

Update on Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Presentation to Faculty Senate

December 12, 2011

Context of QEP

Every 10 years, Texas A&M seeks reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

- Off-site review (Nov 2011) – focuses on our Compliance Report**
- On-site review (April 2012) – focuses on our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)**

Aggies Commit

Aggies Commit is an set of activities to reinforce the long history of Aggies who :

Make significant Commitments and then Keep those Commitments.

Within the total set of activities is our QEP; **Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime** will focus on Student Learning Outcomes

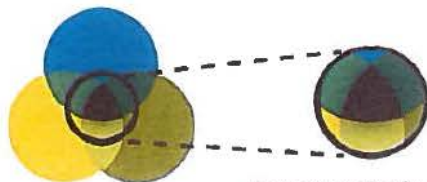
2011 Launch the QEP Portion of Aggies Commit via Reallocations to each College

2015 100% of all enrolled students participate in at least one Aggies Commit semester before graduation

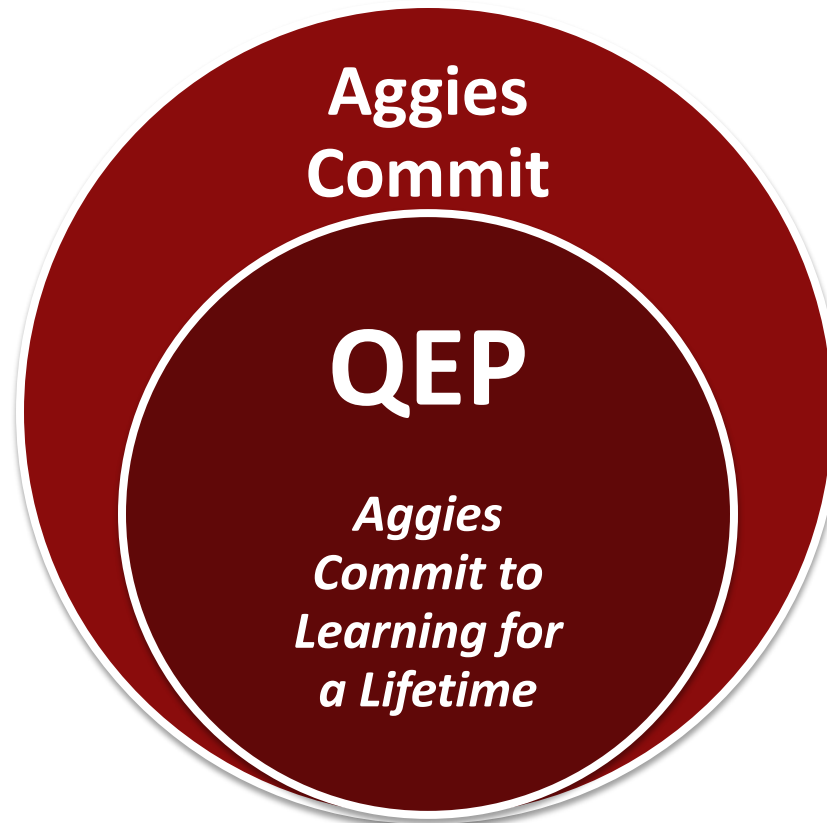
2019 100% of Texas A&M University Students have at least 3 experiences in Aggies Commit for a Lifetime of Learning



Aggies Commit will involve all students, faculty, staff, and administrators, through the colleges and divisions, and through campus clubs and organizations, in making commitments and then reflecting on the personal and University growth manifested in keeping those commitments. These commitments will focus on enhancing the University learning outcomes or on strengthening the University core values.



EDUCATION FIRST
Teaching Research Service



- **Our QEP is a major part of Aggies Commit**
- **Focuses on student learning**
- ***It's for us***

Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime

Our QEP calls for –

- **students to commit to developing the dispositions and skills for learning for a lifetime (student learning goal)**
- **the institution to create a campus culture that enables students to intentionally and thoughtfully pursue the development of these dispositions and skills (institutional goal)**

Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime

For student learning goal:

- Dispositions and skills for lifelong learning
 - Curiosity, Initiative, Independence, Transfer, Reflection
- Skills for integrative learning
 - Connections to experience, Connections to discipline, Transfer, Integrated communication, Reflection and self-assessment
- Student reflections and VALUE rubrics

Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime

For the institutional goal:

Individual colleges and Galveston and Qatar campuses -

- Identify student learning outcome(s)
- Strengthen/develop high impact learning experience(s)
- Identify meaningful partnership opportunities with co-curricular units
- Elicit individual student commitment and reflection
- Provide advising and mentoring
- Assess achievement

Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime

Infrastructure and Support:

- Digital infrastructure for organizing student commitments and reflections
- Professional development support
- Resources – reallocation
 - Aggies commit
 - High impact learning experience; Advising; Integrated interdisciplinary experiences; Academic supporting

Aggies Commit to Learning for a Lifetime

Please talk to colleagues about QEP

- We will seek feedback soon once we've completed the QEP document
- We need to prepare for the on-site review
 - About 13 team members on campus April 2-5, 2012
 - They will meet with faculty, staff, students, and administrators and talk to them about our QEP
- Prepare for QEP implementation

QEP Committee Members

Luciana Barroso, Dwight Look College of Engineering, Co-Chair

Joseph Bassett, student

Kim Dooley, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Howard Eilers, College of Architecture

Jim Hermann, College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Cynthia Hernandez, Division of Student Affairs

Ann Kenimer, Office of the Dean of Faculties

Todd Kent, Texas A&M University at Qatar

Andrew Klein, Faculty Senate (Faculty Senate)

Elisa McNeill, College of Education

Brad Morrill, student

Julie Newman, College of Geosciences

Glenn Phillips, student

Loraine Phillips, Office of Institutional Assessment, *Ex Officio*

Leslie Reynolds, University Libraries

Genyne Royal, student

Janie Schielack, College of Science

Bill Seitz, Texas A&M University at Galveston

William Simmons, student

Nancy Simpson, Mays Business School

Mike Stephenson, College of Liberal Arts

Crystal Usher, student

Srinivas Vadali, Dwight Look College of Engineering

Ben Wu, Office of the Dean of Faculties & Center for Teaching Excellence, Co-Chair

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link “liberal arts” and “professional courses”; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.



Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.