) was re-conceived amid concerns that the institution might be unable to satisfy some local officials with student work. The resulting design was less focused on highly-skilled work performed by upperclassmen and was more focused on work that provided meaningful learning experiences for students. Despite the redesign, the resignation of the Service-Learning Director led to the discontinuation of the SCI for lack of full-time staff to support the work.

Despite the unforeseen changes in funding and staffing levels at various points throughout the implementation of the QEP, the goals of the plan and student learning outcomes (SLOs) did not change.

Results: QEP Impact on Student Learning and the Environment

Student Learning

The QEP assessment plan focused on four student learning outcomes (SLOs). These SLOs were implemented in all QEP-funded courses and programs. Student participants in these courses and programs were both **pre- and post-tested** using survey instruments developed in-house. The surveys were created to help the faculty and/or staff leaders more effectively assess student learning in each QEP-supported opportunity.

Direct Assessment. The QEP’s impact on student learning was assessed using **four rubrics**, each designed for a specific Experience Learning (EL) SLO and associated benchmarks. Instructors selected a benchmark from each SLO and customized a rubric to fit with the objectives of a particular course. Table 1 shows the level of benchmark competency assessed at four achievement levels: beginner (1), developing (2), accomplished (3), and advanced (4) skills. Figure 1 shows the average student scores related to each of the SLOs across seven semesters (fall 2017 – summer 2020). Instructors teaching EL courses used the rubric to score only students in their classrooms. More information on direct assessments can be found on the Experience Learning website.

**Faculty Fellows Program
Average Direct Assessment Results**

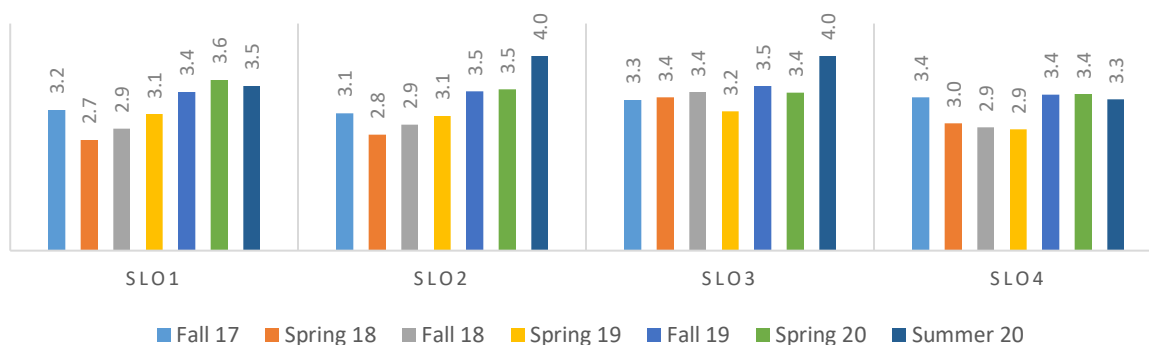


Figure 1. Faculty Fellows - Direct Assessment

Indirect Assessment. As a complement to direct assessment, the following indirect assessments measured changes in attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and cultural norms resulting from EL.

- **Student Surveys:** These measured students’ perceptions of their own learning and attainment of the SLOs and benchmarks. They also acted as a form of structured reflection for students.
- **Faculty Surveys:** The faculty surveys gauged faculty’s perceptions and level of satisfaction with the structure

and organization of EL activities, the content of the trainings and related programming, and knowledge gained from participating in the programs.

- **Focus Groups:** Focus groups of faculty and staff allowed for the collection of qualitative data about faculty experiences with EL activities, strengths of the activities, and areas for improvement.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):** Responses to specific items from the NSSE focused on student perceptions of the current state of EL activities on campus to track changes in student perceptions of the SLOs.

