

***Capping Student Success:  
Using Capstone  
Experiences to Enhance  
Student Learning***



***Quality Enhancement Plan  
2020–2025***

***March 16–19, 2020***

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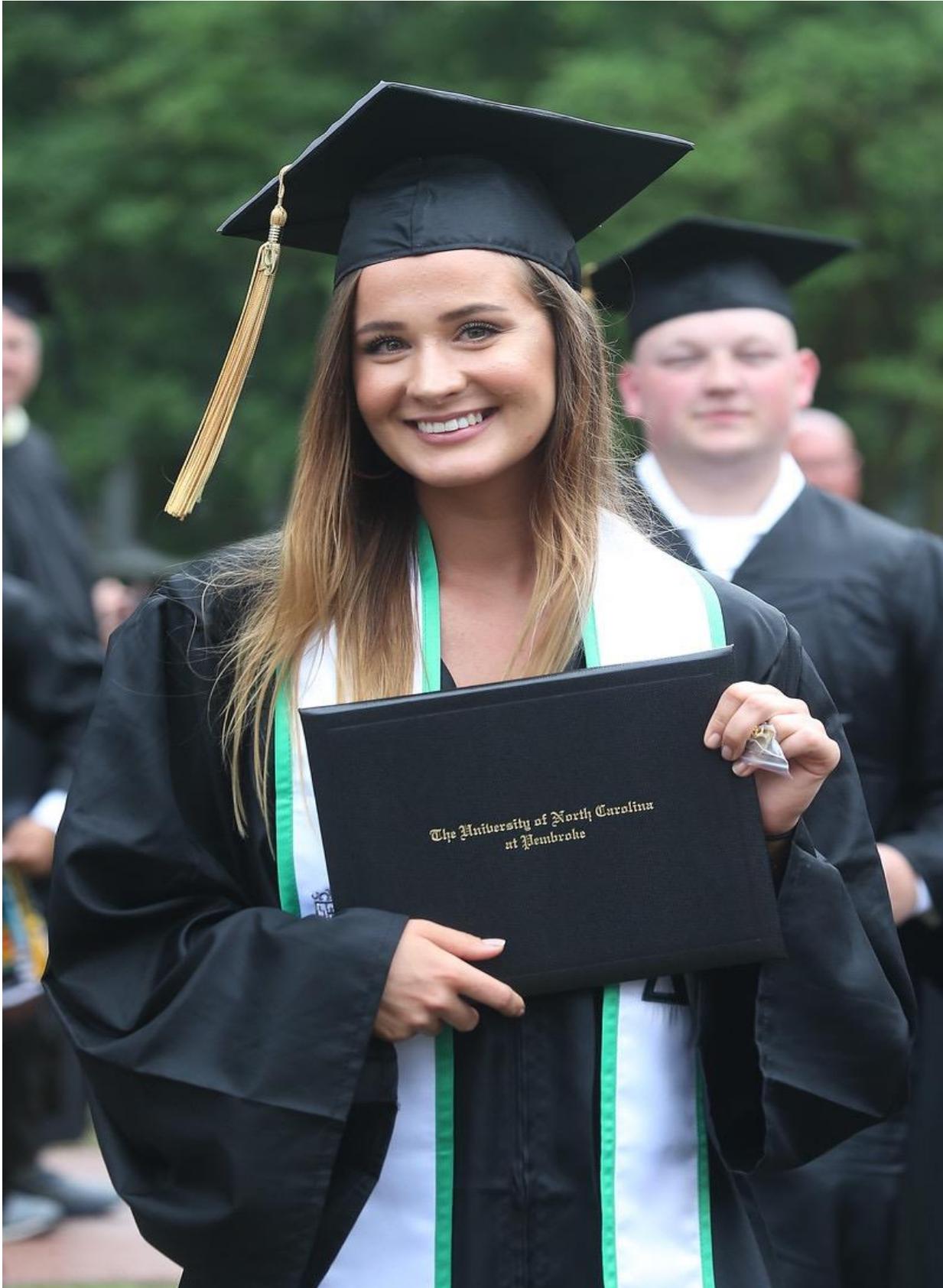
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## I. Executive Summary

The topic of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan is enhancing student learning by improving student engagement in high-impact practices, specifically capstone courses. The University's QEP topic arises from and is closely related to the University's strategic planning process. Student success is a major focus of the University's Strategic Plan.

Goal #2 of the UNC Pembroke Strategic Plan 2012–2019 deals with student success. It states that the University of North Carolina at Pembroke will maximize student success by improving its recruitment strategies and enhancing its academic support systems. In 2016, the Chancellor and his Cabinet developed a set of annual operational goals to guide faculty and staff in the implementation of the University's mission and vision as articulated in the University's Strategic Plan. Named "The BraveBook: Our Playbook for Success," this series of objectives built upon the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and provided a series of annual initiatives and targets for the further implementation of the Strategic Plan. The 2016–2017 BraveBook had a thematic goal of maximizing student success. The 2017–18 BraveBook and 2018–2019 BraveBook each had five objectives, one of which was student success.

In summer 2016, the Reaffirmation Steering Committee began the process of identifying a topic for the University's next Quality Enhancement Plan. This included reviewing the University's Strategic Plan and the strategic planning process associated with it to determine what elements in the plan focused on the improvement of student learning or student success and how the next QEP could be derived from those elements. As discussed above, the strategic planning process has continuously focused on improving student success, and the resulting University Strategic Plan and BraveBook operational plans contain more than ample bases for a variety of QEP topics focused on student learning and/or student success. Living and learning communities, advising, tutoring, service learning, and increasing retention, graduation, progression, and placement rates have had a prominent place in the strategic planning documents.

Surveys of faculty, staff, and students in 2017 were used to help determine the QEP topic. After extended discussion, the QEP Topic Selection Committee decided that student engagement was a topic that could serve to encompass a variety of knowledge, behaviors, and skills that students should acquire during their University career. The Committee reviewed research on student engagement and concluded that the emphasis on high-impact practices and its connection to student engagement would serve the University well as part of its next QEP. An in-depth review of the literature on student engagement, high-impact practices, capstone courses, and integrative learning was conducted in order to discover best practices and use them to inform the development of the specific objectives and student learning outcomes that drive the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement were used to assess the state of student engagement on campus and document a need for initiatives to improve student learning through student engagement. The 2016 FSSE results showed that 76% of faculty found it important to do culminating experiences. The 2014 and 2017 NSSE results showed that a low number of freshman students were participating in high-impact practices. Twenty-six percent would like or expected to participate in a culminating experience. Thirty-seven percent of seniors were doing a culminating experience in 2014. In 2017, 29% of seniors didn't plan to do a culminating experience, and 13% hadn't decided. The percentage of seniors doing a culminating experience dropped from 37% in 2014 to 28% seniors in 2017.

Results of a survey of 809 UNC Pembroke Alumni conducted by the UNC System Office in 2018–2019 provided a connection between high-impact practices and workplace engagement and lifelong wellbeing across five dimensions. It revealed that while 42% of UNC Pembroke alumni responding reported that they are engaged in their work, 46% reported that they are not engaged in their work. Eleven percent reported being actively disengaged. UNC Pembroke alumni who worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete were 1.7 times more likely to feel engaged with their work and 1.2 times more likely to experience high levels of wellbeing.

Much of the literature on student engagement and high-impact practices highlights the relationship between increased levels of student engagement and participation in high-impact practices and graduation. There is substantial room for improvement on this measure of student success at UNC Pembroke. Although the University's five-year graduation rate has increased steadily over the last seven years, it has not yet reached its target five-year graduation rate of 46.5% as established by the UNC System Strategic Plan. Although six-year graduation rates have increased steadily over the last six years, the rate of 40.3% in 2018 is still less than about half of the University's peer institutions

Arising from the University's mission to prepare students for rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives and the University's strategic goal of maximizing student success, the overarching goal of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan is to increase student learning by increasing student engagement in high-impact practices, specifically capstone courses and experiences. With respect to student learning outcomes, students completing a capstone course should be able to:

1. Connect relevant experiences to academic knowledge from different courses and fields of study in the University setting;
2. Make connections across disciplines, perspectives, fields of study;
3. Adopt and apply information to new situations; and
4. Engage in meaningful self-reflection.

Achieving the overarching goal and associated student learning outcomes depends upon the development and expansion of capstone or culminating experiences at the University. A series of steps in the process of creating and expanding capstone courses in order to achieve the desired student learning outcomes have been outlined. These are:

- Step 1— Survey of Capstone Courses. The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee will conduct a survey in Qualtrics of coordinators of academic programs to determine the existence of courses that are or could be designated as capstone courses and what they entail. The QEP Advisory Committee will analyze the responses when the survey is completed in order to determine what departments might be most likely to participate in the development process and which might be approached to design or redesign a capstone course. This step will occur in fall 2020.
- Step 2— Guidelines for Standardizing Capstone Courses/Culminating Experiences. The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop standard guidelines for capstone courses/culminating experiences to be included within the scope of the Quality Enhancement Plan. The guidelines will be provided to departments so that faculty can determine if existing courses are good candidates for participation in the development

process and to see what might be involved in the development of new capstone courses. The guidelines will be based on the Committee's research into current best practices in capstone courses/culminating experiences. This step will occur in fall 2020.

- Step 3—Selection of Applicants for Course Design/Re-Design. Departments will be offered the opportunity to develop or re-develop capstone/culminating experiences. To recruit faculty for the capstone course development process, the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop an application process.. The Committee will offer stipends for participation in the development/redevelopment process. The QEP Advisory Committee will develop selection criteria for applications for course design/re-design. The Committee will review the applications and select those to be included in the development process. These actions will be completed in fall 2020.

With thirty-six undergraduate degrees offered at the University, the goal is to involve a maximum of six undergraduate programs per year in the development process (possibly three existing capstone courses and three new ones). This would result in the Quality Enhancement Plan encompassing 83% of all degree programs over five years.

- Step 4—Faculty Development Workshops. Faculty Development workshops will be held during the fall and spring semesters. Workshops will focus on the value of integrative thinking and reflective learning, best practices for incorporating these practices into capstone courses, assessment of student learning outcomes on integrative thinking and reflection in capstone course, and rubric training. Workshops will include material related to the incorporation of the desired student learning outcomes into the capstone courses. Participants will be provided with descriptions of ideal capstone experiences. Faculty teaching courses in the capstone course development initiative will receive a stipend for developing capstone courses. Funds will be available for travel to regional or national conferences on the teaching of capstone courses to faculty participating in the course development program and others interested in participating in the program. Faculty development activities will begin in spring 2021.
- Step 5—Offering Capstone Courses. The first newly-designed or redesigned courses will be offered following the completion of the initial series of faculty development workshops. Existing courses that have been redesigned can be offered sooner than ones that are newly-created. Newly-created courses must be approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process that involves administrative and Faculty Senate approval before they can be offered. These processes will begin in fall 2021 and spring 2022 and continue throughout the five-year period of the Plan.
- Step 6—Reviewing Syllabi for Capstone Courses. The QEP Advisory Committee will review the syllabi of capstone courses that are being offered as part of the course development initiative within the University Quality Enhancement Plan. This will occur on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the Quality Enhancement Plan to ensure that the newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses continue to adhere to the guidelines established for the courses in the program. These processes will commence in 2021–2022 and be ongoing for the duration of the Quality Enhancement Plan.
- Step 7—Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in Capstone Courses. The QEP Advisory Committee and the QEP Director will oversee the assessment of the student learning outcomes in the capstone courses in accordance with the assessment plan as

outlined below. The AAC&U VALUE Rubric on Integrative and Reflective thinking will play a prominent role in measuring the achievement of the student learning outcomes in the courses. These processes will commence in 2021–2022 and will be ongoing.

The QEP Director will have ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation and assessment of the QEP. The QEP Director will be a full-time faculty member with fifty percent reassigned time in the fall and spring semesters to administer the QEP. The Director will receive a stipend in the summer to carry out the implementation of the QEP. The Director will be assisted by an Assessment Coordinator who will be responsible for conducting the assessment and evaluation of the project in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research. The Assessment Coordinator will be a full-time faculty member with fifty percent reassigned time in the fall and spring semesters and a summer stipend.

Achieving QEP goals with respect to student learning will require a five-year budget commitment of approximately \$890,000 of which approximately \$655,000 is for in-kind expenses and \$235,000 for new expenses. Yearly costs average approximately \$176,000 per year.

The purpose of the assessment process is to measure the degree to which the QEP is achieving its goals, especially its impact on the improvement of student learning. The assessment plan details the processes for evaluating the student learning outcomes outlined in the QEP. The plan contains relevant direct and indirect measures of student learning and measures outcomes at the initial and ending stages of the program. It uses both internal and external comparisons to assess the contribution of the QEP to student learning. The results of the assessment will be reviewed by the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee and used to make modifications to the QEP as necessary.



## II. Institutional Context—Overview of UNC Pembroke

Begun as a normal (teacher education) school to educate the Lumbee Indians of Robeson County in 1887, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke is a public, four-year, master's degree-granting institution. It has been one of the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina since the system's inception in 1972. In 2005, the General Assembly of North Carolina enacted House Bill 371 designating the University of North Carolina at Pembroke as North Carolina's Historically American Indian University. In 2012–2013, the University celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding.

### *Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Institutional Distinctiveness*

The Mission Statement reflects the University's unique heritage as a school for the education of Native Americans and its identity as one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in the South. Excellence in teaching and learning for the purpose of preparing graduates for careers, further education, leadership roles, and lifelong fulfillment is at the heart of the University's endeavors. Faculty and staff affirm their commitment to personalized teaching, engaged scholarship, creative activity, and public service to a multi-ethnic regional and global society. The full Mission Statement reads as follows:

Founded in 1887 as a school for the education of American Indians, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke now serves a distinctly diverse student body and encourages inclusion and appreciation for the values of all people. UNC Pembroke exists to promote excellence in teaching and learning, at the master's and undergraduate levels, in an environment of free inquiry, interdisciplinary collaboration, and rigorous intellectual standards.

Our diversity and our commitment to personalized teaching uniquely prepare our students for rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives. We cultivate an international perspective, rooted in our service to and appreciation of our multi-ethnic regional society, which prepares citizens for engagement in global society. Students are encouraged to participate in activities that develop their intellectual curiosity and mold them into responsible stewards of the world.

UNCP faculty and staff are dedicated to active student learning, engaged scholarship, high academic standards, creative activity, and public service. We celebrate our heritage as we enhance the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social life of the region.

The Vision Statement, Core Values Statement, and Institutional Distinctiveness Statement complement the Mission Statement. The Vision Statement expresses what the University aspires to become. It emphasizes the University's commitment to challenging students to "embrace difference and adapt to change, think critically, communicate effectively, and become responsible citizens." The Core Values Statement expresses institutional beliefs and ethical principles. It guides faculty and staff as they work to promote the value of the liberal arts, appreciation of the University's American Indian history, respect for diversity, and service to the region. The Institutional Distinctiveness Statement articulates the University's identity and expresses that it differs from peer institutions "by offering an affordable, highly personalized,

student-centered education to diverse students” and that the University prepares its students for life and leadership within a diverse society.

Chancellor Cummings expressed the essence of the University’s mission, vision, and values upon taking office in 2015 when he articulated the belief that the University exists to change the lives of our students, faculty/staff, and the community it serves. UNC Pembroke is focused on and committed to changing lives through education.

### ***UNC Pembroke and the State, Region, and County***

Offering thirty-six undergraduate degrees and seventeen master’s degrees, the University serves an eleven-county region in South Central and Southeastern North Carolina. Robeson, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Hoke, and Scotland, and Richmond counties account for 52.3% of the undergraduate student enrollment. Robeson County is the county of origin for 21% of the student body. Robeson County is the largest of North Carolina’s counties in area (approximately 10% smaller than the state of Rhode Island). With over 120,000 residents, it is one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the nation and the political and cultural center of North Carolina’s largest American Indian tribe—the Lumbees.

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke creates significant value for the state, region, and Robeson County, according to a UNC General Administration study that was released in February 2015. The study, titled “Demonstrating the Collective Economic Value of the University of North Carolina System,” examined the statewide benefits of all sixteen universities and specifically UNC Pembroke’s economic impact statewide, in its nine-county regional service area, and in Robeson County. The focus of the economic impact study was on value created through operations, research, construction, and student and visitor spending. The University also creates value through its mission to increase the employability and income of its graduates.

- In 2012–13 fiscal year, The University’s payroll and operations spending of \$116.4 million, together with its construction and student, alumni and visitor spending, created a total of \$389.9 million in added state income. This is the equivalent of creating 6,622 new jobs.
- In the University’s service region, it created \$256.3 million in added regional income in 2012-13, the equivalent of 5,171 jobs.
- In Robeson County, spending by UNCP created \$152 million in added county income. The amount is 5.5 percent of the gross county product of Robeson and equivalent to 3,178 jobs.
- UNCP students paid \$28.1 million in tuition, books, fees and supplies. Their investment returned \$405.5 million in estimated additional earning over their working careers.
- State and local taxpayers invested \$59.5 million in the operations of UNCP in 2012–13. Every dollar North Carolina taxpayers invested in UNCP returned \$4.20 in benefits.
- Every dollar that society spent on education at UNCP during 2012–13 returned \$10.20 in benefits to North Carolina communities.

### ***UNC Pembroke Student Demographics***

The total enrollment in fall 2018 was 7,137 students of which 1,068 were graduate students. Considered one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in the South, the ethnic composition of the University’s student body in fall 2018 is presented below.

**UNC Pembroke Composition of the Student Body  
Fall 2018**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
American Indian	14.6%
African American	32.6%
White	38.2%
Hispanic	6.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.6%

The total minority enrollment was 55% of the student body. There were 44 international students representing twelve countries. The gender distribution was 62.5 % female and 37.5% male. More than 95% of students were in-state residents, and 68% were commuter students. Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia were represented in the student body. Full-time students comprised 73.9 % of the student body.

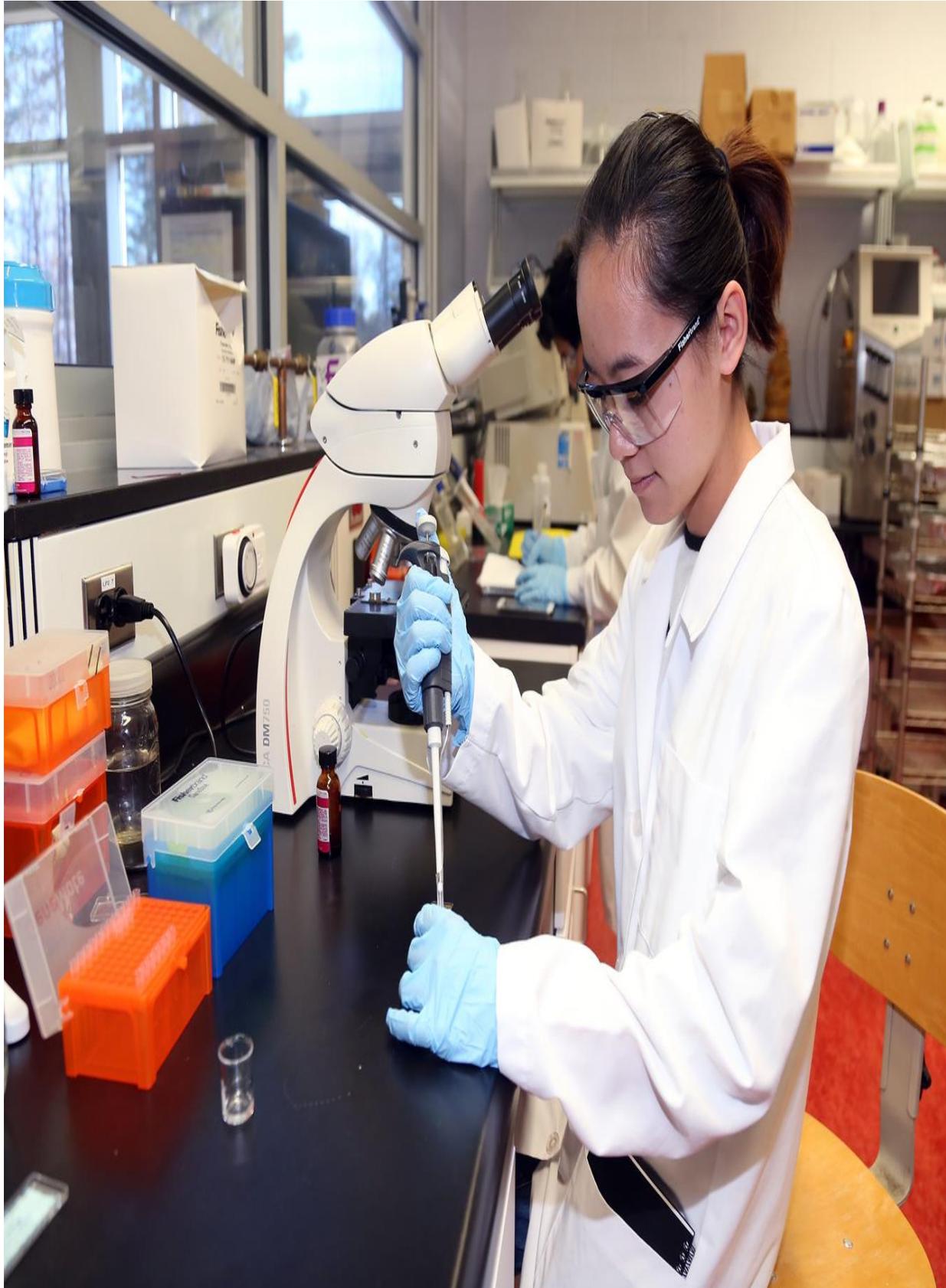
The socio-economic backgrounds and general level of academic preparedness of students at the University vary considerably. Many students are first generation college students, and many receive financial aid. Many students work while attending school full time. Sixty-two percent of students applied for need-based financial aid in fall 2018. Fifty-three percent of students were awarded some form of financial aid, and 45% were awarded need-based scholarships. Fifty-four percent of students received Pell Grants. The University was able to meet 67% of financial need. Consistent with national trends, non-traditional students comprise a significant proportion of the student body.

