

COLLABORATE UTA

ASSESSING AND ENHANCING TEAMWORK THROUGH
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES



A QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

SITE VISIT APRIL 4–6, 2017



COLLABORATE UTA
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

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SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“They come in as an individual and they leave as a team member.”

This observation about the value of students participating in teamwork, and the transformation that occurs, came from a staff member with vast experience in the Marketing/Communication industry. AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes, the 60x30TX Plan, Texas Higher Education Core Competencies, and employer surveys (Gray & Koncz, 2017) indicate that the ability to collaborate, or work in teams, is one of the most important marketable career and life skills students can acquire in college, and bring to an internship or a job. Collaboration is one of UTA’s core values as reflected in UTA’s Strategic Plan, *2020 Bold Solutions, Global Impact*. To help prepare our students for a 21st century economy requiring higher order thinking skills, UTA’s QEP is focused on collaboration or teamwork¹. The QEP engages students in problem solving, engagement with others that are different from themselves, and integrating others’ views to achieve a common goal.



The QEP is one element of a broader effort to weave a number of existing high impact practices into a cohesive student success effort. A cornerstone of this broader effort is the Maverick Advantage, a campus-wide initiative that seeks to educate our students beyond the classroom by engaging them in five Distinguishing Activities: Global Connections, Community Engagement, Career Development, Leadership and Undergraduate Research. These Distinguishing Activities provide a context for UTA’s QEP. Students engage in collaborative endeavors within the context of each of the five Distinguishing Activities, and *Collaborate UTA*, through a narrow focus on teamwork, provides a focused platform for assessing and enhancing the quality of those experiences through the Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) shows that our students’ teamwork skill level is behind that of other institutions in the UT System, baseline peers and aspirational peers. Although faculty often assert that they use team-based assignments in their courses, research indicates that the quality of teamwork skills taught by the instructor varies, that the roles of individuals in the team are not always adequately assessed, and faculty/student interaction such as the giving of feedback during the process is uneven (Matusovich et. al., 2012).

UTA’s Quality Enhancement Plan, “Collaborate UTA”, will use Professional Learning Communities to engage faculty in developing innovative collaborative activities or teamwork in their courses. The QEP will assess change in students’ skills and abilities through various assessment methods as part of their course assignments. The goal is that students will develop competency in teamwork and be able to describe the value of the experience as evidenced in the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO 1a: Students will recognize effective teamwork.
- SLO 1b: Students will practice effective teamwork.
- SLO 1c: Students will value effective teamwork.
- SLO 2: Students will connect teamwork experiences to the classroom.

Collaborate UTA will be piloted in the College of Liberal Arts, and after analysis of assessment data and adjustments to the plan as needed, it will be rolled out to other colleges/schools across campus.

¹ In line with research from McClellan (2016), we use the terms collaboration and teamwork interchangeably.

SECTION II: PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC

UTA STUDENT SUCCESS CONTEXT

UTA is the fifth most diverse university in the U.S., according to *U.S. News and World Report* and advancing learning within a complex educational landscape is a key element of the university's strategic initiatives. A number of initiatives are underway that provide a context for the launching of the QEP. The Maverick Advantage is a key element of UTA's strategic plan. It is a campus-wide initiative that seeks to educate our students beyond the classroom by engaging them in five Distinguishing Activities: Global Connections, Community Engagement, Career Development, Leadership, and Undergraduate Research. This initiative provides students with a number of choices for engaging in collaborative learning. Students may engage in a course with a service learning (*Community Engagement*) component such as the freshman MAVS1000 course that calls for teams to respond to community needs; students may engage with the Office of *Undergraduate Research* to work as a team member in a research lab under faculty supervision; or students

