LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

Quality Enhancement Plan

POST-GRADUATE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

MARCH 18–21, 2024

QEP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Longwood University's QEP is the result of a comprehensive and iterative multi-year process integrated with ongoing institutional planning. The QEP team members and a wide range of campus constituents engaged in the process that led to selection of the QEP topic "Preparing for Post-Graduate Success." Informed by best practices literature, campus feedback, and a QEP guiding principle of building sustainable faculty and staff partnerships, three scaffolded student learning outcomes were identified. The QEP, officially called the Post-Graduate Success Initiative, will equip students to:

1. set post-graduate goals consistent with a holistic sense of self and community,
2. a) create and b) revise a plan integrating curricular and co-curricular experiences that support post-graduate goals, and
3. articulate the connection between curricular and co-curricular experiences and their post-graduate plans.

In the context of Longwood's citizen leadership mission and strategic plan key principles of transforming lives and camaraderie, *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* were selected as best practice frameworks to facilitate student achievement of the QEP learning outcomes and serve particularly the retention of students of color, first-generation students, and Pell-eligible students. To *consider life design* is to "encourage students to be active agents in their career process while embracing a designer's mindset" (Catrino, 2023, p.134). To *practice career everywhere* is to recognize that formally trained career educators do not have to be engaging in or overseeing all career conversations; everyone should be prepared to embrace a career-readiness conversation. These two frameworks organize QEP activities into two broad phases; *consider life design* is associated with a student's first year at Longwood and QEP SLO 1 and 2a, whereas *practice career everywhere* is associated with all subsequent semesters and QEP SLO 2b and 3.

The University's QEP will enhance existing campus programs and refine ongoing projects. For example, Longwood's approach to academic advising will be strengthened by the QEP. By funding stipends and course releases for designated first-year advisors, the QEP will facilitate earlier and more frequent advising conversations, particularly in academic programs with significant gaps in retention of historically underrepresented students. Paired with expanded professional development (available to all faculty and staff) enhanced advising will facilitate achievement of SLOs 1 and 2. A revitalized micro-internship program will support SLOs 2 and 3 and articulation opportunities (SLO 3) will be embedded in campus-wide events, such as the existing, semiannual Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase and an innovative new Graduate School Immersion Day. With dedicated human and financial resources and a robust assessment structure, the Post-Graduate Success Initiative is set to strengthen the self- and career-development of Longwood's future citizen leaders.

QEP Identification and Development Process

Longwood University's mission – to develop citizen leaders prepared to make positive contributions to the common good – provides the backdrop and opportunity to create a stronger connection between students' educational experiences and post-graduate success. For the University's QEP, by graduation, students should be empowered to articulate how their Longwood experiences shaped their goals and built their capacity to contribute to society and create a personal and communal future based on their skills, abilities, interests, and aspirations.

Longwood University's QEP is the result of a comprehensive and iterative multi-year process thoughtfully integrated with ongoing institutional planning. Consistent with the Longwood Key Strategic Principle of Camaraderie (see Strategic Plan 2019-2025), the QEP team members and the wide range of campus constituents engaged in the topic selection and plan development phases reflect a "commitment to real diversity of backgrounds, identities, and intellectual perspectives."

QEP Process Leadership

Formed in summer 2021, the Reaffirmation Leadership Team (RLT), listed in Table 1, was charged with coordinating the accurate and timely completion of all tasks associated with the internal review process and Compliance Certification, including "overseeing the development and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan."

Table 1. Reaffirmation Leadership Team

Name	Title
W. Taylor Reveley IV	President, Longwood University
Larissa Smith	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), Professor of History
Louise Waller (2021-2022) Matt McGregor (2022-present)	Vice President for Administration and Finance
David Shoenthal	Associate Provost & Associate VPAA, Professor of Math
JoEllen Pederson	Associate Professor of Sociology, Chair of Faculty Senate
Pam Tracy	Director for the Center for Faculty Enrichment, Professor of Communication Studies

As a first step in its oversight of the QEP, the RLT appointed Dr. Pam Tracy to lead the process in two stages over a two-year period. First, in the Topic Identification phase, running August 2021-May 2022, she chaired the Topic Recommendation Committee (TRC). Then, for the QEP development phase, running August 2022-May 2023, she chaired the Writing and Development Committee (WDC). As an experienced administrative professional and faculty member, she actively collaborates across university divisions, has experience with the SACSCOC reaffirmation process, and has shepherded to fruition large-scale learning and academic success

projects. In her role as chair of the TRC and WDC, she convened and led committee meetings and work, provided campus-wide QEP progress updates, and reported to and provided requested information to the RLT throughout the QEP planning process.

Topic Identification Process

In selecting the membership of the TRC, the RLT prioritized:

- broad-based representation of institutional constituencies;
- expertise in diverse areas of student learning and success, including retention and persistence; and
- socio-cultural experiences and identities reflective of a student population with diverse backgrounds and learning needs.

The result was an eight-member team (see Table 2) that included an undergraduate student, staff from three University divisions (i.e., Student Affairs, Strategic Operations, Academic Affairs) and, within Academic Affairs, faculty representing the three academic colleges.

Table 2. QEP Topic Recommendation Committee (TRC)

Name, Title	Representation
Pam Tracy, Director for the Center for Faculty Enrichment, Professor of Communication Studies	Chair
Chris Labosier, Associate Professor of Environmental Science	Cook-Cole College of Arts and Sciences
Hua (Meg) Meng, Assistant Professor of Marketing	College of Business and Economics
Alison King, Assistant Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders	College of Education, Health, and Human Services
Mark Hamilton, Research & Digital Services Librarian	Greenwood Library
Waleed Ahmed, Assistant Director of Admissions and Retention	Strategic Operations
Jonathan Page, Director of Multicultural Affairs, Title VI Coordinator, and Co-Chair of the University Diversity Council	Student Affairs
Jalen Lee, Criminal Justice Major and Cyber Security/ Information Systems Minor	Undergraduate Student

The QEP TRC's responsibilities were to:

- identify possible QEP topics in the context of university data and strategic priorities;
- evaluate the possible topics based on research, feedback from the University community, and feasibility to fund and assess topics;

- make QEP topic recommendations to Longwood's Reaffirmation Leadership Team, who will select the official topic; and
- inform members of the Longwood community about the SACSCOC QEP requirements and Longwood's QEP topic recommendation process and timeline.

Overview of Topic Recommendation Committee Process

The TRC met weekly from August 2021 through March 2022. Early on, the TRC generated a list of questions to guide conversations about the institutional data needed to inform decisions:

- What elements of the University's Strategic Plan 2019-2025 and institutional mission focus on student learning and/or student success?
- What will it mean to be a Longwood graduate in 10 years? Are we preparing students for this future?
- In what ways does Longwood meet or not meet the needs of students? Have the needs changed? What could we do better?
- In terms of student learning and student success, what areas do we need to improve? What data do we have to help us answer this?

A data sub-committee identified national data germane to topics and worked with personnel throughout the University's divisions to locate and evaluate the necessary institutional data, including: the 2017 and 2020 NSSE reports, the 2021 report to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) on student learning competencies, Longwood student withdrawal data from 2017-2022, and annual assessment reports from University units and offices, such as Counseling and Psychological Services. The team also reviewed a 2021 report on Longwood matriculation and retention rates for key demographics. The report contents prompted the TRC to request, wherever possible, a breakdown of data by race, sex, and Pell-eligibility. Simultaneous to the work of the data sub-committee, a feedback sub-committee designed and executed the campus-wide topic solicitation and feedback process, which included the creation of a topic idea proposal form, the design of surveys and focus group questions, and facilitation of virtual and face-to-face feedback sessions.

To further ensure that the QEP topic arose out of institutional planning processes, the TRC coordinated their work with that of the University Planning Council (UPC) by presenting progress reports and soliciting feedback. The UPC serves as a means of aligning the university's operations and budgeting with the strategic priorities of the university and is a forum for discussion of key issues for the university. The UPC includes broad University representation and is co-chaired by the President, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Administration and Finance, and the chair of the Senate Finance and Planning Committee. The UPC works in concert with established procedures and bodies responsible for educational, programmatic, and business-related functions. Reporting from two subcommittees of UPC, the University Assessment Committee and the University Diversity Council, were

particularly valuable for ensuring alignment with Longwood's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes throughout the QEP topic selection and development processes.

Campus Communication and Feedback Opportunities

Reflective of Longwood's strategic priority of "intensifying enthusiasm across all enrollment," the TRC committed to a transparent and inclusive topic selection process that kept the campus informed and engaged (see Topic Selection Process Timeline). Faculty, staff, and students received meaningful and timely updates on the topic selection process as well as ongoing opportunities to share insights and feedback. The general scope of communication included:

- A Longwood QEP website including SACSCOC QEP requirements, opportunities for providing feedback, topic summaries, and QEP topic selection time-line;
- informational meetings with faculty, staff, students, and administrators at different stages of process;
- in-person updates to standing committees (e.g., UPC, Student Government Association, Strategic Enrollment and Academic Leadership team, Staff Advisory Council) and constituent groups of students, staff, and faculty (e.g., Opening and closing general faculty meetings, Student Success unit, Student Affairs division); and,
- campus-wide emails describing the QEP timeline and process, and the importance of campus involvement and opportunities for such at all major phases of topic and plan development.

Topic Solicitation

In late August and early September of 2021, members of the TRC presented at the Opening Faculty Meeting, meetings of staff and administrators in the Student Affairs division and the Student Success Division, the Staff Advisory Committee meeting, and a meeting of the Student Government Association. Each presentation covered: (1) the why of Accreditation, Reaffirmation, and a QEP, (2) the membership of the RLT and TRC, (3) a timeline for the QEP topic selection, and (4) the key considerations in QEP topic selection. Each presentation concluded with a summary of opportunities to stay involved, such as submitting topic ideas, attending focus group discussions, completing surveys, and monitoring QEP website updates.

Longwood's unique mission, alongside the SACSCOC guidelines for the QEP, informed design of the submission guidelines for topics. The submission template allowed the committee to gather sufficient information for decision-making, while recognizing that a streamlined form would enhance the inclusivity of the process across differences in the time, energy, expertise, and experience of those considering a submission. Each submission needed to include:
WHAT: A description of the Quality Enhancement Plan topic including the overarching goal and alignment to Longwood's Strategic Plan and/or Mission
HOW: Way(s) in which the proposed project could improve student learning or student success

WHO: The student constituencies the QEP intends to reach and the potential for the topic to reach a diversity of learners at Longwood, as well as the opportunity for cross-campus participation of faculty and staff

WHY: A topic rationale or basis for thinking the particular QEP enhancement is needed at Longwood

In September 2021 the TRC reviewed the ten submissions from faculty, staff, and students. This was the first of three points in the topic solicitation process at which the TRC needed to make decisions about topic viability. At each of these three junctures, referencing the SACSCOC QEP evaluative framework, the following questions guided decision-making:

- How is the topic aligned with our institutional priorities and mission? What insights and/or questions do you have about this alignment?
- How is this topic justified by institutional data on student learning and/or success?
- How has the campus community responded to this topic?
- Is this topic feasible in terms of resources and assessment?

Based on its review of the ten submissions, the TRC merged duplicate and overlapping topics (e.g., two ideas related to environmental sustainability) and added two topics generated from the work of the TRC data sub-committee. The resulting list of ten topics, each with an accompanying summary, was disseminated to the campus community through the QEP informational website and email. Campus community members were encouraged to provide feedback by completing an online survey or attending a faculty/staff session or a student session. Sessions were offered in person and via Zoom in early to mid-November 2021. TRC committee members facilitated the feedback sessions using a standardized presentation that started with a brief overview of the SACSCOC criteria for a QEP and the topic selection criteria. From there, participants responded to four sets of guiding questions:

- What topic stands out to you? Why? How is this topic connected to your role at Longwood?
- Could faculty and staff be involved in the promotion and implementation of this topic? How so?
- Do you see connections among topics? How so?
- Are we missing a topic? What would that be? Why this topic?

Each session concluded with a description of next steps and a link to a qualitative questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather general feedback on each topic, to gauge if respondents could see someone in their role participating in the topic, and to get insight on overlap among topics and whether viable topics were missing from the initial list.

Topic Short-List Feedback

Based on the campus feedback and continued review of institutional data (e.g., graduation and retention rates, NSSE, student learning competencies, Common Data Set, availability and usage

of campus programming and services), from December 2021-January 2022 the TRC narrowed and reframed topics from the original list of ten into a list of six. For example, given the institutional mission and based on campus feedback, the topic initially proposed as "Career Preparation" was deemed too narrowly focused. Also at this stage, based on ongoing communication with the UPC, including summaries from the early stages of work by the University Diversity Council to implement a Diversity Strategic Plan, the topic selection process began to focus more narrowly on links between each topic and the institutional need for retention of low-income, first-generation, and/or African American students.

Second-year retention rate of first-time-in-college, full-time undergraduate degree-seeking students is the first of Longwood's student achievement measures for SACSCOC Standard 8.1. The threshold for this measure is 75% and the target is 80%. While not part of the official student achievement measure, Longwood disaggregates retention rates by three criteria: gender, Pell recipients, and race/ethnicity. Disaggregating on a measure for socioeconomic status is important given that Longwood's mission is, in part, to be a catalyst for regional prosperity and advancement. Disaggregation by race/ethnicity links directly to the "Reflecting the Diversity of America" priority in the Strategic Plan. In the cohorts for 2017 through 2021, students who received Pell grants never met the retention threshold; whereas, those who did not receive a Pell grant exceeded the 75% threshold with the exception of the 2020 cohort (likely due to the effects of Covid-19). A similar pattern holds for the race/ethnicity variable. White/Non-Hispanic students exceeded the threshold in all cohort years from 2017 through 2021 except 2020. By comparison, Black or African American students and Hispanic students only met the threshold in one of the five years.

The TRC generated revised summaries for each of the six short-list topics to include:
- links to strategic priorities and Longwood mission;
- ties to improving retention for low-income, first-generation, and/or African American students;
- goals of this QEP topic;
- some potential implementation strategies; and
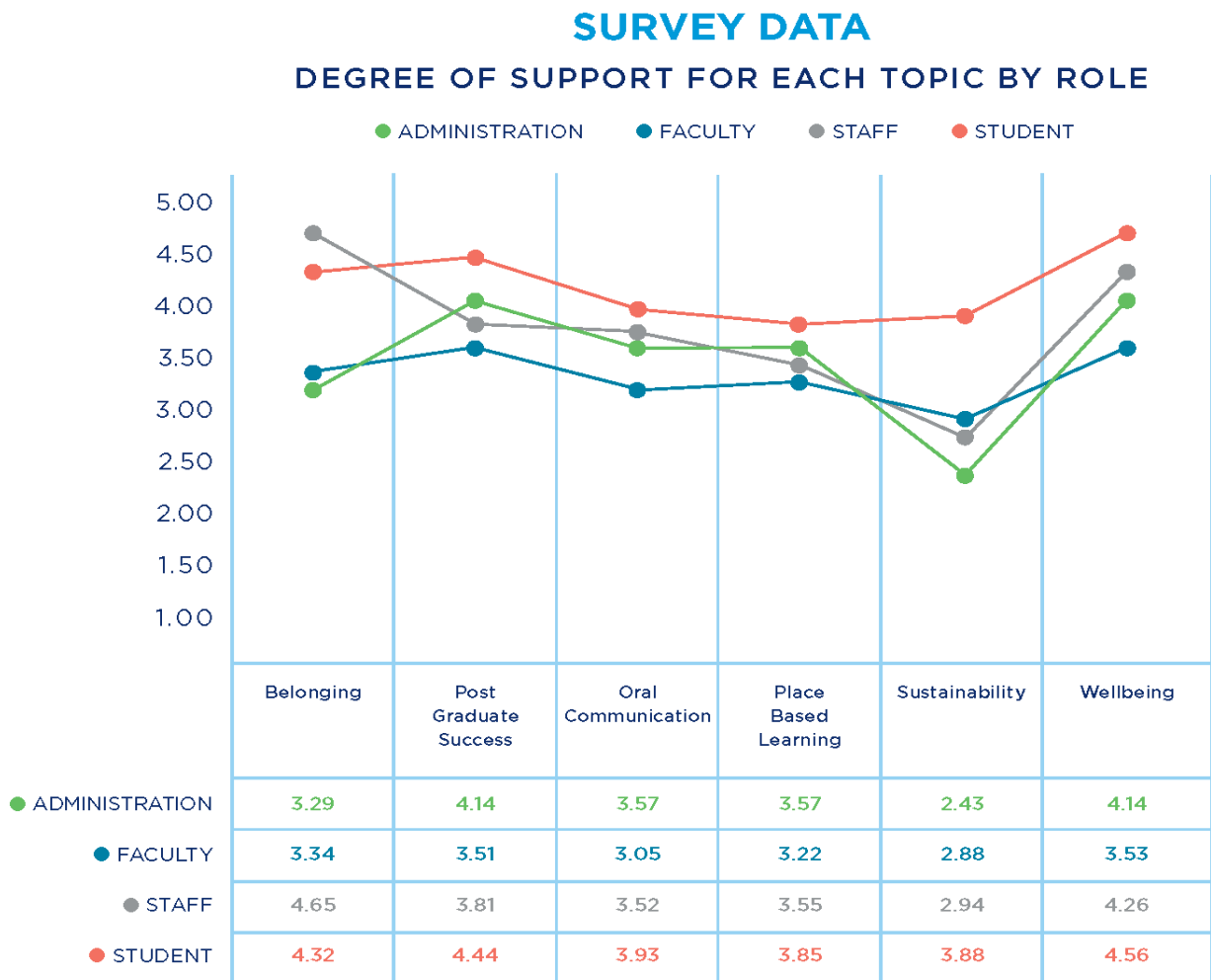- supportive data to justify need for enhancement.