A legislatively-mandated tuition reduction plan known as the NC Promise Plan provides for in-state students at UNC Pembroke to pay only \$500 in tuition per semester. For out of state students the cost is \$2500. Tuition without the reduction would have been \$3200 for in-state undergraduate students and \$15,000 for out-of-state undergraduate students. The Plan does not affect required fees and other costs of attendance. State funding covers the cost of reduced tuition revenue resulting from enactment of this plan. The legislature makes up the difference between the full tuition price and the NC Promise Tuition Plan tuition price. The goal is to increase affordability for students. Legislators selected UNC Pembroke to participate in this plan to ensure the population in the University's service region have an affordable option for higher education. The Plan shifts a greater portion of the cost from students to the state strengthening the state's investment in the campus. In 2017-18, the cost for a typical undergraduate student living off-campus for an academic year was decreased from \$8,496 to \$5,893 (NC Promise Website, Frequently Ask Questions Page).

Recent trends in enrollment show that from 2000 to 2010 the University experienced a rapid increase in enrollment that resulted in a doubling of the student population. Enrollment from 2011 to 2017 stabilized at approximately 6200 students. In 2018, enrollment increased by 885 students to 7,137 students. This increase was due primarily to the implementation of the NC Promise tuition-reduction plan. In 2019, enrollment increased again to 7,698 students.

The fall-to-fall retention rate for first time freshmen at UNC Pembroke ranged from 62.4% in fall 2011 to 68.7% in fall 2017. While the University's retention rate exceeded the benchmark of 65.5% and 67.0% the UNC System established for it in several of those years, it did not always meet the 68% and 71% that the University set for itself. However, the University did meet its

retention goal in fall 2017 and saw a substantial increase in the retention rate to 73% in fall 2018. The five-year graduation rate for UNC Pembroke students graduating nationwide has increased steadily over the last seven years, from 34.2 % for students graduating in 2012 to 44.5% for students graduating in 2016. The six-year graduation rate has increased steadily over the last six years, from 32.7 % for students graduating in 2013 to 40.3% for students graduating in 2018. The rate for UNC Pembroke for students graduating in 2015 of 37.9% was equal to or greater than approximately half of the University's peer institutions



### III. Development and Rationale

#### *Connection to Strategic Planning*

After a planning process of almost 1 ½ years, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke Strategic Plan 2012–2017 was approved by the Board of Trustees on November 16, 2012. The Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC) was designated to provide oversight while University Vice Chancellors were charged with accomplishing the plan's objectives. SPARC encouraged departments and units within the University to develop their own strategic plans and align those with the larger university one. SPARC was charged with reviewing the plan in 2016 to determine if revisions were needed. If no revisions were needed at that time, the strategic planning process would begin again in 2019 in preparation for a new UNC Pembroke strategic plan to be approved in 2020.

SPARC kicked off the 2011–12 strategic planning cycle by engaging in data gathering exercises that were used to collect information from institutional constituencies/stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, employers, alumni, donors, the Board of Trustees, Lumbee Tribal Council members, and area K–12 representatives. Following data gathering and engagement with stakeholders, sub-groups of SPARC members wrote “concept papers” on the topics such as academics, the campus and surrounding area, communication and morale, distance education, fiscal sustainability, outreach, student services, and technology. The papers were used to draft a Vision Statement for the University. The year of strategic planning activities ended with the creation of a set of objectives and action plans aligned with strategic goals. This work was based on the Vision Statement and other strategic planning documents describing various planning assumptions.

Goal #2 of the UNC Pembroke Strategic Plan 2012–2017 dealt with student success. It stated that the University of North Carolina at Pembroke will maximize student success by improving its recruitment strategies and enhancing its academic support systems. Objectives associated with the student success goal are provided below.

- Revise admissions standards and recruitment practices to identify students who are a good fit for UNC Pembroke.
- Grow and strengthen Living and Learning Communities.
- Implement specialized programs to support the needs of commuter and distance education students.
- Enhance student support and intervention systems such as academic advising and tutoring.
- Promote diversity in all aspects of University life and foster opportunities for collaboration among academic disciplines and administrative units.
- Create resources that ameliorate students' challenges in securing and maintaining access to safe housing, healthy foods, and other basic life needs.

In the fall of 2012, the Strategic Plan was reviewed and approved by the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and the Board of Trustees. Subsequent strategic planning activities consisted of implementing the plan. SPARC continued to oversee this process. Action plans were passed along to the Cabinet. In spring 2013 the newly-formed University Oversight Committee took on an oversight role in the strategic plan implementation process. By contributing to budgeting decisions, identifying achievements, and keeping the

campus focused on the University's objectives, the UOC directed the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan from 2012 to 2015.

In 2015, the Chancellor's Annual Report to the UNC Pembroke Board of Trustees provided an update on the University's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan Implementation Report showcased many changes that occurred since 2012. It reviewed that initial strategic plan and chronicled the University Oversight Committee's implementation of it. Authored by the UOC, the 2010–2017 Strategic Plan Implementation Report showed that faculty, staff and administrators of UNC Pembroke successfully carried out the twenty-six objectives introduced in the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan. The University of North Carolina at Pembroke has addressed all of the objectives introduced in the 2012–17 Strategic Plan.

With respect to Goal #2 on maximizing student success, the Report showed that the actions described below had been accomplished with respect to the objectives relating to student success.

- Grow and strengthen Living and Learning Communities.
  - Added Discover Nursing Living and Learning Community in Cypress Hall, adjacent to Health Sciences Building.
  - Added Leadership Living and Learning Community.
  - Added Career Quest Learning Community.
  - Added Soaring Ahead Learning Community (for Early College students).
  - Added Strengthening Our Ties Learning Community (for American Indians & those interested in native heritage).
  
- Enhance student support and intervention systems such as academic advising and tutoring
  - Reorganized the Office of Enrollment to offer more robust academic support, including intensive advising
  - Increased opportunities for tutoring
  - Enhanced Hawk alerts
  - Increased the number of courses offering Supplemental Instruction
  - Relocated academic support offices into a single location, divided among three adjacent buildings.
  - Usage of all support services, including academic advising, tutoring, probation/suspension counseling, and Writing Center, increased between fall 2011 and fall 2014, including 34% increase in freshman usage of tutoring. HAWK Alerts increased from 470 alerts submitted by 41 faculty in Fall 2011 to 1,801 alerts submitted by 180 faculty in fall 2014.
  - Reorganized and expanded New Student Orientation to integrate programming with support offices.
  - Implemented a new, paperless electronic Early Warning System for faculty to submit alerts on students who are struggling.
  - Created Transfer Transition Office with federal funding to provide peer mentoring, workshops, a space for relaxation and computer usage for commuter students, and other services.
  - New American Indian transfer retention rate increased from 56.3% in Fall 2011 to 68.3% in Fall 2014.

- Established Go-to Faculty, a select group of specially trained faculty who make themselves available to speak with students and provide guidance or support on any matter, academic or otherwise. In 2014, Go-to Faculty spent minimum of 20 contact hours serving as an extra resource for students, participating in student orientation, staffing Welcome Tents, fielding questions at Helping Hands event, and supplementing the assistance provided by other faculty and staff.

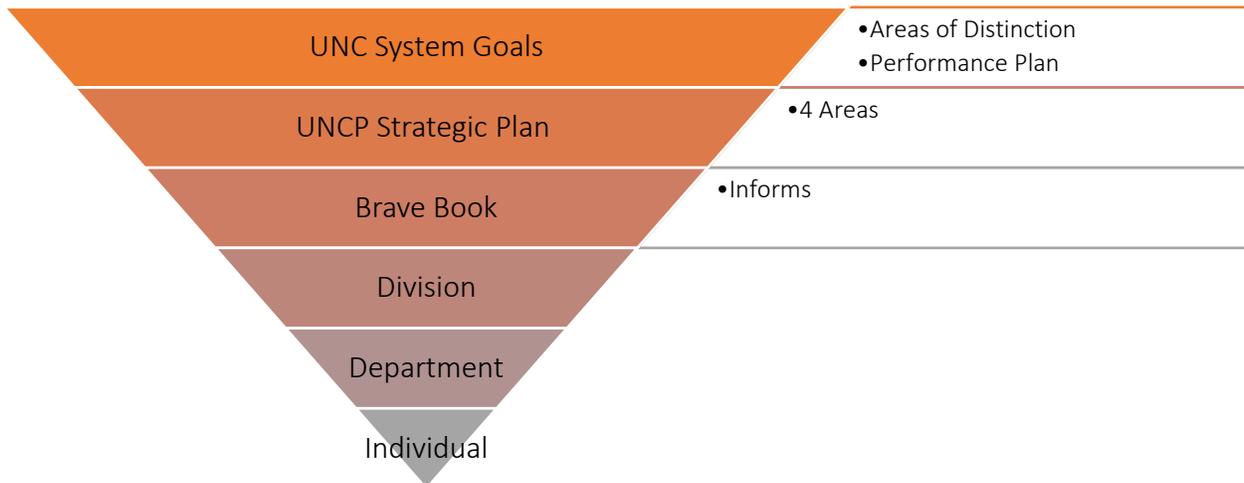
Good strategic plans are fluid and responsive to environmental changes. Although the goals and objectives should be considered stable, new goals and ways to achieve those goals (objectives, action plans) may be proposed if needed. In 2016, individuals responsible for plan implementation reviewed the entire strategic plan and concluded that a major revision would not need to be done until the 2019–2020 academic year. It would be necessary to be attentive to possible alignment between the University’s strategic plan and other long-term plans within the University, including the Campus Master Plan, and the University of North Carolina System Strategic Plan.

In 2016, the Chancellor and his Cabinet developed a set of annual operational goals to guide faculty and staff in the implementation of the University’s mission and vision as articulated in the University’s Strategic Plan. Named “The BraveBook: Our Playbook for Success,” this series of objectives built upon the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and provided a series of annual initiatives and targets for the further implementation of the Strategic Plan. The guiding principles for the BraveBook included:

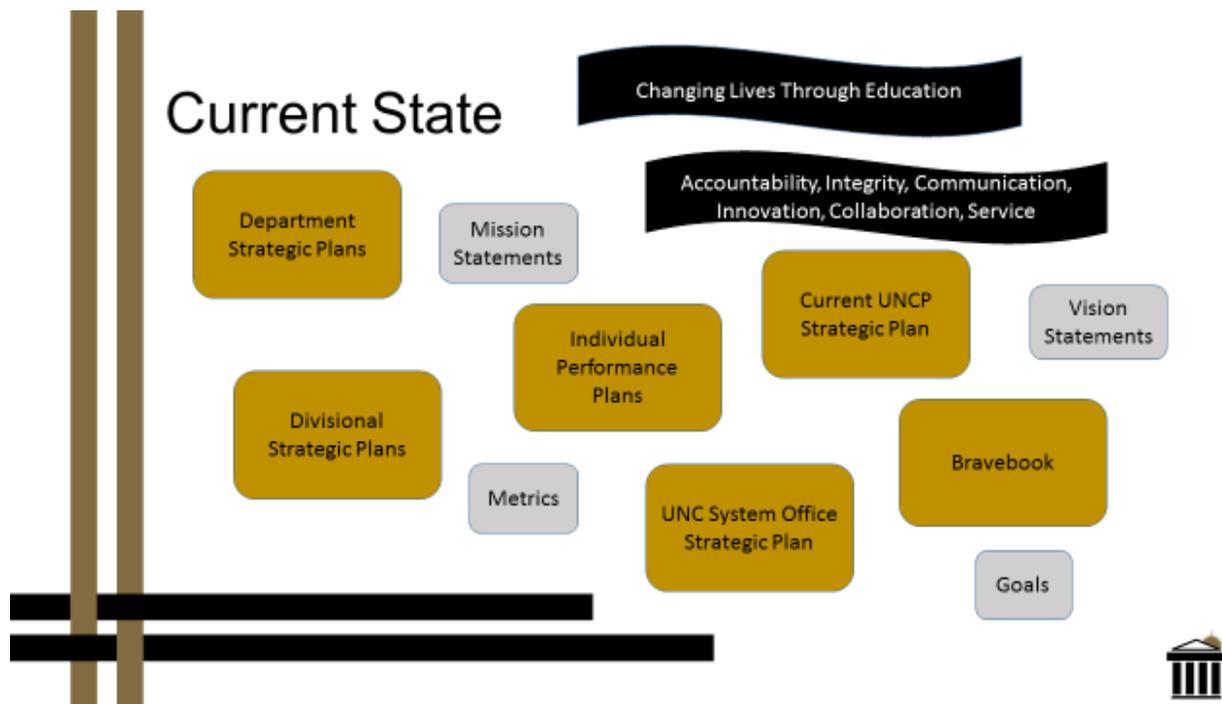
- changing lives through education for our students, faculty and staff, and the communities we serve;
- valuing service to others ahead of ourselves, integrity and accountability in our actions, proactive communication and collaboration, and innovation in what we do; providing a quality, student-centered and affordable higher education as well as empower and positively impact the world we serve; and
- providing personalized education and support to our students, using information to make effective and efficient decisions, leveraging our unique culture and partnerships, and being committed to the development and engagement of our faculty and staff.

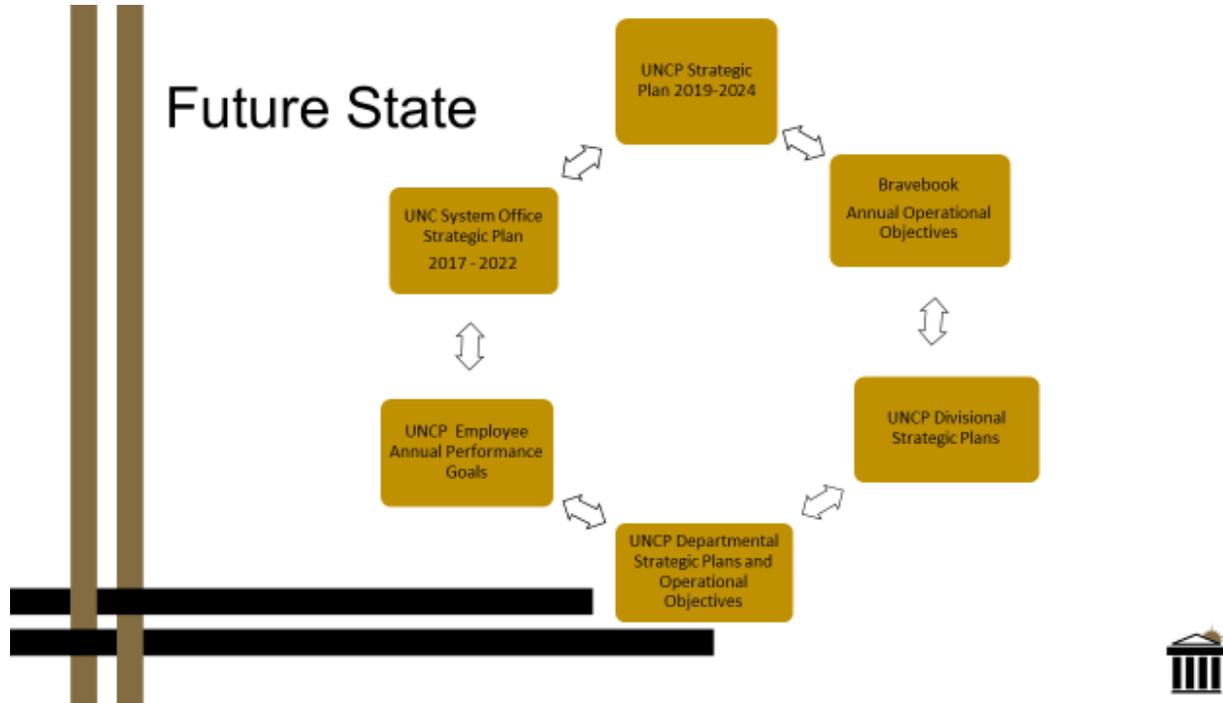
The 2016–2017 BraveBook had a thematic goal of maximizing student success. Defining objective categories included assessing and improving the student support experience with the applicable standard operating objective (metric) of improving student retention, graduation, and placement rates. Defining initiatives associated with this objective included development of the Center for Student Success and expanding student service-learning opportunities. The 2017–18 BraveBook had five objectives, one of which was student success. Initiatives associated with this objective included developing and implementing a strategic student retention, progression, and graduation plan. Progress on the implementation of the BraveBook initiatives was monitored monthly at meetings of the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

In 2017–2018, as part of BraveBook Initiative #8, Improve Organizational Alignment through Our Vision, Mission and Values, a group of faculty, staff, and students examined the alignment between the UNC Strategic Plan, UNC Pembroke Strategic Plan, and the BraveBook Process. The Committee authored the visual below to illustrate the cascading nature of the plans to be used in the next planning process. It showed that planning process flow from UNC System goals through the UNC Pembroke Strategic Plan and the BraveBook to division, department, and individual plans.



A graphic depicting the future state of the alignment among planning processes was also developed. It shows the relationship as a circular one in which each type of planning process feeds into another.





A new strategic planning process began in summer 2019. It is set to conclude with the UNC Pembroke Board of Trustees' approval of the UNC Pembroke Strategic Plan 2020-2025 in April 2020.

**Identifying the Topic–Process Used to Develop the QEP**

The table below provides a brief overview of the institutional process used to develop the QEP. This process is elaborated further in the subsequent narrative.

**SUMMARY OF THE QEP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Summer 2016	Reaffirmation Steering Committee formed
Spring 2017	QEP Topic Selection Survey is administered to all students, faculty, and selected staff
Spring 2017	Committee analysis of survey results shows responses grouped around nine topics
Fall 2017	Second QEP Topic Selection Survey asks students, faculty, and selected staff to rank seven topics
Fall 2017	QEP Topic Selection Committee is formed
Fall 2017	QEP Topic Selection Committee reviews the survey results and decides on student engagement as overall topic
Fall 2017	QEP Topic Selection Committee narrows the overall topic to focus on high-impact practices
Spring 2018	QEP Topic Selection Committee becomes the QEP Writing Committee
Spring 2018	QEP Writing Committee determines that the overall goal is to increase student learning through increasing student engagement in high-impact practices

Spring 2018	QEP Committee decides to focus specifically on expanding the use of one high-impact practice–capstone courses/projects
Spring 2018	Committee members are assigned to review literature on student engagement, high-impact practices, capstone courses, and integrative learning
Spring 2018	QEP website is created
Summer 2018	QEP literature review is completed
Fall 2018	QEP Committee membership is reconfigured to account for attrition and increase representation of support units and academic departments
Fall 2018	Review of NSSE and FSSE data for the needs assessment is completed
Fall 2018	Student learning outcomes are developed
Fall 2018	Actions to be implemented are expressed in a series of steps for creating and expanding capstone courses to achieve student learning outcomes
Spring 2019	Visit of Dr. George Kuh, nationally-recognized expert on student engagement and high-impact practices, advances the QEP Committee’s work
Spring 2019	QEP Committee develops a timeline for implementation of the actions to be completed
Spring 2019	QEP Committee develops an organizational structure to implement the QEP and determines the necessary budget
Fall 2019	QEP Committee develops the Plan for assessing the achievement of the student learning objectives and communicates the Plan to campus constituencies

In summer 2016, the Reaffirmation Steering Committee for the development of the University’s next decennial reaffirmation report was formed. One of its first tasks was to begin the process of identifying a topic for the University’s next Quality Enhancement Plan. The Committee began by reviewing the University’s Strategic Plan and the strategic planning process associated with it to determine what elements in the plan focused on the improvement of student learning or student success and how the next QEP could be derived from those elements. As discussed above, the strategic planning process has continuously focused on improving student success, and the resulting University Strategic Plan and BraveBook operational plans contain more than ample bases for a variety of QEP topics focused on student learning and/or student success. Living and learning communities, advising, tutoring, service learning, and increasing retention, graduation, progression, and placement rates have had a prominent place in the strategic planning documents.