NSSE Data: As part of the QEP, students completed the NSSE in spring 2016 and spring 2019. However, as part of the QEP's analysis, spring 2014 NSSE data was also used as a baseline to compare to subsequent QEP years. A 2-way factorial ANOVA on six items related to QEP SLOs based on the difference in years (2014, 2016, 2019) and class standing (1st year and 4th year students), revealed no interaction effect between year and class for any experiential learning item. Main effects showed 4th-year students reported significantly higher gains than 1st-year students in all QEP SLO categories, while students in spring 2019 reported significantly higher perceived gains in working effectively with others (SLO 3) and solving complex real-world problems (SLO 2) than students in spring 2014. Student participation in internships, study abroad, and working with a faculty member on a research project showed only minor fluctuations between spring 2014 and spring 2019. Low response rates likely attribute to unexplainable fluctuations in responses (i.e., data are not representative of the whole student population).

Smart Communities Initiative (SCI). This second QEP initiative was sponsored by the Office of Service-Learning to build relationships between UT Knoxville and local communities to improve the health and vitality of residents. The SCI program ran from AY 2014-15 to 2016-17, when it was terminated due to a lack of staff to support the work.

In AY 2015-16, a total of 21 courses were offered with agreed upon projects for the Southeast Tennessee Development District; and, the assessment consisted of an end-of-semester student survey. In total, 54 students completed the survey where they were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about the opportunities the project provided. Overall, 91% of students found the experience valuable to their learning and development. The most agreed upon statements indicated the project provided opportunities to:

- Network with government and industry personnel (57%),
- Leverage [their] scholarship toward solutions to pressing community problems (56%),
- Work closely with [their] professor (54%), and
- Increase motivation to work hard on the project due to its real-world nature (52%).

In addition, to some degree, students agreed that the project:

- Enhanced [their] ability to work with others (43%),
- Helped improve communication and presentation skills (46%), and
- Increased learning from the course (46%).

In AY 2016-17, the "SCI Mini" (a scaled-down program) was conducted with five courses in partnership with Lenoir City, TN. The assessment for the SCI included the four QEP assessment plan elements. Five faculty members with a total of 80 students participated in the assessment during fall 2016. Students completed a Pre- and Post-Experience Student Survey, while faculty assessed their students' capstone assignment through a direct assessment and also the organization and impacts of the SCI through the faculty survey and focus group.

Student responses to closed-ended items suggest little change occurred from the service-learning experience. Open-ended responses to the post-experience survey show that the students' role in the community allowed them to realize that engagement and problem solving are long-term endeavors. Students were surprised by the magnitude of the project and, therefore, were struck by the time they needed to dedicate to their team and stakeholders. One student discovered some individuals in the community were unreceptive to change, which extended the timeline to complete the project. She noted that, "[the experience] ...taught me that some people do not like change and to make change happen, it takes some time." Another student noted that she "planned out times throughout the week to have meetings in and outside of class." Many students mentioned the extra time needed outside regular class time to complete assignments. While faculty held positive perceptions of the impact the SCI had on the students, they felt their own experience was less impactful. Approximately 54% of faculty responses indicated a positive impact on faculty-related activities, while 75% of faculty responses reported a positive impact on students. Similar patterns were evident with community relationships. Faculty had mixed feelings over

the level of interest community leaders expressed and, collectively, faculty found that the student-community relationship was strong. Overall, faculty felt that students gained a positive experience from their work in the SCI.

Faculty indicated that students showed the highest level of achievement in SLOs 1 and 4 (students will value the importance of engaged scholarship and lifelong learning, and students will utilize structured reflection, respectively) as shown in the direct assessment. Interestingly, students reported SLO 2 (connecting classroom knowledge to solving real-world problems) as their least exposure area compared to the other QEP SLOs. In AY 2017-18, the SCI underwent a redesign in order to re-emerge later in AY 2018-19. When the SCI was discontinued that year, no other data were collected.

The SCI plan was 20-40 courses with 10-30 students each and, while the design worked well initially, it was not sustainable without additional resources. In AY 2017-18, a decision was made to redesign the SCI to allow for greater flexibility in human resources and longer periods of engagement between the faculty, students, and members of the communities. The SCI was ultimately discontinued when the Director of the Office of Service-Learning resigned.

S, R, and N Course Designations. In furtherance of the third QEP initiative, the Undergraduate Council approved a system of course designations in 2016 to document particular types of EL occurring in courses: S (service-learning) and R (research); the N (internship) designation was approved in spring 2018. The course designation system provides an institutional definition of each type of EL (see criteria, page 6), and the designations are now part of the course numbers for designated sections, which allows accurate tracking of service-learning, research, and internship experiences within courses for the institution and for each student enrolled.