The summaries were circulated through the QEP website, through campus-wide emails, and at a series of feedback sessions in February 2022. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators attended feedback sessions to engage in conversations about topic connections, possible implementation strategies, and ways for particular campus constituents to get involved that were linked back to student retention. Also, in February 2022, the campus community had the opportunity to complete a survey to provide additional feedback on the six topics. In this survey, participants were asked to review each topic summary and answer the following questions:
- How well does this topic address student learning and/or student success?

- How well does this topic address retention of students at Longwood University in general?
- How well does this topic address retention of BIPOC (e.g., Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian) students at Longwood University?
- How likely do you think it is for your area to participate in the implementation of this topic?
- (Optional) If this topic was chosen, do you have any ideas about how the topic might be implemented?

Two hundred and sixty people including 72 staff, 105 faculty, and 83 students responded to some portion of the survey; 130 participants [faculty (n=55), staff (n=37), students (n=38)] completed the survey, including the final item asking participants to indicate (on a five-point scale) how likely they would be to support each topic (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

SURVEY DATA
DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR EACH TOPIC BY ROLE

	Belonging	Post Graduate Success	Oral Communication	Place Based Learning	Sustainability	Wellbeing
ADMINISTRATION	3.29	4.14	3.57	3.57	2.43	4.14
FACULTY	3.34	3.51	3.05	3.22	2.88	3.53
STAFF	4.65	3.81	3.52	3.55	2.94	4.26
STUDENT	4.32	4.44	3.93	3.85	3.88	4.56

Final Topic Selection

The TRC reviewed all quantitative and qualitative data from the feedback sessions and the campus survey and decided to eliminate the Sustainability topic. From there, the TRC agreed to send forward five topics for consideration by the RLT: Belonging, Preparing for Post-Graduate Success, Effective Oral Communication, Place-Based Learning, and Well-being. The RLT requested an unranked list of topics and the following information in each topic summary:

- How the topic might help to improve retention
- Institutional data to support need for topic focus
- Campus feedback data
- Review of available retention-specific data from the QEP impact reports of other institutions
  - For example, in relation to Well-being, one institution implemented an early alert system that loops faculty and staff into the alert and outcomes. 70% of their faculty used the program at least three times a semester and the institution saw 30 years of 75% retention increase to 82% in the first two years of implementation.
- Information on possible grant funding opportunities
- Possible implementation strategies

On February 15, Dr. Tracy submitted the five topics to the RLT for consideration. On February 18, Dr. Tracy sent an email to the campus community updating faculty, staff, and students on the process. The message included the recommended topic list and confirmed that the RLT would consider all five. After a careful review of the topic summaries and a deliberative session of all members, on March 15, 2022, the RLT came to a consensus that the Post-Graduate Success Initiative would be Longwood's next QEP topic. At the Closing Faculty Meeting on March 24, 2022, Dr. Tracy revealed the topic and discussed the next stage—writing and development. Also on March 24, Dr. Tracy sent a topic announcement campus-wide to faculty, staff, and students.

QEP Writing and Development Process

With the selection of the QEP topic, the RLT shifted its attention to creating a committee that would guide the development of the topic into a forward-thinking plan that would engage important constituent groups in the support of student learning and/or success. Dr. David Shoenthal, the Associate Provost, and Dr. Pam Tracy, the QEP chair, recommended members for a Writing and Development Committee (WDC) to the RLT. They prioritized:

- broad-based representation of institutional constituencies;
- expertise in diverse areas of student learning and success, including retention and persistence of African American and Pell-eligible students; and
- socio-cultural experiences and identities reflective of a student population with diverse backgrounds and learning needs.

The result (see Table 3) was a six-member team that included staff from three University divisions (Student Affairs, Strategic Operations, Academic Affairs) and provided continuity in membership with the Topic Recommendation Committee.

Table 3. QEP Writing and Development Committee (WDC)

Name, Title	Representation
Pam Tracy, Director for the Center for Faculty Enrichment; Professor of Communication Studies	Chair
Waleed Ahmed, Assistant Director of Admissions and Retention	Strategic Operations: Student Success
Sarai Blincoe, CCCAS Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Assessment and Department Chair, Associate Professor of Psychology	Academic Affairs
Erica Brown-Meredith, Assistant Professor of Social Work and Director, CLASP Program	Academic Affairs
JoEllen Pederson, Associate Professor of Sociology and Faculty Liaison, Reaffirmation Leadership Team, and Co-Chair of the University Diversity Council	Academic Affairs
Cheryl Steele, Dean of Student Engagement	Student Affairs

The WDC's responsibilities were to:
- identify QEP goals, outcomes, and implementation strategies in the context of university data and strategic priorities;
- research best practices and information related to the topic and specific learning outcomes and implementation strategies;
- solicit feedback and insight from campus community, stakeholders, and key collaborators;
- develop an assessment plan;
- request resources necessary to implement the QEP; and
- inform members of Longwood community about the SACSCOC QEP requirements and Longwood's QEP writing and development process and timeline.

Overview of QEP Writing and Development Committee Process

The team began work with a two-day retreat in late July 2022 to: (a) discuss what it means to write and develop a QEP, including best practices for team-based research and writing and identification of project targets, (b) articulate the relationship between preparing for post-graduate success and retention, (c) identify knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to post-graduate success, (d) and consider possible QEP goals and outcomes. The retreat included virtual interviews with the QEP director/coordinator at two universities with post-graduate success

oriented QEPs, who shared their lessons learned from writing and implementing a QEP. The retreat culminated with the drafting of a QEP goal and a guiding principle:

> *Goal:* For students to choose and complete curricular and co-curricular experiences that are linked to their post-graduate success.
>
> *Guiding Principle:* Accomplishing this goal requires building sustainable faculty and staff partnerships.

This goal and commitment to professional cross-campus collaboration framed the development of student learning outcomes and implementation strategies. For example, the emphasis on both curricular and co-curricular learning experiences meant considering implementation strategies that were not credit/grade-bearing and could be infused in areas such as student employment and the activities of student organizations.

Following the retreat, the WDC met weekly from August 2022 through November 2022, and then as needed through the spring of 2023 (see Writing and Development Process Timeline). Committee meetings and team member work in August focused on drafting and unpacking possible QEP outcomes, identifying and reviewing trade and academic literature on post-graduate success, and creating a schedule of meetings with Longwood experts and stakeholder groups. In September, the committee members conducted a series of individual and small group stakeholder meetings to get feedback on the QEP goal and draft outcomes. In October, the WDC focused and intensified the literature review and initiated a backward design process to begin linking drafted student learning outcomes with implementation strategies. The focus for November 2022 through February 2023 was the solicitation of feedback on implementation strategies, first with a survey and campus-wide feedback sessions and then, in early spring, a second round of individual and small-group stakeholder meetings. These stages are described further below as illustration of the team's efforts to involve stakeholders in the development of specific, measurable outcomes for student learning and/or success that can be met through sustainable implementation strategies.

As was the case with the topic selection process, the WDC committee continued to engage in a transparent and inclusive process including campus-wide communications. The general scope of communication included:

- timely QEP process updates on the [QEP website](#) and via email;
- informational meetings with faculty, staff, students, and administrators;
- in-person updates to standing committees;
- individual and small-group meetings with selected campus experts, stakeholders, and key collaborators; and
- campus-wide feedback and discussion sessions.

QEP Goal and Outcome Refinement

Following the July retreat, the work of the WDC members to familiarize themselves with Longwood institutional data in relation to the draft QEP goal led the committee to generate an initial student success outcome, that of improving Longwood's retention of BIPOC students. In the first three weeks of September 2022, the WDC coordinated meetings with over a dozen university divisions and selected stakeholders (i.e., Office of Multicultural Affairs, Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Employment, Call Me MISTER, Exploratory Studies staff, College of Business and Economics Career staff, Cormier Honors College, Athletics, First-Generation Student Committee, LIFE STEM, Office of Teacher Preparation, Civitae Core Curriculum, Graduate Studies) to discuss the proposed QEP goal and outcome and to understand (a) what post-graduate success related activities were already occurring in their area, (b) what they would like to do more of, and (c) what they thought graduates needed to know, value, and do to be successful. For each meeting, the facilitating WDC team members submitted summary notes which were discussed in the September and October weekly meetings. Feedback themes were generated for the following topical areas:

- Formulation of the QEP goal and retention outcome
- Skills, knowledge, values/attitudes needed by student year (1st year, 2nd, junior/senior)
- What activities/programs already exist? What might be enhanced?
- What activities/programs are missing? What activities do they wish could happen?

The WDC learned that student affairs and student success staff value career mentoring and see this as an important part of student development throughout the college experience. They provide opportunities for student employees and student organization leaders to reflect on what they learned and how this might apply to their future. However, when students are prompted to reflect on the skills, knowledge, and values cultivated in a particular experience, they may not be able to communicate that to others. These communication skills could be developed more consistently through curricular and co-curricular learning experiences.

Another theme, consistent with the WDC's collaboration guiding principle, was the desire for a more coordinated campus-wide effort to encourage early (first- and second-year) planning and self-exploration in relation to goal setting and post-graduate plans. Stakeholders shared that some projects and programs with the potential to address this need for early exploration and planning were stalled due to COVID restrictions or insufficient resources.

This series of meetings also revealed the challenge of concentrating a QEP on post-graduate success while discussing retention. Meeting attendees often recommended implementation strategies outside the purview of post-graduate success (such as increasing financial aid) and discussions would shift to a focus on retention explicitly rather than preparing students for post-graduate success as a means to improving retention rates. As such, the committee opted to take two decisive steps in the implementation planning process. First, the committee developed a set

of culturally inclusive guiding questions to help frame subsequent discussions about student learning outcomes and implementation strategies, to ensure that the selected strategies helped low-income and/or African American students and met the needs of these socio-cultural student cohorts.

- What factors affect Pell-eligible (e.g. low income, first-generation), male, and African American/Black students' retention and persistence? How are these related to post-graduate success? What strategies can help?
- What mindset/theories/assumptions do we need to embody and embrace?
- What prior knowledge/values/experiences do these students bring with them? How are these connected to post-graduate success? What strategies can help?
- What factors in the learning environment and in the broader climate help to shape their college learning experiences? How is this connected to post-graduate success? What strategies can help?

Secondly, the committee decided to utilize retention as a measure within the QEP assessment rather than positioning retention as a QEP student success outcome. In parallel with the stakeholder meetings, a combination of literature review and a facilitated process of "unpacking" the QEP goal, led to the generation of three student learning outcomes with a scaffolded and iterative structure. Retention was an appropriate measure of success for the first of these three outcomes.

At the time of graduation from Longwood, students will be able to:
SLO 1: set post-graduate goals consistent with a holistic sense of self and community
SLO 2: (a) create and (b) revise a plan integrating curricular and co-curricular experiences that support post-graduate goals
SLO 3: articulate the connection between curricular and co-curricular experiences and their post-graduate plans

Implementation Strategy: Feedback and Development

From the campus stakeholder meetings, the WDC obtained valuable information about current and potential future campus projects with ties to post-graduate success. Meanwhile, the team utilized a literature review of implementation strategies for the Post-Graduate Success Initiative generated by Hanover Research (a research and grant firm contracted by Longwood) as a jumping-off point for identifying theoretical, empirical, and popular press background material on post-graduate success and the retention of historically underrepresented students. Committee members were assigned to subsets of literature with the articles and books in the Hanover report as starting point. For example, one committee member focused on what factors affect Pell-eligible (e.g., low income, first-generation) students', men, and/or African American/Black students' retention and persistence. Another member investigated the dynamics of the world of

work for graduates of the near-future, and how career services professionals are adapting to student preferences and practices post-COVID. The themes that emerged from the literature review are summarized in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

- Career development initiatives are most successful with institution-wide support and infusion into coursework and curriculum.
- To find the best career path in a changing world of work, students should align personal interests, majors, and career interest, but with emphasis on flexibility.
- Approaches such as "life designing" and "narrative approaches" are useful for students.

- African American students, especially men, greatly benefit from a range of career development initiatives, including counselors and mentoring activities, and an institutional commitment to their personal development.
- Advisors, especially first-year advisors, have an important role in helping students prepare for careers and develop future-readiness competencies.
- First-year programs and orientations are great opportunities to ensure students start on a strong path for career readiness.

- Experiential learning is an excellent means of equipping students with future competencies and career knowledge.
- Pedagogical strategies such as "design thinking," "active learning," and "inquiry-based" teaching are effective.

With a vast assortment of possible strategies for supporting post-graduate success, WDC chair Pam Tracy worked from the literature review findings and the stakeholder meetings to formulate a set of guiding principles for the next steps. In developing the implementation strategies and learning activities, the members of the WDC embraced:

1. the necessity of culturally relevant and culturally responsive practices
2. the importance of curricular and co-curricular learning
3. the recognition of connections between post-graduate planning and holistic sense of self and community
4. the iterative and embedded nature of student planning and preparation
5. the importance of informed student choice
6. the recognition of the developmental nature of goal planning

With these principles in place, by November 2022, the WDC was ready to solicit feedback from the campus on possible implementation strategies and activities for each of the three student learning outcomes. Based on student feedback from the topic selection stage, the WDC shifted approaches for gathering the input of students. Rather than arranging open-to-all sessions, the WDC went to specific student groups, such as the Student Government Association and a gathering of over 200 student-athletes, and particularly focused on minoritized student experiences through meetings with Collaborating with Lancers for Academic Success (CLASP); the Community, Humanity, Allyship, Grace, Equity, and Networking (C.H.A.N.G.E) student group; All For Respecting Our Hair (AFROH); and the Black Student Association. Faculty and staff were invited to three different open feedback sessions, and WDC members went to scheduled meetings of UPC, the University Assessment Committee, the Academic Chairs Council (a committee of all department chairs) and the Strategic Enrollment and Academic Leadership (SEAL) team that includes leadership from the university divisions of Academic Affairs and Strategic Operations. Dr. Tracy also provided a QEP update on the process, SLOs, and possible implementation strategies to the university Board of Visitors in December 2022.

At each meeting participants considered possible implementation strategies, drawn largely from the earlier round of stakeholder meetings, and aligned with each QEP outcome. For example, for the first student learning outcome, *students will set post-graduate goals consistent with a holistic sense of self and community*, participants considered strategies such as goal-setting activities embedded in required first-year general education courses, the Exploratory Studies program, and club leadership training. Other ideas aligned with SLO 1 were to develop a First-Year Advising program or Mentoring program. Attendees offered feedback on the implementation strategies suggested by the WDC for each outcome, and could make original suggestions as well.