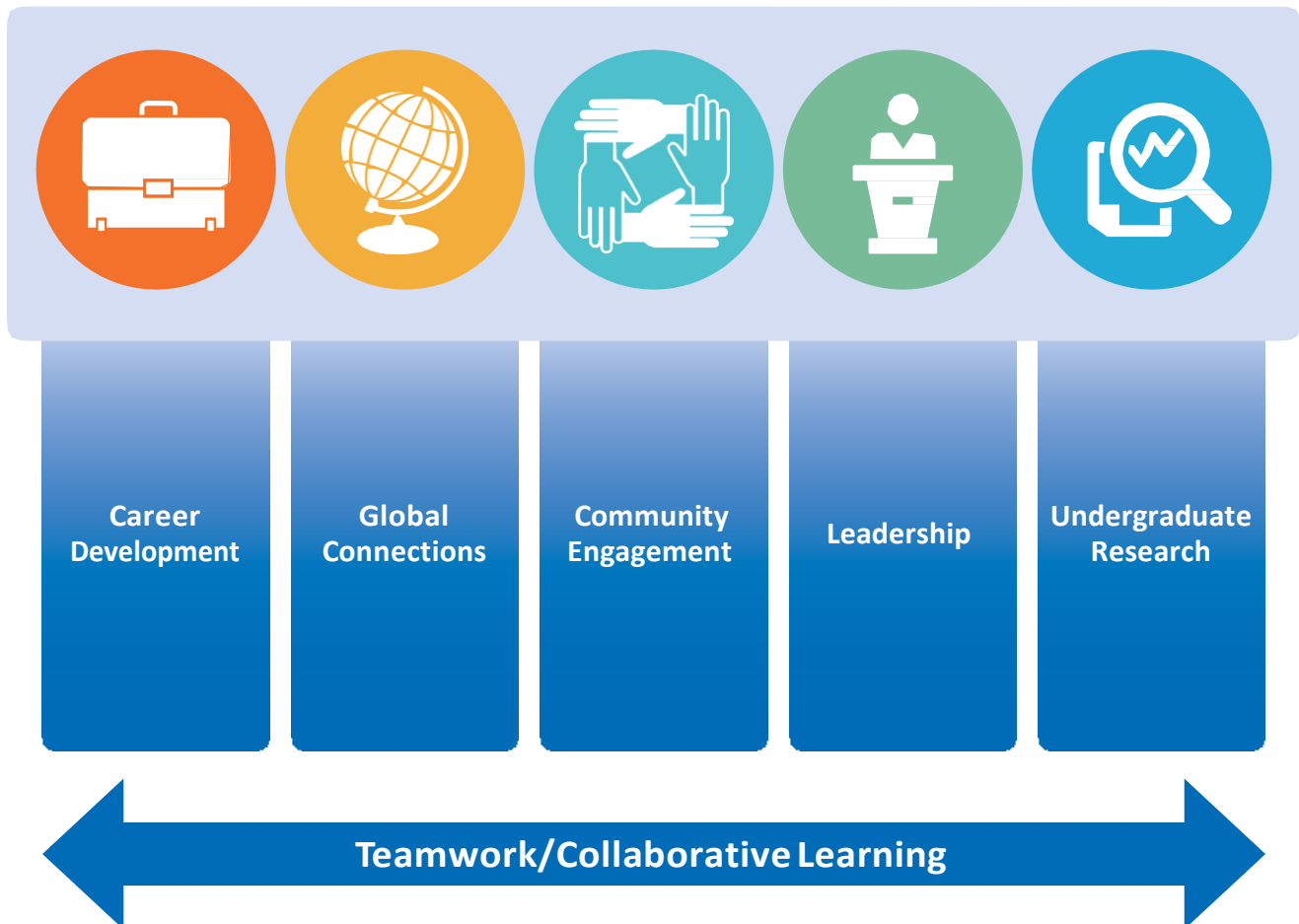
may choose to enroll in a study abroad course (*Global Engagement*) that will also encompass teamwork as students problem solve in a different cultural context.

The QEP also taps into initiatives being developed by the Office of Student Affairs that provide opportunities for freshmen to develop leadership skills that allow students to reflect on their role as a team member. Students in MAVS1000 will have an opportunity to earn a Leadership Certificate, providing them with additional training for effectively engaging in teamwork. The experiential learning opportunities offered by the Maverick Advantage will be used as a recruiting tool for early engagement of students in the Distinguishing Activities, but the QEP will assess only the collaborative component across each of these activities.