Table 1 shows the number of EL-designated courses of each type offered during the 5-year QEP implementation period. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) was able to incorporate EL questions into the institution’s course evaluation system, TNVoice, so that students could share what they learned. Note: There are no data to report prior to AY 2017-18, as the designations were not yet established.

Table 1. Approved Experience Learning Designated Courses by Designation

Academic Year	Service-Learning (S)	Undergraduate Research (R)	Internship (N)
2016-17	<i>Pilot Year</i>	<i>Pilot Year</i>	N/A
2017-18	13	7	<i>Pilot Year</i>
2018-19	7	15	8
2019-20	10	17	10
2020-21	1	3	0
Total Courses	31	42	18

The AY 2017-18 TNVoice course evaluation assessment consisted of nine closed-ended and one open-ended question that focused on the student experience through the EL opportunity. The assessment was disseminated to 154 students from 9 R-designated course sections with a 72.8% response rate and 245 students from 11 S-designated course sections with a 62.9% response rate.

The results indicate that students felt positive about their experience in an S- or R-designated course. Open-ended responses from students in S-designated courses stated that they learned the importance and nuances of working with community members within their field of interest. Students in R-designated courses indicated that adding research to the course provided another hands-on perspective into their field that was otherwise limited in prior courses. These assessment results suggest that the S- and R-designated courses had a positive effect in promoting EL and student exposure to the intended learning outcomes. The closed-ended responses suggested a similar narrative to the open-ended responses. Based on these results, the QEP staff continued to support the S- and R-designated courses, and proposed the N-designation for internships to begin in AY 2018-19.

In AY 2018-19, the assessment for the S-, R-, and N-designated courses was administered again through TNVoice course evaluations. The survey was disseminated to 319 students from 27 R-designated courses with a 35.7% response rate, 407 students from 16 S-designated courses with a 60.7% response rate, and 20 students from five N-designated courses with no responses during AY 2018-19.

Similar findings were evident in the results. Open-ended responses from students in R-designated courses indicated that they valued the real-life application and exposure to some of the real-world challenges associated with research. Students in S-designated courses stated that they learned how to work and communicate with communities, something that they would not normally learn outside of this opportunity. No students from N-designated courses completed TNVoice N-related questions. The close-ended responses suggest that students had a generally positive experience in S- and R-designated courses.

Table 2 shows service activities over a 6-year period. The tracking of community service hours was enabled through the use of Track Your Hours, offered by the institution’s Jones Center for Leadership and Service. Alternative spring break trips, offered at UT Knoxville since 1993, are also offered through the Center. The College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences offers the Leadership Studies minor, which contains a community service component. In Table 3, internships by college are shown over the same period. Several colleges have excelled in engaging students in EL (e.g., business, engineering, education). COVID-19 impacted alternative spring break opportunities in AY 2019-20.

Table 2. Service over a 6-Year Period

Center for Leadership and Service	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of students who have logged community service hours	1046	2280	2824	4349	5686	6154
Percentage of students who have logged community service hours	4.88%	10.43%	12.76%	19%	19.7%	20.8%
Number of students who completed the experiential Leadership Studies Minor	-	6	20	12	8	10
Number of students participating in Alternative Break service trips	162	155	159	163	239	93

Table 3. Internships over a 6-Year Period

Number of Internships*†	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Herbert College of Agriculture	30	36	110	115	199	86
College of Architecture & Design	6	7	35	32	47	26
College of Arts & Sciences	98	32	182	202	477	97
College of Communication & Information	54	48	138	132	160	104
College of Education, Health, & Human Sciences	15	36	199	256	274	358
College of Engineering	209	139	159	248	357	276
College of Nursing	4	2	12	9	88	7
College of Social Work	60	13	23	17	34	10
Haslam College of Business	365	211	391	383	680	560
Total	841	524	1249	1394	1636	1528

*Student reported number of internships or co-ops completed
 †Based on year of graduation

During AY 2018-19, the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) was used as a measure of SLO 2 (students will develop and apply knowledge, values, and skills in solving real-world problems). Thirty students from S-, R-, and N-designated courses took the test with a low 6.8% completion rate. The average score on the test was 15.2 (out of 34), well below the campus average (M = 19.4, SD = 5.34). The low response rate made the results difficult to compare, and results should be interpreted with caution. The CCTST was not used again due to the low response rate. Instead, a rubric similar to the one used in the Faculty Fellows Program was used to directly assess students in S-, R-, and N-designated courses.