Also in November 2022, the campus community had the opportunity to provide survey-based feedback on possible implementation strategies aligned with each of the three SLOs. In the survey, participants reviewed a description of each implementation strategy and indicated on a five-point scale, to what extent they thought that Longwood should enhance/develop that particular strategy. Participants could also offer qualitative feedback on each strategy. Two hundred and seventy-two individuals completed the survey; of the 272 participants, 16% were staff, 22% faculty, 3% administrators, 53% undergraduate students, and 6% graduate students. As seen in Table 4 below, the strongest quantitative support was for enhancing and/or creating:

- First-year advising program in academic programs including Exploratory Studies
- Four-year plan
- Series of learning activities
- Affinity group mentoring
- Transition/Bridge program
- Micro-internships
- Alumni as mentors

Table 4. Mean Scores for Feedback on Implementation Strategies

	Total	Staff	Faculty	Administration	Undergrad	Graduate
First-year advisors	4.06	4.14	3.22	4.13	4.37	4.27
First-year mentors	3.91	3.80	3.23	3.63	4.20	4.27
Goals embedded in classes	3.85	3.93	3.70	4.00	3.87	3.87
Four-year plan	4.03	4.00	3.67	3.25	4.24	4.21
Alumni as Mentors	4.06	3.66	4.22	3.88	4.09	4.43
Service learning	3.94	4.30	3.37	2.88	4.12	4.21
Micro-internships	4.19	4.20	3.62	3.88	4.43	4.57
Series of learning activities	4.16	4.35	4.35	4.38	3.95	4.55
Portfolio	3.44	3.64	3.07	3.13	3.53	3.91
Expanding departmental offerings	3.84	4.00	3.32	3.50	4.01	4.45
Bridge program	4.07	4.05	3.85	4.00	4.15	4.55
Affinity group mentoring program	4.10	3.70	4.07	4.13	4.19	4.82

In terms of qualitative responses, the following themes emerged among faculty, staff, and students.

- Belief that making meaningful connections with new students is critical and needs to happen sooner rather than later with some frequency and consistency (across coaching groups, advisors).
- Concern that asking first-time, first-year students to engage in developing post-graduate goals might be too overwhelming and put unnecessary pressure on these students (especially first-generation students and those not yet decided on a major).
- In reference to setting post-graduate goals and creating a plan, faculty, staff, and students emphasized that "if it isn't mandatory" students will likely not "do it." How might we provide incentives for students to participate in developing a post-graduate success plan?
- Faculty and staff wonder how any new initiatives would be related to the current coaching program. There is concern of overwhelming students with too many different mentors/advisors. Also, there is concern that the different mentors/coaches/advisors would not proactively communicate with each other.
- Faculty and staff concerned about additional workload of a first-year advising program.
- Faculty, staff, and students want more professional development for advisors and mentors – particularly related to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and post-graduate success related topics.
- CTZN 110 is full with content right now; adding plan development into all sections of this course would be overwhelming. CTZN 110 post-graduate success focused sections might work.

From the survey and campus conversation feedback, the WDC used a backward design framework to align SLOs with specific actions as well as possible assessments and implementation resources. For example, qualitative feedback on workload, professional development, and contact consistency informed the core features of the first-year student advising plan. After refining the list of strategies and actions, the WDC convened another round of small group and individual meetings with key collaborators in December 2022 and January 2023. Meetings were designed to ascertain how these collaborators could contribute to and/or participate in the QEP implementation. More specifically, committee representatives met with: Student Success including Orientation, New Lancer Days, and Coaching Program; members of the Civitae Core Curriculum Committee (e.g. Director, CTZN 110/Inquiry into Citizenship Course Coordinator, CTZN 410/Symposium Course Coordinator); the CLASP Director; Office of Alumni and Career Services; Office of Student Engagement including the Dean, and the Director and Assistant Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs; the Associate Vice President for Student Development who coordinates student employment; and the Registrar, who oversees the Exploratory Studies program. In each meeting, a WDC committee member presented the SLOs, the implementation strategies, actions to implement, and the resources needed and asked for the collaborator to envision their involvement. In addition to demonstrating compliance with 7.2.b, this intensive collaborative work results from the influence of the guiding principle of accomplishing the QEP goal through building sustainable faculty and staff partnerships at the QEP development and initiation stages.

With this work accomplished, the leadership of the QEP was transitioned in May 2023 from the WDC to a three-member leadership team. Dr. Sarai Blincoe, a member of the WDC representing Academic Affairs, was appointed QEP Lead. Mr. Waleed Ahmed, representing Strategic Operations and also a member of the WDC, was appointed co-lead alongside Mr. Quincy Goodine, representing Student Affairs. This leadership model is designed to continue broad-based support for the QEP at the implementation and assessment stages.

The next section of the narrative summarizes the QEP activities as positioned within two best practice frameworks well-suited to the rapidly changing post-graduate landscape.

Implementing the Post-Graduate Success Initiative

Career training and job prospects remain prominent reasons for pursuing a college degree,[1] but the post-pandemic labor market is in flux. Technological change is rapid, automation and digital communication dominate, and there is a shift to home and remote working. In a labor market characterized by instability, innovation, and globalization, workers can expect multiple career transitions, "and second and third jobs that current college students will have after graduation may not (yet) exist."[2] Graduate school may look like a more predictable path, but the number of post-graduate pathways can be overwhelming; there are over 1,000 post-baccalaureate degree institutional options in the U.S. alone.[3] Add in concerns about growing unemployment and increasing inequality, and many "COVID kids" are understandably unsure about careers and may even be too overwhelmed to effectively initiate a job search.[4]

Institutions of higher education may reasonably be expected to prepare their students for this landscape. According to a 2013 Lumina Study, when considering the quality of a college or university, 68% of Americans consider the percentage of graduates who are able to get a good job to be very important. But only 43% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "college graduates in this country are well-prepared for success in the workforce." Lower income Americans were more likely to strongly agree (24%) that college graduates are well-prepared for workforce success than higher income families.[5] A more recent survey suggests that members of Gen Z (people aged 16-25) regard the education system as the most important institution to prepare them for the future. They ranked career development in the top three school subjects of importance, but 59% said that the education system could improve by more focus on real-life work.[6] For Black students and families, education is often viewed as a path not only to individual success, but to upward mobility and improved quality of life for the family.[7]

From the perspective of "career" as "a holistic constellation of one's paid and unpaid roles, as well as life tasks, over the course of one's lifetime,"[8] career education becomes everyone's business, a collective and communal effort to prepare students for a new world of work. Career guidance and interventions provided by higher education personnel need to target strategies for flexibility, proactivity, and the "capacity to plan a career path rather than to identify a specific role."[9] Practitioners also need to evolve their practices to address equity issues, as career development is uniquely positioned to help "historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities gain the access and social mobility that sets them up for the future."[10] Informed career decision-making starting in the first year of college positively affects academic major stability, academic performance, and on-time degree completion. Students best able to navigate the competitive and challenging post-graduation job market have committed to "clear career-related life goals" during their early undergraduate years;[11] students without a clear plan "may remain in school longer than necessary, fail to take advantage of curricular and co-curricular activities that would prepare them for work, or may drop out of school altogether."[12] As students and their families expect an investment in higher education to result in superior job prospects,

colleges and universities need to consider the visibility, prioritization, and integration of professional development and post-graduation planning on their campuses.[13] The Post-Graduate Success Initiative will guide Longwood's efforts to do just that over the next five years.

Guiding Best Practices for QEP Activities

One of the key principles of Longwood's Strategic Plan is to transform lives by "connecting students with people and experiences that broaden their minds, challenge them, and equip them with strong career skills." Longwood's Post-Graduate Success QEP fuses that principle with an emerging vision for university-level career education that integrates the work of faculty and staff to equip students for "a critical engagement with the world of work and the future."[14] In the context of campus-wide efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, this QEP also acknowledges that there are flawed, Westernized assumptions behind much post-graduation advice given on university campuses, such as the belief that individuals have complete control over their career direction and can select, from amongst multiple options, a direction about which they are *passionate*, ensuring a clear forward and upward post-graduate trajectory. Ultimately, "the concept of choosing and pursuing a career is actually a privilege"[15]; higher education personnel better support students when career development conversations holistically acknowledge interests, identities, values, skills, community ties, and the shifting future of work. The three student learning outcomes of the Post-Graduate Success Initiative are consistent with recommendations that learners (1) explore themselves and the world where they live, learn, and work and (2) develop strategies that allow individuals to make the most of their current situation. With these dynamics as background, two recommendations for best practice in career education guided the collaborative determination of specific QEP activities: *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere*.[16]

Consider Life Design

To *consider life design* is to "encourage students to be active agents in their career process while embracing a designer's mindset. Doing so will open students up to being informed decision makers."[17] The Life Design approach to career development has been championed by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans of the Stanford University design school. First with a Designing Your Life course taught at Stanford, then with a book, *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life,* and now with a Life Design Studio for University Educators program, the curriculum has expanded into a global movement. The activities of Longwood's Post-Graduate Success Initiative are informed by training for all three members of the QEP leadership team through the Life Design Studio.

In a life design approach, the student is an active agent who embraces ambiguity and failure, and works iteratively, experimentally, and optimistically to imagine a career and a life that doesn't exist and to create a life that is meaningful.[18] Life design thinking is consistent with newer approaches to career interventions, particularly career construction theory. Whereas older career interventions emphasize personal ability as the means to self-fulfillment, and focus on finding an

ideal match or "fit" between the student or worker via standardized inventories, career construction theory is oriented to "uncover clients' unique approaches to meaning making, purpose, and life direction."[19] Resilience is a key element; learning not to be discouraged by past failings, the capacity to spring back from the major hurdles as well as the everyday stressors benefits persistence in the short and long term. [20]

In a recent survey, nearly two-thirds of participating students expressed feeling overwhelmed when selecting a major and "51% of students were not confident in their career path when they enrolled in college."[21] Students who come to college highly anxious and undecided about a major and career path, as well as those who arrive confident but uninformed, may be set up for long-term failure if they do not have time for exploration and self-reflection. The challenges of indecision "highlight the need for intentional structures and support at the institutional level for the integration of career exploration and development."[22] The life designing approach is appropriate for addressing the problem of indecision as it prioritizes time at the *know yourself* (e.g., identifying values, interests, traits, strengths, ambitions) and *explore options* (e.g., actively investigating majors and careers through research, networking, and experience) stages of career development.[23]

Importantly, life design
> "is intrinsically a communal effort. When you are wayfinding a step or two at a time to build (not solve) your way forward, the process has to rely on the contribution and participation of others. The idea and opportunities you design are not just presented to you or fetched for you by others on your behalf—they are *co-created with you* in collaboration with the whole community of players you engage with in life."[24]

The collaborative emphasis in life design can better position representatives of a predominantly white institution like Longwood University to support members of marginalized groups. African American men at Primarily White Institutions (PWIs) report that they lack support "that was specific to their identities and experiences" and they "do not expect the career center staff to know about the unique experiences of African American students."[25] When academic advisors, career counselors, and other institutional network members shift from the role of expert "to one of an interested, curious, and tentative inquirer and observer,"[26] they suggest they are open to learning the frame of reference of minoritized students, and thereby creating an inclusive, supportive environment for career development.[27] Additionally, Black students routinely describe drawing from the cultural assets of their families and communities to navigate the college experience.

The emphasis for Black students on collectivism and familial interdependence into adulthood suggests that campus leaders should anticipate and honor more diverse and more frequent family engagement for Black students.[28] Efforts to incorporate families into the students' life designing

process honors the cultural wealth possessed and utilized by Communities of Color[29] and may also reduce tension for first-generation students of color when they experience disagreement about, or discouragement from, career decisions with important others.[30] Similarly, first-generation working class students often find themselves "code-switching" and battling imposter syndrome as they attempt to affiliate both with their home community and the often privileged white middle-class culture of their college campus. These students may opt to hide or surrender their sociocultural values in an attempt to resolve "the discord of their identity and operating in the higher education environment."[31] Purposeful valuing of the competencies and experiences of first-generation working class students can help them experience genuine belonging in the present and develop self-advocacy skills essential to navigating future workplace environments.

The *consider life design* framework guided the selection of the activities aligned particularly with QEP student learning outcomes 1 and 2a. In their first year at Longwood, whether that be as transfer students or first-time freshmen, students will encounter life design ideas and activities through orientation, the first-year student success coaching program, select general education and major-specific courses, and first-year advising. Faculty, staff, and even peer mentors will be prepared to guide students in the life design process, and utilize the design process themselves, through professional development opportunities that incorporate multicultural competence. The community-wide, collaborative emphasis on life design best practices links smoothly with the second guiding best practice for QEP implementation.

SLO 1: Set post-graduate goals consistent with a holistic sense of self and community.

SLO 2: (a) Create and (b) Revise a plan integrating curricular and co-curricular experiences that support post-graduate goals.

SLO 3: Articulate the connection between curricular and co-curricular experiences and their post-graduate plans.

Practice Career Everywhere

To *practice career everywhere* is to recognize that formally trained career educators do not have to be engaging in or overseeing all career conversations; everyone should be prepared to embrace a career-readiness conversation. The QEP's *practice career everywhere* emphasis, particularly for QEP learning outcomes 2b and 3, makes this truly a campus-wide effort.

The economic recession of 2008 created a paradigm shift in college services that has been defined by "connected communities." In this shift, students and parents are looking for career

services and planning that are customized and offer specialized career development support to students. This means that career planning is no longer centrally located in career services, but should be accomplished through a network of stakeholders including students, campus partners, and alumni.[32] Research supports the particular value of a *practice career everywhere* campus for minoritized students. In a recent narrative study of the career development of first-generation students of color, none of the participants mentioned using their university's career center. This finding is consistent with other studies of career center service usage.[33] Some students of color feel that only mentors who share their racial or ethnic identity can effectively meet their needs, and in some studies, students of color paired with mentors of the same ethnicity tend to make greater progress in their collegiate careers.[34] A *practice career everywhere* framework speaks to issues of belongingness and support for students of color at PWIs by increasing the people available for career conversation and refining the conversational form. Conversations about post-graduate goals and pathways are no longer restricted to persons and spaces that may lack representation of one or more of a student's core identities. Instead, students can have developmental conversations where, and with whom, they feel most comfortable, such as with a campus employment supervisor or with an alumna at a graduate program immersion day.

Contiguous with the best practice of *consider life design*, a *practice career everywhere* approach encourages students to treat their vocational experience as a *story*. Such "narrative approaches" to career education and development "tend to be more holistic and inclusive in nature, taking into consideration roles beyond paid work only."[35] The narrative approach gives students encouragement to generate meaning for changes in the curricular and co-curricular experiences along their vocational pathway, such as switching majors, acceptance into a valued student organization leadership position, or rejection from a coveted internship. Recognizing the narrative structure of their undergraduate experiences can prepare students for the work-world of the future and "the reality that life-career planning is an ongoing, cyclical process, rather than a single-time event."[36]

The *practice career everywhere* framework guided the selection of the activities aligned particularly with QEP student learning outcomes 2b and 3. After the first year at Longwood, students will have opportunities to participate in a set of programs that emphasize refinement and articulation of the (co)curricular pathway. Some of the programs to be implemented, such as the micro-internships and the Longwood graduate program Immersion Day will be small-scale and targeted to particular student populations. Others will aim to connect all students with the QEP, such as professional development for on-campus student employees and workshops integrated with the existing campus-wide Symposium Day and the student Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase. Building naturally on life design principles, this suite of activities offers an array of contact points for students to prototype their readiness for post-graduate pathways.

The primary mechanism to give Longwood faculty, staff, and administrators the professional development necessary to understand the QEP frameworks and activities and to prepare for their participation in the QEP will be the annual Teaching and Learning Institute. The 11th annual Teaching and Learning Institute, to be held May 2024, will have *consider life design* as its theme, and the 2025 theme will be *practice career everywhere*. The 2024 Institute will build from materials and resources available through Stanford's Life Design Lab. First, in a half-day virtual program, participants will experience life design curriculum first hand as a student. Day two of the Institute will be face-to-face for participants to consider how life design language, principles, and practices can be infused into Longwood's programs and support for new students. All faculty, staff, and administrators will be invited to attend and the event will be structured for the different roles that personnel have with students, including academic advising, mentoring, employee supervision, teaching in the discipline, etc. The Institute will also serve as the launching ground for the course (re)design grant activity and corresponding Canvas-based Post-Graduate Success Toolkit (explained further below).

In the opening letter of Longwood University's 2021-2026 Diversity Strategic Plan, President Taylor Reveley writes of the particular responsibility of Longwood, as a public institution with "the deeply consequential civil rights history of our home community of Prince Edward and Farmville,"…"to reflect the growing diversity of the Commonwealth and nation." In the context of Longwood's citizen leadership mission and key principles of camaraderie and transforming lives, *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* were selected as best practice frameworks to facilitate student achievement of the QEP learning outcomes and serve particularly the retention of students of color, first-generation students, and Pell-eligible students. The *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* frameworks organize QEP activities into two broad phases, the first associated with a student's first year at Longwood and QEP SLO 1 and 2a, the second associated with all subsequent semesters and QEP SLO 2b and 3.

In the sections that follow, the planned and (as applicable) piloted implementation of each of the other QEP activities are described in relation to best practices literature and institutional context.