After reviewing the process used for involving institutional constituencies in identifying the topic for the previous QEP, the Committee decided to survey faculty, staff, and students as a means of involving institutional constituencies in the selection of the QEP topic. In spring 2017, the Reaffirmation Steering Committee sent out a Qualtrics survey to all students and faculty. Staff members in the divisions dealing with student affairs and student success were also included in the survey. The QEP Topic Selection Survey asked respondents to identify what they saw as the major obstacle (s) to student learning at UNC Pembroke. They were also asked to describe what solutions to these obstacles they would propose that could become the basis of the new Quality Enhancement Plan. (Appendix A, QEP Topic Selection Survey.) By May 2017, the survey had received 170 responses and the Committee undertook to analyze the results.

They found that the responses were grouped around the nine topics listed in the table below.

**FIRST QEP TOPIC SELECTION SURVEY TOPICS**

College Readiness/Study Strategies
Student Motivation
Critical Thinking Skills
Student Engagement
Work/Life Balance
Information Literacy
Advising Quality
Critical Reading Skills
Research Opportunities

After further refinement of the topics, the Reaffirmation Steering Committee deployed a second survey to students, faculty, and staff in fall 2017. It asked recipients to rank a set of seven topics from most to least important and to provide any additional topics. These topics in the survey are listed below.

**SECOND QEP TOPIC SELECTION SURVEY TOPICS**

Study Skills
Critical Thinking Skills
Student Engagement
Information Literacy
Advising
Critical Reading Skills
Student Research Opportunities

In October 2017, The QEP Topic Selection Committee was formed to consider the results of the second survey and to choose the topic of the University’s next QEP. The Committee was composed of faculty members who had served on the last QEP Committee and who were interested in serving on the committee to develop the next QEP. These faculty were drawn from the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, and Library. The Division of Student Affairs and the Center for Student Success were also invited to provide the names of staff members who might be interested in serving on the Committee, and those individuals were included in the Committee membership. The Dean of the School of Business was asked to provide the names of faculty from the School who might be willing to serve, and that individual became a member of the Committee. The membership of the QEP Topic Selection Committee is listed in the table below.

**QEP TOPIC SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Mr. Michael Alewine	Library
Dr. Cherry Beasley	Department of Nursing
Dr. Polina Chemishanova	Department of English, Theatre and Foreign Languages
Dr. Sherry Edwards	Department of Social Work
Dr. Angela McDonald	Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling
Dr. Cyndi Miecznikowski	Department of English, Theatre and Foreign Languages
Dr. Derek Oxendine	Center for Student Success

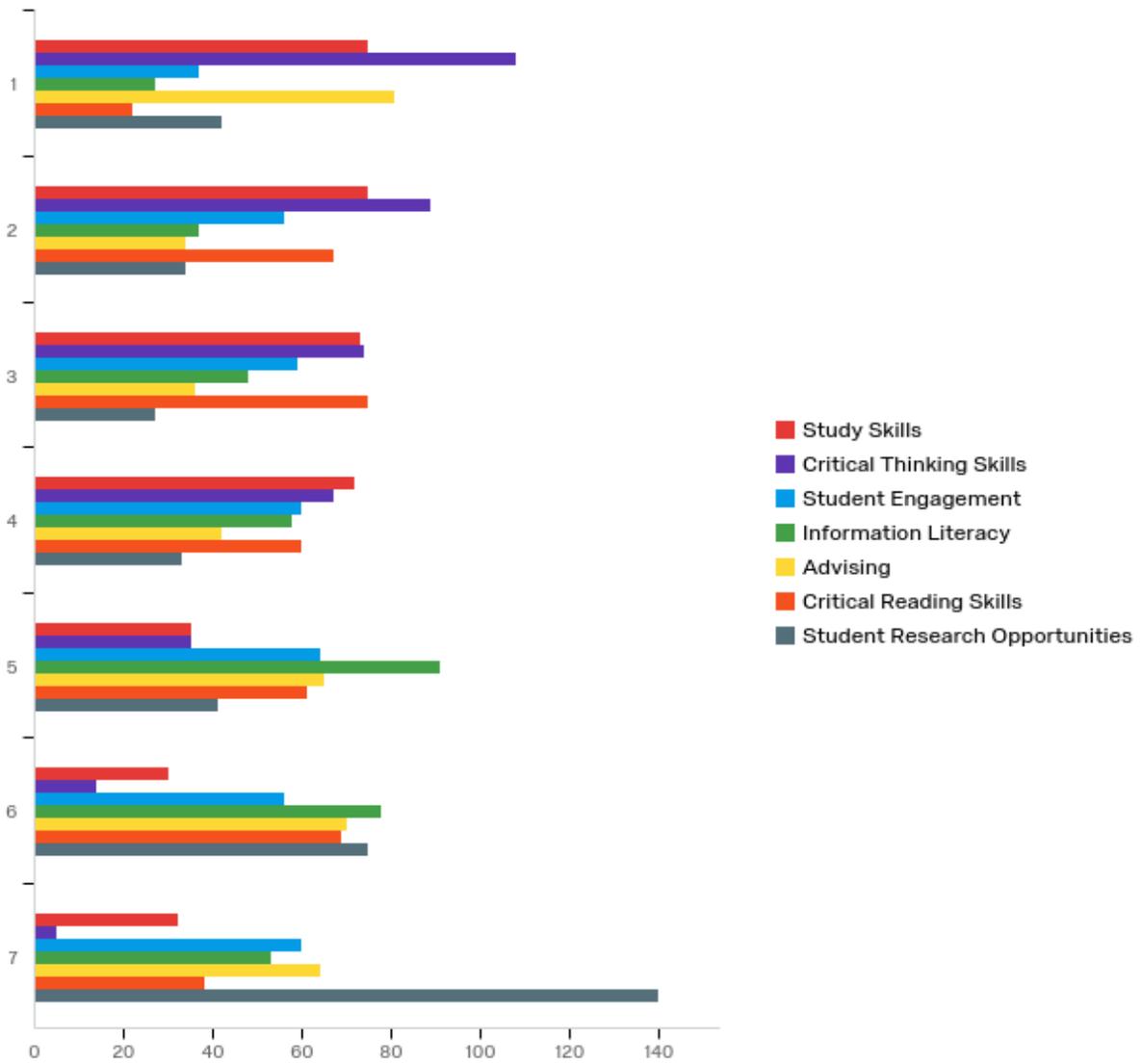
Dr. Rosemarie Pilarczyk	Department of Nursing
Ms. Christina Poteet	Office for Community and Civic Engagement
Dr. Mohammad Rahman	Department of Accounting and Finance
Dr. Cornelia Tirla	Department of Chemistry and Physics
Dr. Marian Wooten	Department of Health and Human Performance
Dr. Elizabeth Normandy	Office of Academic Affairs, Chair

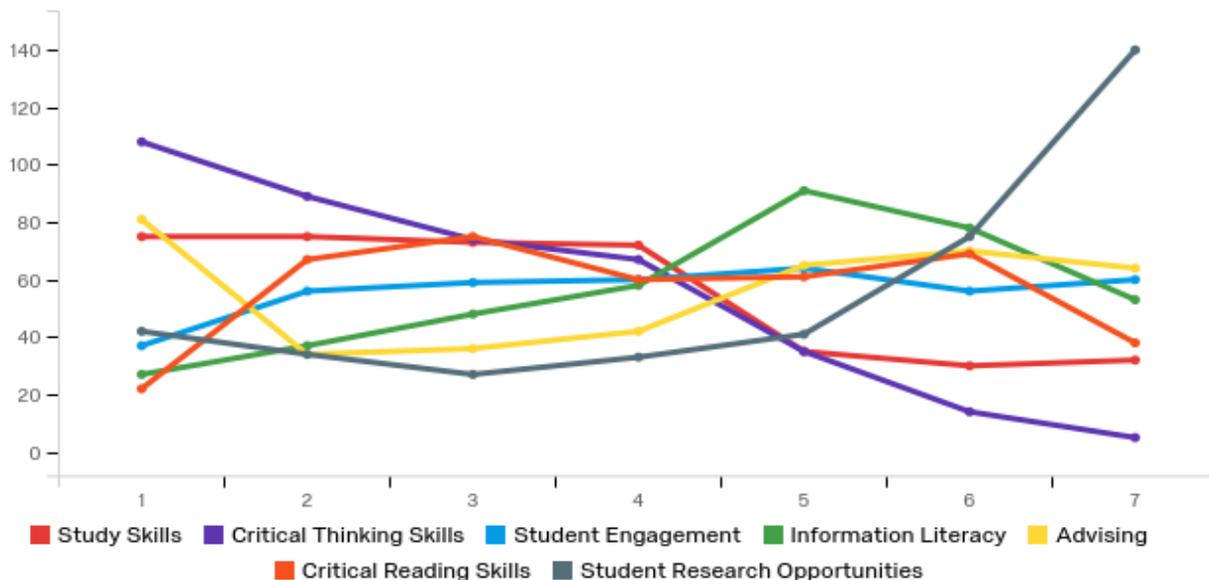
The QEP Topic Selection Committee held two meetings in fall 2017. At the first meeting, the Committee reviewed the results of the second QEP Topic Selection Survey. These results showed that critical thinking skills had received the top ranking among the seven topics included in the survey. Critical thinking was followed by advising, study skills, student research opportunities, student engagement, information literacy, and critical reading skills in the ranking of topics. Additional topics suggested included success in online learning, global engagement, critical writing skills, quantitative skills, internships, oral communication, and experiential learning. After extended discussion, the Committee decided that student engagement was a topic that could serve to encompass a variety of knowledge, behaviors, and skills that students should acquire during their University career. Results of QEP Survey 2 are shown below.

### QEP TOPIC SELECTION SURVEY RESULTS

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
	Responses	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
1	Study Skills	19.1	75	19.1	75	18.6	73	18.4	72	8.9	35	7.7	30	8.2	32
2	Critical Thinking Skills	27.6	108	22.7	89	18.9	74	17.1	67	8.9	35	3.6	14	1.3	5
3	Student Engagement	9.4	37	14.3	56	15.1	59	15.3	60	16.3	64	14.3	56	15.3	60
4	Information Literacy	6.9	27	9.4	37	12.2	48	14.8	58	23.2	91	19.9	78	13.5	53
5	Advising	20.7	81	8.7	34	9.2	36	10.7	42	16.6	65	17.9	70	16.3	64
6	Critical Reading Skills	5.6	22	17.0	67	19.1	75	15.3	60	15.6	61	17.6	69	9.69	38
7	Student Research Opportunities	10.7	42	8.7	34	6.9	27	8.4	33	10.5	41	19.1	75	35.7	140
	Total		392		392		392		392		392		392		392

### RANKING OF TOPICS FOR THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN





At the second meeting of the QEP Topic Selection Committee in fall 2017, the Committee reviewed research on student engagement compiled by Committee members and posted to a working bibliography for the QEP maintained by the Library. This research included other QEPs that dealt with student engagement. After extensive discussion of this material, the Committee concluded that the emphasis on high-impact practices and its connection to student engagement would serve the University well as part of its next QEP. The University already had programs in place in many of the areas commonly identified areas as high-impact educational practices. University programs on service learning and the development of professional skills within the School of Business would be programs that could form the foundation of the QEP.

In spring 2018, the QEP Topic Selection Committee became the QEP Writing Committee. The committee members were briefed on the requirements of the QEP. These include a topic that is identified through an ongoing process of strategic planning; has broad-based support in the UNCP community; focuses on supporting specific learning outcomes or student success (e.g., grades, pass rates, retention, standardized tests, etc.); is supported with resources, both financial and human in order to implement, reinforce, and complete the initiative; and an assessment plan designed to measure the effectiveness of the initiative. The QEP could be a continuation of an existing initiative but it would require a new emphasis. The new QEP period will be 2020 – 2025.

It was determined that the working QEP goal statement would be “increasing student engagement through the use of high-impact practices for the purpose of increasing student learning or student success.” The QEP would need to include student learning outcomes, a review of relevant literature and/or best practices, actions to be implemented, a timeline, organizational structure, resources, and assessment. The next step after selecting a topic is defining the student learning outcomes. Other QEPs that deal with high-impact practices were discussed. Ways of connecting the new QEP to existing initiatives such as the School of Business Passport Program and the University College were discussed. QEP committee members were asked to look at various learning outcomes of existing programs that can be associated with high-impact practices. These can be used to develop overall outcomes for our QEP.

The Committee discussed the need for an operational definition of student engagement. The literature on student engagement defines it as either individual engagement in the classroom or opportunities provided by the institution for students to be engaged. Clearly articulated student learning outcomes (SLOs) can fall into one of two categories: student learning in terms of knowledge, skills, or values and student success in terms of graduation rates, retention rates, course completion rates, course success rates, job placement rates, licensure pass rates, etc. The QEP needs to include an assessment of whether or not SLOs identified in the QEP document have been achieved. High-impact practices (HIPs) can be course- and/or curriculum-based. The Committee discussed the various high-impact practices as foci for the QEP. These included:

- freshman seminar/first year experience,
- common intellectual experience—general education,
- learning communities,
- writing intensive courses,
- collaborative learning,
- undergraduate research,
- diversity and global learning,
- service-learning and community-based learning,
- internships, and
- capstone courses.

The Committee discussed how many high-impact practices UNC Pembroke should try to incorporate in a QEP focusing on student engagement. After some deliberation, the Committee tentatively selected internships and capstone courses as the two high-impact practices it should consider adopting for the University's QEP. QEP Committee members began a review of some of the literature on internships and capstone courses.

After a discussion of high-impact practices and other research, the committee began to focus specifically on capstone courses/projects. The Committee worked on developing a conceptual definition of the concept. Characteristics of capstone courses include:

- culminating experiences,
- disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature,
- occur in the final year,
- project-based/demonstrating knowledge of discipline,
- integration and application of knowledge,
- simulation—using prior knowledge,
- synthesis/evaluation of knowledge,
- collaborative learning, and
- writing-enriched.

The Committee discussed what student learning outcomes should be assessed and how they might be assessed. The ways included surveys or indirect assessment, use of an integrative learning rubric for assessment in the major, artifacts/portfolios, and professional preparation. The Committee discussed incentives for departmental buy-in, the number of courses to be offered every year, approval of course syllabi, and faculty development to instruct faculty on how to develop capstone courses/projects. The Committee discussed surveying departments to determine what they might be doing that could resemble capstone courses/projects and doing a

pilot in one or two departments. Committee members were charged with reviewing research on capstone courses/projects.

The Committee modified the QEP goal statement to read “improving student learning by increasing student engagement in high-impact practices specifically capstone courses.” The Committee decided that a member of the Committee would conduct a review of the University Catalog to determine the number of capstone courses, senior seminar courses, and internships currently offered. Committee members were assigned portions of the literature review to complete. This included the literature on student engagement, high-impact practices, capstone courses, and integrative learning. Committee members shared findings from the literature on student engagement and an overview of the literature on high-impact practices. A Committee member presented a catalog review of current internship, capstone, and senior seminar offerings. She stated that the catalog lists more internships than capstone courses.

In spring 2018, a website for the QEP was created. The QEP Committee prepared to review institutional data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and other sources in order to conduct a needs assessment. The Committee worked on the literature review during summer 2018. In fall 2018, the QEP Committee reviewed and discussed the completed literature review. The membership of the QEP Committee was reconfigured to account for attrition and increase the representation from support units key to student success initiatives and a wider range of academic departments. The new membership of the QEP Committee is listed in the table below.

**QEP WRITING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Robert Arndt	Library
Dr. Polina Chemishanova	Department of English, Theatre and Foreign Languages
Dr. Sherry Edwards	Department of Social Work
Dr. Beth Holder	Dean, University College
Dr. Miranda Reiter	Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Dr. Rosemarie Pilarczyk	Department of Nursing
Mr. Sandy Jacobs	Office for Community and Civic Engagement
Dr. Tiffany Locklear	Department of Teacher Education
Dr. Mohammad Rahman	Department of Accounting and Finance
Dr. Rebecca Gonzalez	Department of Accounting and Finance
Dr. Cornelia Tirla	Department of Chemistry and Physics
Dr. Marian Wooten	Department of Kinesiology
Dr. Elizabeth Normandy	Office of Academic Affairs, Chair

The review of NSSE and FSSE data was concluded. The 2017 FSSE results showed that 76% of faculty found it important to do culminating experiences. The 2014 and 2017 NSSE results showed that a low number of freshman students were participating in high-impact practices. Twenty-six percent would like or expected to participate in a culminating experience. Thirty-seven percent of seniors were doing a culminating experience in 2014. In 2017, 26% of seniors didn’t plan to do a culminating experience, and 13% hadn’t decided. The percentage of seniors doing a culminating experience dropped from 37% in 2014 to 21% seniors in 2017.

The Committee discussed the development of student learning outcomes with respect to the QEP goal of increasing student learning and student engagement through the use of a high-

impact practice, namely capstone courses. Student learning outcomes must be observable, demonstrable, and measureable. The Committee developed the following student learning outcomes. With respect to student learning outcomes, students completing a capstone course will be able to:

1. Connect relevant experiences to academic knowledge from different courses and fields of study in the University setting;
2. Make connections across disciplines, perspectives, fields of study;
3. Adopt and apply information to new situations; and
4. Engage in meaningful self-reflection.

The Committee discussed using the AAC&U Integrative Learning Value Rubric to assess student achievement of the student learning outcomes. The Committee discussed what actions would be implemented in order to achieve the goal of enhancing student engagement and student learning. The “*Actions to be Implemented*” Section of the QEP is at the very center of the QEP. The Committee decided what initiatives the University would undertake for students with regards to capstone courses and how they are to be implemented. This was expressed in a series of steps in the process of creating and expanding capstone courses in order to achieve the desired student learning outcomes.

In spring 2019, the Committee’s work was advanced by the presentation of Dr. George Kuh, who visited the campus in March 2019. Dr. Kuh is the Founding Director, Senior Scholar, and Co-Principal Investigator of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment and a nationally-recognized expert on student engagement and high-impact practices. He provided an overview on student success, an in-depth look at high-impact practices, and a discussion of institutional strategies for developing high-impact practices (HIPs). The Committee discussed what the members took away from Dr. George Kuh’s presentation on HIPs. Dr. Kuh’s workshop reinforced the importance of reflection in HIPs and stressed that simply providing opportunities for students to engage in HIPs is not enough; there should be intentional engagement of students in HIPs. When it comes to HIPs, intentionality is key. Research shows that the more HIPs in which students engage, the better they do academically.

In spring 2019, the Committee developed a timeline for the implementation of the actions to be completed. It also developed an organizational structure to implement the QEP and determined the budget necessary. The Committee considered three different leadership choices. These included the creation of a new, full-time position of QEP Director filled through a national search, use of existing faculty personnel with reassigned time and a stipend, or use of an existing administrative staff member. The Committee decided that the preferred structure would be a QEP Director and an Assessment Coordinator with reassigned time for their administrative duties during the year and a stipend in the summer. The Committee discussed what administrative support might be needed and the ways in which graduate assistants might be used.

The Committee discussed what funds would be necessary to provide a robust faculty development program, including the type and amounts of stipends to be provided to faculty. Other funds would be necessary to provide faculty development workshops; travel to workshops, conferences, and institutes; marketing; and assessment tools such as NSSE and FSSE. The Committee decided that faculty stipends should be set at \$2,000 per faculty member participating in the program, the amount allocated for workshops should be \$7,500 to \$10,000.

per year, the marketing budget should be set at \$5,000, and the cost for the NSSE would be \$6,000 for each administration.

In fall 2019, the Committee finalized the assessment plan. An Integrative Thinking and Reflection Rubric based on the AAC&U Value Rubric will be used to assess the achievement of the student learning outcomes in capstone courses. Capstone courses will contain assignments that produce artifacts that will be assessed with the rubric. The Assessment Coordinator will take an active role in the formulation of the faculty development workshops. The Assessment Coordinator will compile the assessment results and present the findings to the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be used as an indirect method to assess student progress in achieving the student learning outcomes. The UNC Pembroke Graduating Senior Survey will be modified to include a question about capstone experience, and an effort will be made to track graduation rates for students who participate in capstone experience compared to other students.

### ***Analysis of Institutional Data***

#### ***National Survey of Student Engagement***

As stated above, the QEP Committee reviewed data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) as part of the topic selection process. The purpose was to confirm that the intended focus on improving student learning through increasing student engagement in high-impact practices would serve the needs of the students and lead to improvement in areas where deficiencies could be identified. The data confirmed that there was a need for programming to enhance students' ability to use integrative thinking and reflection in order to make connections across multiple academic contexts and educational experiences. They supported the QEP topic and student learning outcomes that were selected.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is an important point of reference for all of the University's planning and assessment. Student engagement embodies two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the University deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that are associated to student learning.

The NSSE makes available comparisons for ten Engagement Indicators and six High-impact Practices. The ten indicators are organized into four themes: (1) Academic Challenge, (2) Learning with Peers, (3) Experiences with Faculty, and (4) Campus Environment. The six High-impact Practices (HIP) have positive associations with student learning and retention. High-Impact Practices (HIPs) share several traits: they demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.