Who we are

Located in the heart of the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area, UTA holds an elite Carnegie designation as one of

Figure 1: Connecting the Maverick Advantage and Teamwork



the “highest research” or R-1 campuses—a designation reserved for only 115 doctoral granting universities in the United States. UTA is a comprehensive research, teaching, and public service institution. It is the largest institution in The University of Texas System. The University includes the Colleges of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs; Business; Education; Engineering; Liberal Arts; Nursing and Health Innovation; Science; the School of Social Work; University College; and the Honors College.

Over the years, the University has changed through a maturation process reflecting a succession of names, ownership, and missions. In 1917, Grubbs Vocational College was formed, a branch of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M). Later, the name changed to Arlington State College; it was elevated to senior college rank in 1959 and was transitioned from the Texas A&M System to The University of Texas System in 1965. Its final name change came in 1967, when it became The University of Texas at Arlington. Currently, the University has more than 54,528 students enrolled for the 2016-17 academic year.

Mission

The University of Texas at Arlington is a comprehensive research, teaching, and public service institution whose mission is the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence. The University is committed to the promotion of lifelong learning through its academic and continuing education programs and the formation of good citizenship through its community service-learning programs. The diverse student body shares a wide range of cultural values, and the University community fosters unity of purpose and cultivates mutual respect.

Vision

The University of Texas at Arlington is a preeminent urban research university that inspires bold solutions with global impact through creative scholarship, transformative access, and collaborative learning.

Values

The heart of UTA’s core values include:

- **Access and Success.** Provide a supportive environment where students can flourish as scholars and citizens. Expand access to academic offerings, scholarship opportunities, and other vital resources that prepare students to succeed and graduate.
- **Opportunity and Excellence.** Pursue the highest standards of excellence throughout every facet of the University. Provide all qualified students with opportunities to reap the benefits of the tremendous knowledge that exists at UTA.
- **Inclusiveness and Diversity.** Foster an inclusive environment that supports a diverse community of

faculty, staff, and students. Encourage the exploration and discovery of the unfamiliar and promote the understanding of all viewpoints.

- **Mavericks and Innovators.** Ensure a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity that strengthens our Maverick nature. Cultivate an atmosphere that rewards curiosity and challenges conventional thought.
- **Collegiality and Collaboration.** Encourage a spirit of collegiality and camaraderie among all members of the UTA community. Champion partnerships and collaborative efforts that increase the University’s impact on society.

Student Diversity

The University has received several rankings and recognitions related to its diversity. For the past three years, UTA was ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as the fifth most diverse national university in the country. The University was designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education in 2014, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) named UTA as its outstanding member institution in 2015 for the University’s contributions to Hispanic higher education. UTA was also identified as one of the 40 most popular U.S. colleges and universities for international students by the Institute of International Education’s 2014-2015 *Open Doors Report*. *Military Times* ranks UTA as No. 20 on the 2017 “Best for Vets: Colleges” list, the highest of any four-year Texas university.

UTA’s diverse student body of 54,528 students hails from over 100 countries. UTA awarded over 7,500 baccalaureate degrees in 2015-2016. The University’s undergraduate student population is 28.6% Hispanic, 15.5% African American, 11.3% Asian, and 3.3% International. In terms of gender, about 40% of the students at UTA are male and about 60% female. The diversity is not just in terms of the typical conceptualization of diversity. The students are also diverse in their college experiences. There is a large population of first generation college students. In addition, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked UTA the third-largest destination in the nation for transfer students based on its 2015 survey of undergraduate programs. UTA also ranked 2nd in the nation for the lowest student debt by *U.S. News & World Report*, allowing students to earn a degree from a high research university. The students’ diverse college experiences influenced the trajectory of our QEP.

LINKS TO THE PREVIOUS QEP

Though the formal process for QEP topic selection and development began evolving in the spring of 2014, the current Quality Enhancement Plan has its roots in UTA’s previous QEP on active learning. That project, which began in 2008, provided faculty development to implement active learning strategies in the classroom, as well as assessment and research support for those faculty who participated. The previous

QEP led to several changes to the institution, the most visible of which was the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, established in 2013. It also led to increased implementation of active learning techniques throughout the University and a general familiarity with the SACS/QEP process.