In AY 2019-20, the student surveys used with the Faculty Fellows Program and direct assessment rubric were used to assess student learning. Surveys were disseminated to 182 students from 47 S-, R-, and N-designated courses with a 44.0% response rate. The low number of EL learning opportunities completed in spring 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19, led to a decision to give faculty teaching EL-designated courses in summer 2020 the option to participate in surveys and direct assessment. Two N-designated courses participated in both types of assessment.

Results from the survey indicated statistically significant changes between various corresponding items. In particular, students reported significant positive changes in lifelong learning items. Open-ended responses indicated that students picked up many different skill sets that can be applied to future classroom and workplace experiences. One student wrote, “I know that the skills I used during the development of this course will continue to be improved over time.” Additionally, many students found ways to continue collaboration during the pandemic using Zoom and mobile devices, while remaining proactive and attentive to their EL projects. Results from the direct assessment showed that students in EL-designated courses had higher attainment of achieving the learning outcomes than students who participated in the Faculty Fellows Program.

The Environment

Several departments added staff lines to support QEP initiatives, such as an Assistant Director for Internship Development in the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration, and the Student Success Librarian for Experiential Learning in University Libraries. The Advising 2020 model included EL as one of three constructs

surrounding the undergraduate academic plan, and the professional advising community eagerly promoted EL courses. Many academic departments created additional programming or collaborations to include high impact practices (HIPs), such as the partnership between the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) and University Libraries that created a seed library and related research opportunities for students. In the Honors & Scholars unit, the new “1794 Scholars” program focuses on providing student participants with EL opportunities. The collection of QEP-related data from colleges and administrative units also became routine, with plans to continue capturing and presenting the data through the creation of a high impact practices dashboard.

Intended Campus Impacts

S, R, and N Course Designations. Course designations of S (service-learning), R (research), and N (internship) were developed to identify and document students’ EL activities in courses, as described in the third QEP initiative. Courses are approved for these designations in a formal application process by the designation subcommittees and then the full curricular committees, based on the criteria below.

- ***What Defines a Service (S-designated) Course?*** A course with this designation has clear and specific student learning outcomes (SLOs) that reflect what students should be able to demonstrate, know, or do by the end of the course and reflect the presence of service, which enhances academic learning in the course. One or more of the SLOs addresses civic learning. A service project with significant student-community interaction reflecting mutual benefit between community and university partners, which is meaningful to the community partner and relevant to the course. The roles and expectations of all involved are clarified in the service project design. Includes continuous structured reflection upon the service project by the students in light of course learning, connected to the SLOs and challenging to the students—requiring higher-order thinking skills.
- ***What Defines a Research (R-designated) Course?*** An R-designated course is a field research course that engages students on an original research project (not a simulation), either contributing to a faculty research project or engaging in an independent research project with a mentor. Students conduct research on an ongoing basis, working an average of 5-10 hours/week. Students gain knowledge of or experience in discipline-specific language, research ethics, skills in research methodologies, and important scholarship. The learning objectives related to the research experience are clearly articulated related to their field of study, educational goals and/or career and vocational aspirations. There is supervision and feedback by a mentor who has expertise related to their field of study, educational goals and/or career and vocational aspirations. The syllabus assignments include reflection assignments and a final synthesis project integrated into the course. There is an outlet to disseminate the original research (e.g., symposium, conference, scholarly article) integrated into the course.
- ***What Defines an Internship (N-designated) Course?*** The internship course engages students in an experience in a professional or organizational setting performing work that is applicable to their fields of study, educational goals and/or career aspirations, and can be transferable to other employment or academic settings. Students are required to conduct professionally applicable work within a defined period of time; and the required number of hours for course credit/per credit hour received is clearly articulated. Learning objectives related to the internship course are clearly articulated and are relevant to competencies in the field of study and/or career readiness competencies. Routine supervision and feedback by a professional with expertise related to the field of study, educational goals and/or career and vocational aspirations is required. The course integrates assignments for self-assessment, reflection, application, and integration of the learning experience as it relates to career/academic decision-making and personal and professional development. Includes a combination of reflection assignments, evaluations, and a final synthesis project. A formal learning agreement must be signed by the student, internship site supervisor and university representative outlining the goals and objectives, rights and responsibilities, contact information and the internship job description.