Engagement Indicators are summary measures based on sets of NSSE questions examining key dimensions of student engagement. The ten indicators are organized within four broad themes: Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment. Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote student learning by challenging and supporting students to engage in various forms of deep learning. Four Engagement Indicators are part of the academic challenge theme: higher-order learning, reflective and integrative

learning, learning strategies, and quantitative reasoning. In 2017, the mean score for first-year students at UNC Pembroke on reflective and integrative learning was 35.3. This compares with 34.6 for other public institutions in the Southeastern United States, 34.9 for other institutions in the same Carnegie classification, and 35.3 for other UNC System schools. This score represents a decline from 37.0 in the NSSE results in 2014. The mean score for seniors was 38.8. This compares with 37.5 for other public institutions in the Southeast, 38.3 for other institutions in the same Carnegie classification, and 38.4 for other schools in the UNC System. This score was exactly the same in the 2014 results.

In 2017, only 49% of first-year students responded that they often or very often combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments, while 74% reported that they connected ideas from their courses to their prior experiences and knowledge. First-year student responses on the NSSE in the category of reflective and integrative learning are provided in the table below.

**UNC Pembroke  
National Survey of Student Engagement  
First-Year Student Responses on Reflective and Integrative Learning  
2017**

Reflective and Integrative Learning	Percent Responding “Often” or “Very Often”
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	49%
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	51%
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	57%
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	66%
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	67%
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	70%
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	74%

Sixty-six percent of senior students responded that they often or very often combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments, and 86% reported that they connected ideas from their courses to their prior experiences and knowledge. Senior responses on the NSSE in the category of reflective and integrative learning are provided in the table below.

**UNC Pembroke  
National Survey of Student Engagement  
Senior Responses on Reflective and Integrative Learning  
2017**

Reflective and Integrative Learning	Percent Responding “Often” or “Very Often”
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	66%
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	60%
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	56%
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	68%
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	76%
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	71%
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	86%

Due to their positive associations with student learning and retention, certain undergraduate opportunities are designated "high-impact." High-Impact Practices (HIPs) share several traits: They demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. As a result, participation in these practices can be life-changing (Kuh, 2008). NSSE founding director George Kuh recommends that institutions should aspire for all students to participate in at least two HIPs over the course of their undergraduate experience—one during the first year and one in the context of their major (NSSE, 2007).

NSSE asks students about their participation in six HIPs. These include service-learning, learning community, research with faculty, internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience. Unlike most questions on the NSSE survey, the HIP questions are not limited to the current school year. Thus, senior students' responses include participation from prior years. In 2017, 79% of seniors at UNC Pembroke reported that they participated in one HIP, and 51% reported they participated in two or more HIPs. This included participation in a culminating senior experience. More specifically, however, only 28% of seniors reported they participated in a culminating senior experience. This was fifteen percentage points below that reported by students from other public institutions in the Southeastern United States, sixteen percentage points below that of other institutions in the same Carnegie classification, and twenty-four percentage points below that of other schools in the UNC System.

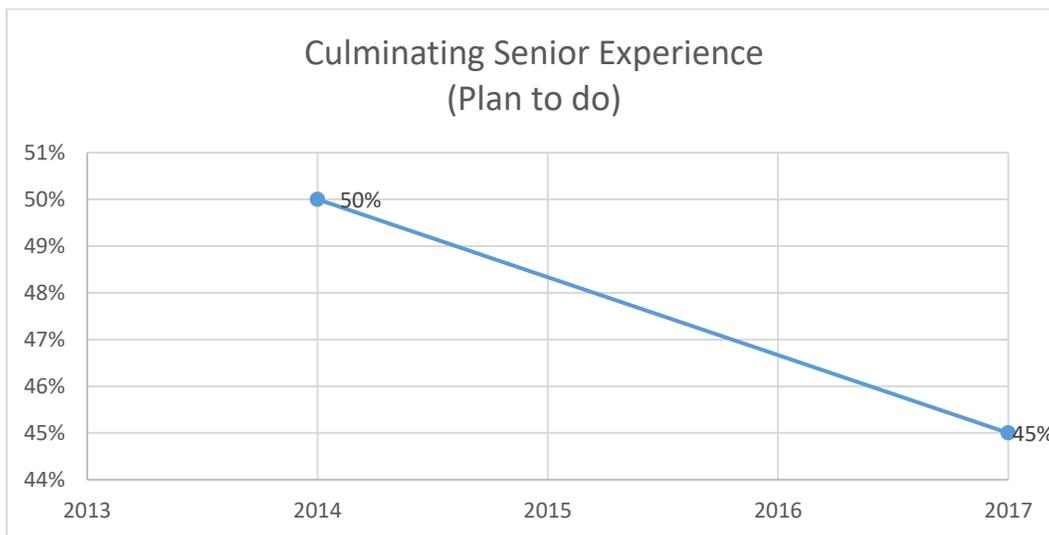
Knowing whether first-year students *plan* to participate in upper-division HIPs can reveal insights about HIP demand, awareness of opportunities, and the clarity of institutional information. These results might also point to topics for additional exploration, such as what contributes to students' expectations, their assumptions about who can participate, or why other students are undecided or have no plans to participate in the activity. In 2017, 45% of first-year students at UNC Pembroke reported that they planned to do a culminating senior experience

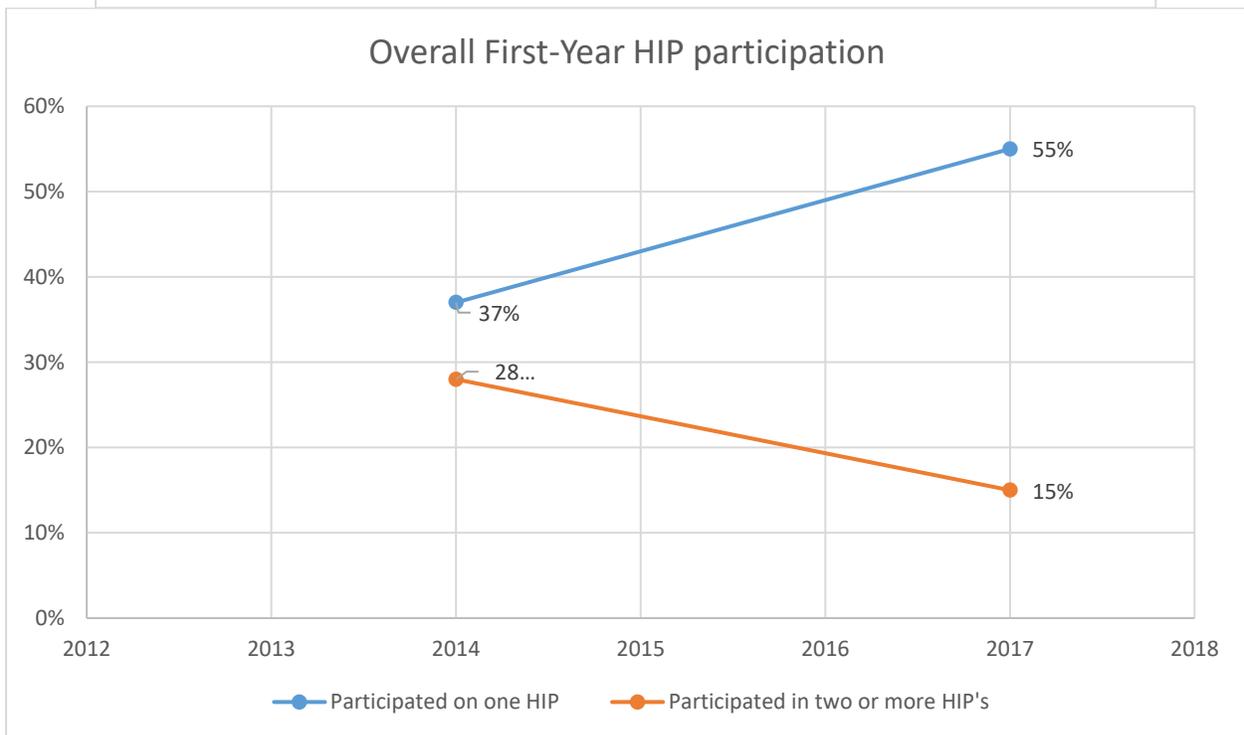
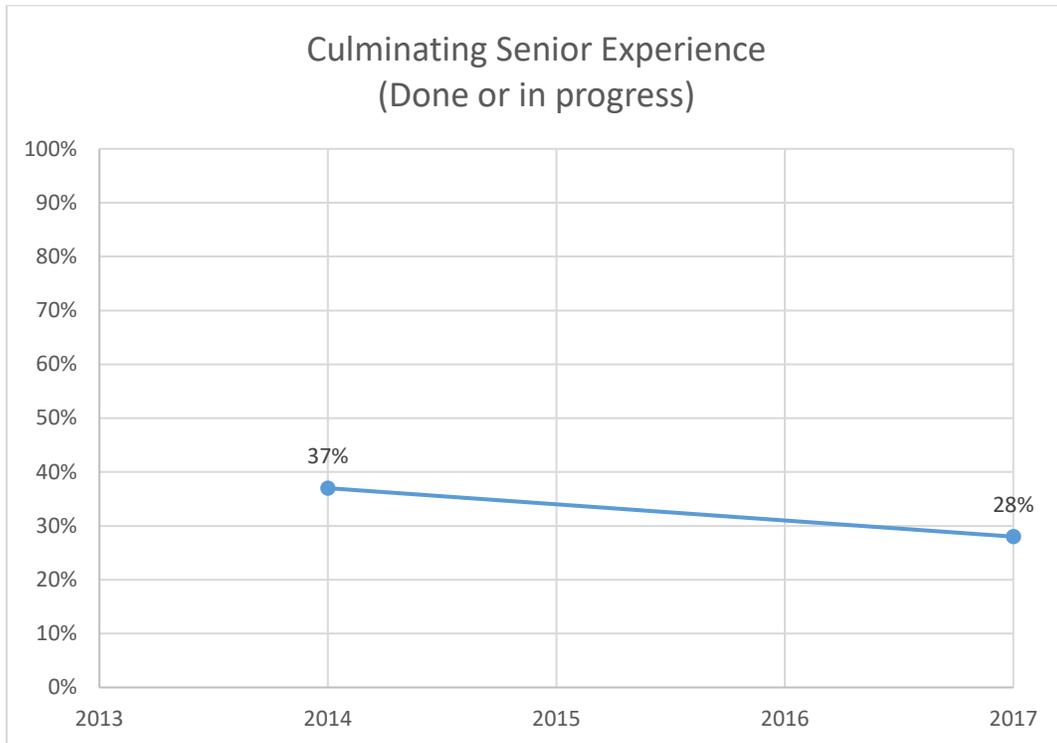
(capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.) However, only 24% of seniors reported that they planned to do one, 18% had not decided, and 29% did not plan to do so. In short, nearly one-third of seniors reporting did not plan to do a senior culminating experience, and nearly half either did not plan to do so or had not decided. The percentage of seniors reporting that they had done or were doing a senior culminating experience was significantly lower for UNC Pembroke than for its comparison groups. The percentages of seniors that had not decided and did not plan to do one was also substantially higher. These results are presented in the table below.

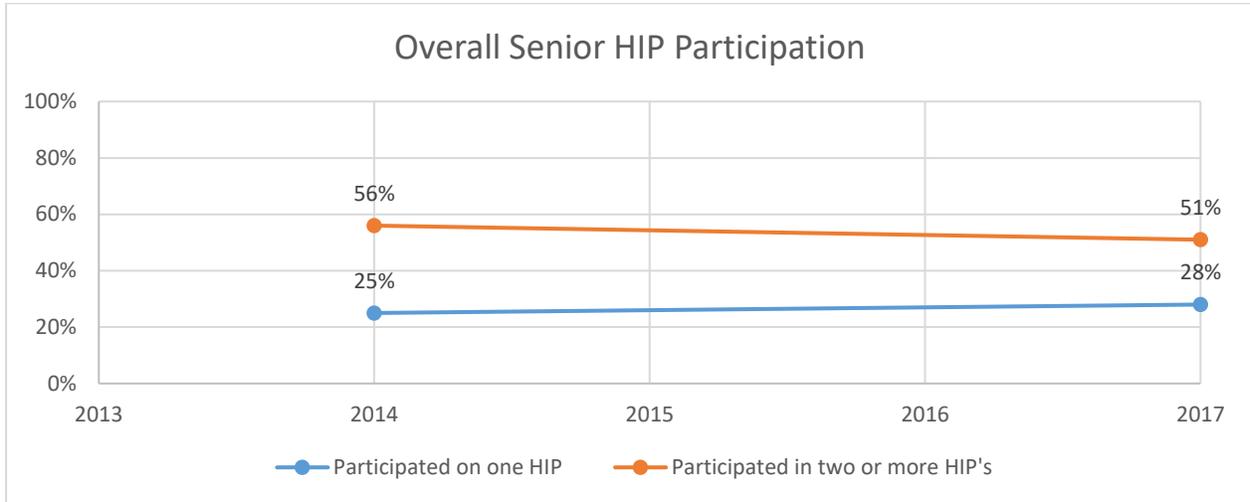
**UNC Pembroke  
National Survey of Student Engagement  
Seniors' Plans to Do Culminating Senior Experiences  
2017**

Institution	Done or in Progress	Plan to Do	Have Not Decided	Do Not Plan to Do
UNC Pembroke	28%	24%	18%	19%
Southeast Public	44%	25%	10%	22%
Carnegie Class	44%	26%	10%	20%
UNC System	53%	24%	8%	16%

The percentage of first-year students at UNC Pembroke who planned to do a culminating senior experience declined from 50% in 2014 to 45% in 2017. The percentage of seniors who had completed or were in the process of completing a culminating senior experience also declined, from 37% to 28% between 2014 and 2017. For first-year students, participation in one high-impact practice increased from 37% to 55% between 2014 and 2017, while participation in two or more declined from 28% to 15%. Increases in participation occurred in service-learning, internship or field experience, and study abroad. For seniors, participation in one high-impact practice rose slightly from 25% to 28% between 2014 and 2017, while participation in two or more high-impact practices declined from 56% to 51% in the same period. The figures below provide a graphic representation of this information on culminating senior experience and overall HIP participation.







Examining participation rates for different groups offers insight into how engagement varies within the student population. This might be helpful to know when determining which departments/programs might be more receptive and which ones less receptive when approached about designing or redesigning a capstone course/experience. For UNC Pembroke, the percentages of students reporting that they participated in a culminating senior experience was highest for the health professions followed by social sciences and arts and humanities. The lowest percentages of students reporting participation in a culminating senior experience occurred in the physical sciences; communications, media, and public relations; and engineering. The results are presented in the table below.

**UNC Pembroke  
National Survey of Student Engagement  
Student Participation in Culminating Senior Experience by Major/Category  
2017**

Major/Category	Culminating Senior Experience
Arts and Humanities	33%
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, Natural Resources	27%
Physical Sciences, Math, Computer Science	–*
Social Sciences	36%
Business	29%
Communications, Media, Public Relations	–*
Education	22%
Engineering	–*
Health Professions	41%
Social Service Professions	24%
Undecided/Undeclared	–*

\*Percentages are not reported (–) for row categories containing fewer than ten students

**Faculty Survey of Student Engagement**

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is designed to measure faculty expectations for and observations of student engagement in educational practices that are

known to be empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning. FSSE surveys faculty who teach at least one undergraduate course in the current academic year. FSSE, a complementary survey to the National Survey of Student Engagement, collects information annually at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities from faculty who teach at least one undergraduate course in the current academic year. The results provide information about faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices linked with student learning and development. Institutions use their data to identify aspects of the undergraduate experience that can be improved through changes in policy and practice.

Due to their positive associations with student learning and retention, special undergraduate opportunities are designated "high-impact." The survey compares the percentage of faculty who believed it was "Very important" or "Important" for undergraduates at the institution to participate in High-Impact Practices before they graduate. In 2016, 77% of faculty surveyed at UNC Pembroke believed that it was important or very important for undergraduates to participate in a culminating senior experience before they graduate. This was second only to an internship or field experience in percentage of responses. Faculty responses for six high-impact practices are provided in the table below.

**UNC Pembroke  
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement  
Responses for High-Impact Practices  
2016**

High-impact Practice	Important or Very Important
Learning Community	33%
Service-Learning	50%
Research with Faculty	60%
Internship or Field Experience	78%
Study Abroad	37%
Culminating Senior Experience	77%

***UNC Pembroke Alumni Survey***

A survey of 809 UNC Pembroke Alumni was conducted by the UNC System Office in 2018–2019. The University of North Carolina System’s Strategic Plan calls on the System to improve access, affordability, student success, and economic impact. As part of that effort, the System committed to collecting new data on graduates’ satisfaction with their university experience and with postgraduate life. The survey results for UNC Pembroke provided a connection between high-impact practices and workplace engagement and lifelong wellbeing across five dimensions. It revealed that while 42% of UNC Pembroke alumni responding reported that they are engaged in their work, 46% reported that they are not engaged in their work. Eleven percent reported being actively disengaged. These results were comparable to those from other UNC System alumni, alumni nationally, and alumni from other public institutions. Engaged employees are highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace, while those who are not engaged are psychologically unattached to their work and workplace. They are putting time, but not energy or passion, into their work.

The survey asked respondents about several experiences that can be seen as high-impact practices that provided the opportunity to enhance reflective and integrative learning. These included having an internship that allowed the student to apply what they were learning in the classroom and working on a project that took a semester or more to complete. Only thirty-three percent of those responding reported that they had worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete. Fifty-six percent responded that they had an applied internship or job experience. These values were consistent with the results from other UNC System schools, alumni nationally, and alumni from other public institutions. According to the Gallup Organization, which conducted the poll, research among alumni nationally supports the idea that these and other “experiential learning” experiences are associated with increased odds of workplace engagement and lifelong wellbeing. According to Gallup, UNC Pembroke alumni who worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete were 1.7 times more likely to feel engaged with their work and 1.2 times more likely to experience high levels of wellbeing. High wellbeing means a life well-lived. Sixty-two percent of UNC Pembroke alumni reported living a life of purpose, 61% reported a sense of social wellbeing, 49% reported financial wellbeing, 47% reported community wellbeing, and 35% reported physical wellbeing. These values were consistent with alumni for other UNC System schools, alumni nationally, and alumni from public institutions.

### **Graduation Rates**

As much of the literature on student engagement and high-impact practices highlights the relationship between increased levels of student engagement and participation in high-impact practices and graduation, the QEP Committee decided to review institutional data on graduation rates to identify areas where the QEP might contribute to student success. As will be seen in the analysis presented below, there is substantial room for improvement on this measure of student success.

The University regards graduation rates as a criterion of student success. A goal of the University Strategic Plan is to maximize student success. The Mission of the University is to prepare students for rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives, and a Core Value of the University is to prepare graduate and undergraduate students to succeed in an ever-changing and increasingly technological, global environment. Improving the five-year graduation rate is a top priority for UNC Pembroke within the UNC System Strategic Plan. The specific target contained in that plan is that by 2022, UNC Pembroke will improve its five-year graduation rate from any accredited institution to 46.5%. As indicated in the table below, the five-year graduation rate has increased steadily over the last seven years, from 34.2 % for students graduating in 2012 to 44.5% for students graduating in 2016. However, the University has not yet reached its target five-year graduation rate as established by the UNC System Strategic Plan.

**UNC Pembroke  
Five-Year Graduation Rates for Students Graduating Nationwide  
2011–2017**

<b>Cohort Year</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
2006	35.2%
2007	34.2%

2008	37.8%
2009	39.4%
2010	40.4%
2011	44.5%
2012	44.3%

The UNC System also compiles information on six-year graduation rates for UNC Pembroke and its peer institutions. The six-year graduation rate for the cohort of freshman students entering in 2005 and graduating in 2011 was 33.5%. The rates have increased steadily over the last six years, from 32.7 % for students graduating in 2013 to 40.3% for students graduating in 2018. This rate is still less than about half of the University’s peer institutions. Information on the six-year graduation rate for UNC Pembroke and its peer institutions is presented below.

**UNC Pembroke  
Six Year Graduation Rates for Students Graduating from UNC Pembroke  
2011–2018**

Cohort Year	Graduation Rate
2005	33.5%
2006	34.2%
2007	32.7%
2008	34.2%
2009	37.9%
2010	35.6%
2011	39.5%
2012	40.3%

**Comparison of Six Year Graduation Rates for UNC Pembroke and Its Peer Institutions  
For Students Graduating in 2017  
(2011 Cohort)**

Institution	Graduation Rate
UNC Pembroke	40%
Austin Peay State University	36%
Eastern New Mexico University	32%
Francis Marion University	37%
Frostburg State University	49%
Indiana University Southeast	32%
Morehead State University (KY)	42%
Nicholls State University (LA)	46%
Northeastern State University (OK)	32%
Northwest Missouri State University	49%
Pittsburg State University (KS)	47%
Southern Arkansas University	35%
University of Guam	35%
University of North Alabama	45%
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin	43%
University of Wisconsin Superior	43%
Western Connecticut State University	44%

UNC Pembroke has also identified the Six-Year National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) Total Completion Rate as a criterion for student success. The University selected this indicator because the University has a significant number of students who transfer to other institutions before graduating, and this indicator reflects the successful graduation of these students. As of November 2016, the UNC Pembroke Six-Year National Student Clearinghouse Total Completion Rate completion rate was 50.7%. By contrast, the completion rate of the set of peer schools the University identified to contextualize its performance on this indicator was 61.7%.