Lessons learned about the development and implementations of a broad campus initiative focused on undergraduate student learning were carried forward into the current QEP development process, which is detailed below. For the previous QEP, both the topic selection and the implementation were the product of faculty and program area proposals. For the topic selection, teams of faculty developed topic areas and general implementation plans, with active learning chosen as the most impactful. During the implementation phase, individual faculty members and staff developed proposals for reframing a course or program using active learning. Each year, the steering committee selected proposals for funding, which resulted in significant transformation of certain courses, published research, and the development of best practices literature in active learning. Upon reflection and analysis, however, the impact of the plan could have been broader with greater buy-in and participation across campus.

QEP THEME FORMATION

UTA's Strategic Plan 2020 Bold Solutions | Global Impact

Along with the impact of our previous QEP, a driving force for the development of this QEP was UTA's strategic plan. Development of the Strategic Plan *2020 Bold Solutions | Global Impact* began in earnest in fall 2013 after the arrival of UTA's newest president, Vistasp Karbhari. Broad community input was solicited through the "Forward Thinking" website (<http://www.uta.edu/forwardthinking/>). In an October message to faculty and staff, President Karbhari posed nine questions to guide the discussion. (See "Forward Thinking: Dialogue": <http://www.uta.edu/forwardthinking/messages/2013-10-03.html>). Responses to these questions were submitted via a web feedback form. During the next few months, President Karbhari met with local business and government leaders, alumni, and UTA's strongest supporters and Development Board members. Responses to the questions were then taken and posted on the "Forward Thinking" website (<http://www.uta.edu/forwardthinking/feedback.php>), where the following themes began to emerge:

- A Shared Vision
- Our Reputation
- Sense of Pride
- Effecting Change

- Looking to the Future
- Identifying Peers
- Building Community
- Economic Impact
- Focus on Students

Visitors to the site could click on "recommend" to agree with particular comments and themes. Additional meetings, including breakfast and lunch discussions were held with faculty and staff. Beginning in November of 2013, input from alumni and students was directly solicited², including the recommendation of themes. Suggestions and ideas were collected from November 2013 until summer 2014. By summer 2014, this considerable feedback and input was compiled into a draft of the current strategic plan and then presented to members of the university community and other key stakeholders³. This presentation included Guiding Aspirations that have changed over time to better conceptualize UTA'S path based on input from the campus community. The Guiding Aspirations as determined in the Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Transform the student experience by enhancing access and ensuring student success.
- Enhance impactful research and scholarship.
- Strengthen collaboration with corporate and nonprofit sectors.
- Build on faculty excellence to strengthen academic programs.
- Enhance visibility and impact through global engagement.
- Lead in creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

As part of this process, Maverick Imperatives were developed and defined throughout 2014, each keyed to the Guiding Aspirations. These Imperatives aim to bring the Guiding Aspirations to reality. They also comprise the core of the UTA educational experience and provide a framework for the strategies that will help us achieve pre-eminence on a global scale. The Maverick Imperatives include the following:

- Be Progressive: Educate Beyond the Classroom
- Be Empowering: Create Lifelong Educational Paths
- Be Responsible: Ensure Student Success
- Be Wise: Cultivate Faculty and Staff
- Be Pioneering: Transform Research Capabilities
- Be Ambitious: Serve the Community Near and Far
- Be Daring: Reimagine Infrastructure
- Be Creative: Be the Innovation Destination

These Imperatives were a significant influence on the QEP. Collaboration is inherent throughout the strategies⁴

² Message to students and alumni: <http://www.uta.edu/forwardthinking/messages/2013-11-21.html> (students); <http://www.uta.edu/forwardthinking/messages/2013-11-08-2.html> (alumni)

³ Presentation of Strategic Plan Draft: http://www.uta.edu/strategicplan/_downloads/presentation.pdf

⁴ http://www.uta.edu/strategicplan/_downloads/draft-maverick-imperatives-and-strategies.pdf