Co-Curricular Transcript (CCT). The CCT, unveiled in fall 2018, was also part of the third QEP initiative. The CCT documents out-of-class EL participation in leadership, volunteerism, undergraduate research, study abroad, and non-course related internship opportunities. Transcript validation is performed within each program offering the experiences and is maintained in a centralized system. Students do not enter their experiences on the transcripts.

High Impact Practices (HIP) Advisory Group. Various offices, units, and centers contributed to the QEP. When a director was hired, these individuals were invited to form an [advisory group](#) to continue to play a role in the

implementation and growth of EL. The 28 members of this group represent five of the nine UT Knoxville divisions. The QEP team met with 11 administrative offices from the HIP group to identify relevant data to be collected. QEP data points were first identified during AY 2015-16. A year later, baseline data on current EL opportunities at the institution were collected going back to AY 2014-15 and 2015-16. Thirty-one data points were collected from administrative offices. In AY 2017-18, data collection processes were revised to prevent collecting duplicate information between this group and representatives from each of the colleges and to ensure consistent definitions of EL were being followed. Reports on the data collected from the administrative offices indicate an increase in opportunities and participation in EL when compared with baseline data. During AY 2018-19, data from the administrative offices indicated many offices saw steady increases in opportunities and participation in EL compared to previous years. The numbers of courses, students, and out-of-course EL opportunities remained similar to AY 2016-17, as well as the numbers for the all 12 types of EL at the institution. In spring 2020, many offices (e.g., Programs Abroad, Jones Center for Leadership and Service, Undergraduate Research) saw decreases in student participation and EL opportunities due, in large part, to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

College Baseline Data Group. Nine college representatives (one from each college serving undergraduates) provided data on student participation in academic courses and other college sponsored co-curricular experiences inclusive of EL. This group collected data each year from AY 2014-15 through AY 2019-20 (six years). In AY 2015-16, QEP data points were identified. The QEP team met with representatives to identify relevant data to be collected from AY 2014-15 and AY 2015-16. In AY 2016-17, baseline data on experiential-based learning practices were collected from the previous two academic years (2014-15 and 2015-16) at UT Knoxville. In all, 36 data points were collected from the colleges. In AY 2017-18, the data collection process was revised to prevent collecting duplicate information with the administrative offices, and to ensure consistent definitions of EL were being used. Results from the colleges show drastic changes when compared to the baseline data. Results collected in AY 2018-19, indicate the number of EL courses offered remained consistent. In AY 2019-20, the number of courses and students remained roughly the same as in previous years and, again, out-of-course EL opportunities decreased in spring 2020 due to COVID-19.

Grant Opportunities for Faculty, Staff, and Students. As part of the first QEP initiative, in AY 2016-17, 11 faculty, staff, and students were awarded the “Faculty/Staff/Student Support (FSS) Initiative Grant,” which supported organizations seeking to implement one of the 12 types of EL into a curricular or co-curricular experience on campus. Six applications were submitted by faculty members, three by staff members, and two by students (one undergraduate and one graduate). The FSS Support Grants included a single indirect assessment that gauged student’s perceptions of their EL activity. The assessment was a survey that included four closed-ended and one open-ended question related to the four QEP SLOs. Results indicated that students agreed to some extent that they: Want to use the knowledge and skills gained from the experience to help others (94%); want to develop relevant skills that are related to this experience (91%); believe they can use the skills and knowledge gained from the experience in real-world situations (93%); and felt they effectively worked with others to achieve a common goal (96%). Students indicated in open-ended responses that teamwork/collaboration, developing intercultural knowledge and competence, and applying skills and knowledge in a real-world context were significant highlights of the experience.