## IV. Literature Review

### *Student Engagement*

While George Kuh (2009) contends that the engagement premise has appeared in the literature for more than seventy years, the beginnings of the use of the term “student engagement” can be seen in the seminal work of Alexander Astin (1984). Astin referred to student involvement as “the quality and quantity of physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 307). Involvement is what students actually do and not so much what they think or feel. Another frequently cited definition is that of Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2007) who refer to student engagement as participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes.

Other definitions of student engagement emphasize the importance of both the student and the institution. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006) characterize student engagement as consisting of two critical features—the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and the institution’s use of resources, curriculum, and learning opportunities to induce students to participate in activities that are linked to student learning. Combining the perspectives of the student and the institution, Kuh defined student engagement as “the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities” (Kuh, 2003, p. 25). Institutions of learning should be intentional in the development of opportunities that provide students with experiences focused on fostering engagement with clearly defined and articulated learning outcomes and provide resources to support engagement opportunities (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010).

Based on a review of definitions in the literature and the discussion of the character of engagement, Trowler (2010) defines student engagement as follows:

Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution. (p. 2)

Researchers have also found that educationally purposeful engagement leads to gains in cognitive and intellectual skill development. The connection between student engagement and student learning is the focus of much of the literature on student engagement. Austin (1984) theorized that student learning is directly related to student involvement. The greater the student involvement, the greater the student learning. The effectiveness of educational policies and practices can be evaluated in terms of their capacity to increase student involvement, and college personnel can assess their activities in terms of their success in encouraging student involvement.

Other benefits to student engagement include increased academic performance, cognitive development, psychosocial development, moral and ethical development, college adjustment, practical competence, skills transferability, and acquisition of social capital (Henning, 2012). Various authors assert that engagement produces gains and benefits in students' cognitive development and mental skills. Student involvement in the college environment enhances student learning (Anaya, 1996); cocurricular experiences contribute to intellectual development

(Baxter Magolda, 1992); and, according to Pascarella and Terenzini, “The impact of college is largely determined by individual effort and involvement in the academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings on a campus” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 602). “Generally speaking, the more students engage in these kinds of activities, the more they learn and the more they are likely to persist and graduate from college” (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006, p. 31). Kuh (2008) reports that learning experiences designed to intentionally engage students in purposeful tasks, allow them interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, and occur in environments rich with feedback produce more learning.

Other studies have shown correlations between engagement and a variety of specific desirable outcomes. Tross, Harper, Osher, and Kneidinger (2000) found that students who devote more time to academic preparation activities outside of class earn higher grade point averages. Coates (2005) asserts that the concept of student engagement derives from a constructivist approach that emphasizes that learning is influenced by participation in educationally purposeful activities. Student engagement concerns the extent to which students engage in educational activities that lead to learning. Graham, Tripp, Seawright, and Joeckel (2007) emphasize that the connection between student engagement and student learning has long been known and discussed in a large body of research which demonstrates that academic achievement is influenced by active participation in the learning process. Pascarella, Seifert, and Blaich (2010) note that student surveys of student engagement demonstrate that institutional practices and student experiences contribute to growth in educational outcomes.

The relationship between student engagement and persistence has also been studied extensively. The benefits of students engaged in educationally purposeful activities are vast. Students who are actively engaged in educationally purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom, are more likely to persist through graduation. Vincent Tinto (2000) contends that active involvement is the key to retention. Students who are actively involved in learning activities are more likely to persist. Bean (1990, 2005) argues that students persist when they are committed to the institution and that commitment is strengthened when they are actively engaged in educationally purposeful activities in and out of class. Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2008) find that student engagement in educationally purposeful activities is positively related to academic outcomes (grades) for first-year students and persistence between the first and second year of college. Harper and Quaye (2014) indicate that engagement is the most significant predictor of persistence for college students because it assists in strengthening the students’ institutional commitment and sense of belonging while helping them to connect academic learning with experience.

Additionally, student engagement has a role in college graduates’ earning power in the labor market due to the development of soft skills, cultural competence, and experiences working with diverse groups of people (Hu and Wolniak, 2010). A longitudinal study conducted by Flynn (2014) focused on baccalaureate attainment of college students at four-year institutions. It suggests that when institutions embrace programs that increase academic engagement, social engagement, or both, it is beneficial to both the institution and the student.

According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), there are three dimensions to student engagement. In behavioral engagement, students comply with behavioral norms, such as attendance and involvement and demonstrate the absence of disruptive or negative behavior. Emotionally-engaged students experience affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or a sense of belonging, and cognitively-engaged students are invested in their learning, seek to go beyond the requirements, and relish challenge. In the landmark publication, *Principles of Good Practice for Undergraduate Education*, Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified seven

categories of effective educational practices that influence student learning. Among these practices are several which define student engagement, including student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, and time on task.

According to Coates (2007) engagement encompasses academic and non-academic aspects of the student experience. These include active and collaborative learning, participation in challenging academic activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences, and feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities. These five factors form the basis of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the annual survey conducted among public and private higher education institutions in the US and Canada. According to George Kuh (2005), enriching educational experiences include complementary learning opportunities in and out of class that augment academic programs. These include internships, community service, and senior capstone courses

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) defines six research-based “high-impact practices” that institutions can employ to foster student engagement. These include culminating senior experiences such as capstone courses, senior projects or theses, comprehensive exams, and portfolios. Similarly, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) views high-impact practices as synonymous with student engagement. Citing Kuh (2008a), the organization lists nine high-impact practices including capstone courses and projects.

### **High-impact Practices**

In its 2007 report *College Learning for the New Global Century*, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) identified ten innovative, “high-impact” educational practices that research suggests contribute to student success and positively correlate with improved student performance. These ten educational practices include:

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

Specifically, these high-impact practices are suggested to lead to greater engagement and retention among undergraduate students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Finley, 2011; Kuh, 2008, 2010; Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013).

Kuh defined high-impact practices as "an investment of time and energy over an extended period that has unusually positive effects on student engagement in educationally purposeful behavior" (Kuh, 2010, p. viii). Synthesizing NSSE research data, Kuh (2008) identified several distinguishing features common across all high-impact practices. High-impact practices are effective, Kuh argued, because they require students to communicate frequently with faculty and peers about meaningful topics. They enable students to integrate, synthesize, and apply their knowledge within and beyond the classroom. They expose students to diverse ideas and

perspectives and provide them with opportunities to engage in active and applied learning while also benefiting from continuous feedback and assessment of their work. The nature of these high-impact activities, Kuh stipulated, promote academic and personal development among undergraduate students and contribute to their cumulative learning.

Schneider agreed that, when purposefully integrated throughout students' entire college experience, high-impact practices contribute to their mastery of what are considered Essential Learning Outcomes for college graduates (Schneider, 2008, p. 3). These are:

- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World,
- Intellectual and Practical Skills,
- Personal and Social Responsibility, and
- Integrative and Applied Learning.

Ideally, institutions would integrate high-impact activities in their curriculum in a way that allows students to engage in at least one high-impact practice every year. In reality, however, most institutions do not systematically and widely offer a broad range of high-impact activities across all years of the students' undergraduate experience (Finley, 2011; Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008).

Kuh's analysis of NSSE data indicated that high-impact practices have a strong positive impact on all students and correspond to increased rates of student engagement, satisfaction, and retention. In his AACU report, *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*, Kuh (2008) suggested that first-year students and seniors who participated in learning communities, service learning, study abroad, student-faculty research, and senior culminating experiences reported greater gains in learning and personal development compared to their peers who did not engage in high-impact activities. These gains included "deep approaches" to learning, which encompass integrating ideas and diverse perspectives, discussing ideas with faculty and peers outside of class, analyzing and synthesizing ideas, judging the value of information as well as one's own views, and considering others' perspectives. According to Kuh, "deep approaches to learning are important because students who use these approaches tend to earn higher grades and retain, integrate, and transfer information at higher rates" (Kuh, 2008, p. 14).

Brownell and Swaner's *Five High-Impact Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion, and Quality* (2010) supported Kuh's conclusion. Having reviewed hundreds of research studies on five specific high-impact practices (first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, undergraduate research, and capstone courses), these authors concluded that each of the five practices does lead to a set of positive outcomes for participants including higher grades, higher persistence rates, intellectual gains, greater civic engagement, increased tolerance for and engagement with diversity, and increased interaction with faculty and peers.

More importantly, research revealed that high-impact practices not only positively correlated with improved performance for all students but that historically underserved students, who are typically considered the most at-risk populations, tended to benefit more from engaging in these activities than majority students (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008; 2010). African-American and Hispanic students who engaged in high-impact practices showed greater gains in first-to-second year retention rates and first-year grade point averages (GPAs), respectively, compared to their Caucasian peers.

Finley and McNair's research on the engagement of underserved students (defined as underrepresented minority, first-generation, transfer, and low-income students) with high-impact practices supports Kuh's original findings. They analyzed the relationship between underserved students' perceptions of their learning and their cumulative participation in multiple high-impact practices using the following four measures: "1) self-reported engagement in activities that NSSE researchers associate with 'deep approaches to learning,' 2) self-reported gains in practical competence, 3) self-reported gains in general education, and 4) self-reported gains in personal and social development" (Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 6).

Finley and McNair reported that on average students engaged in between one and two high-impact practices. Transfer students participated in significantly more high-impact activities than non-transfer students while first-generation students engaged in significantly fewer high-impact practices than students who were not first generation (Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 8). Overall, however, "students who participate in any single high-impact practice perceived their learning significantly more positively than students who did not participate in the same practice" (Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 9). Reported levels of engagement in deep learning and perceived learning gains for students who participated in either a learning community or a senior capstone course, for example, were 7.7 points and 6.1 higher, respectively, compared to those of students who did not participate in these practices. Additionally, Finley and McNair (2013) found that, "there is a measurable, significant, and positive relationship between students' *cumulative* participation in multiple high-impact practices, on the one hand, and their perceived engagement in deep learning and their perceived gains in learning, on the other" (p. 9).

More recently, Kilgo, Sheets, and Pascarella examined the effects of participation in high-impact practices on students' mastery of liberal arts outcomes including critical thinking, moral reasoning, lifelong learning, intercultural awareness, and socially responsible leadership. The researchers concluded that only two high-impact practices—collaborative learning and undergraduate research—had significant positive impact on all liberal arts outcomes (Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015, p. 517). Mixed levels of impact were observed for study abroad, internship, service learning, and capstone experience. Capstone courses, for instance, were a significant, positive predictor for life-long learning and a significant, negative predictor for critical thinking (Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015, p. 522).

### Capstone Courses

Capstone courses are considered culminating experiences designed to cap off the integration of educational experiences and provide a transition to work or graduate education beyond the bachelor's degree experience. AAC&U defines capstone courses and projects as "culminating experiences [that] require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned" (Kuh, 2008).

Capstone courses were begun in the early 1900s as courses taught at the end of a program to integrate philosophy and religion. Only recently were they recognized as a "high-impact practice" (Kuh, 2008). Considered a transformative learning experience because of their positive contributions to desired learning outcomes, capstones have grown in scope and importance in undergraduate education. Limited empirical research exists on the relationship between capstone course/experience as high-impact practice and student learning outcomes in part because, as Kuh (2008) speculated, at many colleges and universities, capstone experiences often fall under the umbrella of undergraduate research (Brownell & Swaner, 2010),

Often called “senior capstones,” these culminating experiences provide students with opportunities to integrate, synthesize, and apply a wide range of skills and knowledge that demonstrate competence across both general education and major program of study requirements. Senior capstones are generally considered mastery experiences, the final opportunity to instill the values, knowledge, and skills expected of graduates (Gardner, Van der Veer, & Associates, 1998; Hunter, Keup, Kinzie, & Maietta, 2012). Capstone courses typically include a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork allowing students integrate their learning across multiple levels and domains (Kuh, 2008).

Starting in 2000, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) began measuring students’ experiences in culminating experiences. The results showed that students attending baccalaureate liberal arts and private institutions were more likely to have culminating experiences. Capstone courses were more likely to be found at institutions with senior enrollments of less than 1,000 students (Padgett & Kilgo, 2012). It also showed that most capstone courses (85 percent) are discipline-based courses.

In *Experiences That Matter: Enhancing Student Learning and Success*, NSSE (2007) reported that students who had some form of culminating experience reported higher levels of satisfaction and engagement with their educational experience compared to students who did not do a capstone course. Additionally, students who participated in a capstone seminar that required a final product of some sort gained more in desired areas compared to their peers whose capstones did not require a final product or performance.

According to Padgett and Kilgo (2012), most senior culminating experiences aim to address specific educational outcomes. The three most important goals for the capstone course are development of critical thinking, analytical skills, or problem-solving skills. Other objectives were identified as important, but far less than these three learning skills. These other objectives included the ability to conduct scholarly research, career preparation, professional development, and proficiency in written communication. Additionally, capstone courses are designed to address a range of important educational outcomes including integration and closure, application, reflection, and transition, depending on the emphasis of the capstone course (Gardner et al., 1998).

According to NSSE’s in-depth examination of capstone experiences, capstone courses characterized as a field placement or experience were associated with the greatest number of educational gains (fourteen of fifteen common gains). These included working effectively with others, acquiring job- or work-related skills, solving complex, real- world problems, applying theory, and synthesizing and organizing ideas. In the case of a comprehensive exam, a thesis, or presentation, the educational gains were only about half of the specified gains, and these gains were in the areas of writing, thinking imaginatively, and synthesizing (NSSE, 2007). Rhodes and Agre-Kippenhan (2004) discovered that the community-based experience in Portland State University’s capstone courses were associated with significant educational gains. These included leadership ability, tolerance of others with different beliefs, knowledge of people from different races or cultures, and the understanding of social issues. Finally, greater educational gains are reported when faculty and students interact in the culminating experience and when capstones place significant demands on students’ time (NSSE, 2007).

## *Integrative Learning*

Today's student faces a rapidly-changing and more inter-connected world. According to the AAC&U, "Fostering student's abilities to integrate learning—over time, across courses, and between academic, personal, and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education." (AAC&U, 2009) Bloom's theory of intellectual development, *Taxonomy of Education Objectives*, defines the ability to integrate knowledge from different sources or contexts as a relatively sophisticated skill, which develops over time and requires considerable effort and experience to attain (Bloom, 1956).

The undergraduate experience is often fragmented for many students, with coursework spread across general education, concentrations, and electives. Many students seek more real-world experiences outside of the classroom to develop the skills they will need for this complex world. Many universities and colleges are offering more integrative learning through first year seminars, interdisciplinary studies programs, advising, internships and capstone experiences to name a few. Many of today's students are headed for professional careers and will need specialized expertise, which can often be developed through integrative learning.

According to Rhodes and Agre-Kippenham (2004), the most frequently reported teaching practice implemented in capstones is integrated learning. Integrated learning demands intentional effort by the student and deliberate pedagogical and curricular moves by educators. Educators believe that the undergraduate experience is fragmented and does not prepare students for the world's complexities. For this reason, they are investing in integrative learning to help students put the pieces together. According to the AAC&U VALUE rubric, integrative learning is defined as understanding and a disposition that students build across the curriculum, starting with making simple connections among ideas and experiences and finishing by synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations beyond the campus environment (Rhodes, 2010).

Traditionally the integration has fallen on the student; institutions assume that motivated students would find their way through the fragmented undergraduate experience. In its 2002 report, *Greater Expectations*, AAC&U asserted that universities and colleges should help students develop the keys to integrative learning. This emphasis on integrative learning can help undergraduates find ways to put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that will prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional, and civic life.

Fostering integration requires that culminating experiences be introduced to students as early as the first college year, and be intentionally reinforced throughout the curriculum. Rhodes (2010) notes that capstones that involve very focused questions in the discipline will have a limited contribution to desired outcomes, including integration across disciplines and ideas, use of multiple perspectives, or synthesizing and applying learning to a wider context. If the capstone course is the final course to cap off the major and the project requires narrow explorations within students' major field, it will limit the likelihood that students will be challenged to connect ideas across their coursework and transfer learning to wider contexts. The culminating experiences should not be rooted in the discipline if the desired outcome is integrative learning. The design of *interdisciplinary* capstone courses or projects is an obvious way to expand connections.

The question then becomes how we develop the “integrated learner” or the “whole person” given that universities and colleges need to be intentional in designing those opportunities (AAC&U, 2002, 2004). A way to increase integration in the capstone is to develop meaningful opportunities for students to connect curricular, co-curricular, and experiential education. Outside-the-classroom activity in which students are confronted with new perspectives and challenged to integrate insights from different fields represent critical steps toward intentional and integrative learning. This will require specific training for faculty in integrative teaching (Gale, 2006). The traditional teaching of the sage on the stage must be replaced with the mentor, mediator, facilitator, coach and guide (Klein, 2005).

Some classroom approaches currently used can foster integrative abilities, and many faculty members are using them currently in their classroom. These approaches help students understand diverse perspectives and experiences and help them to better understand the world that they live in. This will require making the university or college a culture of integration (Hutchings, 2006). For this to happen, collaborative efforts at the campus, program, and departmental levels are needed. It is necessary to start with training for the faculty while creating buy-in across the campus (Huber, Hutchings, Gale, Miller, & Breen, 2007).

Integrative learning and reflection go hand in hand. Whether it is reflection or metacognition, the idea of making students more intentional, self-aware, and purposeful about integrative learning is powerful. Reflection assignments that invite students to consider to reevaluate their views and take on new perspectives, as well as classic reflection activities, are vital. For this reason, culminating experiences that incorporate portfolios as an instrument for students to document, connect, and reflect upon their integrative learning experiences, in connection with rubrics for self-assessment such as the AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric (Rhodes, 2010), can foster integrative learning in capstones by making students more self-aware.

With respect to assessment, a student’s work must be looked at directly in order to operationalize the outcome and clarify goals for courses, programs, and institutions. The senior capstone projects is an example in which better results can be fostered through a planned series of integrative assignments that help students integrate their thinking over the years of their undergraduate education. A common rubric can then be used to assess the quality of the project and to assure that the student outcomes are met (Miller, 2006). A final point to consider is that the capstone course can be a rich source of information on the quality of undergraduate instruction in both skills and knowledge and is an excellent and frequently used site for student learning outcomes assessment (Berheide, 2007). Further, the evaluation of capstones for educational effectiveness and, specifically, for their contribution to outcomes like integrative learning must be conducted.



## V. Goals and Objectives

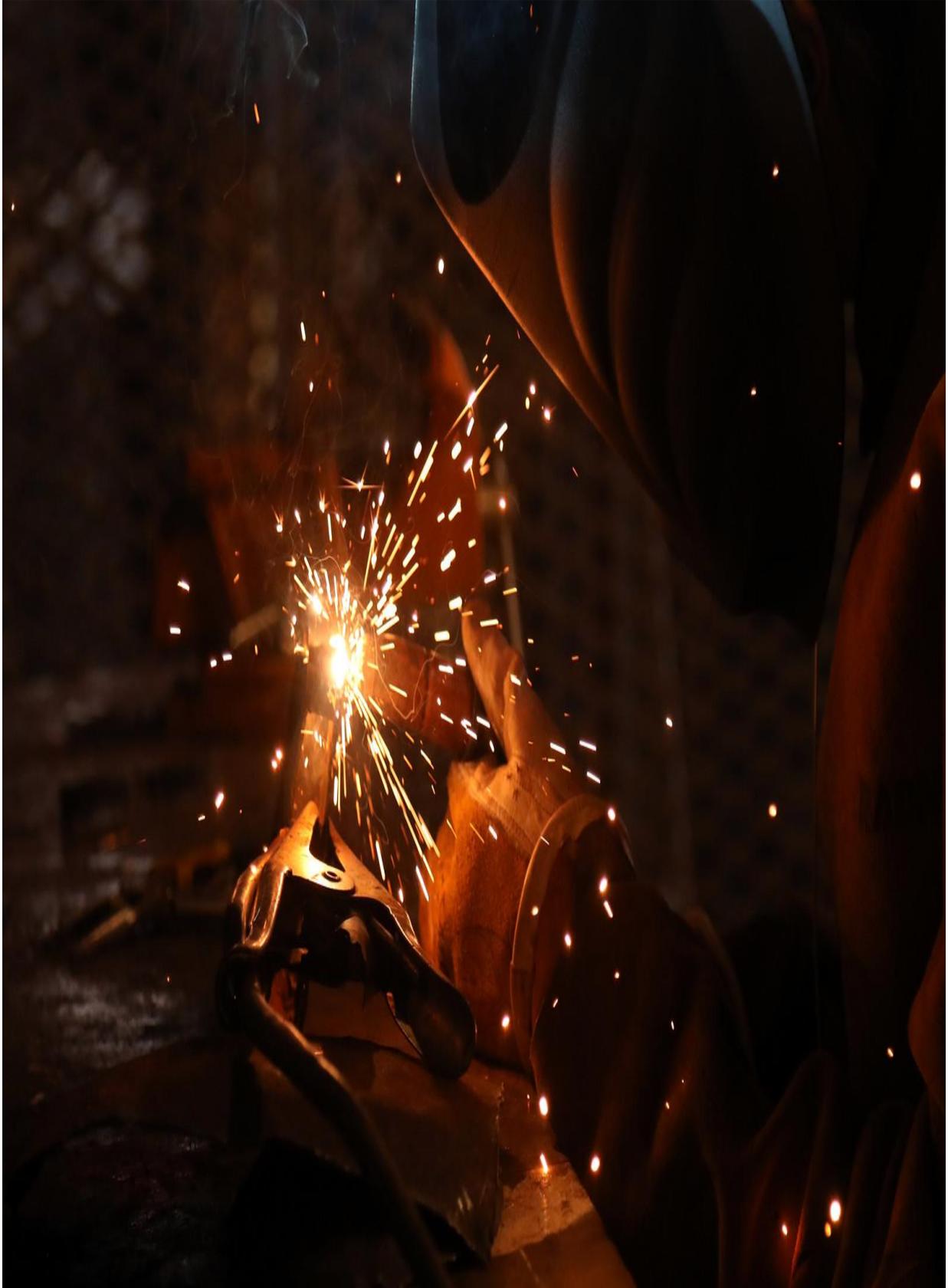
Arising from the University's mission to prepare students for rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives and the University's strategic goal of maximizing student success, the overarching goal of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan is to increase student learning by increasing student engagement in high-impact practices, specifically capstone courses and experiences.