Consider Life Design: Setting Goals and Creating Plans

Students making the transition to a university campus experience a form of culture shock.[37] The honeymoon stage, typical of summer and pre-semester orientation days, is characterized by excitement and curiosity, meeting new people and exercising independence. The activities traditional to college campus orientation keep the energy high, but soon enough the realities of new freedoms and new expectations, academic rigor, and shared living spaces set in. Students may experience isolation, confusion, and homesickness, with males and first-generation students more likely to be lonely than females or non-first-generation students.[38] Many first-generation

students will also struggle to navigate complex bureaucracies and unwritten rules, and experience conflicts between their families and home communities, and the peers, faculty, and staff that form the campus community. The path to post-graduate success begins with persistence through the first semester. Managing the culture shock successfully depends on the development of routines and the formation of friendships beyond the loose affiliations characteristic of the honeymoon stage. Gaining confidence in academic and social abilities can also move the student through this stage. By infusing existing transition-to-Longwood programs with life design ideas and activities oriented to goal-setting and planning, the Post-Graduate Success QEP aims to equip students to navigate first-year challenges as measured by improvement in the University's first-year retention, particularly of African American, Pell-eligible, and first-generation students.

Introducing Life Design Language

The first-year transition to Longwood moves in stages, from a short-course in Canvas (the learning management system, or LMS), to a half-day summer orientation program, another Canvas short-course, and then New Lancer Days programming in the days immediately before the start of classes (see Timeline 1).

TIMELINE 1

FIRST YEAR TRANSITION

The first-year transition to Longwood moves in stages, from a short-course in Canvas (the learning management system), to a half-day summer orientation program and another Canvas short-course, to New Lancer Days programming in the days immediately before the start of classes.

Start Here Canvas Course

↓

Summer Orientation

↓

5 Things Every Lancer Needs to Know Canvas Course

↓

New Lancer Days

In the "5 Things Every Lancer Needs to Know" Canvas short-course, video-based modules feature diverse alumni, current students and faculty/staff. The videos include messages about the college transition, resilience, advocacy, and purpose. One video covers transition tips from a first-generation student. Starting in summer 2024, the course will include a QEP-themed module as an entry point for life design language and a general introduction to the QEP. With a freshmen

completion rate of over 55% for the last two years, the "5 Things" short course is a natural, convenient, and inclusive way to generate initial familiarity with the QEP and life design.

New-to-Longwood students also attend summer orientation, a July half-day program. Students attend a one-hour academic session, typically facilitated by a department chair and utilized for completing course schedules and answering questions. Campus representatives from offices of student engagement, financial aid, student employment, accessibility resources, counseling and psychological services, etc., are available to connect with students and their families. All of these activities are contact points to begin life design messaging in support of post-graduate success.

For example, during the 2023 orientation, the Department Chair of Psychology engaged students in a 25-minute "What is Success?" module adapted from the Stanford Life Design Lab studio resource portal, the modules of which are in the box on the right.[39] Students doodled an image representing their successful self in five years, used post-it-notes to list all the ways they have heard people define success, categorized those success definitions in areas like relationships, experiences, and external reward, and then discussed the sources of those success narratives and how they aligned (or didn't) with the success image they doodled. This series of activities was a jumping off point for the remainder of the academic session, in which the Chair worked with students on deciphering and refining fall course schedules. To encourage faculty, staff, and administrators to build student interactions from a life design perspective, such as the example above, multiple professional development programs will be supported by the QEP.

- Students are aware of their own success narrative and the sources of those narratives.

- Students consider many possible definitions of success and recognize that success could have multiple facets.

- Students consider which aspects of their own success narratives serve them and fail them.

Beginning Our New Direction: Undergraduate Transition Program

The "5 Things" Canvas short-course and the summer orientation give initial QEP exposure to a majority of Longwood students. An existing initiative of the Student Affairs Division is a first step in more targeted QEP engagement that directly supports efforts to increase retention rates for African American and Pell-eligible students. The Beginning Our New Direction (B.O.N.D.) program will provide targeted activities to improve the transition to college experience and help achieve the first QEP student learning outcome for approximately 50 students each year from traditionally and historically underrepresented and underserved communities. These students are

more likely to experience "summer melt": they are qualified high school graduates who have been accepted to at least one institution of higher education, but do not make the transition. Students at risk for summer melt can benefit from early and regular contact and explicit supports, such as hearing from peer or staff ambassadors, or attending specially designed summer programs. For example, the University of Portland's *Summer Launch Initiative* for first-generation students built participant sense of belonging and support through an emphasis on connections with first-year peers and returning students, all while providing valuable information about campus offices and higher education processes.[40]

Longwood's B.O.N.D. program is well-suited for QEP inclusion because the program's goals will develop a student's holistic sense of self at an early stage of goal-setting and (co)curricular planning. The four program goals are: (1) create community and provide community building opportunities that affirm students' salient identities, (2) support families through the transition process through information sharing and resource introduction, (3) connect students to resources to support their academic success and persistence, and (4) introduce students to practical and personal resources and skill building opportunities that promote co-curricular connection and involvement. Goals one and three of the B.O.N.D. program are particularly germane to the QEP.

A four-day pilot program in August 2023 had 29 participating students (23 Black/African American, 5 Hispanic/Latinx, 1 Asian; 18 female, 7 male, 4 non-binary). Of these participants, 86% were Virginia residents with 25% from Southside Virginia and 22% identified as first-generation. On B.O.N.D. Day 1, students and their family members met program staff members and one another. Each student was matched with a peer mentor from the R.I.S.E. (Resilience. Inclusion. Support. Empowerment.) program. At PWIs, even high achieving-students of color "encounter pejorative racialized environments…; thus, they need the social supportive networks that assist them in functioning in these environments so that they do not feel like outsiders and so that their academics are not adversely affected."[41] Mentoring to support academic and social adjustments is particularly needed for African American and Hispanic men at PWIs. African American male students may feel particularly vulnerable to discrimination, less socially connected and "hyper-visible" as there may be few males like themselves for social support.[42] R.I.S.E. mentors are students of color trained to create an environment and network of support and resources to increase sense of belonging and engagement with Longwood for the incoming students. The R.I.S.E. mentors support their assigned mentees throughout the first year by attending University-sponsored events with their mentee(s) and holding regular individual meetings. Staff in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, including QEP Co-lead Quincy Goodine, also hold check-ins with B.O.N.D. participants and the R.I.S.E mentors.

Specific contact for B.O.N.D. participants with the QEP will come in two forms: (1) a session for B.O.N.D. family members, and (2) life design-themed sessions for the B.O.N.D. students. Although families can attend a session on common experiences for the threshold transition

during Longwood's summer orientation, usually held in July, not all students have a family member in attendance at orientation. In particular, the family members of students of color, first-generation, or Pell-eligible students may lack the employment flexibility to attend a half-day of programming. For this reason, the B.O.N.D. program incorporates move-in in August, a special event that routinely involves multiple family members, as an additional contact point for family. This approach values family support networks and helps the families to create communication plans and expectations with their students. A special session for family members on Day 1 of the program, shortly after move-in, was piloted by the QEP Lead in August 2023. The session began with a breathing and visualization exercise that acknowledged the strong emotions of the day and prefaced the discussion of "why college" (e.g., life of the mind, career readiness, becoming me, supporting self/community) and definitions of success that followed. Informal family feedback after the session was positive and the QEP will support the continuation of this dedicated family session on B.O.N.D. Day 1.

The theme for Day 3 of B.O.N.D. is goal setting, academic resources, and success mapping. The key program outcome for Day 3 is that by the end of the day's programming, students will be able to articulate three to five goals for their first semester along with a plan of action that incorporates appropriate resources. During the August 2023 program pilot, the QEP lead conducted a one-hour workshop framed by life design. Activities themed to "why college" and definitions of success created the opportunity for participants to collaboratively explore sense of self and community (SLO 1) from an asset-based perspective. On a post-workshop assessment, 77% of participants indicated the session was very useful and 59% indicated that the session had a significant impact on them in their transition to college. Of the academic resource activities offered during the B.O.N.D. program, the life design-themed session was identified as most useful. The only programming that students rated higher in impact were the community building and student panel/debriefs with mentors. Qualitatively, students reported that the session got them thinking in a new way. One student wrote, "before this session, I had not really thought about college and life planning. Things had pretty much always been decided for me" and another commented, "I liked the discussion...It made me think about the why I decided to go to college and why I chose Longwood." The pilot results are indicative of the value of continuing the infusion of life design ideas and activities in B.O.N.D. programming through the five years of the QEP. A lunch & learn format is envisioned for the next iteration of the program in August 2024.

Student Success Coaching Groups

Students participating in the B.O.N.D. program move together into the **New Lancer Days** (NLD) programming, which begins for all new students on the evening of move-in day in August (typically a Thursday) and carries through to the Monday start of the fall semester classes. There are sessions to cover campus safety, hazing prevention, and other mandated topics, as well as social events and a time to meet with faculty and peers from the chosen academic program. A core component of NLD is the Coaching Group. In the context of the QEP, the Student Success

Coaching Group activity will help new students develop a holistic sense of self and community (SLO 1). Peer mentors and coaches will receive professional development to utilize life design concepts and facilitate related activities in one-on-one and small group conversations.

Student Success Coaching, a program of Longwood's Strategic Operations division since 2018, has been instrumental in helping incoming students make meaningful connections on campus, develop essential skills for success, and work through challenges in a supportive environment. Coaches are Longwood faculty and staff members who apply to organize a group of 10-15 students around a theme, which have included academic major, interests and activities (e.g., Dungeons and Dragons, Fantasy Football), and identities (e.g., first-generation). The essential qualification for coaches is the willingness to connect and be available to students. Coaches receive a $900 stipend upon completion of the semester and all requirements of being a coach, which include (1) meeting with the group during New Lancer Days, (2) meeting 1:1 with students before week 4 of the fall semester, and (3) facilitating at least two additional small group activities. Each coaching group incorporates a Peer Mentor. The Peer Mentors are charged with introducing new students to the university's community, creating a comfortable and safe environment in which entering students can individually and collectively "find their feet," and providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to start their college career. Each Peer Mentor accompanies the Coaching Group to NLD events and facilitates discussions on key social and academic topics, such as the Longwood Honor Code and how to read a syllabus. Peer Mentors and the Coaches collaboratively plan the activities for their groups, such as registration pizza parties, attendance at campus sporting events, and game nights.

The results of a survey of students ($n = 253$, 35% response rate) who participated in the coaching program in Fall 2023 suggest that students particularly value the coach and peer mentor as a just-in-time resource when they have individualized questions. Following the mandatory New Lancer Days coaching group meeting, 48.6% of survey respondents reported meeting with their group approximately once a month and 13.8% reported meeting once every one to two weeks. The highest rated coaching group activity was the individual meeting with the coaches; 88.7% of students rating the meeting as very helpful or extremely helpful.

Professional Development for Coaches and Peer Mentors

Dedicated training for peer mentors has been in place for over a decade because the peer mentor program was originally developed in the context of a first-year general education course. With the phase-in of a new general education model starting in 2018, peer mentors were retained, but only in connection to New Lancer Days and Coaching. Training for peer mentors includes sessions with personnel from key campus offices and divisions such as Housing, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Honor & Conduct, as well as time for logistics planning. New in QEP Year 0, the QEP Lead, Dr. Blincoe, facilitated a life design-themed session for the peer mentors. In the session the peer mentors were introduced to Life Design mindsets,[43] completed a wellness

dashboard, charted points of energy and engagement in their typical week, and prototyped exploration of an interest "beyond the major." The exercises were designed to equip peer mentors with concepts and activities that they could use when connecting with new students to help their mentees reflect on aspects of self and community. Feedback on the training was collected via survey from 19 peer mentors at the end of the fall semester. Although the lag in time since the actual training meant that students typically reported not remembering much of the session content, they still consistently identified the wellness dashboard and the energy/engagement charting as useful in an ongoing way for themselves and for discussions with mentees. With some redesigning of the session length and timing, the QEP will continue to support training for peer mentors, as well as training for coaches.

Training for coaches has been expanded in the years subsequent to the program's introduction in 2018. Coaching training is now designed to avoid the perception of the coaching function as limited to direction providers, pointing to the accessibility office or multicultural center. Consistent with National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) best practices, coaches are oriented to helping "students move from the periphery to the center of campus."[44] The half-day training includes an introduction to the coaching roles and responsibilities, a panel on how to help students academically, and a presentation on student transition challenges. In August 2023, the QEP Lead delivered a life design-themed session for coaches. With parallels to the training for Peer Mentors, the session introduced the designer mindsets and a set of life design activities, but with an emphasis on integrating the activities into the set of meetings required for the coaching group (e.g., New Lancer Days session, 1:1 coach-student meeting, group activity). In QEP Years 1 through 5 the QEP Lead and QEP Co-lead, Mr. Waleed Ahmed, will collaborate with the student success staff to offer further enhancement of coaching training.

Additionally, the format of the required New Lancer Days coaching group meeting will be adjusted to incorporate a life design-themed activity for all groups. This approach was piloted in QEP Year 0 with seven coaching groups, including the B.O.N.D. coaching groups, the groups for Exploratory Studies, and a group designated for first-generation students. During the 50-minute coaching group meeting on the Friday of New Lancer Days, the coaches facilitated a Who Am I activity. Students wrote 10 "I am..." statements and then participated in a discussion of patterns in the list, such as an emphasis on personality, identity, and/or life roles, what was listed quickly in the first three statements versus taking longer to generate, and how the statements might look different in 1 year. Students also responded to a survey about the clarity they perceived in their sense of self, strengths, and communities of origins, why they are attending college, and their goals for the first semester at Longwood. In general, students (N = 121) reported means of 2.71 to 3.16 on a 0 to 4 scale, indicating quite a bit of clarity in these areas. Notably, the lowest scores were for sense of strengths (M = 2.71, SD = .95) and clear first semester goals (M = 2.84). Importantly, the exploratory studies group had a significantly lower score for the question about why they are attending college, particularly when compared to the B.O.N.D. group who, as

described above, had participated in a group activity about reasons for attending college in their pre-orientation programming. The pilot data suggests room for growth in line with QEP SLO 1 and the feasibility of life design programming at Longwood to strengthen student clarity concerning their identities, purpose, and goals.

As described above, the Student Success Coaching Groups continue through the fall semester with social programming and 1:1 meetings, but the program is voluntary. Although students are assigned an academic advisor upon matriculation, many do not pursue contact until October and the approach of spring course registration. Thus students who choose not to participate in their Coaching Group activities may have limited contact with the faculty and staff who can offer resources and referrals during the challenging weeks of transition to undergraduate life. The QEP aims to generate continuity of supports for new students within a life design framework by increasing the frequency and substance of contact with the assigned academic advisor.

Holistic Advising for New-to-Longwood Students

Academic advising has been repeatedly identified as a factor important to retention, particularly for students of color. In a recent study of over 1000 initiatives at 55 institutions of higher education, advisor meeting was the number one overall initiative in terms of increase in percentage points of persistence (7.07pp) for first-year students, compared to 5.20pp for tutoring and 5.03pp for scholarships. When data was collapsed across year in college and broken down by race and ethnicity, the advisor meeting initiative remained the most beneficial for persistence across all groups.[45] In another study, seeing an advisor "sometimes" or "often" during the first year of college was one of three factors positively linked to first-to-second year college retention.[46]

Articulating a vision for the future of advising, Lowenstein (2013) elaborates an analogy of advisors as teachers, suggesting that teachers may make the best advisors, as the "advisors need a breadth of intellectual background and a set of pedagogical skills identical to those that the best classroom teachers possess."[47] Former NACADA president Eric. R. White argues that prioritization of an advising relationship with well-informed academic advisors who have reasonable caseloads and are embedded in an academic unit can give students "the opportunity to blend together all aspects of the curriculum into a meaningful experience" that will reinforce the institutional mission.[48] This vision for advising is consistent with Longwood's placement of advising responsibility in the teaching function of faculty. The list of faculty academic responsibilities in the Longwood Faculty Policy and Procedures Manual (FPPM) includes "academic advising and academic consulting with students." The expectations for advisors further described in the FPPM (see the call-out on the next page) align closely with the student learning outcomes of the QEP, including student goal-setting, planning, and development of a holistic sense of self.

Available data suggests that Longwood students, on average, experience beneficial academic advising with faculty. On the 2023 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), when asked to indicate the quality of interactions with academic advisors (1 = poor; 7 = excellent), the mean score was 5.6 for first-year students with 80% of students reporting a 5 (21%), 6 (22%), or 7 (37%). Importantly, the majority of first-year students completing the survey reported that Longwood very much or quite a bit emphasized "providing support to help students succeed academically" (70%) and "providing support for overall well-being" (68%). These are areas that first-year advising can reinforce.