Experience Learning Certificate Program. In AY 2015-16, the former Tennessee Teaching & Learning Center (TennTLC) offered an EL certificate program focused on the four EL SLOs to faculty teaching EL courses. The certificate featured four workshops: Motivation, collaboration, application of skills and knowledge in real-world problems, and reflection. A survey was administered to all faculty in attendance. As shown by the means of their responses (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest or “best” value), respondents agreed that they would be able to apply at least one of the elements in their teaching ($M_{mot} = 4.45$, $M_{coll} = 4.68$, $M_{rw} = 4.10$, $M_{refl} = 4.59$). Respondents also agreed that they found the sessions informative ($M_{mot} = 4.45$, $M_{coll} = 4.66$, $M_{rw} = 4.38$, $M_{refl} = 4.74$). Based on the results, future workshops with more depth were offered in partnership with the QEP team.

Resources for Faculty and Staff. A poster of “12 types of Experiential Learning” with a map of “Key Campus Partners” was shared with faculty and academic advisors to help students find EL opportunities that suited them. The [Experience Learning Resource Guide](#) was written for faculty, staff, and advisors, detailing the QEP’s purpose and intended outcomes, as well as best practices for implementing EL in a course or other experience. The Guide debuted at the fall 2016 Academic Leadership Retreat. The [EL Risk Management Handbook](#) was developed to help faculty and staff identify, assess, manage, and monitor risks associated with implementing EL opportunities. Members of the Faculty Fellows

Program were provided additional resources particular to their course redesigns. Table 4 shows Faculty Fellows activities during the QEP implementation and one year prior. Much of AY 2019-20 was focused on sustaining existing EL opportunities and supporting instructors in the quick pivot to online instruction.

Table 4. Faculty Fellows Activities over a 6-Year Period

Faculty Development	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of Awards	4	3	11	0	28	46
Number of events	3	3	5	10	41	16
Number of Online Resources	16	16	17	22	32	-
Number of Faculty Fellows			26	12	12	8
Number of approved courses that have an "S" designation^				10	9	10

*Formally the Teaching and Learning Center until January 2018
 ^Data point was consolidated with TU office data from Service-Learning office

Unanticipated Outcomes

QEP Inclusion in New Academic Advising Model. EL was chosen as one of three components of UT’s new institution-wide [academic advising model](#). This model was constructed around the idea of a common experience for all students. Beginning in AY 2020-21, all incoming students will be advised not only on the basis of their academic and career interests, but also in terms of actively participating in experiential learning and self-development.

Improved Student Safety in EL. In AY 2017-18, UT Knoxville received permission from the UT System to incorporate a customizable waiver into relevant EL courses. And, general liability insurance was added to the UT System Student Liability Insurance Policy to better protect students working in communities in EL contexts.

EL Role in New General Education Curriculum. The QEP also played a major role in the structure of the institution’s new general education curriculum, Vol Core, which will launch in fall 2022. This new set of requirements includes “Engaged Inquiries” within one of the three pillars of the new curriculum. In these courses, students are required to (1) work effectively in teams or groups, (2) participate in reflection, (3) apply what they are learning to a real-world setting, or (4) combine two or more disciplines in their final project. These requirements are hallmarks of the QEP. Also, a separate but significant graduation requirement called “Contemporary Issues and Solutions” will debut in fall 2022. This requirement encourages faculty to include EL in their courses.

2019 Game-Based Learning Certificate. Fifteen faculty, staff, and Graduate Teaching Associates completed this program that promoted best practices in gamification and role-playing. The goal was to support participants in the adoption of these pedagogies in their courses. At least two reported they implemented strategies in their instruction.

HIPs for All UT Students By 2025. In 2019, the UT System Board of Trustees announced the system’s approved strategic plan. As part of that plan, all UT students will participate at least one High Impact Practice (HIP) by 2025.

New Research Designations for Graduates. The co-curricular transcript (CCT) was adopted by the Office of Undergraduate Research for issuance of new graduation recognitions, including Excellence and Distinction in Undergraduate Research, and is the primary tool for tracking research participation across the institution.