### *Student Learning Outcomes*

Informed by the literature on student engagement, high-impact practices, capstone courses, and integrative learning that stresses the value of integrative learning in helping students prepare for life beyond the bachelor's degree and the analysis of institutional data which points to gains in student learning that can be made from more student engagement in high-impact practices such as capstone courses, the QEP Committee has adopted the following student learning objectives in fulfillment of the overarching student success goal stated above.

Students completing a capstone course will be able to:

1. Connect relevant experiences to academic knowledge from different courses and fields of study in the University setting;
2. Make connections across disciplines, perspectives, and fields of study;
3. Adopt and apply information to new situations; and
4. Engage in meaningful self-reflection.



## VI. Actions to be Implemented

Achieving the overarching goal and associated student learning outcomes depends upon the development and expansion of capstone or culminating experiences at the University. A series of steps in the process of creating and expanding capstone courses in order to achieve the desired student learning outcomes are outlined below.

### *Step 1—Survey of Capstone Courses*

The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee will conduct a survey in Qualtrics of coordinators of academic programs to determine the existence of courses that are or could be designated as capstone courses and what they entail. Deans and Department Chairs will be notified and their assistance requested. The survey will ask programs coordinators to explain their capstone course or culminating experience and what form it takes in their program/degree currently. Questions might address when the capstone course is offered, enrollments, and optional or/required nature of the course. What is the relationship of the student learning outcomes of the existing capstone course to those of the Quality Enhancement Plan? Programs coordinators will be asked about departmental interest in developing/designing a capstone course. The QEP Advisory Committee will analyze the responses when the survey is completed in order to determine what departments might be most likely to participate in the development process and which might be approached to design or redesign a capstone course. (See Appendix B, UNC Pembroke Capstone Courses and Culminating Experiences, for a list of existing courses that could be redesigned for the Quality Enhancement Plan.) As indicated in the timeline below, this step will occur in fall 2020.

### *Step 2—Guidelines for Standardizing Capstone Courses/Culminating Experiences.*

The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop standard guidelines for capstone courses/culminating experiences to be included within the scope of the Quality Enhancement Plan. The guidelines will be provided to departments so that faculty can determine if existing courses are good candidates for participation in the development process and to see what might be involved in the development of new capstone courses. The guidelines will be based on the Committee's research into current best practices in capstone courses/culminating experiences. This step will occur in fall 2020.

Guidelines for developing a capstone course/culminating experience may include:

- A definition of the capstone experience—The capstone experience is a culminating set of experiences that captivate, encapsulate, synthesize, and demonstrate learning.
- A description of a capstone/culminating experience—A capstone experience is a culminating set of personal, academic, and professional experiences in which students synthesize, integrate, and/or apply their previous knowledge. It occurs near the end of the program, and student engagement is central to the capstone experience. The student artifacts generated in the capstone should be designed to reflect the desired student learning outcomes in the course.
- Discussion, reflection, and/or demonstration of general education and/or institutional outcomes, such as effective written and oral communication, problem solving, information literacy, should be evident in the capstone.
- The capstone can occur within the framework of a discipline-specific, synthesizing experience in which students reflect on their experiences and metacognitive skills in

relation to program goals and outcomes. Students write short reflective pieces that describe what they have learned and how their assignments and experiences have helped them achieve each program outcome.

- Student reflection assignments are designed to connect the students' signature work to their personal goals/life experiences, strengths and challenge, application/integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines, and to course and/or program student learning outcomes.
- Course activities are designed to produce an application/demonstration of knowledge (e.g., thesis, design project, portfolio development)
- Assessment of student signature work in capstone courses includes clear directions for the assessment, target competencies, a scoring rubric, assessment strategy and criteria outlined for the competencies, a rating scale, and a scoring standard that details acceptable performance on the rubric's criteria.
- A capstone course can include an out-of-class/co-curricular experience, a service-and/or community-based learning experience, or a college-to-work/career transition experiences such as an internship.
- Teaching strategies and methods in capstone experiences can include collaborative learning, self-directed learning, problem-based learning, and learner-centered teaching. (See Appendix C, Capstone Experiences, University of Hawaii at Manoa, <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/capstone.htm>)

### **Step 3—Selection of Applicants for Course Design/Re-Design**

Departments will be offered the opportunity to develop or re-develop capstone/culminating experiences. To recruit faculty for the capstone course development process, the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop an application process for departmental faculty to apply to develop or redevelop capstone courses. This will be used to identify faculty who are already offering capstone courses or who are willing to offer such courses. The Committee will offer stipends for participation in the development/redevelopment process. The application process will be designed to measure current practice and willingness to meet expected outcomes. Based on the review of the applications, a target group of faculty members will be identified to receive stipends to participate in the course development process.

The QEP Advisory Committee will develop selection criteria for applications for course design/re-design. The Committee will review the applications and select those to be included in the development process. The guidelines for the development/redevelopment of courses and that the QEP Advisory Committee developed previously will be used to help evaluate and select courses to be included in the development process. The QEP Committee will develop a communication/marketing plan to let departments know about the opportunities associated with the Quality Enhancement Plan. These actions will be completed in fall 2020

With thirty-six undergraduate degrees offered at the University, the goal is to involve a maximum of six undergraduate programs per year in the development process (possibly three existing capstone courses and three new ones). This would result in the Quality Enhancement Plan encompassing 83% of all degree programs over five years. The table below illustrates the process for increasing the number of capstone courses offered at UNC Pembroke.

**Developing Capstone Courses at UNC Pembroke  
2020–2025**

Quality Enhancement Plan 2020–2025		Number of Programs	Number of Existing Courses	Number of New Courses
Year One	Fall 2020–Spring 2021	6	3	3
Year Two	Fall 2021–Spring 2022	6	3	3
Year Three	Fall 2022–Spring 2023	6	3	3
Year Four	Fall 2023–Spring 2024	6	3	3
Year Five	Fall 2024–Spring 2025	6	3	3
Five-Year Total		30	15	15
Percentage of All Programs Included		83%		

**Step 4—Faculty Development Workshops**

Faculty development activities are an important part of the QEP. Faculty Development workshops will be held fall and spring. Each will focus on pedagogy for student engagement in capstone courses and integrative/reflective thinking. In designing the faculty development activities, the campus can draw upon an established history of course redesign in the area of writing intensive and writing in the discipline courses for the previous QEP. For each workshop, faculty will be asked to evaluate the experience and suggest changes. Faculty development activities will begin in spring 2021

The mission of the faculty development program is to provide program faculty with the tools, skills, and knowledge for embedding and delivering a capstone course within a curriculum. Workshops will focus on the value of integrative thinking and reflective learning, best practices for incorporating these practices into capstone courses, assessment of student learning outcomes on integrative thinking and reflection in capstone course, and rubric training.

Faculty development workshops will provide faculty with training in the best practices for designing capstone courses/culminating experiences. They will enable faculty to become familiar with current trends in capstone courses/culminating experiences. They will educate faculty about issues germane to capstone courses. They will encourage faculty to incorporate best practices regarding culminating experiences into their courses and enable them to develop meaningful assignments for students, evaluate the effectiveness of the assignments, and assess student learning in the context of the course. Faculty will learn how to develop signature work for capstone courses, write effective reflection assignments, and assess student performance in signature work.

The QEP Director, Assessment Coordinator, and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop workshops for those faculty teaching and developing capstone courses. The Director, Coordinator, and Committee will determine what the design of the workshops will be, who will offer them, and when they will be offered. The Committee will ensure that the workshops for capstone course development include material related to the incorporation of the desired student learning outcomes into the capstone courses. Participants will be provided with descriptions of ideal capstone experiences.

Workshops will feature peer-to- peer training and mentoring. They will use outside consultants as well as those on campus who have special expertise or who exhibit best practices in the

teaching of capstone courses. Subject matter experts from within the current faculty as well as external consultants will be compensated for presenting instruction for faculty development sessions. The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee will solicit input from individual faculty and academic departments concerning the design of workshops and other faculty development activities. The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will form a multi-departmental QEP subcommittee to assist with the administration of faculty development activities. The content of the workshops will include an evaluation component.

Faculty teaching capstone courses approved for the Quality Enhancement Plan course development process will participate in faculty development activities, such as workshops, seminars, and presentations. The first phase of the faculty development workshops will coincide with the initiation of the overall QEP initiative. Faculty development activities might include a multi-day workshop held at the beginning of the semester or a series of half-day workshops held throughout the academic year. The faculty development workshops encompass participation from current faculty at a variety of levels and may include new faculty. Faculty teaching lower division students will be given opportunities to participate in workshops as well as faculty who teach upper division students in their specific disciplines. All faculty will be encouraged to participate in these faculty development sessions, but the primary focus will be those faculty who teach in the Quality Enhancement Plan capstone course development process.

Faculty teaching courses in the capstone course development initiative will receive a stipend for developing capstone courses. Faculty receiving stipends will be required to participate in faculty development activities as a condition for receiving the award. Academic departments and colleges will be expected to take faculty development activities and participation in the program into consideration for annual merit evaluations in the area of teaching as defined in the Faculty Evaluation Policy.

Funds will be available for travel to regional or national conferences on the teaching of capstone courses to faculty participating in the course development program and others interested in participating in the program. Members of the QEP Advisory Committee will also be provided with the opportunity to attend/participate in conferences related to student engagement, high-impact practices and capstone courses. In addition to on-campus workshops, the QEP includes support for faculty to attend discipline or program specific regional or national conferences that focus on pedagogy and student learning. Faculty will be encouraged to attend conferences on using various kinds of instruction and assignments to improve capstone courses. Resources related to promoting student success in capstone courses, including books, articles, and videos describing best practices for writing instruction and assessment will be made available.

Follow-up professional development will be provided to faculty who have completed the first year of faculty development activities. This might include interdisciplinary learning communities, teaching circles, and round table discussions. A second group of faculty members will begin participating in development activities in the second year of implementation. Subsequently, the process will repeat annually with a formative evaluation to be completed after each cycle. Faculty who complete faculty development activities and develop expertise in areas of best practice will be invited to assist and facilitate workshop sessions for new participants entering the plan in ensuing years.

The faculty development activities outlined above are intended to create a scholarly environment where faculty will work together to improve student learning. Workshops provide a collegial setting for stimulating thought, discussion, and innovation in pedagogy. Uniting faculty

from a variety of disciplines to improve student learning improves faculty communication and camaraderie. Historically, University faculty tend to work in isolation within their discipline, and the Quality Enhancement Plan provides an excellent vehicle for faculty to join forces for a unified goal. Enhancing faculty practice is at the core of creating such an environment.

The Faculty Development initiative has as its outcome the development of a community of faculty scholars committed to academic engagement in the classroom and prepared for instruction in integrative thinking/reflection. This will help the fostering of a culture of engaged learning. The infusion of faculty development focused on academic engagement and integrative thinking into the curriculum has the potential to change the approach of faculty in all their classes.

### ***Step 5—Offering Capstone Courses***

The first newly-designed or redesigned courses will be offered following the completion of the initial series of faculty development workshops. Existing courses that have been redesigned can be offered sooner than ones that are newly-created. Newly-created courses must be approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process that involves administrative and Faculty Senate approval before they can be offered. In this process, courses that are new to the curriculum of a program, such as a newly-created capstone course, require the approval of the Subcommittee on Curriculum and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, as well as the Dean of the relevant school or college, Registrar, and Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Changing the title of a course or the course description to make it a capstone course constitutes a minor change and requires only the approval of the Subcommittee on Curriculum of the Faculty Senate as well as the Dean, Registrar and Provost. (See Appendix D, UNC Pembroke Curriculum Development and Revision Process.) These processes will begin in fall 2021 and spring 2022 and continue throughout the five-year period of the Plan.

### ***Step 6—Reviewing Syllabi for Capstone Courses***

The QEP Advisory Committee will review the syllabi of capstone courses that are being offered as part of the course development initiative within the University Quality Enhancement Plan. This will occur on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the Quality Enhancement Plan to ensure that the newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses continue to adhere to the guidelines established for the courses in the program. These processes will commence in 2021-2022 and be ongoing for the duration of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

### ***Step 7—Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in Capstone Courses***

The QEP Advisory Committee and the QEP Director will oversee the assessment of the student learning outcomes in the capstone courses in accordance with the assessment plan as outlined below. The AAC&U VALUE Rubric on Integrative and Reflective thinking will play a prominent role in measuring the achievement of the student learning outcomes in the courses. These processes will commence in 2021-2022 and will be ongoing.



## VII. Timeline for Implementation

To implement the Quality Enhancement Plan, the QEP Committee has developed a detailed timeline of actions to be taken during the five-year period of the plan. This timeline is discussed below.

### *Year One: 2020—2021*

The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee will be appointed by fall 2020. The Director and Committee will survey academic program coordinators about existence existing capstone courses or culminating experiences as discussed in Step 1 above. The Director and Committee will analyze the survey results and develop a list of programs where capstone courses might be developed or redeveloped. The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee will develop the guidelines for capstone courses/culminating experiences and provide them to departments. The Director and Committee will develop the application process for faculty to apply to develop or redevelop capstone courses. The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will develop selection criteria for applications for course design/redesign, review the applications, and select those to be included in the development process. These actions occur in Steps 2 and 3 above. In spring 2021, as outlined in Step 4, professional development for faculty who will teach the capstone courses will be offered.

### *Year Two: 2021—2022*

In fall 2021, the first newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses will be offered by faculty who have completed the professional development workshops. These will be existing capstone courses from three academic programs. In spring 2022, three additional programs will develop new capstone courses. Newly-created courses will be approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process. A total of six newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses will be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year. Assessment of capstone courses will be ongoing throughout the year. Professional development for faculty will be offered twice a year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. The QEP Director and the QEP advisory Committee will review the syllabi of capstone courses being offered as part of the QEP to ensure that they adhere to the guidelines established for the courses in the program. The actions in Year Two correspond to Steps 5, 6, and 7 above.

### *Year Three: 2022—2023*

In year three, up to six more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses will be offered. Assessment of capstone courses will be ongoing throughout the year. Professional development will be offered twice a year, once each in fall and spring semesters. Review of capstone course syllabi will continue. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be administered in spring 2023, and the results will be compared to the results from the previous administration in 2020.

### *Year Four: 2023—2024*

In year four, up to six more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses will be offered. Assessment of capstone courses will be ongoing throughout the year. Review of capstone course syllabi will continue. Professional development will be offered once a year, likely in the fall semester.

**Year Five: 2024—2025**

In year five, up to six more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses will be offered. Assessment of capstone courses will be ongoing throughout the year. Review of capstone course syllabi will continue. Professional development will be offered once a year, likely in the fall semester. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be administered in spring 2025, and the results will be compared to the results from the previous administration in 2023.

The chart below provides the semester-by-semester timeline for the implementation of the QEP.

<b>QEP Timeline 2020–2025</b>	
<b>Year One: Fall 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee are appointed.</li> <li>• The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee survey academic program coordinators about existence existing capstone courses or culminating experiences.</li> <li>• The Director and Committee analyze the survey results and develop a list of programs where capstone courses might be developed or redeveloped.</li> <li>• The QEP Director and QEP Advisory Committee develop the guidelines for capstone courses/culminating experiences and provide them to departments.</li> <li>• The Director and Committee develop the application process for faculty to apply to develop or redevelop capstone courses.</li> <li>• The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee develop selection criteria for applications for course design/redesign, review the applications, and select those to be included in the development process.</li> </ul>
<b>Year One: Spring 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development for faculty who will teach the capstone courses is offered.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Two: Fall 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered by faculty who have completed the professional development workshops. These will likely be existing capstone courses from three academic programs.</li> <li>• Professional development for faculty is offered twice, once in the fall and spring semesters.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Two: Spring 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three additional programs develop new capstone courses.</li> <li>• Newly-created courses are approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process.</li> <li>• A total of six newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing throughout the year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development for faculty is offered in the spring semester.</li> <li>• The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee review the syllabi of capstone courses being offered as part of the QEP to ensure that they adhere to the guidelines established for the courses in the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Three: Fall 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Newly-created courses are approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing.</li> <li>• Professional development is offered in the fall semester.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Three: Spring 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing.</li> <li>• Professional development is offered in the spring semester.</li> <li>• Review of capstone course syllabi continues.</li> <li>• The National Survey of Student Engagement is administered in spring 2023. The results are compared to the results from the previous administration in 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Four: Fall 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Newly-created courses are approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing.</li> <li>• Professional development is offered once a year in the fall semester.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Four: Spring 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing.</li> <li>• Review of capstone course syllabi continues.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Five: Fall 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Newly-created courses are approved through the University Curriculum Development and Revision Process</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing throughout the year; review of capstone course syllabi will continue; up to 6 more courses will be developed/ revised.</li> <li>• Professional development is offered once a year in the fall semester.</li> </ul>
<b>Year Five: Spring 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three more newly-designed or redesigned capstone courses are offered.</li> <li>• Assessment of capstone courses is ongoing.</li> <li>• Review of capstone course syllabi continues. The National Survey of Student Engagement is administered</li> </ul>

	in spring 2025. The results are compared to the results from the previous administration in 2023.
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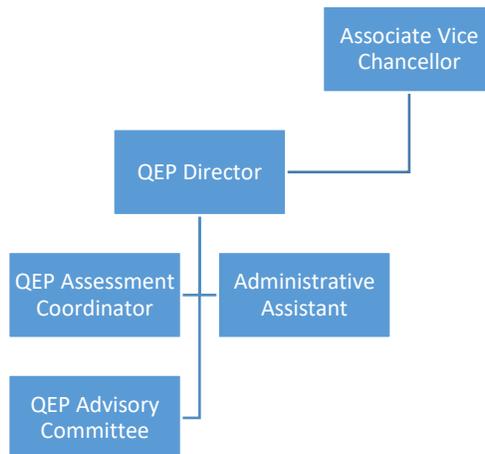


### VIII. Organizational Structure

As discussed above, the QEP Writing Committee considered three different options for the leadership of the QEP. These included the creation of a new, full-time position of QEP Director filled through a national search, use of existing faculty personnel with reassigned time and a stipend, or use of an existing administrative staff member. The Committee decided that the preferred structure would be based upon the use of faculty personnel with reassigned time for their administrative duties during the year and stipends in the summer.

The Director of Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) provides transformational leadership to support faculty and staff in the implementation of the QEP as designed by the QEP Writing Committee. The QEP Director will have ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation and assessment of the QEP. The QEP Director will be a full-time faculty member with fifty percent reassigned time in the fall and spring semesters to administer the QEP. The Director will receive a stipend in the summer to carry out the implementation of the QEP. The Director will be assisted by an Assessment Coordinator who will be responsible for conducting the assessment and evaluation of the project in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research. The Assessment Coordinator will be a full-time faculty member with fifty percent reassigned time in the fall and spring semesters and a summer stipend. A part-time Administrative Assistant will provide clerical support. The QEP Director will supervise the Assessment Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant. The position of QEP Director position will be located in the Office of Academic Affairs and report to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Accreditation/SACSCOC Liaison. The reporting structure is depicted in the organizational chart below.