As discussed above, during the QEP writing and development phase in fall 2022, over 100 undergraduate students responded to a survey about possible QEP activities. Asked to rate the extent to which they supported a series of different possible programs, scored from definitely not (1) to definitely yes (5), a first-year advising program was scored second highest at 4.38 and four-year plan creation (an activity naturally connected to advising) as third at 4.26 (see Table 4). In the free response section of the survey and in focus groups, multiple constituents said that faculty should retain this key role. One respondent said, "I believe that the relationship between the faculty advisor and the student is important, one of the most important and

ADVISORS ARE TRAINED AND PREPARED TO:

a. assist students in understanding their abilities, interests, and limitations;
b. help students clarify their values, develop an educational program consistent with these values, and relate their educational plans to their career plans;
c. refer students to academic and student affairs support services;
d. provide information about university and departmental policies, procedures, and resources;
e. review opportunities for academic involvement, such as internships and research with faculty; and
f. assist students in evaluating their progress toward their educational goals.

productive ones that the student gets." Others agreed that strong faculty advising keeps students in the majors and that advisors like to see students develop their identities and relationships.

Although the faculty academic advisor model appears generally successful, fine-grain feedback is unavailable. Students occasionally report advising concerns to a department chair or make a request for a new advisor, but more typically, they respond to poor advising or an advising mismatch by withdrawing from communication. This understandable student response may have the unfortunate consequence of delaying student progress through the program. One emphasis of the QEP advising activity is the creation of a feedback mechanism that can (a) enhance faculty

accountability, (b) facilitate delivery of just-in-time professional development, and (c) promote recognition of effective advising in both annual evaluations and the promotion and tenure process.

To create a culture of advising and to introduce advisors to technology, strategies, and up-to-date information on student populations and campus opportunities, professional development is another emphasis of the QEP advising activity. During the QEP development process, feedback from faculty repeatedly targeted training and compensation for advisors, both tied to motivation. One respondent noted that "so much of the success depends on quality of training" and another said "I advise 1st year students as part of my role as a faculty member. We aren't trained how to best support this group." It is clear that to avoid burnout and a mentality of obligation, advisors need to be willing to take on this role in the first place and then be well-trained and supported to do it. Professional development needs to include information on advising frameworks, the opportunity to develop an advising philosophy, training with advising technology, and detailed information about the students and the campus resources with a diversity, equity, and inclusion emphasis. One of NACADA's core advisor competencies is the knowledge of "the characteristics, needs, and experiences of major and emerging student populations,"[49] which means knowledge of the under-represented and marginalized communities that Longwood's students represent. To serve students holistically, advisors need to ensure that students will not feel pressured to set aside their diverse identities as they work with advisors. Advisors also need to prepare to refer effectively to the range of campus resources and groups that support student success.[50]

Program Implementation

Faculty members serve as academic advisors for undergraduate students with few exceptions. Most notably, Registrar's Office staff members advise Exploratory Studies (undeclared) students and pre-Business Administration majors, and the College of Business and Economics employs an educational support specialist for upperclassmen advising. Keeping advising within academic departments helps to maintain lower advising case load. National recommendations are less than 100:1, but in a 2017 survey only 54.6% of schools reported ratios lower than that.[51] At Longwood, among faculty with assigned advisees, the median departmental advisee load ranges from 2 to 25, with only four departments having a median over 40.

Also consistent with best practices, first-year advising is mandatory. Only about 45% of institutions require students to meet with an advisor at least once per semester in the first year,[52] but at Longwood students must meet with their assigned academic advisor prior to registration to receive a PIN number, which grants access to the registration system, until they have earned 46 credits. The requirement for advising thus extends for two years for most students, establishing a relational pattern of advising support that keep students returning as juniors and seniors.

A data-based strategy was used to designate academic programs for potential inclusion in the QEP advising activity, starting with year one to year two retention data from 2017-2018 through 2021-2022. The data included first-time-at-Longwood freshmen and transfer students. The data was generated for each academic program and broken down by Pell-eligibility, first-generation status (student self-identified), race/ethnicity (e.g., White, Black/African American, Hispanic, Other Race), and rural residency (as defined by SCHEV, students from VA localities in the lowest quintile of associate and baccalaureate attainment rates). The University-level retention metrics for first-time, full-time freshmen (see Standard 8.1 in the Compliance Certification) were used to guide the determination of a threshold for examining retention by academic program. The program-level data included transfer students because the QEP is designed to support any Longwood undergraduate, regardless of transfer status. Further, the inclusion of transfer students is important for the overall enrollment in several programs to reach the threshold of consideration for the advising activity.

Programs are considered eligible for inclusion in the QEP advising activity if for at least one of four groups of students (e.g., Pell-eligible, first-generation, Black/Hispanic/other race, rural resident), the program's five-year average of retention at the University was less than 65% *and* the total number of first-time students in the program across the five years was at least 30. With this methodology eight unique academic programs were identified as eligible to participate in Year 1 of the advising activity: Business Administration, Biology, Communication Studies, Computer Science, English, Exploratory Studies (undeclared), History, Music. By the end of QEP Year 2, the retention dataset will be updated to the most recent five years of retention data and recalculated to determine the eligibility of additional programs for Year 3 inclusion.

Because both the Business Administration program and Exploratory Studies were identified as having students at retention risk in at least two demographic categories, partnering with the Registrar's Office is a priority in Year 1. The QEP Lead will coordinate with the Provost's Office and Academic Deans to extend further invitations to the identified academic programs. The QEP roll-out covers inclusion of three programs in Year 1, three additional programs in Year 2, and four additional programs in Year 3, for a total of 10 programs.

In addition to academic program advising, the QEP will also provide advising training for a graduate assistant for the student organization Collaborating with Lancers for Academic Success (CLASP). This group exists to provide guidance, leadership, socio-emotional, and academic support to students from diverse backgrounds, with a focus on first-generation students, BIPOC racial/ethnic minority students, and limited income students. A graduate assistant is already in place. With the new advising model, the graduate assistant will be trained alongside the first-year advisors and tasked with providing similar contacts and supports for CLASP students who are not already enrolled in a program with a designated first-year advisor.

With a commitment of $3,000 per academic program per year, the advisor compensation structure is flexible to adapt to particular program curricular structures, faculty sizes, and student cultures. For example, a department could elect to have all faculty members designated as first-year advisors. All faculty would receive a small stipend to meet the added expectations for professional development, student contact, and assessment. In this model, students would stay with their designated advisor beyond the first year. An alternative model could take advantage of the one-credit introduction to college and the discipline courses offered by many academic programs. For example, the instructors of COMM 105, a mandatory one-credit professional development course taken in the first semester of program enrollment, could be designated first-year advisor to students (~20) enrolled in their course section. Because it is a 1 credit class, the added advising work could be factored into teaching load so that the course counts as 3 credits of the 12 in a standard full-time faculty member's teaching per semester. This model has the added benefit of connecting advising to classroom learning, a mechanism modeled recently by the Registrar staff members serving as Exploratory Studies advisors. They partnered with the instructors of dedicated sections of CTZN 110, Inquiry into Citizenship (one of two Civitae general education courses required for first-year students) taken by the Exploratory Studies students. The advisors attended several class sessions, supporting students for assignments like oral presentations, and collaborated with instructors to strategically promote campus opportunities and resources.

Advising Program Components and Expectations

In the proactive advising framework, it is the advisors who initiate contact with students at critical times during the semester. This intentional and deliberate contact has the goal of building a caring and beneficial relationship to increase academic motivation and persistence and address problems before they escalate. The timely interventions are customized to student needs and progress is monitored by advisors.[53] Because proactive advising aims for a developmental process of self-awareness and reflection consistent with the QEP's first learning outcome and *consider life design* framework, it will be the advising framework guiding the first-year advising activity. Students will have the opportunity, through the advising relationship, to holistically consider their interests, values, and strengths, and then use that awareness to set realistic post-graduate goals. The infused life design approach will also help to address the confusion many students experience about major selection and the uninformed decision making that can lead to accumulation of excess credits and extended time-to-degree.

This proactive model necessitates realistic advising caseloads which is easily implemented with Longwood's faculty delivered advising model. For academic programs and faculty advisors participating in the QEP first-year advising activity, the milestones and expectations are chronologically summarized in Timeline 2, and elaborated below in relation to three core and interrelated areas: ongoing professional development, early/frequent/tailored faculty-student contact, and feedback/evaluation processes.

FIRST-YEAR ADVISING MILESTONES

SPRING

Programs Selected for Participation

Teaching and Learning Institute for Professional Development

↓

SUMMER

Advisees Assigned, Group Meeting at Summer Orientation

↓

FALL

Continued Professional Development

Group Meeting During New Lancer Days

Individual Meeting in Semester Week Two or Three

Individual Mid-semester/Registration Meeting

Additional Individual Meeting

↓

SPRING

Continued Professional Development

Individual Meeting in Semester Week Two or Three

Individual Mid-semester/Registration Meeting

Additional Individual Meeting

Professional development

Although the FPPM sets clear parameters for advising responsibilities, faculty are naturally better equipped for some advising functions (e.g., evaluating progress toward educational goals, reviewing academic involvement opportunities) than others (e.g., helping students clarify values and develop a program consistent with those values, understanding abilities and interests). In developing the advising portion of the QEP, the experts in Longwood's Center for Faculty Enrichment (CAFE) were key collaborators to ensure that the parameters of the advising activity followed best practices and that sufficient resources would be available through CAFE to train

each cohort of designated first-year advisors. CAFE already provides several training opportunities for faculty advisors beyond what they might receive informally through academic department-based mentoring. For example, new faculty members receive advising information about student academic and social supports (with an emphasis on DEI), the Civitae general education program, and FERPA during new faculty orientation. CAFE also sends out just-in-time information and resources for advisors and conducts semester workshops for both new and experienced advisors covering advising philosophies, best practices, advising technologies, and case studies. But the professional development offered by CAFE is not required to become or remain an advisor and attendance (though lively) is typically low given the voluntary nature of the programming.

To receive the stipend and/or course release associated with participation in the first-year advising activity, faculty must commit to attending a professional development series throughout the initial year as a designated first-year advisor. For any academic program participating in the first-year advising activity, participation by all faculty (even if not the designated first-year advisor) will be highly recommended and encouraged. Most of these professional development sessions will also be open to *any* interested Longwood faculty or staff member.

As an example, one session will be dedicated to the development of an advising syllabus, which can be a powerful tool for advisors to reflect on and commit to a philosophy of advising. The creation of an advising syllabus for students models the use of syllabi from other areas of campus. With components like an advising mission statement, advisor expectations, advisee expectations, calendar and resources, students and their families can use the syllabus as a tool to understand what advising is all about and navigate the responsibilities of each party involved.[54] For family members in particular, the advising syllabus can include FERPA information and even spell out the role of family members in the student's success.[55] A syllabus helps the student shift from receiver of advising information to an active participant in an advising relationship.

Course registration advising is another situation in which timely professional development can enhance the student advising experience. Research suggests that guided student-made degree plans have positive links to persistence when compared to advisor-assigned degree plans.[56] Incorporating life design concepts and activities, a professional development session will be targeted to the degree planning process. This will also support faculty preparation for working with the student on a post-graduate goal setting and plan creation activity, which serves as the assessment artifact for QEP SLO 1 and SLO 2a.

Early, frequent, multi-modal faculty-student contact

Research suggests that effects are not long lasting when students meet only once or twice in a semester with an advisor, so when three Ohio colleges instituted a program requirement of meeting with an advisor twice a month in their first semester, over 60% of students met with the advisor six or more times, and graduation rates increased.[57] Longwood's advising activity will

aim for five substantive contacts before the end of the first semester and at least three additional substantive contacts in the second (see Timeline 2). Through a close partnership with the first-year student experience office, summer orientation scheduling will incorporate group meetings between the advisor(s) and students. There will also be a group meeting during New Lancer Days. Both group meetings will be semi-structured with life design activities.

In addition to the pre-semester group meetings, advisors are expected to meet individually with each advisee three times during the fall semester. One of those meetings must occur by the end of semester week three and is designed to incorporate the development of year 1 goals. This goal setting activity provides formative training in support of QEP SLO 1. The feasibility and desirability of early, regular contact has been recently tested by the advisors for Exploratory Studies students. The advisors meet with the students during orientation, and this year they served as the coaches for designated Exploratory Studies student success coaching groups, meaning they also met during New Lancer Days and individually by the end of semester week three. Notably, 86% of students were passing classes with a C- or better at midterm of fall 2023; whereas, at midterm fall 2022 that number was 80%.

The spring semester expectations for faculty-advisee 1:1 contact will be similar. One meeting must take place by the end of spring semester week three and at least two other meetings must be held by the end of the semester. It is anticipated that at least one of those meetings will be at mid-semester and focused on registration advising.

Messaging between formal meetings is just as important. Research suggests that advising outreach needs to be individualized. In interviews with students participating in the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) project (an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that invested in technology-mediated advising reform at more than two dozen colleges and universities), most did not remember receiving general informational messages about things like tutoring hours and childcare availability, and they were more likely to read emails coming from faculty than from advisors and other campus offices. The final iPASS report recommends more personalized and action-oriented communication as well as careful consideration of how the message sender influences the student opening of the message. [58]

To this end, the Canvas learning management system will be utilized for the advising activity by building academic program and/or advisor specific course shells. This allows for customization of messaging and responsiveness to student communication preferences, as students can be coached to select their preferred means of Canvas notification. Academic programs can use announcement features to share information with all students as well as the messaging feature for personalized contact. Additionally, just-in-time professional development and sample communications will be provided to help advisors disseminate messages that are congruent with proactive advising and design mindsets (e.g., communicating willingness to plan with a student

on innovative approaches to a problem, acknowledging student successes beyond course grades, and encouraging students to see challenges as valuable learning moments).[59]

Feedback & evaluation

Longwood's current reliance on a de-centralized advising model means that no standardized protocol exists for measuring students' expectations for advising or their actual experience with it. A system of advising assessment (at the program & services level) and evaluation (at the level of the individual academic advisor) is critical for: (a) informing effectiveness and areas of needed improvement to enhance the promotion and tenure and annual evaluation processes, (b) attending to equity in advising, particularly for first-generation, low-income, and racially minoritized students, (c) guiding professional development of advisors, and (d) gathering evidence for applying for funding to further develop campus-wide advising.

The QEP Lead's participation in the February 2024 NACADA Advising Institute will inform development of the advising assessment cycle, including student learning outcomes, advisor outcomes, and measures. Multiple mechanisms for assessment and evaluation, both formal and informal, are anticipated, including student check-out surveys at the end of individual advising sessions, advisee and advisor focus groups, advisor self-assessments, and advising meeting checklists and case notes. To ensure consideration of advisor behaviors, practices, and outcomes from multiple perspectives, key campus experts and stakeholders, including department chairs and deans, students, staff in CAFE, and especially the advisors in the advising activity cohorts, will be essential participants in the development of processes and measures.

As noted above, one of the mechanisms by which academic programs could delegate first-year advisors is to pair advising responsibilities with instructional responsibilities. Faculty staffing one-credit first-year professional development courses could serve as the first-year advisor for the students enrolled in their course. As academic program faculty consider how to re-invest in academic advising in their programs from a life design perspective, they could simultaneously pursue life-design informed pedagogical changes through the QEP's course (re)design grant activity.

Course Redesign Grants and the Post-Graduate Success Virtual Toolkit

Conroy et al (2022) recommends that "a "warm-handoff" from a faculty advisor or departmental chairperson to a career services professional can enhance realistic information about post-graduation options and critical skills for obtaining meaningful employment" (150). The Teaching and Learning Institutes for May 2024 and 2025, described previously, are important mechanisms for connecting faculty and staff across campus in support of this "warm-handoff" approach, as is the professional development incorporated into the first-year advising activity. Another facet, launching from the Teaching and Learning Institutes, is a virtual post-graduate success resource toolkit and associated program of course development and redesign grants.

Career courses are correlated with higher retention rates, job search efficacy, vocational identity, preparation for employment and graduate school, and even predictive of higher graduation rates, but they remain somewhat rare.[60] For example, in a nationally representative sample of psychology programs at baccalaureate institutions, only 39% of the programs offered a careers in psychology course. Partnerships between academic programs and career services can be essential for connecting students with valuable career information and resources. Although career centers of some type are common to US colleges and universities, Gallup surveys found that 39% of graduates reported they never used career services or could not recall using them.[61] Moreover, in a 2023 survey of over 3000 students from 144 two- and four-year institutions, roughly seven in 10 students said they are aware of what services their career center offers but only four in 10 have gotten help or benefited from offerings from their campus career centers.[62]

The usage statistics at Longwood's Career Services are generally consistent with the broader U.S. findings. Students are typically accessing career services in the 1:1 format as seniors (~50%) and juniors (~30%). Based on optional appointment check-out surveys, from August 25, 2022 to May 2, 2023, there were 306 appointments. The most common appointments were for career document review (120) and mock interviews (130). Students less frequently utilized career services appointments for job and internship searches (24) and career exploration (18). At Longwood, the Career Center staff have documented more frequent contact with students in the academic programs that incorporate a career or professional development course compared to those that do not have such a course.