Lasting Impacts of 2017 EL Summer Institute (ELSI): Per the first QEP initiative, 25 faculty members received Faculty Development Grants to incorporate EL components into their courses, requiring them to participate in the 4-week ELSI program. Twenty-two of the 25 faculty were focused on redesigning a course to include at least one type of EL. The final three faculty members from the Department of English formed a team to redevelop the Chancellor’s Honors Writing II course to include undergraduate research. In spring 2018, the Office of Undergraduate Research designated one night of its annual Undergraduate Research Fair, [Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement \(EURēCA!\)](#), to focus on student presentations from the redesigned course. This event supported the research of 279 students enrolled in the course who presented their research at the event. In spring 2019, 324 students presented. This program continues today and has led to both a curricular change and a change in the institution’s Research Week events. This change will help UT

Knoxville provide more first-year students with an undergraduate research experience and enhance the culture related to this portion of the student population. Also noteworthy is the work being done to incorporate EL into the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences Leadership Studies minor. This was done for the entire minor with 2-3 courses annually, for a total of 6 courses. These Faculty Fellows were provided resources, consultations, and additional support on the EL assessment process to enable them to measure their students' learning through the redesigned course(s).

In AY 2017-18, EL Faculty Fellows were asked to collect course data, which included each assessment element of the assessment plan. Twenty-two faculty members participated in the assessment process for 774 students. While students completed a pre- and post-experience student survey, faculty assessed their students' capstone assignments through a direct assessment and the organization and impacts of the ELSI on their classes through the faculty survey and focus group.

Results from the student surveys elicited significant change between numerous corresponding items. Open-ended responses showed that many students did not alter their perception of what it means to be a lifelong learner as a result of this experience, while others felt that this experience helped them understand the importance of continuous learning throughout one's life. One student wrote, "While it has not altered my knowledge or perspective drastically because I already knew quite a bit going in about the importance of being an active citizen, my passion has continued to grow." Also, a few students shared a deeper appreciation for self-reflection and community awareness. One student stated, "Learning is not just about reading and researching, it is also about observing and reflecting and trying it yourself." Overall, students indicated positive changes from their EL opportunities.

Instructors indicated that students showed the highest level of achievement in SLOs 3 and 4, as demonstrated in the direct assessment. Achievement of SLO 4 (students will utilize reflection) is significant since students indicated that they did not often engage in structured reflection at the beginning of the semester. Interestingly, students reported SLO 4 as one of their areas of weakness compared to the other QEP SLOs. Direct assessment results indicate that students demonstrated high levels of learning as a result of their EL opportunities.

Instructors' perceptions of the impact the ELSI had on their courses were positive. All instructors strongly agreed that they would recommend teaching an EL course to a colleague. All instructors indicated some level of agreement that the ELSI was beneficial for them. Instructors did provide constructive feedback on how to improve the program for the future, which included more administrative support throughout the semester, breaking instructors into teams based on pedagogy, and including faculty experts as a resource for instructors new or novice to experiential education. Many of the suggestions were implemented in the 2018 summer institute.

2018 Teaching and Learning Innovation Summer Institute (TLISI): In spring 2018, the unit that housed EL was reorganized, and the EL Summer Institute (ELSI) became the TLISI. Of the Faculty Fellows who participated in the 2nd summer institute, 12 of the 27 participated in the EL track. Fellows were provided with resources, presentations, and consultations. The EL assessment process was used to support the redesigned courses.

In AY 2018-19, EL Faculty Fellows were asked to collect course data, which included all elements of the assessment plan. The 12 Faculty Fellows participated in assessing 419 students who completed a pre- and post-experience student survey, while faculty assessed their students' capstone assignment with direct assessment in addition to providing feedback on the program through the faculty survey. Courses in 2018 focused on service-learning, gaming, simulations, and role-playing.

Results from the student survey indicate few significant changes in the perception of meeting the QEP SLOs over the course of the fall semester and significant increases in perception of meeting the QEP SLOs over the spring semester. The open-ended questions had similar responses to the previous year. Most students found value in the EL opportunity with many emphasizing a preference for learning through concrete examples and scenarios. One student wrote, "Using the games to take an in-depth look at real world problems was something I had never done in a history class before. I found it to be eye-opening and a WAY better form of learning than lectures." Most students reported strong communication skills were vital throughout the experience, especially for collaboration, while others distinctly emphasized the application of skills and knowledge. Another student reported, "This experience showed me that learning doesn't have to be facts, it can be skills and knowledge that can be applied to my life and the world around me." The students' understanding and attainment of QEP SLOs was apparent in their responses.