**UNC Pembroke  
Organizational Chart for the Quality Enhancement Plan**



The duties of the QEP Director are as follows:

- Provide leadership for the development, planning, and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan;
- Chair QEP Advisory Committee and act as the lead spokesperson for the QEP;
- Supervise the work of the QEP and monitor progress toward the achievement of QEP goals and program outcomes on an annual basis;
- Oversee the work of the Assessment Coordinator to direct assessment processes for all aspects of the QEP;
- Oversee QEP professional development program—organize, facilitate, and evaluate faculty development activities;
- Work with faculty and department to identify and develop capstone courses;
- Promote faculty participation—secure and maintain sufficient faculty involvement in the QEP to meet plan objectives;
- Monitor and analyze the results of surveys and evaluations to assure program quality;
- Manage the QEP budget, including the submission of requests to fund equipment, material, supply and staffing needs;
- Oversee the use and maintenance of equipment and facilities assigned to the program;
- Perform all supervisory duties required to maintain and operate the program;
- Establish and maintain effective working and cooperative relationships with faculty, staff, and the QEP Advisory Committee;
- Assist in coordinating the development, review and revision of QEP publications, publicity, and other community relations activities;
- Assure compliance with SACSCOC standards; and
- Prepare annual reports and the QEP Impact for the SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim Report.

The QEP Director will be selected through an internal search. The successful candidate will hold an earned doctorate or other terminal degree and be tenured in an academic department at UNC Pembroke. The individual should possess leadership, administrative, and interpersonal skills and, if possible, have experience in the assessment of student learning outcomes. The individual should have a record of commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning, minimum of five years teaching experience, and knowledge of academic engagement strategies. The individual should be familiar with SACSCOC QEP requirements.

The QEP Director will be expected to teach two courses per semester. The QEP Advisory Committee will conduct the search for the QEP Director. The QEP Director position will be located in the Office of Academic Affairs and report to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Accreditation.

The Assessment Coordinator will work with the Office of Institutional research to conduct surveys of students and faculty, analyze survey data and create reports, and analyze and report data from rubric indicators used for course assessments. The Coordinator will make recommendations for improvements based on the analysis of assessment data. The Coordinator will maintain records of progress on student learning outcomes and program goals. The Coordinator will prepare and present reports to the QEP Advisory Committee. The successful candidate will possess a Ph.D. or other terminal degree, have a record of commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning, knowledge of learning outcomes and assessment practices, background in statistical analysis, experience analyzing large quantitative and

qualitative data sets, and knowledge of survey construction and analysis. The individual should be familiar with SACSCOC QEP requirements and the use of rubrics for assessment.

The Administrative Assistant will be appointed from existing staff personnel. The responsibility of the Administrative Assistant is to support the ongoing operations of the QEP. This includes maintaining accurate files and reports, carrying out clerical duties under the direction of the Director, maintaining budget materials, processing paperwork and forms required for the program, and responding to inquiries from constituent groups.

The QEP Advisory Committee will provide support to the QEP Director. The QEP Advisory Committee will be composed of representation from diverse academic departments. Under the direction of the QEP Director, the QEP Advisory Committee will be charged with assisting in the implementation, administration, assessment, and revision of the QEP. Members of the Committee will serve as liaisons between the Committee and their own academic department. They will act as information clearinghouses for the QEP, disseminating information regarding the QEP to academic departments and providing feedback to the Committee regarding the implementation of the QEP in their respective areas. The Committee will meet at least monthly to review progress and resolve issues of concern regarding the implementation and assessment of the QEP.

The QEP Advisory Committee will work with the QEP Director to identify and develop capstone courses and assist the Director in the design and implementation of faculty development activities. The QEP Advisory Committee will assist the QEP Director with the process of curriculum change for the creation of capstone courses and implementation of new course requirements. It will review and analyze assessment results. It will form subcommittees as necessary for the implementation of the QEP initiatives and the assessment of student learning outcomes. It will champion the QEP goals to University constituencies.



## IX. Resources

The University has committed sufficient resources in its financial plan to implement the initiatives outlined in the QEP over the next five academic years. The costs outlined represent an accurate assessment of the University's financial capacity to meet the institutional goals and needs identified for the QEP. Based upon the resources available and projected expenditures, the University administration and the QEP Writing Committee have created a QEP fiscal budget for the five years ending 2025. The budget presents by fiscal year the available resources the University will appropriate to the QEP and the anticipated expenditures for the QEP. The costs related to the QEP are as follows:

- Personnel Costs—Salaries and Fringe Benefits
- Workshop Presenters
- Stipends
- Travel
- Office Equipment and Supplies
- Assessment Expenses
- Marketing Expenses

Funding for personnel costs includes salaries and fringe benefits for the reassigned time for the QEP Director and the Assessment Coordinator. The budget provides for an initial in-kind salary of \$40,000 (\$53,674 with fringe benefits) for the Director and an additional \$53,674 for the Assessment Coordinator. A half-time Administrative Assistant will also be assigned to the project at an in-kind salary of \$12,500 (\$ 18,914 with fringe benefits). Total in-kind costs for personnel salary and fringe benefits range from \$126, 262 in the first year to \$135,898 in the last year of the QEP. These salaries are scheduled to increase modestly over the length of the QEP. Stipends of \$2,000 apiece are provided for faculty to develop courses for the QEP for a total of \$12,000 per year.

The University does have faculty resources that can be used to offset the reassignment of faculty time in the affected departments where necessary. The University's student enrollment has been increasing in recent years providing for an increasing number of full-time faculty positions. Some of these positions can be allocated to academic departments where faculty time has been allocated to directing the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Additionally, the University engages in the judicious use of part-time faculty and faculty overloads when necessary. However, the University monitors the use of part-time faculty and faculty overloads to ensure that the use of part-time faculty is appropriately limited and that overloads are assigned and accepted carefully so that faculty do not become over extended. The University calculates regularly the semester credit hours generated by full-time and part-time faculty, and these calculations show that the vast majority of semester credit hours taught in undergraduate and graduate programs in any given semester are taught by full-time faculty. Faculty overloads account for less than 2% of course sections taught in a given semester. Deans of the colleges and schools are responsible for the expenditure of funds from their budgets for the hiring of adjuncts and for approving faculty overloads.

If the University were to employ two adjunct faculty members to teach two courses each in every semester to offset the reassigned time, the cost would be based on the salaries paid to the adjunct faculty members. The rate the University pays for adjunct faculty depends on the rank assigned to the adjunct, and this rank is based on educational credentials and teaching

experience. Rates range from \$3200 per course for a Lecturer/Instructor adjunct to \$4,000 per course for an adjunct with the rank of Professor. Overloads are compensated at the same rates. If all reassigned time were supplemented with the hiring of adjuncts or assigning of overloads, the cost to the University per year would range from \$25,600 to \$32,000.

In the QEP budget, funding is also designated for workshop presenters to provide development for faculty to design courses. Travel for faculty, QEP Director, and Assessment Coordinator is funded at an initial level of \$9,000 per year. To provide for assessment expenses, \$6,000 is set aside in the third and fifth year of the QEP for the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). An additional \$2,000 is budgeted in the first- and fourth-year administration of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). In summary, achieving QEP goals with respect to student learning will require a five-year budget commitment of approximately \$890,000 of which approximately \$655,000 is for in-kind expenses and \$235,000 for new expenses. Yearly costs average approximately \$176,000 per year. The detailed budget is presented below.

The University has received funding from the U.S. Department of Education Title III Program for Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI). This grant provides approximately \$395 thousand per year for five years to the institution for improving student success in low-income and minority student populations. The goals of this program include designing, implementing and evaluating new courses/programs that will improve academic outcomes for Native American and low-income students; faculty development to increase understanding of student success in academic program and courses; and faculty/student mentorships in research and service to increase student success.

Begun 2017, this grant is set to end in 2021–2022. The Project Director for this grant estimates that approximately \$40,000 per year for two years (2020–2021 and 2021–2022) from this grant can be used to support the Quality Enhancement Plan. The funds would be used primarily for faculty development to design and redesign capstone courses and culminating experiences for the purpose of enhancing student success.

**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN BUDGET  
2020-2025**

<b>Personnel (Salaries)</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>
QEP Director (50% Reassigned)	40,000	40,800	41,616	42,448	43,297
Assessment Coordinator (50% Reassigned)	40,000	40,800	41,616	42,448	43,297
Administrative Assistant (50% Allocated)	12,500	12,750	13,005	13,265	13,530
<b>Total In-Kind Salaries</b>	<b>92,500</b>	<b>94,350</b>	<b>96,237</b>	<b>98,161</b>	<b>100,124</b>
<b>Personnel Fringe Benefits</b>					
QEP Director (50%) 18.9% Retirement + 7.5% FICA+ \$519 per month for Insurance	13,674	13,885	14,101	14,321	14,544
Assessment Coordinator (50%)	13,674	13,885	14,101	14,321	14,544
Administrative Assistant (50%)	6,414	6,480	6,547	6,616	6,686
<b>Total In-Kind Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>33,762</b>	<b>34,250</b>	<b>34,749</b>	<b>35,258</b>	<b>35,774</b>
<b>Total In-Kind Expenses</b>	<b>126,262</b>	<b>128,600</b>	<b>130,986</b>	<b>133,419</b>	<b>135,898</b>
<b>Summer Stipends for Director and Coordinator</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Stipends for faculty to develop courses (6 @ \$2000 per year)</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>
<b>Workshop Presenters</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>Travel</b>					
Director and Coordinator	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Faculty	6,000	6,000	5,000	4,000	3,000
<b>Office Equipment and Supplies</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Assessment Expenses</b>					
National Survey of Student Engagement	-	-	6,000	-	6,000

*University of North Carolina at Pembroke*

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	2,000			2,000	
<b>Marketing Expenses</b>	5,000	4,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
<b>Total New Expenses</b>	53,000	49,000	52,000	40,000	41,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	179,262	177,600	182,986	173,419	176,898



## X. Assessment

The purpose of the assessment process is to measure the degree to which the QEP is achieving its goals, especially its impact on the improvement of student learning. The assessment plan details the processes for evaluating the student learning outcomes outlined in the QEP. The plan contains relevant direct and indirect measures of student learning and measures outcomes at the initial and ending stages of the program. It uses both internal and external comparisons to assess the contribution of the QEP to student learning. The results of the assessment will be reviewed by the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee and used to make modifications to the QEP as necessary.

As outlined previously, the student learning outcomes are that students completing a capstone course will be able to:

1. Connect relevant experiences to academic knowledge from different courses in the University setting;
2. Make connections across disciplines, perspectives, and fields of study;
3. Adopt and apply information to new situations; and
4. Engage in meaningful self-reflection.

As a direct measure of these outcomes, the University will use an Integrative Thinking and Reflection Rubric adapted from the AAC&U VALUE rubric on integrative learning. This rubric can be found in Appendix E. Faculty teaching capstone courses will incorporate the QEP student learning outcomes into the course learning objectives. Capstone courses will contain assignments that produce artifacts that will be assessed with the rubric. These assignments will include projects that integrate knowledge from multiple courses/disciplines and require meaningful self-reflection. The courses will contain assignments that require the transfer of knowledge and adoption and application of information to new situations and connect academic knowledge to relevant experiences outside the classroom. Faculty teaching capstone courses will use the rubric to assess students' signature assignments/ culminating assignments and reflective writing pieces. They will use the rubric to assess the indicators of integrative thinking and reflection contained in the student learning outcomes.

The Assessment Coordinator will take an active role in the formulation of the faculty development workshops and will participate in the delivery of workshop content related to the assessment of the QEP student learning objectives. Faculty will be trained in the use of the Integrative thinking and Reflection Rubric before teaching capstone course. The Assessment Coordinator will review the syllabi of newly designed or redesigned capstone courses prior to the beginning of the classes to confirm that the courses meet the course development guidelines. Course instructors will provide data collected as a result of the assessment of the QEP student learning outcomes in their courses to the Assessment Coordinator who will compile the results and present the findings to the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee. The benchmark to be reached will be that each year 80% of students will score a 3 or 4 on the Integrative Thinking and Reflections rubric items that measure the student learning outcomes.

As an indirect measure of student learning, data from National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be used to assess student progress on the student learning outcomes. The NSSE will be administered to freshman and senior students twice during the length of the QEP, once

in year three and once in year five. NSSE measures student perceptions of performance on key dimensions of student engagement. This includes engagement in reflective and integrative learning. The benchmark to be achieved would be that student responses to questions about engaging in reflective and integrative learning would increase by 10% over the life of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

NSSE also asks students about their participation in high-impact practices such as the culminating senior experience. The benchmark to be achieved would be that seniors' responses to questions about engaging in culminating experiences would increase by 10% per year for a total of a 50% increase in reported participation over the initial measurement in 2017. This would bring UNC Pembroke student responses into line with that reported by students from other public institutions in the Southeastern United States and other institutions in the same Carnegie classification and to within ten percentage points of that of other schools in the UNC System.

Data from the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) will be gathered in year four of the Plan. FSSE is designed to measure faculty expectations for and observations of student engagement in educational practices that are known to be empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The benchmark to be achieved would be that the percentage of faculty responding that it is important or very important for students to participate in a culminating senior experience before they graduate would increase by 10% by the end of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

The University Office of Institutional Research conducts a Graduating Senior Survey at least once every two years. The purpose is to measure how satisfied graduating seniors are with their learning experience and the services they received at UNC Pembroke. Graduating seniors are asked about their participation in co-curricular activities and enriching educational experiences. These include co-ops, paid internships, unpaid internships, practicums, student teaching, service learning, and clinicals. Many of these experiences can be regarded as high-impact practices. Seniors are asked to what extent these experiences contributed to their personal and professional growth. As a means of assessing the success of the QEP, this survey will be modified when it is given in future years to gauge seniors' participation in capstone/culminating experiences and the extent to which they contributed to their personal and professional growth.

The QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Committee will work with the University Career Center to conduct an Alumni Survey one year following the teaching of the first newly-designed capstone courses. The purpose would be to determine if participating in capstone courses had contributed to the attainment of rewarding careers, postgraduate education, leadership roles, and fulfilling lives described in the University Mission Statement. Results from future alumni surveys conducted by the UNC System Office in which respondents are asked about participation in high-impact practices and perceptions of workplace engagement and lifelong wellbeing will be reviewed and compared to the results from the 2018–19 survey. There should be an increase in alumni reporting that they participated in an experience that allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom and working on a project that took a semester or more to complete and in the percentage of alumni who report feeling engaged with their work and high levels of wellbeing.

Increased student engagement in culminating senior experiences should contribute to an increase in the University's five-year and six-year graduation rates. This would contribute to the achievement of the University's targeted five-year graduation rate as established by the UNC

System Strategic Plan and to improvement in the University's six-year graduation rate relative to that of its peer institutions. Students who enroll in capstone courses should be more likely to graduate in five or six years when compared to other students. QEP assessment measures will include an effort to track the graduation rates of students who participate in capstone experiences and compare them with those of students who do not.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QEP Topic Selection Survey:**  
**Help UNCP Determine How to Improve Student Learning**

UNCP is preparing for [reaffirmation of accreditation](#) with our regional accreditor, SACSCOC. Core Requirement 2.12 of the SACS Principles of Accreditation requires an institution to have a plan for increasing the effectiveness of some aspect of its educational program relating to student learning. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is developed by the institution and describes a course of action for institutional improvement. The plan is summarized in a QEP document that is submitted to SACS. The QEP addresses a well-defined action plan for a topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning. The QEP Committee which is composed primarily of faculty members in conjunction with key staff and administrators solicits your input in determining the topic or issue(s) for the QEP.

Student learning is defined broadly in the context of the QEP and may address a wide range of topics or issues. It may include changes in students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributable to the collegiate experience. Examples of topics or issues include, but are not limited to, enhancing the academic climate for student learning, strengthening the general studies curriculum, developing creative approaches to experiential learning, enhancing critical thinking skills, introducing innovative teaching and learning strategies, and exploring imaginative ways to use technology in the curriculum. UNCP's most recent QEP focused on writing across the curriculum.

Please provide specific answers respond to the questions below. Thank you for your help assistance!

**Which best describes your role at UNCP? (Select all that apply.)**

- Faculty
- Student
- Staff
- Other

What do you see as the major obstacle(s) to student learning at UNCP?

What solutions to these obstacles would you propose that could become the basis of the Quality Enhancement Plan? Proposals can involve the initiation of new programs or modifications to existing ones.

Survey Powered By [Qualtrics](#)

**APPENDIX B  
UNC PEMBROKE  
CAPSTONE COURSES AND CULMINATING EXPERIENCES**

**CAPSTONE COURSES**

**THE 4030. Senior Capstone I (1 credit)**

Part one of a two-semester Senior project focusing on student's personal interest in theatre.  
PREREQ: Declared Senior Theatre Major.

**THE 4040. Senior Capstone II (2 credits)**

Part two of a two-semester Senior project focusing on student's personal interest in theatre.  
PREREQ: Declared Senior Theatre Major.

**GGY 4610. GTC Capstone (1)**

Practical demonstration of knowledge through the development and completion of a real-world project using appropriate geospatial data and technologies. PREREQ: Permission of instructor

**ITC 4940. Capstone Project in Information Technology (4 credits)**

Capstone IT project to be taken by graduating students in the Information Technology curriculum. PREREQ: CSC 2920 and Senior standing in BSIT.

**PSY 3000. Research Methods Capstone (3 credits)**

Intended for psychology majors, the course is designed to teach written and oral communication skills used in psychological research. Students will learn to write research papers in psychology and will make use of skills learned in PSY 2080 and PSY 2100. Students will be expected to develop their skills using library resources and applying APA guidelines. PREREQ: C or better in ENG 1050 and ENG 1060; PSY 2080, PSY 2100; declared major, minor, or concentration in PSY.

**NUR 4510. Transition to Professional Nursing: A Capstone Experience (3 credits)**

2-(8\*) This course facilitates the transition of students into professional practice through preceptorships with professional nurses in a variety of clinical settings. Through this culminating experience, students synthesize knowledge of nursing cognates and general education and refine their professional nursing roles. The experience allows faculty to assess each student for minimal achievement of competencies within the program outcomes. PREREQ: Pre-licensure BSN students only. COREQ: NUR 4120, NUR 4450. To enroll in this course students must have adhered to all Department of Nursing policies and procedures during this and prior semesters.

**NUR 4550. Professional Nursing Issues in Practice (3 credits)**

3-0 This course is the capstone experience that includes synthesis of nursing cognates and general education. The experience allows the students to demonstrate achievement of competencies within the program outcomes. The course incorporates essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the professional nurse in practice. PREREQ/COREQ: To be taken simultaneously with or after completing all other requirements for the BSN degree. RN-BSN students only.

**BRD 4600. Advanced Television Production (3 credits)**

A capstone course that builds on concepts and skills from earlier coursework, including preproduction planning, scripting, videography, and postproduction. Students will work with

studio or field techniques to manage complex productions and to produce an original TV series or long-form video. PREREQ: C or better in BRD 3600.

**MGT 4660. Business Strategy (3 credits)**

A capstone course integrating knowledge from functional areas through analysis of complex business problems. Case approach requires student involvement in decision making. PREREQ: ACC 3310 or MGT 4410, MGT 3030, and a "C" or better in MGT 3060, MKT 3120 and FIN 3100.

**PRE 4600. Public Relations Campaigns (3 credits)**

Senior capstone course building on concepts and skills from earlier coursework. Students use formal and informal research methods to develop a strategic plan, including evaluation strategies, for a "client." PREREQ: PRE 4070 , PRE 4090 and MCM 4360 .

**SEMINARS**

**HST 4510. Senior Seminar (3 credits)**

A study of special problems in a selected area of history with emphasis on historiography, methods, research, and writing skills. PREREQ: 2.0 QPA in history courses taken, and completion of 15 hours of advanced history courses

**AIS 4500. Seminar in Native American Literature (3 credits)**

**ENG 4500. Seminar in American Indian Literature (3 credits)**

A study of selected topics in American Indian literature. PREREQ: Permission of instructor.

**ART 4000. Art Education Internship Seminar (3 credits)**

Art Education Students participate in a continuous dialogue with their classmates and the instructor about the internship experience. The dialogue consists of the sharing of experiences in the context of the student internship, curricular concerns, lesson planning, assessment, classroom management, and reflections on problems, concerns and successes that occur in the classroom. Students will analyze their own teaching practices and develop a portfolio of their student internship experiences, thereby learning to be reflective practitioners. This course is intended to prepare students to enter into the teacher job market. PREREQ: ART 3050, ART 3080, ART 3090

**SCE 4750. Professional Seminar in Middle/Secondary Science (3 credits)**

A seminar designed to parallel the full semester student teaching experience (SCE 4490). Emphasis will be placed on the appropriate application of methods of teaching and assessment in a clinical setting. Topics will include the proper use of instructional materials, classroom management, participation in the reflective teaching process, professionalism, and required Teacher Education assessments. PREREQ: Admission to Professional Semester.