Although a general education program is a common place for the incorporation of a professional development course for all students, during the implementation development phase of the QEP, the Writing & Development Committee consistently heard from faculty that they did not want the QEP to be a curricular QEP. Faculty expressed concerns about adding more content and assessment to the two required first-year general education courses, particularly after several years of pivoting to teach with COVID-related restrictions. At the same time, many faculty members are interested in curriculum-to-career opportunities. For example, in the last three years, the history, psychology, criminal justice, and environmental sciences programs have each created a required one-credit introduction to the major course. These courses typically incorporate early exposure to a range of post-graduate pathways and the development of college success skills. Faculty are also pursuing curricular refinements to promote professional development within the discipline at the junior and senior level. For example, the course description for the recently revised English major capstone states that "this capstone course offers methods for students to identify, highlight, and present transferrable skills and proficiencies gleaned while completing the English major. By connecting major-specific skills to the larger demands of contemporary workplaces and civic life, this class enables students to consider their post-college goals in relation to broader questions about the position of the humanities in 21st century society."

The QEP course (re)design activity will help more academic programs advance curriculum-to-career activity. In the first year of the QEP, AY 2024-25, course instructors can choose to apply for a $500 grant to substantively rework an existing course (e.g., redesign multiple assignments) or a $1000 grant to develop a new course. For example, faculty in business administration might create a one-credit first-year seminar for pre-business students. Alternatively, someone who regularly teaches CTZN 110 (the required first-year general education seminar) could propose to create a Canvas LMS-based module on self-reflection and community cultural wealth in support of QEP SLO 1.[63]

Program Implementation

The course development activity will be announced at the May 2024 Teaching and Learning Institute. The application will require a rationale and goals for the proposal, including the relationship between proposed changes and the *consider life design* theme of the QEP and the relationship between the proposed changes and existing program or course student learning outcomes. For existing courses, faculty will submit a syllabus and describe course components that will be redesigned. Those proposing new courses will be asked to submit evidence of consistency with larger planning objectives of the academic program or unit such as an annual assessment report. The application will require a department chair signature to ensure the chair is aware of the commitment being made and feasibility and relevance of the faculty member's plan given larger curriculum initiatives within the academic program/department.

Applications will be due in early fall and the program will run in the spring semester. Faculty will commit to participate in an initial consultation and then ongoing professional development (e.g., course backward design, transparency in learning & teaching (TILT) assignment design) with an assigned course development coach (e.g., staff from CAFE, Career Services, and faculty who have been teaching similar courses). There will be required check-ins and product benchmarks. The program will culminate with presentations by the faculty to the group for feedback on their designs.

Participants will also commit to allowing collection of data for purposes of informing the course (re)design process as well as for QEP assessment. The course development coaches will use focus groups and surveys to gather data from students currently enrolled in the existing course, or, in the case of new courses, students from the relevant academic program, to help the faculty establish learning outcomes and activities consistent with student expectations and needs. The 2024-25 grant cycle will focus on courses with *consider life design* components, most likely courses offered for first-year students in the academic major or the CTZN 110 courses in general education. Assignments from the courses will contribute to the formative assessment of SLO 2.

Feedback provided by round one participants will be used to adjust the program for a second round of grants. The second round will be initiated at the Teaching and Learning Institute in May 2025, with applications due fall 2025 and course (re)designing occurring in Spring 2026. With a format similar to the 2024 life design-themed Institute, the QEP-supported 2025 Teaching and Learning Institute will be themed to *practice career everywhere*, making it an appropriate launch point for the second round. Although some grants will be available for continued life design-focused course development, the funding focus in grant round two will be *practice career everywhere* courses, such as upper-level professional development courses in the major, or the CTZN 410 general education capstone course. These courses are envisioned to include activities and assessments focused on plan revision (SLO 2b) and articulation of the choices and experiences that help meet the selected post-graduate goals (SLO 3). Another avenue for these *practice career everywhere* (re)design grants are courses offered in most academic disciplines as directed practicum in applied settings. The coordinator of these experiences in criminal justice, for example, might apply for a grant to create a Canvas LMS-based module on professional dress and professional communication with videos and assignments to be completed before the first day of an on-site internship. Or the faculty member might build a final assignment for the practicum experience that involves student updates to their LinkedIn Profile with the appropriate information about the experience.

The two rounds of the course (re)design grants are set for Year 1 and Year 2 of the QEP, with funding set aside for a smaller set of course grants in Year 3. Extending the impact of the grants, the assignments, assessments, and syllabi developed will be made available to the campus community via a Post-Graduate Success Virtual Toolkit, housed in the institution's LMS. The Toolkit is designed to bridge the *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* conceptual frameworks, link together QEP activities under each framework, and extend the impact of programs past the life of the QEP. The Toolkit will contain curated modules for the application of the two frameworks to a range of student-focused functions, including academic advising, student employment supervision, and teaching. In addition to embedding toolkit resource development into other QEP activities, such as the Teaching and Learning Institute and course (re)design grants (described above), and the micro-internship and student employment programming (described below), all University personnel will have the opportunity to apply for stipends to develop Toolkit content in Years 1 through 4 of the QEP. For example, staff members in athletics and the career center could apply for a stipend to co-construct a Toolkit module on translating student leadership experience, such as captaining a team, for professional application materials like resumes and cover letters.

Practice Career Everywhere: Revising Plans and Articulating Connections

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), students need to proactively develop goals and plans for their future throughout their academic career. In addition, they must develop an awareness of their own strengths and areas for improvement, seek opportunities to hone skills and knowledge, and "professionally advocate for oneself and others."[64] Nationally, evidence suggests students lack this form of professional self-awareness. In a recent NACE survey, employees and recent graduates rated career readiness on each of eight NACE competencies. Graduates had the lowest proficiency ratings in the area of career and self-development. Just over 60% claimed they were highly proficient; strikingly, employers rated just over 40% of graduates as highly proficient in this area, making it the second lowest scoring competency.[65] The behavioral markers of the career- and self-development competency include awareness of strengths and areas for development, developing plans and goals for future careers, professional self-advocacy, seeking opportunities to learn, including developmental opportunities, and establishing and maintaining relationships with people who can help one professionally.[66]

This description of self- and career- development meshes with the *practice career everywhere* framework that guided the set of activities developed in support of QEP learning outcomes 2b and 3. To achieve competency in self- and career-development, students need a campus where career planning is wide spread and naturally integrated with student activities, rather than existing in the silo of an office of career services. Through a range of programs facilitated by a network of faculty, staff, and alumni, students will be guided to refine their selection of curricular and co-curricular experiences and practice integrating the connection between experiences and post-graduate goals. The programs are described below in an order roughly chronological to when a Longwood undergraduate might participate.

Campus Employment

A 2019 report from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) argued that "if designed and organized effectively, institutions can use their on-campus student employment program to provide students with meaningful learning and engagement opportunities that can help with retention and build career-readiness skills."[67] On-campus employment is a powerful tool for addressing the "working student dilemma," the trade-off between the time, energy, and resources needed to succeed as a student and those needed to succeed as an employee. Carefully structuring on-campus part-time employment can mitigate many of the negative effects of employment on student academic progression.[68] The activities supported by the QEP in the area of campus employment are guided by the findings of the NASPA report. Specifically, the growth areas of application procedures, student employee supports, and feedback and reflection, align closely with both the recommendations of the NAPSA report and the QEP student learning outcomes.

Approximately 600 undergraduates (10% of whom are first-year students) work across campus each year, with at least 25% in federal work-study positions. The principal on-campus employers include Greenwood library, campus recreation, residential commuter life, and dining services. Longwood also recently created "The FreeLancer Pool" for students who prefer not to have a weekly position; students in the pool can be considered for paid freelance work if a campus office has a special project need. Consistent with best practices, Longwood centralizes the posting of employment opportunities using a course shell in the learning management system. A standardized format is also used for job postings. Each posting includes a brief description, required qualifications, and job responsibilities, but expected student learning outcomes are not listed with each position. The absence of this component is not unique to Longwood. Only 35% of institutions surveyed for the NAPSA study reported requiring or explicitly encouraging the use of learning outcomes or job competencies in student employment position descriptions.[69] Standardizing position advertisements to include learning outcomes will be one activity within student employment associated with the QEP. Articulating learning outcomes up front can prompt students to consider how a particular position fits within their broader (co)curricular plan of preparation for post-graduate life and set the stage for their professional development within the position.

The application process is another opportunity for enhancement. Like most higher education institutions, Longwood leaves it to individual campus employers to determine the materials required of applicants. The writing center, for example, requests a one-page letter of interest, a one-page resume, and a writing sample. By comparison, the student recreation center has a general application that requests basic information on employment history. Other positions simply request an email be sent to a contact person for more information or for interview scheduling. In support of the QEP, a basic level of application material standardization (e.g., requiring a resume) will be introduced over the life of the QEP to provide students "with a low-risk space to experience a hiring process similar to that required by off-campus employers."[70]

In addition to adjusting the logistics of the hiring stage of on-campus employment, the QEP will invest resources in the professional development of student employment supervisors. At Longwood, the student employee supports are generally provided at the hiring department level rather than the institutional level, meaning that professional development for supervisors can in turn facilitate the professional development and learning opportunities for student employees. Efforts to enhance student employment in this fashion are relatively new in higher education. Approximately 50% of institutions surveyed by NAPSA provided supervisor orientation and training and only 31% reported ongoing professional development opportunities.[71] With quality training, supervisors are better equipped to cultivate a supportive student-supervisor relationship, provide constructive feedback, and establish frequent opportunities for students to articulate their learning and reflect on the connections between the employment experience, coursework, and long-term career goals.

One significant place for professional development will be the Longwood Teaching and Learning Institute. As described above, the 2024 and 2025 Institutes will be inclusive of staff members. Student employment supervisors can expect to come away with concepts and tools for incorporating the *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* frameworks into their supervisor and mentorship roles. For ongoing professional development, the QEP leads will draw on materials available through the Work+Collective at Arizona State University[72] and offer targeted annual training. Finally, as noted above, the Post-Graduate Success Virtual Toolkit will be an additional resource for ongoing professional development for all campus personnel. Student employment supervisors will have the opportunity to draw on resources contributed from other offices and divisions, as well as contribute their own resources through the toolkit development grant activity mentioned earlier.

Efforts to standardize aspects of the application process and provide regular and comprehensive professional development for supervisors will have the benefit of enhancing the co-curricular learning experiences of nearly one-fifth of Longwood's student body. A robust on-campus employment program can generate formative experiences in line with QEP SLO 2b (refining the plan to integrate college experiences) and SLO 3 (articulating how experiences contribute to reaching post-graduate goals).

Virtual Micro-Internships

In spring 2021, the Career Center partnered with alumni to offer a virtual micro-internship pilot program. Fifteen alumni and 11 students, generally juniors and seniors, participated. Alumni designed projects that were meaningful for the company and required the student to generate a concrete deliverable. Students completed approximately 20 hours of work for a $500 stipend and received feedback from the alumni supervisor. The micro-internship program did not continue beyond that single semester due to Career Center staffing changes; however, during the QEP development phase, the Career Center staff brought the former micro-internship activity to the attention of the committee as a program well-suited to QEP student learning outcomes 2 and 3.

The following lessons learned from the 2021 micro-internship pilot were provided as starting points for retooling and relaunching the program:
1. Major-specific projects may pose challenges in terms of generating effective matches between student interests and skills and the project activities.
   a. Alumni from several fields were very interested but it was difficult to determine an appropriate micro-internship project, particularly for alumni/students in the education fields. Marketing, finance, and general business projects were common.
2. Providing direct financial support for students, paid by the University, is essential.
   a. Payment increased the equity of access for students from under-represented backgrounds who might otherwise have to sacrifice paid work to participate.

     b. For many companies it is not feasible to have students paid directly by the company due to the complexity of Human Resources procedures and paperwork, particularly for the abbreviated time frame.
3. The virtual format was necessary to accommodate student schedules, allow for broader access to the alumni network, and address Longwood's rural locality.
4. The timing of the project in the second half of the spring semester challenged students' ability to complete the project on time, as many projects culminated in and around final exam week.
5. Requiring a deliverable at the end of the micro-internship was essential.
     a. Deliverables encouraged alumni to create projects that hone workplace competencies.
     b. Student accountability is increased when they are designated the sole responsible party for the deliverable.

To further develop the micro-internship program within the scope of the QEP, a five-member Longwood team (i.e., QEP Lead and Co-Leads as well as Ms. Megan Miller, Associate Director for Campus Career Engagement, and Dr. David Shoenthal, Associate Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs) participated in the fall 2023 AAC&U Curriculum-to-Career Innovations Institute. The Institute is a virtual, semester-long learning and design experience. Campus teams benefit from expert insights from both higher education and industry leaders to develop curricular-based designs. The AAC&U Curriculum-to-Career team met throughout the fall in addition to attending the virtual Institute design events, and received mentorship from experts at Handshake, NACE, and AAC&U, among others. They developed a micro-internship model and received initial feedback from alumni attending the October 2023 Longwood Career Week.

Informed by the pilot program in 2021, and with the QEP student learning outcomes as a guide, the vision identified for the micro-internship activity coalesced around the following priorities:
1. Encouraging classroom-to-career connections, with an emphasis on liberal arts disciplines,
2. Equipping students with a network outside of Longwood so they can see the field and work world in a way that informs their post-graduate decision making,
3. Building students' marketable skillsets,
4. Reconnecting alumni to the University and increasing their affinity for their degree, and
5. Keeping Longwood relevant for prospective students and their families.

For the Longwood University Micro-Internship Program, the Office of Alumni and Career Services (OACS) will connect alumni with current students for short, paid, professional assignments. OACS staff will recruit alumni and help them develop meaningful projects that capitalize on student general education skillsets. Feedback from alumni suggested that templates

for desirable project types (e.g., social media and marketing, data visualization and analytics, background research and literature review) would be an important program element.

Sophomores from under-represented populations, particularly those in the liberal arts and sciences, are the target population for this activity. Students will be recruited at the end of freshman year through existing campus programs and offices already linked into QEP activities (e.g., B.O.N.D., CLASP, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Exploratory Studies) as well as in partnerships with the department chairs and faculty of particular liberal arts and sciences programs. To be eligible for applying to the program, students will have to complete short internship preparation modules (e.g., online modules from the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership student internship toolkit) prior to the first day of the fall semester. This prerequisite serves to jumpstart student professional development as well as increase student investment in the micro-internship program.

Official application to the program will occur in the fall (see Timeline 3). Students will be able to view particular micro-internship options in the OACS online portal. Alumni will receive access to the applicant pool for making hiring selections, with final matching overseen by OACS staff. Student and alumni will meet virtually and complete a micro-internship contract prior to the semester midpoint. Students will then be registered for a micro-internship course for the winter intersession. Winter intersession was chosen to help control the supply and demand of projects and allow students to focus on their project commitment. Swarthmore University undertook a similar (though larger scale) initiative and found that in addition to the benefits for matching students with projects, the winter break timeline was beneficial for marketing and for student completion rates.[73]

MICRO-INTERNSHIP PROCESS

SPRING 2024

Curriculum Creation and Approval for CTZN 292

Student Participant Recruitment

Micro-Internship Project Template Creation

↓

SUMMER 2024

Alumni Recruitment and Project Generation

Students Complete Canvas Pre-work

↓

FALL 2024

(September) Students Complete Application Process

(October) Student-Alumni Matching, Hiring Paperwork with LU, CTZN Course Registration,

Students & Alumni Complete Micro-Internship Contract

(November) Student Micro-Internship Orientation

↓

Winter Intersession 2024/25

Launch Pilot Cohort

Students will be registered for a zero-credit CTZN course for the micro-internship. Registering students for a course provides structure and accountability for the professional development aspects of the program, allows the experience to be communicated via a transcript, and aids long-term record-keeping. CTZN is the prefix used for Longwood's Civitae general education program. Use of this prefix emphasizes the multidisciplinary, general education focus of these micro-internships. A zero-credit pass/fail option was selected to avoid the challenges of different length micro-internship projects. Twenty hours is the desired average, but if projects come in under or over that mark, a zero-credit course avoids complications with the federal credit hour definitions. The pass/fail grade, though not applicable to the GPA because it is a zero-credit course, strengthens accountability.

