

GC QEP Proposal

1. Short, Descriptive Title

(See SACSCOC summary page of QEPs for examples: <https://sacscoc.org/quality-enhancement-plans/>)

Think Link: Thinking Independently and Leading Creatively through Authentic, Problem-Based Integrated Learning

2. Vision/Rationale/Statement of the Problem: Summary of Your QEP Idea

(Please include evidence, internal and/or external to GC, to explain why this topic is important, meaningful, and significant, and related to student success. Include references where applicable.)

In a context of local, state, national, and global challenges that include but are certainly not limited to uncertainties following two years of a global pandemic, significant trauma and loss, economic disparities, polarized political perspectives, and racial and cultural inequities across sectors, the need for developing a citizenship with the capacity to solve problems through thinking independently and leading creatively is essential. We also know that complex societal problems are less likely to be solved by individuals than by creative teams skillful in drawing from the expertise of a range of disciplines simultaneously. This involves a mindset of taking action by addressing aspects of problems that are within our control in an authentic and systematic manner. It seems as though this moment provides an ideal opportunity to “Think Independently and Lead Creatively” as professionals engaged in authentic, problem-based, integrated learning. For example, earlier this year, Student Affairs, Public Health and medical professionals in our College of Health Sciences demonstrated the potential of integrated authentic problem-solving partnerships. Constitution Week connected Political Science and Community Partners. A Think Link QEP would allow for many tools we have within our purview to leverage for solutions to problems. For example, how might public service announcements through Mass Communications, examples from local school partners of the COE, and connections across the state help students to learn, get engaged, and work toward authentic solutions to staying healthy at school and in daily activities? How might we all better comprehend the reality that in the USA, over 900,000 individuals have lost their lives to COVID-19 in the past two years? Integrated task forces that unite disciplinary expertise across a range of fields fit directly into our institutional mission. Thus, I see this proposed Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that unites the best of GC Journeys, CBEL, and the expertise of all stakeholders to foster deeper collaborative learning across faculty, staff, and students, has key potential for significantly impacting student success and lifelong learning. Long term interdisciplinary approaches to authentic local and global problems can be studied in positive, proactive, scholarly, rigorous, and integrated ways. This work has excellent potential for action and impact, for engaging students, faculty, and staff. As Youngerman and Culver (2019) describe in their chapter addressing problem-based learning, this approach creates a context for engaging students as they address real-world problems by applying knowledge, theoretical and practical, to learn and to improve surrounding communities. The resulting energy and engagement inspires students and instructors in key ways. For a more comprehensive review of a related approach, project-based learning, see Guo, Saab, Post, and Admiraal (2020). The nature of

solving authentic problems is a key distinction for project-based learning. A significant component, possible and vital for GC, is the opportunity to work in interdisciplinary teams of students, faculty, and staff.

3. Expected Outcomes

(What are the anticipated student learning outcomes related to student knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values and/or the student success outcomes associated with this proposed QEP?)

Anticipated Outcomes Student Knowledge - ability to identify problems, knowledge of tools for solving problems through the support of more than one discipline, critical literacy Student Skills & Student Behaviors - critical thinking, effective writing, problem solving skills, listening, and empathy Student Values - collaboration; respect for diverse perspectives, inclusive problem solving

4. Student Population

(The QEP does not have to involve all students but it should include a significant and substantial portion of the student population or sub-population. Please describe which students will be primarily involved in this QEP.)

GC1Y and GC2Y courses already have aspects of this approach to learning. Therefore, all freshman and sophomore would be included. As we build upon the success of GC Journeys and a vision for transformative experiences across the college experience, this QEP would further develop opportunities for engaging students as well as for uniting the expertise of staff and faculty in solving problems that authentically impact our local and global communities. The potential for this Think Link QEP to apply within every major and discipline area is significant.

5. Strategies/Actions/Activities

(What are the major anticipated activities, programs, projects that will students, faculty, staff will engage in for this QEP?)

Exploration of a range of specific problems/potential projects will be key. Facilitating buy-in and engagement with projects of interest with faculty and staff will facilitate the support of students as they begin connecting knowledge from a range of disciplines to address and work on a solution for a particular problem. Problem/Project Identification Connections - Perhaps like our Dinner with 12 Strangers program Links between courses and student life/student organizations; faculty and staff Links between courses and ongoing university initiatives (GC Journeys, GC1Y, GC2Y, Capstone, Undergraduate Research, etc.) Grant Funding Rounds for Problem Solving Projects Dissemination of Solution Phases and Complexities Exploration of New Problems

6. Possible Means of Assessing Outcomes/Activities

(How will we demonstrate student learning and student success?)

Due to the nature of this QEP, there are many assessments in place that can be aggregated to demonstrate student learning and success. For example, we have some key measures in place, and these can be stamped accordingly. GC1Y GC2Y Rubrics and assessments Undergraduate Research GC Journeys tracking through Degree Works Courses with a specific project-based learning component (especially as connected with another course or faculty from another discipline) assessment in writing/reflection of the impact of project based learning. There are samples cited in the review by Guo, Saab, Post, and Admiraal (2020).

7. Anticipated Resources Needed

(What dedicated resources might this QEP need including personnel, financial, dedicated time, space, materials, etc...)

Time seems to be the most critical resource in terms of building interdisciplinary teams for responding to problems. In addition, tools to facilitate the reporting will be key. Faculty and staff are much more likely to seek to participate if this project allows for synthesizing work that is already happening in new ways rather than adds an additional reporting component. Many faculty engage students in solving problems through research projects. Think Link allows for key connections across disciplines to really inspire and engage creatively. Grant funding, the amount from indirect costs is likely to be sufficient, that can support faculty time and project resources/materials would be excellent. Funds for communications would be incredibly helpful. Looking at the showcase that SCAD graduates in animation have at the end of each academic year MIGHT provide an idea for getting a bigger sense of the impact of GC projects. <https://www.scad.edu/blog/scadfilm-presents-animationfest-2021> At a showcase or festival, every project that has come to completion could be highlighted with a 60-90 second video about the project and solutions to the problem. An event like this might also allow for ongoing project to share and recruit support.