**ENGS 4xxx. Seminar in Literature (3 credits)**

Intensive study of a theme or issue in composition, rhetoric, or professional writing. May be repeated as subject matter changes. PREREQ: One previous writing course at the 3000 level or above. (Numbers will vary)

**SPN 4480. Professional Seminar for Pre-Service Teachers (3 credits)**

This seminar is specifically designed to coincide with the teacher candidate internship experience. Through the seminar, teacher candidates are supported with the appropriate

resources to complement their teaching experience in off-campus public school settings. Emphasis is placed on increasing students' pedagogical expertise by discussing controversial Spanish grammar topics, addressing how to integrate culture, history, and politics into lessons, developing instructional techniques that can be easily adapted to the needs of students, and addressing the needs of heritage speakers. PREREQ: Admission to professional semester. COREQ: SPN 4490.

**SSE 4490. SSE Internship Seminar (3 credits)**

Middle Grades and Secondary Social Studies Education students participate in a continuous dialogue with their classmates and the instructor about the internship experience. The dialogue consists of the sharing of experiences in the context of student teaching; issues ranging from curricular concerns to classroom management; weekly lesson plans and reflections; problems and successes vis-a-vis the Teacher Candidate Work Sample; professionalism; and entering the teacher job market. PREREQ: Enrollment in SSE 4480 and a minimum QPA of 2.5. Required of history majors seeking licensure as well as secondary and middle grades social studies licensure candidates.

**PHIS 4xxx. Seminar in Philosophy (1-3 credits)**

An examination of selected philosophers, movements, problems, or major ideas to be presented each term the course is presented. The objectives of the course may be met by directed research. The course may be repeated for credit up to and including 9 semester hours as long as there is no duplication of subject matter. PREREQ: Consent of instructor.

**MAT 4750. Professional Seminar in Secondary Mathematics (3 credits)**

A seminar designed to parallel the full-semester student teaching experience. Emphasis will be placed on the appropriate application of methods of teaching and assessment in a clinical setting. Proper use of instructional materials, participation in the reflective teaching process, and opportunities for professional development and growth will be emphasized. PREREQ: Admission to Professional Semester

**MUS 4750. Professional Seminar for Pre-Service Music Teachers (2 credits)**

A seminar designed to parallel the full semester internship experience. Emphasis is placed on helping on-site pre-service teachers understand the purpose, organization, and administration of schools and school systems as well as the role of the music teacher. Opportunities will be provided to review the challenges found in the internship experience.

**WLS 4500. Seminar in International and Intercultural Relations (3 credits)**

Research seminar to gain experience in formulating, designing, and implementing meaningful research projects in international and intercultural relations. A substantial paper will be prepared by the student and presented to the Seminar and World Studies faculty. PREREQ: Approval of World Studies Minor Coordinator.

**PED 4060. Health/PE Teaching Seminar (2 credits)**

A seminar that will explore and examine health/PE teaching methods, materials, techniques, and evaluation procedures as it relates to the teaching of both health and physical education. PREREQ: May only be taken by physical education majors during the student teaching semester.

**SWK 4910. Integrative Seminar for Field Work (3 credits) 709**

This course will focus on the transition from student to entry level professional. Each student will engage in field work activity that will allow the development of generalist skills; will explore multi-cultural/lifestyle and practice issues and will present a case in order to demonstrate the integration of social work skills, knowledge and values. Each student will demonstrate the development of professional communication skills and will be able to function in a human service setting. PREREQ: SWK 2000, SWK 2450, SWK 3450, SWK 3480, SWK 3600, SWK 3710, SWK 3800, SWK 3850, SWK 3910, SWK 4450, SWK 4600, SWK 4800; formal acceptance into the BSW Program; a minimum overall QPA of 2.5; and permission of instructor. Students may only enroll in 12 hours during their field work.

**ECE 4750. Professional Seminar for Pre-service Birth-Kindergarten Teachers (3 credits)**

Seminar designed to parallel the full semester internship experience. Emphasis is on helping these on-site pre-service teachers understand the purpose, organization, and administration of various service delivery sites; and the role of a Birth-Kindergarten practitioner. Students continually review and reflect on elements of the total service delivery process in early childhood education and the developmentally appropriateness of instructional approaches, assessment strategies, behavior management systems, curriculum models, and home/school/community collaboration. PREREQ: Admission to the Professional Semester. COREQ: ECE 4460.

**SED 4360. Seminar in Special Education (3 credits)**

The seminar is specifically designed to coincide with the teacher candidate internship experience. Through the seminar, teacher candidates are supported with the appropriate resources to complement their teaching experience in off-campus public school settings. Emphasis is placed on the purpose, organization and administration of schools and school systems as well as the role of the special education teacher. The teacher candidate is given continual opportunities to reflect on the application of the total instructional process in special education to determine effective teaching practices. Graded on a Pass/Fail basis. The course may be repeated. PREREQ: Completion of all General Education and Special Education courses, minimum 2.5 QPA.

**ELE 4070. Professional Seminar in Elementary Education (3 credits)**

This course is designed to parallel the full-semester internship experience involving candidates in a professional learning community. Teacher candidates will complete portfolio assessments supporting the internship. Pass/Fail grading. PREREQ: Admission to the Professional Semester

**EED 4750. Professional Seminar in Secondary/Middle Grades English/Language Arts (3 credits)**

Philosophy of English curricula and purposes of Standard Course of Study; applications in concrete teaching situations of appropriate methods and materials of instruction and assessment procedures; reflection on teaching practice. Seminar designed to parallel the full-semester internship/teaching experience in English Education (EED 4490). PREREQ: Admission to professional semester.

**ENG 4550. Directed Studies Seminar (3 credits)**

A sequence of studies culminating in a substantive research paper or comparable project or original work. The program of studies is designed and carried out by the student in cooperation with a faculty member in the department. PREREQ: Consent of instructor.

**HON 4500. Honors Thesis/Project (3 credits)**

*Restrictions: Honors College students only* Preparation of a thesis or project in consultation with a faculty committee chosen by the student; presentation of the work in seminar. Independent study in the student's major is encouraged. PREREQ: Honors College students only

**PSYS 3xxx. Current Topics Seminar (3 credits)**

Comprehensive treatment of selected topics in psychology. Content will vary, depending on interests of participants. Offered on demand (see Department Chair). (repeatable up to 9 credits)

**APPENDIX C**  
**University of Hawaii at Manoa**  
**The Capstone Experience**

**Definition**

The capstone experience is a culminating set of experiences that "captivate, encapsulate, synthesize, and demonstrate learning." <sup>1</sup>

**Keys to the Capstone**

1. The capstone should be a culminating set of personal, academic, and professional experiences.
  - In a capstone course, students synthesize, integrate, and/or apply their previous knowledge, rather than acquire new knowledge or skills. Students demonstrate mastery, not learn new knowledge/skills.
  - A capstone should occur near the end of the program. [Tip: schedule the capstone course before the student's last semester in case remediation is needed.]
  - Student ownership, responsibility, and engagement should be central to the capstone.
2. Rationale for the framework (see below) should be based on the specific needs of the program/discipline.
3. The products (e.g., written assignments) of the capstone should be designed to help assess the program's desired student learning outcomes.
4. Discussion, reflection, and/or demonstration of general education and/or institutional outcomes should be evident in the capstone. [Note: some general education outcomes may not be relevant, but a capstone experience can likely address these general education outcomes: effective written and oral communication, ethical decision making, information accessing and information processing, problem solving, inquiry and analysis methods.]
5. Satisfactory completion of the capstone experience should be required for graduation.
6. Full-time (tenured) faculty members should facilitate, mentor, and/or coordinate the capstone experience.

**Frameworks for a Capstone Experience**

There are four common frameworks for capstones (see Rowles, et al.). Programs typically choose one as the primary framework based on their program's needs. If/when appropriate, the other frameworks may also be incorporated or acknowledged.

1. **Mountaintop.** Students from two or more disciplines (or specializations) engage in interdisciplinary inquiry. For example: Geography majors and Biology majors enroll in their major's capstone courses and are paired with a student from the other discipline. Each GEOG-BIOL pair of students completes an interdisciplinary project such as a project that uses geographic information systems (GIS) to monitor fish migration patterns or habitat changes.
2. **Magnet.** Students pull together their learning from multiple courses and/or experiences. For example, students gather their best work samples from four courses (can also include internship, practicum, service learning, etc.), choosing samples that directly address the program's learning outcomes.
3. **Mandate.** Students document their learning in relation to external industry/professional standards or requirements. For example, civil engineering students gather evidence to

demonstrate they have achieved the outcomes set forth by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

4. **Mirror.** Students reflect on their experiences and metacognitive skills in relation to program goals and outcomes. For example, students write short reflective pieces that describe what they have learned and how their assignments and experiences have helped them achieve each program outcome.

### **Options for Courses/Activities within the Capstone Experience**

A capstone experience can consist of one or a combination of these:

- A course in the major
- An interdisciplinary course with a minimum of two distinctly different disciplines represented
- An out-of-class/co-curricular experience
- A service- and/or community-based learning experience
- An application/demonstration of knowledge (e.g., thesis, design project, portfolio development)
- A college-to-work/career transition experiences (e.g., internship, informational interviewing)

### **Pedagogic Practices for Capstone Experiences**

Professors typically use some of the following teaching strategies and methods in capstone experiences:

- **Collaborative learning**  
“*Collaborative learning* is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. . . . Most center on students’ exploration or application of course material, not simply the teacher’s presentation or explication of it. Collaborative learning represents a significant shift away from the typical teacher-centered or lecture-centered milieu in college classrooms.” *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* (1992) by Anne S. Goodsell, et al., National Center on Postsecondary Teaching. Available thru interlibrary loan from UH Hilo, LB1032.C65.1992.
- **Self-directed learning**  
Faculty members give students choices about their learning as well as responsibility for the consequences associated with those choices. The faculty member (or internship supervisor, co-op employer, etc.) establishes the necessary structures to guide and support students while still leaving the students to do such things as establish goals, create timelines, monitor progress, develop products for evaluation, etc.
- **Problem-based learning**  
Faculty members give students an ill-defined task to complete or an open-ended problem to solve. The faculty member acts as a mentor, coach, and/or facilitator. Often the task/problem mirrors an actual, discipline-based task/problem but it has been simplified or structured to match the level of the students.
- **Learner-centered** (*Learner-centered* = a focus on what the students are learning and doing, not on what the professor is delivering or doing)  
Faculty members design assignments that promote critical thinking, integration, reflection, synthesis. They give students assignments and activities that encourage students to “suspend judgment, maintain a healthy skepticism, and exercise an open mind”; professors design activities that call for the “active, persistent, and careful

consideration of any belief in light of the ground that supports it.” [Taken from: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~dschjb/wwwcrit.html>, whose source is John Dewey’s *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking in the Educative Process* (1933). Available at Hamilton Library BF455.D5.1933.]

Footnote #1 Sources

“Toward a Model for Capstone Experiences: Mountaintops, Magnets, and Mandates” by C.J. Rowles, D.C. Koch, S.P. Hundley, & S.J. Hamilton. *Assessment Update*, Jan/Feb 2004, 16(1) [Available online via E-Resources, Hamilton Library.]

“Capstone Experiences and Their Uses in Learning and Assessment,” workshop by S.P. Hundley, Assessment Institute (sponsored by IUPUI), October 2008.

**APPENDIX D**  
**UNC PEMBROKE**  
**Curriculum Development and Revision Process**

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke has a clearly defined process for the development of curriculum, including degree programs, tracks, concentrations, minors, and individual courses:

1. The UNC Board of Governors must approve proposals for new degree programs. These proposals must be prepared according to specified guidelines of the UNC Academic Program Development Procedures.
2. All graduate programs must be submitted to the UNC Graduate Council for review and approval and to the UNC Board of Governors for approval.
3. Curriculum development and revisions proposals are initiated by the faculty of the academic departments by completing one of the standardized curriculum forms available in the Curriculog system: <https://uncp.curriculum.com>
4. Curriculum proposals are voted on by the department and signed by the Department Chair who records the department vote count in the "Comments" section of the form when approving or rejecting the proposal.
5. In the case of proposals affecting other departments, including the cross-listing of courses, the proposal form should be submitted by the originating department. The votes of affected departments are recorded, and the Chairs of affected departments also review and sign the proposal. If the cross-listed course affects a program in the affected department, the affected department may also need to submit a program proposal addressing the change to the program. Cross-listed course numbers must be approved by the Registrar's office.
6. If the development or change affects Teacher Education, the Teacher Education Committee reviews the proposal and the Chair of that Committee signs it. Graduate curriculum proposals and new graduate programs must first be approved by the Graduate Council before being submitted to the Curriculum Subcommittee. Graduate Teacher Education proposals should be submitted to the Teacher Education Committee before being submitted to the Graduate Council.
7. The Registrar, the appropriate Dean, and the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs must also sign the proposal.
8. Proposals involving the General Education Program are submitted to the Curriculum Subcommittee before the General Education Course Proposal is submitted to the General Education Subcommittee in most cases. A department seeking to revise an existing General Education course should submit a Course Revision proposal, which will be reviewed and approved by both Subcommittees. A department seeking to add a new course to the General Education program should submit a New Course proposal to Curriculum and, once fully approved, submit a separate General Education Course proposal to General Education. A department seeking to add an existing course to the General Education program should submit a General Education Course proposal to the General Education Subcommittee; a proposal to the Curriculum Subcommittee is only required if the department is also making modifications to the existing course.
9. Departments seeking WE or WD designation for an existing course should submit their proposal to the Writing Intensive Committee, who will shepherd it through the Curriculum Subcommittee and Academic Affairs Committee. New courses must be fully approved as courses before Curriculum will consider their potential WE or WD designations.

10. Proposals involving the creation of new courses, revisions to existing courses, or course deletions are submitted on Course Proposal Forms. Note that Curriculog contains a separate form for each of these options.
11. Proposals involving new courses must attach sample syllabi to the “forms” section on the right side of the proposal work area. New course numbers must be approved by the Registrar's office.
12. Proposals involving one or more changes to degree programs, tracks, concentrations or minors, etc., are submitted on Program Proposal Forms. Note that Curriculog contains separate form options for new, revised, and deleted programs.
13. Electronic forms must be launched in the Curriculog system at least two weeks prior to the Curriculum meeting, which usually meets on the first Thursday of every month. (The Curriculum Committee does not meet in January and at times adjusts the March meeting date, depending on the spring break schedule.) If a proposal will be reviewed by another committee before coming to Curriculum, it must be launched two weeks prior to that committee's meeting.
14. The Curriculog Administrator will review proposals for completeness and to ensure they have been entered correctly into the system before they proceed beyond the department level. Proposals may need to be completely re-done. To avoid delays, proposers are encouraged to work with the Curriculog Administrator in advance to ensure they have followed all directions. Individual access to the proposal forms may be shut down after spring break to ensure that proposing departments do not submit proposals too late in the year for all stages of the process to be completed.

A representative from the department submitting the proposals must be present at Curriculum Subcommittee meetings to address any questions or provisions that may arise. The proposal is reviewed and a vote is taken. If the proposal passes, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Curriculum forwards the curriculum matters to the appropriate office or committee.

The Curriculum Subcommittee is responsible for sending to the Academic Affairs Committee all information pertaining to each individual course that is necessary for the Banner System. The Curriculum Subcommittee shall make recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee on their adoption, and proposals shall move forward based upon the following policies.

- A. The Subcommittee on Curriculum will treat as minor, and send to the Registrar without Academic Affairs Committee and Senate approval, the following types of proposals: course and program modifications involving changes to prerequisites, course descriptions, course titles, and course deletions; the addition or substitution of one or two electives to a program; and program modifications mandated by changes previously approved by Senate. These will be considered minor changes and forwarded to the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee for information only, unless the Subcommittee on Curriculum has a compelling reason to forward said revisions to the Academic Affairs Committee. Changes to prerequisites of General Education Courses are considered major and require the approval of the Academic Affairs Committee and Faculty Senate.
- B. Approved program modifications involving the addition or deletion of tracks, required courses, or more than two elective options at a time will proceed to the Academic Affairs Committee.
- C. All program modifications described in B, once approved by the Academic Affairs Committee, proceed to the Senate.
- D. All new program proposals (including new degrees, academic majors, concentrations, minors, and certificates), deletions of above programs, new General Education course proposals, and General Education course deletions require Faculty Senate approval.

- E. Individual new courses not part of General Education program require approval by the Academic Affairs Committee but not the Faculty Senate.
- F. All curriculum items not requiring Academic Affairs Committee approval will be reported to the Academic Affairs Committee by the chair of the Subcommittee on Curriculum. All curriculum items not requiring Faculty Senate approval will be reported to the Senate by the chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

A representative of the department whose proposal is being considered must be present at all committee meetings beyond the Curriculum Subcommittee level as necessary to address questions and concerns regarding their proposal.

This multilevel approval process is used to assess the curriculum and the process for curriculum development and revision. In addition, the curriculum and the process are evaluated as part of the institutional assessment made by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Curricula of the various departments and the process used to develop curriculum are assessed by those agencies who accredit particular programs, e.g., at UNC Pembroke, the National Council for Assessment of Teacher Education, the State Department of Public Instruction, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the Council on Social Work Education.

**APPENDIX E  
UNC PEMBROKE  
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

**Rubric for Evaluating Integrative Thinking and Reflection**

This rubric was created using the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Integrated Thinking VALUE Rubric. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>Connection to Experience</b> Connect relevant experiences to academic knowledge from different courses in the University setting</p>	Relates experiences outside the classroom to academic knowledge in an exemplary manner; demonstrates a strong understanding of the links between experiences and course theories, material, and academic knowledge.	Relates life experiences to academic knowledge in a proficient manner; demonstrates an above average understanding of these links between course theories, material, and academic knowledge, but could make a stronger case for connections.	Demonstrates an average ability to make links Between life experiences and academic knowledge but has some difficulty understanding these links or connections	Demonstrates a minimal ability to make links or connections between experiences and academic knowledge; work submitted suggests significant difficulty understanding these links and connections.	There is no evidence of connections or links being made between life experiences and academic knowledge in the submitted work.
<p><b>Connection to Discipline</b> Make connections across disciplines, perspectives, and fields of study;</p>	Makes connections across disciplines in an exemplary manner; demonstrates a strong understanding of the links between	Makes connections across disciplines in a proficient manner; demonstrates an above average understanding of	Demonstrates an average ability to make connections across disciplines and perspectives; submitted work indicates some difficulty	Demonstrates a minimal ability to make connections across disciplines and perspectives; submitted work indicates significant difficulty	There is no evidence of connections or links being made across disciplines or perspectives in the submitted work

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	disciplines, perspectives, and fields of study.	these links but could make a stronger case for connections.	understanding these links or making these connections	understanding the links between these links or making these connections.	
<b>Transfer</b> Adopt and apply information to new situations	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations and solves problems/ explore issues in an exemplary manner; submitted work indicates a high-level ability to adapt and apply knowledge.	Proficiently uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in new situations to contribute to the understanding of problems or issues; submitted works indicates an above average ability to adapt and apply knowledge.	Submitted work indicates some ability to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations although evidence is limited	Submitted work indicates a minimal ability to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations	There is no evidence of the ability to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situation in the submitted work
<b>Reflection and Self-Assessment</b> Engage in meaningful self-reflection	Submitted work clearly indicates an exemplary ability to analyze, reflect, judge, and accept/reject ideas; strong evidence of the ability to envision a future self (e.g., making plans that build on past experiences,	Submitted work clearly indicates a proficient level of analyzing, judging, and accepting/rejecting ideas; above average ability to envision a future self (e.g., possibly making plans that build on past experiences, working	Submitted work indicates an acceptable level of analyzing, judging, and accepting/rejecting ideas; some ability to envision a future self (e.g., possibly making plans that build on past experiences, working with ambiguity and risk,	Submitted work indicates a minimal ability to analyze, judge, and accept/reject ideas; minimal evidence of envisioning a future self (e.g., making plans that build on past experiences, working with ambiguity and risk, dealing with	Submitted work indicates a lack of ability to analyze, reflect, judge, and accept/reject ideas; does not envision a future self (e.g., making plans that build on past experiences, working with ambiguity and risk, dealing with

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	working with ambiguity and risk, dealing with frustration, considering ethical frameworks, etc.) that has occurred across multiple and diverse contexts; demonstrates a superior ability to critically examine and reflect on experiences	with ambiguity and risk, dealing with frustration, considering ethical frameworks, etc.) that has occurred across multiple and diverse contexts; demonstrates an above average ability to critically examine and reflect on experiences but analyses should be more specific	dealing with frustration, considering ethical frameworks, etc.) that has occurred across multiple and diverse contexts; demonstrates some ability to critically examine and reflect on experiences	frustration, considering ethical frameworks, etc.) that occurs across multiple and diverse contexts; does not demonstrate the ability to critically examine or reflect on experiences beyond a minimal level.	frustration, considering ethical frameworks, etc.) that has occurred across multiple and diverse contexts; does not demonstrate the ability to critically examine or reflect on experiences beyond a minimal level.
Score					
				Total Score	
				Average Score	