Professional development is an important aspect of this student experience. In addition to the summer pre-work, professional development modules will be incorporated into a November orientation program and into the delivery of the intersession CTZN course. Three NACE competencies – Career & Self Development, Professionalism, and Critical Thinking – will be program focal points. Professionalism, which NACE characterizes as knowing work environments differ greatly and understanding and demonstrating effective work habits, is naturally aligned to this immersive experience, as is Career and Self Development, "proactively develop(ing) 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." The third chosen competency, Critical Thinking, described as the ability to "identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information" will be mapped to the particular project assignments in collaboration with alumni. Students will need to identify sample behaviors related to each competency, build personal learning plans to develop the competency in the context of the micro-internship, and articulate a competency development story at the end of the program. These activities and artifacts will be incorporated into assessment of QEP SLOs 2b and 3.

Students will receive a $500 stipend for successful completion of the program. The QEP includes funding for a pilot in QEP Year 1, the winter of 2024-25, with five student participants. Twenty students will be funded when the program reaches full scale in QEP Year 4. Mindful of the staffing needed to recruit alumni and mentor their project development, recruit students and facilitate the application process, match students with alumni projects, and oversee aspects of student professional development, the QEP also provides funding for a new hire in Career Services, starting in QEP Year 2 (2025-26). See the Resources section below for details.

Longwood Graduate Program Immersion Day

In the fall of 2021, the Longwood Office of Admissions hosted the first immersion days for prospective undergraduates. Partially in response to a desire for more faculty contact, immersion day programming gives students a chance to see inside an academic major. In addition to an admissions and financial aid overview and campus tour, each program is unique, offering activities customized by the academic program (e.g., student panels, class visits, facility tours, laboratory demonstrations). In the past two years Immersion Days have expanded to cover every academic major program and nearly 500 students have registered in this application generating effort. The QEP proposes to support the development and delivery of a comparable program for the Longwood graduate programs, delivered by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The primary goals of the program are to provide experiences in support of student learning in line with QEP SLOs 2 and 3 as well as generating assessment materials for those SLOs. A secondary goal is to increase the quantity and quality of applications for Longwood's graduate programs from current Longwood undergraduates.

Longwood juniors are the target audience for this program. Participation in the fall of junior year leaves sufficient time for students to make changes in their (co)curricular plans to better align with graduate study goals. For example, after participating in an immersion day for the Longwood MBA program, a student might decide to enroll in additional coursework or complete a job shadow to better discern which MBA concentration to pursue.

Students wishing to participate in the immersion day will complete a brief application, including a short response to an interview-style question. This process increases accountability for attendance, thus facilitating event planning and logistics (e.g., meals, room reservations, sizing of student and staff breakout panels). An application also reinforces a core purpose of the day: to give students opportunities to reflect on, and potentially revise, their post-graduate goals and their corresponding pathways. The collected artifacts will be incorporated into the QEP assessment.

Lessons learned from the undergraduate immersion day program include the desirability of an experience that blends academic and student life components and prioritization of face-to-face interaction with faculty and current students. Knowing that the target audience of current Longwood juniors will already have experience with campus and community life, the student life components will center on financing graduate school and a panel with current students about the differences between the undergraduate and graduate lived experience. For the academic components, classroom observations will be considered, keeping in mind most graduate courses are held on weekends and evenings, and in some cases (e.g., MBA) the entire program is virtual. A distinctive component envisioned is an alumni panel and meal. This encourages networking with graduates from the programs, exchange of information about career outlook and return on investment, and an opportunity for the student participants to develop skills for the professional dining environment. Another program element will be individual or small-group meetings with a faculty member and/or alum to receive feedback on the students' current post-graduate goals and co-curricular plans. This feedback will be one incentive for participation in the event, as will the availability of an application fee waiver upon completion of the immersion day activities. Completion will include the submission of a brief reflection about how the activities of the day contributed to awareness of the need for revisions in post-graduate goals and/or (co)curricular plans (SLO 2b).

The counseling program has been identified as a good candidate for piloting the program, with a roll-out in the fall of QEP Year 1 (2024-2025). The QEP budget includes an allocation of $1,500 for such uses as marketing, travel expenses for alumni, catering, and small stipends for faculty participation. Additional funding is allocated for an expanded roll-out in Year 2 and then a full implementation in Years 3, 4, and 5.

Symposium Day and the Student Showcase for Research and Creative Inquiry

Providing students with learning opportunities to practice self-presentation in both face-to-face and on-line contexts can increase student self-efficacy in relation to the articulation of their competencies and traits. Articulation opportunities for formative and summative assessment of QEP SLO 3 will be embedded in two events already held each semester: the campus-wide Student Showcase for Research and Creative Inquiry and the Symposium Day held for students enrolled in the Civitae general education capstone course.

The Student Showcase is a direct result of Longwood's prior QEP. Classes are cancelled so students and faculty can attend the half-day event in the fall semester and full-day event in the spring semester. The setting is semi-professional, comparable to a national conference or discipline-specific symposium. Students present in person and can select from poster, oral presentation, performance, and visual art formats. The event is ideal for developing multiple professional competencies, including translating information to a general audience, collaboration and teamwork, and public speaking. As such, it is a natural place for students to reflect on their experience and practice articulating their professional growth.

The Director of the Office of Student Research serves as the Showcase chair, with support from a Showcase organizing committee. The Showcase has integrated career preparation information and activities in the past on a small scale, such as having a table staffed by Career Services to give students 1:1 resume support. But similar to what professionals experience at conferences, students are typically preoccupied by their own presentations and often exhausted by the end of the event, which led to underutilization of the career services opportunities.

To get a sense of student interest in programming to support their articulation abilities, a survey was integrated into the registration form for the fall 2023 showcase. 186 presentations were registered, most of which (86.8%) were group projects. Of the 186 registrations, 38% indicated interest in one of the listed workshops. Given that groups were often filling the registration out together, or having a single team member complete the form for the group, this is likely an undercounting of student interest. The professional headshot was the most popular (23.4%) followed by individual resume review (18.1%) and how to highlight the showcase project in a resume (16%). Between 9% and 14% of students were interested in other specific articulation opportunities, such as how to highlight the showcase project in a LinkedIn page, a graduate school personal statement, or a cover letter.

Additional items assessing self-perceptions of articulation abilities were included in the Showcase participation survey sent electronically to all participants a few days after the fall 2023 event. Students were asked to rate how much confidence, from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very much) they had in their ability to highlight their showcase project in various formats, including their resume, cover letter, interviews, personal statement for graduate school applications, and LinkedIn profile, as well as their general ability to describe how the showcase project is relevant

to their career plans and how to communicate knowledge, skills, and experiences gained through the showcase to potential employers and graduate schools. Though coming from a small sample of 18 students, the results suggest that students report quite a bit of confidence in their ability to communicate to employers or graduate schools the knowledge, skills, and experiences they gained in a generic sense ($M = 3.17$). Strikingly, when asked to consider concrete forms of communicating, their confidence ratings were low. On average, they reported very little confidence for highlighting the project for a resume ($M = 1.67$) or cover letter ($M = 1.61$) and they were only somewhat confident for LinkedIn ($M = 2.00$) or a graduate school essay ($M = 2.33$).

Informed by the survey data, the Showcase will integrate opportunities for students to participate in brief, focused articulation feedback sessions. Facilitated by Career Services staff and trained members of the Showcase advisory committee, these mini-sessions will give disciplinary-specific feedback for articulating how a student's presentation topic and research skillsets could be incorporated into a resume, cover letter, and other professional communication situations. The program will be piloted in the spring of 2024; scaling will continue across the five QEP years, with an emphasis on the spring Showcase due to its full-day format. As the primary purpose of this activity is to give students formative experiences with articulation (SLO 3), students not presenting at the Showcase will also have opportunities to participate in the professional development workshops.

With the Showcase providing multiple opportunities to build an articulation skillset, Symposium Day will be the focal point for assessment of SLO 3. Symposium Day is the culminating experience for Civitae (see box to the right), Longwood's signature general education experience. The program capstone is the three-credit CTZN 410 course, also known as Symposium on the Common Good. In the course students "prepare to serve the common good by applying the knowledge, skills, and perspectives gained throughout their core curriculum, major

THE CIVITAE NAME "evokes several key elements of the curriculum. Its "civic" root emphasizes civics education and Longwood's mission of educating "citizen leaders." "Vitae" — Latin for "life" — reinforces that the curriculum serves as preparation for all aspects of a full life, including citizenship and work. Vitae also evokes "curriculum vitae" — a synonym for resumé in academic and professional circles. This highlights the value of the curriculum's focus — in particular on oral and written communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork — not just as preparation for citizenship but as important skills for a successful career in any field."

classes, and extracurricular activities. In relation to a common theme and a specific community issue, students will synthesize and analyze information from multiple disciplines and generate a product for public consideration." Faculty members utilize a disciplinary lens in their topical 410 courses. Recent topics have included "youth sport specializations and the breaking of bodies, bank accounts, and communities" taught by a faculty member in Kinesiology, and "public discourse and the numbers game" taught by a faculty member in Mathematics.

The course was selected as a fitting opportunity for assessment of QEP SLO 3 because the course is taken by all students, typically during the senior year. As the capstone of the general education program, it is designed to draw students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds into collaboration and reflection on their preparation for citizen leadership. Coincidental to the development of the QEP in 2023, the Symposium Day format was undergoing changes, shifting away from a project and presentation focused event, somewhat duplicative of the Showcase, to a format better aligned with the course learning outcomes. The new format, starting with the pilot in spring 2024, will incorporate activities aligned with QEP SLO 3, articulation of the (co)curricular experiences.

On Symposium Day, students will first hear from a community stakeholder, such as a local mayor or school district superintendent, about the challenges and open questions they face in their role. Students then move into small discussion groups to generate solutions. Next, a representative is chosen by random drawing from each small group to share the findings and recommendations with a larger group. These representatives are eventually consolidated further, also by lottery, into a select group of "senators," who spend the afternoon of Symposium Day developing a proposal to present to the stakeholder at the day's final session. After lunch, as the senators deliberate and prepare for the presentation, the other student participants (approximately 300 each semester), will participate in a professional development workshop and articulation assessment.

For the workshop, members of the QEP advisory committee, together with members of the Civitae committee, will guide students through a reflective revisit of their Civitae coursework to identify key learning experiences. Next, using tools such as accomplishment statements and what/so what/now what reflections, students will develop brief (one-two minutes) learning narratives aligned with several of the NACE competencies. Working in small groups, they will practice delivering their narratives as though in a mock interview. From there, students will report in their original small groups to a classroom to have their narrative video-recorded and receive feedback from the group and a faculty or staff facilitator. These video narratives will then serve as artifacts for QEP assessment.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The first section of the QEP narrative described Longwood's process of topic identification. Through the work of the Topic Recommendation Committee, topic selection arose naturally from existing institutional planning processes and involved a wide range of campus constituencies. The engagement of key constituents continued into the plan development stage as faculty, staff, administrators, and students collaborated with the Writing and Development Committee via focus-groups, surveys, and intentional small group conversations. The second section of the QEP narrative described the specific plans for implementing Longwood's Post-Graduate Success Initiative QEP structured by three student learning outcomes. Framed by the ideas of *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere*, QEP-linked programming will enhance students' ability to set goals, construct plans, and articulate accomplishments. Plan development incorporated best practices scholarship, baseline data from institutional surveys (e.g., NSSE), internal planning and evaluation processes (e.g., diversity strategic plan development, annual assessment reporting), and pilot activities (e.g., B.O.N.D., student success coaching). An estimated 20% of Longwood undergraduates will have stand-alone experiences aligned with SLO 2 such as first-year advising, student employment, and/or participation in a graduate school immersion day. Additionally, the QEP structure ensures that nearly all students have contact with activities aligned with QEP SLO 1 (in the form of New Lancer Days activities with the student success coaching group) and SLO 3 (through Symposium Day). The final sections of this narrative describe the commitment of institutional resources, both human and financial, to implement the QEP and measure student learning via formative and summative assessments.

Resources

The members of the leadership team for the QEP are well-qualified and broadly representative of the University's divisions and constituents. The QEP Lead, Dr. Sarai Blincoe, will have oversight responsibility of the QEP, reporting to the Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The responsibilities of the Lead include, but are not limited to:

- Overseeing and managing the QEP implementation
- Overseeing and managing the QEP budget
- Promoting QEP participation within colleges, departments, and units
- Implementing the QEP assessment plan, including collecting and analyzing data and monitoring results against targets
- Communicating results to colleges, departments, and units and assisting in revising activities to ensure continuous improvement
- Revising the comprehensive QEP implementation and assessment plan, if need arises, to maintain progress toward established student learning outcomes
- Staying current on best practices related to the QEP
- Working closely with the Center for Faculty Enrichment to plan, schedule, and implement faculty and staff professional development and training called for by the QEP, including advising workshops and the Teaching and Learning Institute

Collaborating and supporting the QEP Lead are the QEP Co-leads, representative of Strategic Operations and Student Affairs. Within their respective divisions they are responsible for:

- Assisting in overseeing and enabling all QEP implementation activities
- Serving as QEP liaisons with colleagues
- Maintaining records and data regarding all QEP activity
- Analyzing data and planning improvements and modifications based on results
- Contributing to progress reporting and documentation requirements

Additionally, the QEP Advisory Board members (see Table 5 for current membership) are responsible for collaborating with the QEP Lead and Co-leads. The membership was chosen to represent three divisions of the university as well as major campus initiatives (e.g., Civitae general education) and student groups (e.g., fraternities and sororities), ensuring the entire campus remains aware of, and invested in, the QEP activities. Specifically, the members of the Advisory Board are tasked with:

- Serving as QEP liaisons to provide updates for colleagues and students in their respective areas and to the campus at large
- Gathering information from campus constituents for the QEP leadership team
- Consulting on the design of assessment and evaluation instruments
- Scoring artifacts for QEP assessment and evaluation

Table 5. QEP Advisory Board

Name, Title	Representation
Sarai Blincoe, QEP Lead, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Psychology	Academic Affairs
Waleed Ahmed, QEP Co-lead, Assistant Director of Admissions and Retention	Strategic Operations-- Student Success
Quincy Goodine, QEP Co-lead, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs & Leadership Development	Student Affairs
Max Feuti, Advisor, Office of the Registrar	Strategic Operations
Elise Green, Assistant Professor of English and Writing, Civitae Writing Coordinator	Academic Affairs
Elizabeth Narehood, Senior Director of Career and Professional Engagement	Strategic Operations
Julie Ramsey, Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life	Student Affairs

Post-graduate success, including career readiness, is a key purpose of higher education. As a priority initiative closely tied to the Longwood mission and strategic plan, the Quality Enhancement Plan requires a meaningful and ongoing financial commitment from the institution. The budget was collaboratively developed to capitalize on existing financial allocations while also investing new resources and reallocating current resources to strengthen Longwood's post-graduate success infrastructure for continuation beyond the formal duration of the QEP. In Spring 2023, once the components were in place, Dr. Pam Tracy and Dr. Sarai Blincoe presented the budget to the Reaffirmation Leadership Team, which includes Longwood's President and the Vice President of Administration and Finance, for discussion and approval. There was unanimous agreement that the University will commit the proposed funds, including over $1.7 million in new and reallocated funding across five years.

Monitoring the QEP budget will be the responsibility of the QEP Lead, Dr. Sarai Blincoe, with the support of the QEP Co-leads, especially as regards the representation of expenditures and operational budgets in Strategic Operations and Student Affairs. The budget components are described below.

QEP Oversight

In Year 0 (AY 2023-24) the work of **QEP Lead** Dr. Sarai Blincoe is supported by a stipend and course releases. In summer 2024 Dr. Blincoe will transition from faculty to an administrative/professional position. As Director of Program Effectiveness, she will support accreditation initiatives across campus, including leading QEP implementation and assessment. From QEP Year 1 through Year 5, the budget allocation is $35,000 as a base salary increase for Dr. Blincoe, with a 3% annual raise. An additional $8,000 per year is budgeted from existing

funds for adjunct coverage of Dr. Blincoe's current two-course annual departmental teaching load.

QEP Co-leads Mr. Waleed Ahmed and Mr. Quincy Goodine will receive a stipend of $10,000 annually from Year 0 through Year 5 to support their QEP leadership work, estimated at 25% of their current duties. Additional new funding is earmarked for hiring one additional staff member in Student Affairs and one in Strategic Operations at starting salaries of approximately $50,000 plus benefits and 3% annually for raises. These hires ensure that the reallocation of Mr. Ahmed's and Mr. Goodine's time to the QEP will not detract from the work of these areas, particularly work in support of the broad goal of retaining students from historically marginalized and under-represented groups and facilitating achievement of the University's Diversity Strategic Plan.