Instructors indicated students showed the highest level of achievement in SLO 3 (students will work collaboratively with others) as shown in the direct assessment. Attainment of SLOs 1, 2, and 4 continue to fluctuate between accomplished and

developing across all Faculty Fellows Program courses. Students reported similar weaknesses for SLO 2 and 4, indicating that reflection and ability to apply knowledge and skills remain unachieved outcomes.

The TLISI had a positive impact on courses from the instructors' perspectives. All instructors strongly felt the program should be offered again. After AY 2019-20, four EL faculty development workshops were offered by TLI in lieu of summer institutes. Budget constraints and new departmental directions precluded future TLISI offerings, though other EL programming was offered for faculty during the year (e.g., workshops, certificates, other EL events). Workshops and other resources on reflective practices and lifelong learning skills were the focus for faculty development in AY 2019-20 due to low ratings in SLO 1 and 4 reported by faculty and students.

A positive outcome of the QEP is that many institutional units supported the QEP in the form of new staff and programs that will outlast the five years of the QEP. Departments like the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration (CCDAE) and the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) that were already offering EL opportunities and saw the value in those for students, utilized the QEP as a way to move the initiatives forward. The CCD hired an Assistant Director for Internship Development to work with organizations to increase internship opportunities, expanded its HIP offering through the Impact Internship Grant, which awards scholarships to students in unpaid internships, and initiated improved risk management policies. University Libraries established a Student Success Librarian for Experiential Learning to work with faculty to incorporate EL in the classroom and through programming. The UT Seed Library, which provides free vegetable, fruit, and flower seeds and related information resources, was a direct result of QEP offerings. The Office of Undergraduate Research and librarians partnered to expand the Discovery Living and Learning Community (LLC) to include a Seed Library-based LLC, where students work in the Grow Lab (a campus urban garden and outdoor classroom) and conduct hands-on research projects on relevant subjects such as food access/insecurity, social and environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and community building/wellness. These new opportunities were integrated into a First-Year Seminar course and courses in Environmental and Soil Science and a Biosystems Engineering Technology.

The Programs Abroad office increased overall education abroad enrollments and expanded international internships, service-learning, and research programs. The Office of Undergraduate Research added \$700,000 to its budget to fund additional full-time staff and increase participation in research. The Honors and Scholars unit created the "1794 Scholars" program to focus on EL opportunities and reflection. Additionally, several units relevant to EL, OUR, CCDAE, Honors and Scholars, and Office of Scholarships and Fellowships, were reorganized into a newly created [Division of Student Success](#) that emphasizes the role experiential learning plays in student retention, graduation, and career outcomes.

What We Learned through the QEP Experience

Impact of Changes in Senior Leadership on Budgets and Priorities. At the end of Year 1 (AY 2015-16), the Provost who had championed the plan returned to faculty. In the 5-year QEP implementation period, the institution weathered significant shifts in senior level leadership, seeing three Provosts and four Chancellors at the helm. These transitions in institutional leadership can adversely affect planned budgets and priorities that tend to change with new leadership. Numerous other campus leaders were also in transition, including four college deans (Education, Health, and Human Sciences; Engineering; Law; and Social Work) who vacated their positions.

Consistent Communication to Top Administration is Crucial. Communication regarding plan progress and goal status that reaches up to the highest levels of the administration must be maintained in order to continue momentum from year to year. With better communication, resources may have been allocated to support the SCI and other programs. Intentional regular communication will keep the institution's focus on and sustain support of the QEP.

Link Professional Development to Curriculum. Campus-wide professional development experiences for faculty were offered without ensuring there would be a home in the curriculum for new courses and experiences produced. At times, some impact was lost when new courses or experiences were created, but not guaranteed to be added to the academic catalog without multiple levels of formal review. A one-year review process for new courses was required.

Adaptable Assessment Practices are More Useful. In the last two years of implementation, we had to adjust QEP data collection. Colleagues in the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment were able to include QEP-related questions in the institution's formal course evaluations. We also developed assessment tools that could be adjusted as needed each time that they were shared with faculty and campus partners, while ensuring the integrity of the tools.