Professional Development

Funding totaling $27,500 is allocated for **professional development for the QEP leads**. In QEP Year 0, Mr. Ahmed and Mr. Goodine attended the Virtual Life Design Studio for University Educators offered by Stanford University; Dr. Blincoe attended prior to the QEP implementation. The Studio experience informed the Year 0 pilot activities and will facilitate successful implementation of life design activities in Student Affairs and Strategic Operations linked to SLOs 1 and 2. In February 2024 Dr. Blincoe will attend the NACADA Assessment Institute to further develop the assessment plan for the first-year advising activity. Allocations in subsequent years will cover expenses for the QEP leads to receive additional training and to disseminate the results of the QEP at relevant conferences and workshops.

The Teaching and Learning Institute has been held annually at Longwood for ten years, thus the budgeted $18,000 per year for two years represents an existing Academic Affairs allocation. The budget typically covers catering, speaker lodging, travel and honoraria, printed materials, and books for participants. The topics will be the two stages of the QEP: *consider life design* in May 2024 and *practice career everywhere* in May 2025.

Funding estimated at $18,000 will provide catering, presenter/trainer stipends, and learning materials for **professional development** for multiple campus constituencies. Professional development for faculty and staff will be conducted in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Enrichment (CAFE). The CAFE staff include a full-time director and two part-time Associate Directors, one for Curriculum Design and one for Across-the-Career Programs. Existing programming on academic advising will be expanded and tailored for QEP needs. Professional development for students, such as the student success coaching group peer mentors, will be coordinated by the QEP Lead and Co-leads.

Life Design Activities

The *consider life design* themed activities are focused in the first year of the student's Longwood experience.

To facilitate life design activities in the four-day **B.O.N.D. program**, $1,500 in funding is allocated annually in Years 1 through 5, specifically to provide two lunch and learn sessions for approximately 50 students each.

The **first-year advising** activity is supported by re-allocations of funding totaling $117,000. The funding begins in Year 1 and is designated as $3,000 per participating academic program, with three programs supported in Year 1, seven programs in Year 2, and 10 programs in Years 3 through 5. Funding is based on a stipend model for a single first-year advisor per academic program but can be allocated differently to cover course releases or smaller stipends.

Collaborating with Lancers for Academic Success Program currently employs a graduate assistant with funding through the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. This position will continue in Years 1 through 5 of the QEP, budgeted at $15,000 ($25/hour, for 150 hours per semester). The graduate assistant will provide first-year advising to any members of CLASP not enrolled in an academic program participating in the academic advising activity.

Faculty stipends are necessary to support the **course (re)design** activity that links together multiple components of the QEP, including first-year advising, professional development through the Teaching and Learning Institute, and the Canvas-based Post-Graduate Success Virtual Toolkit. Stipends of $1,000 are budgeted for new course design and $500 for a course redesign. With $7,500 allocated in QEP Year 1, approximately four new courses and seven redesigned courses can be funded. In QEP Year 2 an additional $2,500 is allocated for three to five courses.

Practice Career Everywhere Activities

The *practice career everywhere* themed activities occur primarily after a student's first year at Longwood.

Designated as a new hire, the **career services staff member** line item is new money allocated for hiring at $60,000 base plus benefits with a July 2025 start date for a total allocation of $372,000. A core responsibility of the staff member will be administration of the micro-internship program including alumni and student participant recruitment, matching, project support for alumni, and professional development for students. This individual may be the instructor of record for the CTZN 292 course, but that will depend on the credentials of the hired individual.

Following the model described above for **course (re)design grants**, $7,500 in funding is provided in QEP Year 2 for work on courses that contribute to the *practice career everywhere* activity. Upper-level courses in Civitae and in the majors are prime candidates, including the designated internship courses (492s). An additional $2,500 is available for follow-on projects in QEP Year 3.

The funding re-allocated for creating and running **Graduate Program Immersion Days** begins at $1,500 in the program's pilot year (QEP Year 1), increases to $2,500 for Year 2 and then $3,500 for Years 3 through 5. Funding will support alumni travel arrangements and catering for a professional networking dinner.

Current financial support for the semiannual **Symposium Day** comes from the Civitae general education budget. Typical expenditures include key note speaker travel, lodging, and honorarium, as well as catering of breakfast, lunch, snacks, and a closing reception. The allocation of $1,000 in Year 1 and $2,000 in Years 2 through 5 will support implementation of QEP-related programming, particularly opportunities for practice with articulation (SLO 3). Similarly, the funds designated for the semiannual **Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase** will support QEP-related programming for all five years of the QEP.

Ongoing Support Activities

To maintain visibility throughout the program, a QEP **marketing** budget is allocated to procure promotional items, brochures, signage, etc. The budget is $1,500 in Year 0 and $2,500 in Year 1 to establish the brand presence and build the merchandise stock. An additional $3,500 in Years 2 through 4 will be used to maintain the branding and marketing campaign and expand activities (e.g., Graduate Immersion Day). The final year of the QEP has an allocation of $1,000. Branded items will include recognition award items for completion of programs like the course (re)design grants and micro-internship program.

Administrative support is designated for all five years of the QEP as one-quarter time ($13,000) of an existing administrative assistant position within Academic Affairs. Anticipated responsibilities include event planning, purchasing, record keeping, and data management.

In QEP Year 1, $5,000 is budgeted for building out a **Post-Graduate Success Virtual Toolkit** via the Canvas Learning Management System. The funding will be disseminated in the form of stipends, similar to the faculty course (re)design grants, to develop toolkit modules and resources. A second round of $2,500 will be administered in Year 3 to capitalize on the full-scale roll-out of QEP activities such as the micro-internships and the Graduate Immersion Day program.

Funding for QEP **assessment** will facilitate data collection, artifact scoring, and analysis. While assessment activities are part of the listed duties of several faculty committees linked to the QEP (e.g., Student showcase organizing committee; Civitae Core Curriculum Committee), stipends will be provided for faculty and staff to take on special assessment responsibilities, particularly rubric-based scoring of the artifacts for the summative assessment of each SLO. Stipends of approximately $300 each are allocated, with $2,500 for Year 1 in which most QEP activities are at a pilot level and thus generating fewer artifacts, and then $6,000 for QEP Years 2 through 5.

Assessment Plan

Employing a mix of direct and indirect measures, the QEP assessment plan utilizes formative and summative assessments to monitor for continuous improvement in the three QEP student learning outcomes. Given the range of activities incorporated into this QEP, which cross institutional divisions and span a student's enrollment at the University, the QEP will support the institutional culture of continuous improvement by modeling an assessment system that is ongoing, iterative, and sustainable.

The QEP Lead will have primary responsibility for implementation of the assessment plan, including the facilitation of data collection according to the established timetables. Supported by annual stipends, the QEP advisory board will assist with rubric development, data collection, and scoring, with collaboration from the members of other key offices and committees. The QEP advisory board will conduct a data review at the start of each semester and will work with the QEP Lead to report annually to campus constituents through standing meetings and reports posted to the QEP website. Should the need arise, the QEP Lead is responsible for modifying the assessment plan in collaboration with staff in the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research.

Table 6 contains details for each measure, including measure type, focal population, target, assessment frequency, and data collaborators. As can be seen in column 3 of the table, this assessment plan includes at least one direct summative measure for each student learning outcome in addition to multiple formative measures. When available, data from pre-existing programs and program pilots was used to establish targets. In the case of new assessments and programming, targets are stated as TBD and will be established after the first year of available data collection. Several rubrics are being internally developed and piloted, starting in the spring of 2024. The narrative following Table 6 summarizes the formative and summative assessment measures for the three SLOs.

SLO 1: Students will set post-graduate goals consistent with holistic sense of self and community
SLO 2: Students will (a) create and (b) revise a plan integrating curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that support post-graduate goals
SLO 3: Students will effectively articulate connections between curricular and co-curricular learning experiences and their post-graduate goals

The QEP Lead, Co-leads, and members of the Advisory Board have primary responsibility in the areas of data management, scoring, analysis, and reporting, but data collaborators are identified for each measure. Data collaborators participate in assessment measure development and administration, ensuring that institutional stakeholders have an ongoing role in QEP planning and evaluation.

Table 6. QEP Student Learning Outcome Measures

SLO	Measure	Type	Focal Population	Target	Timing	Data Collaborators
1	Self-report survey: clarity of goals and holistic sense of self and community	formative, indirect	First-Year Students	By the end of semester 1, 10% increase in number of students agreeing that they have clear post-graduate goals and a holistic sense of self/community	Fall, annually	First Year Experience & Student Success
1	Program-level year 1 to year 2 retention	formative, indirect	First-Year Students	>65% for each demographic group by end of the QEP	Fall in Years 2, 4, 5	Office of Assessment & Institutional Research, University Analytics
1	Post-graduate goals + reflection	summative, direct	Students in First-Year Advising Program	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	December, annually	Faculty
2a & 2b	Post-graduate goals + (co)curricular plan creation and/or revision	formative, direct	Students enrolled in courses within the course (re)design grant activity	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	Rolling, annually	Faculty, Center for Faculty Enrichment
2a	Post-graduate goals + (co)curricular plan	summative, direct	Students in First-Year Advising Program	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	May, annually	Faculty
2b	Post-graduate goals + (co)curricular plan revision	summative, direct	Micro-internship cohorts, graduate immersion day participants	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	Rolling, annually	Career Services, College of Graduate & Professional Studies

SLO	Measure	Type	Focal Population	Target	Timing	Data Collaborators
3	Attendance: Career Services 1:1 appointments & Showcase workshops	formative, indirect	Sophomores and Juniors	TBD increase in # students from QEP Year 1 baseline	May & December, annually	Career Services, Office of Student Research
3	Resumes, cover letters	formative, direct	Students seeking professional document review meetings with Career Services	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	Rolling, annually	Career Services
3	Symposium Day competency elevator pitch	summative, direct	Symposium Day participants	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	2x/year	Civitae Core Curriculum
3	Longwood graduate program application materials	summative, direct	Longwood undergraduates applying for Longwood graduate program admission	TBD: X% of students score Y or above on rubric	Summer, annually	College of Graduate and Professional Studies
1, 2, 3	Behavioral intentions scale	formative, indirect	Faculty/staff attendees: Teaching and Learning (T&L) Institute, coaching professional development	X% will indicate agree or strongly agree on a measure of implementation intentions	Post-event, as applicable	Center for Faculty Enrichment
1, 2, 3	Syllabi: presence of QEP-aligned activities and assessments	formative, direct	Courses taught by T&L Institute attendees and (re)design grant participants	25% increase in presence of QEP-aligned activities and assessments	Summer in Years 1, 3, 5	Center for Faculty Enrichment

Formative Assessment for SLO 1

A series of self-report surveys will assess student growth across the first semester in their (a) clarity of post-graduate goals, and (b) perceptions of a holistic sense of self and community. The baseline measure will be embedded as a quiz at the end of the QEP module of the 5 Things Canvas LMS course that new-to-Longwood students complete in the summer before matriculation. The second measure will be administered as part of the early semester mandatory meetings with the student success coach. The final administration will be included in the end-of-semester coaching group satisfaction survey. These surveys will not be incentivized, but existing completion rate statistics for the 5 Things course, coaching 1:1 meeting, and end-of-semester survey are greater than 30% suggesting a sufficient sample size for each measure.

First-time, full-time student second-year retention rate is one of four institutional measures of student achievement for SACSCOC standard 8.1. Consistent with the approach used to select programs for participation in the first-year advising activity, this retention metric will be generated for each academic program and broken down by Pell-eligibility, first-generation status, race/ethnicity, and rural residency.

Summative Assessment for SLO 1

Direct assessment of the first student learning outcome requires a sample of post-graduate goals and corresponding information about student sense of self and community. This artifact will typically take the form of a goal list with supporting short reflective essay. A rubric designed internally during the spring of 2024 will be used to assess the goals using the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based) method as well as the quantity and quality of awareness of holistic self and community (e.g., identities, strengths, values) within the supportive reflection. The primary means of generating these artifacts will be the first-year advising activity. The goal list and reflection will appear in the advising syllabus as a required outcome by the end of the student's first semester at Longwood. Several of the required group and individual advising meetings will include structured progress toward the completion of the artifact. Additional goals and reflections may be generated through faculty participation in the course (re)design grant activity. The QEP advisory board will pilot the rubric with the three programs participating in the first-year advising program roll-out in QEP Year 1.

Formative Assessment for SLO 2a and 2b

Participants in the course (re)design grant activity will be asked to incorporate in their courses, where appropriate, goal setting and (co)curricular experience planning activities aligned with SLO 2. Artifacts from these courses will be scored with the same rubric used for the summative assessment of SLO 2a and 2b.

Summative Assessment for SLO 2a

As with SLO 1, summative assessment requires a sample of post-graduate goals and supporting information about a (co)curricular plan. An internally designed rubric will assess goals using the SMART method and evaluate the plan for alignment of the (co)curricular experiences with each goal. The primary means of generating these artifacts will be the first-year advising activity. The goal list and reflection will be listed in the advising syllabus as a required outcome by the end of the student's first year at Longwood. The QEP advisory board will pilot the rubric with the three programs participating in the first-year advising program roll-out in QEP Year 1.

Summative Assessment for SLO 2b

The micro-internship and graduate immersion day programs incorporate a process for students to revise plans. Although students who participated in the first-year advising activity will be prioritized for recruitment into the micro-internship and graduate immersion day programming, most of the student participants (especially in the early years of the QEP) will not have generated an initial (co)curricular plan. As such, mechanisms will be in place to help students draft initial plans during the application stages of the micro-internship and graduate immersion day. In QEP Year 1 the rubrics will be piloted with the sample of students in the micro-internship and the pilot of the Graduate Immersion Day. By QEP Year 4, with the full roll-out of both programs, artifacts from a sample of 100+ students will be available for assessment.

Formative Assessment for SLO 3

Attendance at professional development opportunities geared to articulation of competencies will be used as a formative assessment. Specifically, the number of students attending the workshops held each semester as part of the Longwood Showcase and the number of students seeking 1:1 appointments with Career Services staff for resume and other application material reviews and mock interviews will serve as data.

To supplement these indirect measures of growth in articulation abilities, permission will be requested from students who participate in the 1:1 appointments for resume and cover letter review to have their de-identified materials assessed. These reviews will be conducted by the staff of the Career Services unit using the same rubrics used for the summative assessments. Similarly, participants completing the course (re)design grant program, where applicable, will be asked to share de-identified resumes and cover letters for scoring.

Summative Assessment for SLO 3

To ensure assessment of student ability to articulate the connections between post-graduate goals and both curricular and co-curricular experiences, two summative assessments will be scored. At the end of each semester, the 300+ students participating in Symposium Day will reflect on their experiences in the Civitae Core Curriculum program and develop a competency elevator pitch. This will serve as the primary artifact for assessing curricular learning experiences in support of post-graduate goals. Student artifact quality will be incentivized through a Symposium Day

elevator pitch competition. Scoring will be done on a random sample of oral presentations using a rubric, and the rubric will be piloted during the spring 2024 event.

Offering a more holistic measure of the connection between (co)curricular experiences (e.g., internships, employment, and student organization leadership positions), the de-identified cover letters and resumes submitted by currently enrolled Longwood undergraduates applying to Longwood graduate programs will be assessed. This novel use of real application materials ensures high student motivation for submitting quality artifacts. Scoring will be done on a random sample of artifacts using a rubric.

Formative Assessment for all SLOs

A behavioral intentions scale will be administered to Longwood personnel participating in QEP-linked professional development, such as the Teaching and Learning Institute and the advising professional development sessions. Prior to the professional development opportunities, the survey will assess the degree to which staff and faculty have been using concepts and activities oriented to building students' holistic sense of self and community and facilitating post-graduate goal-setting and (co)curricular experience. Subsequent to professional development participation, staff and faculty will report the degree to which they intend to implement QEP-aligned concepts and activities. CAFE programming, including the Teaching and Learning Institute, already incorporates surveys for program evaluation, making this a straightforward addition for which adequate sample sizes are anticipated without additional incentive.

Syllabi will be indicators of the saturation of *consider life design* and *practice career everywhere* concepts and activities in academic courses. Using participation rosters from the course (re)design grant activity and the Teaching and Learning Institutes, syllabi from courses taught before and after event participation will be scored for the presence of QEP-aligned activities and assessments. The saturation score from Year 1 will serve as the baseline and inform subsequent targets for increasing the presence of aligned syllabus content by Year 5.

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