Table 1. Maverick Imperatives and their Experiential Learning-Related Strategies

Maverick Imperative	Maverick Imperative Strategies
<p>Educate Beyond the Classroom</p> <p>“UT Arlington embraces a hands-on approach to learning that makes students an active partner in discovery. By emphasizing outside-the-classroom experiences such as research opportunities, internships, clinical placements, and service-learning endeavors, we progressively prepare our students to succeed in their chosen fi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase collaborative experiences through internships, service learning, and undergraduate research. • Increase funding and opportunities for student participation in research, scholarship, and creative activity. • Provide opportunities and resources for students to study abroad and to complete fi internationally.
<p>Create Lifelong Educational Paths</p> <p>“To ensure an informed and engaged global citizenry, UT Arlington offers lifelong learning opportunities to help individuals achieve their personal and professional goals. We provide broad access to innovative educational programs so that no matter where learners are in their educational journey, they are empowered to keep pace with a rapidly changing world.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a community of entrepreneurs by providing opportunities for training. • Prepare graduates with the skills and vision to adapt to and excel in a changing world.
<p>Ensure Student Success</p> <p>“UT Arlington is committed to helping students achieve their full potential. We are responsible for providing these promising leaders with a supportive environment where they can flourish as scholars and citizens while preparing to become part of an increasingly global and competitive workforce.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide innovative and technology-rich instruction to support success in early courses. • Create programs and policies that provide appropriate and meaningful roles for faculty to enhance UT Arlington’s reputation as a leader in outstanding undergraduate education, especially for academically talented students from under-represented groups.
<p>Serve the Community Near and Far</p> <p>“UT Arlington treasures the responsibility of creating innovative partnerships that spawn fresh approaches to community engagement. To ensure success in the 21st century, we must continue to ambitiously expand our influence locally and globally. By doing so, we become an integral societal partner and a valuable resource for our neighbors near and far.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new study abroad programs that address the needs and desires of lifelong learners. • Increase coordinated efforts to link existing programs to public, corporate, and nonprofi entities.
<p>Cultivate Faculty and Staff</p> <p>“UT Arlington is dedicated to attracting, nurturing, and retaining world-class faculty and staff who are aligned with our vision of becoming the Model 21st-Century Urban Research University. Such talented educators create a top-tier institution that draws high-achieving, highly motivated students’ intent on earning a college degree.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support faculty, staff, and students at each point in their career path to help them establish a sustained lifelong program of intellectual growth, professional development, and personal fulfi • Deploy strategies for recruiting and retaining highly talented faculty and professional staff.

identified to accomplish the imperatives (see Table 1), such as the examples below.

- “Educate Beyond the Classroom”: The experiences mentioned here such as research opportunities, internships, clinical placements, and service-learning endeavors, are opportunities that involve collaboration and occur in local, national and global contexts.
- “Serve The Community Near and Far”: speaks to the responsibility of creating innovative partnerships that spawn fresh approaches to community engagement including service learning. Obviously, this involves collaboration. This is highlighted in the strategies with phrases such as “collaborative experiences” and “community of entrepreneurs.”
- “Ensure student success.” The strategy linked to that imperative speaks about the use of technology, innovative teaching, and mentoring students, particularly those that are underserved. High impact practices for student success call for the development of opportunities for collaboration in courses, using innovative teaching practices (including technology), and support faculty development in these areas.

CAMPUS-WIDE CONVERSATIONS AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

A second step in developing the QEP was engaging in discussions of UTA’s distinguishing characteristics. A leadership group in Academic Affairs was charged by the Provost to develop the QEP which included stakeholders involved in the development of the Strategic Plan. Topic selection began in earnest in May 2015 with a Purposeful Idea Gallery (PIG). Hosted by the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE), the PIG was structured in the style of an interactive gallery crawl. Posters were hung throughout the CTLE with facts about the student body of UTA, data from employers, and provocative quotes about the future of higher education. The event was open to all students, faculty, and staff; awareness of the event was generated through the Faculty Affairs Newsletter, the CTLE website, and through direct communication with departments. Each attendee was supplied with a pen and Post-It notes, which allowed them to respond with comments and questions directly on the presented materials. Over 40 individuals attended. After the event, the notes were collected, sorted, and coded. Themes such as student preparedness, the importance of student/faculty interaction, and the importance of experiential learning emerged.

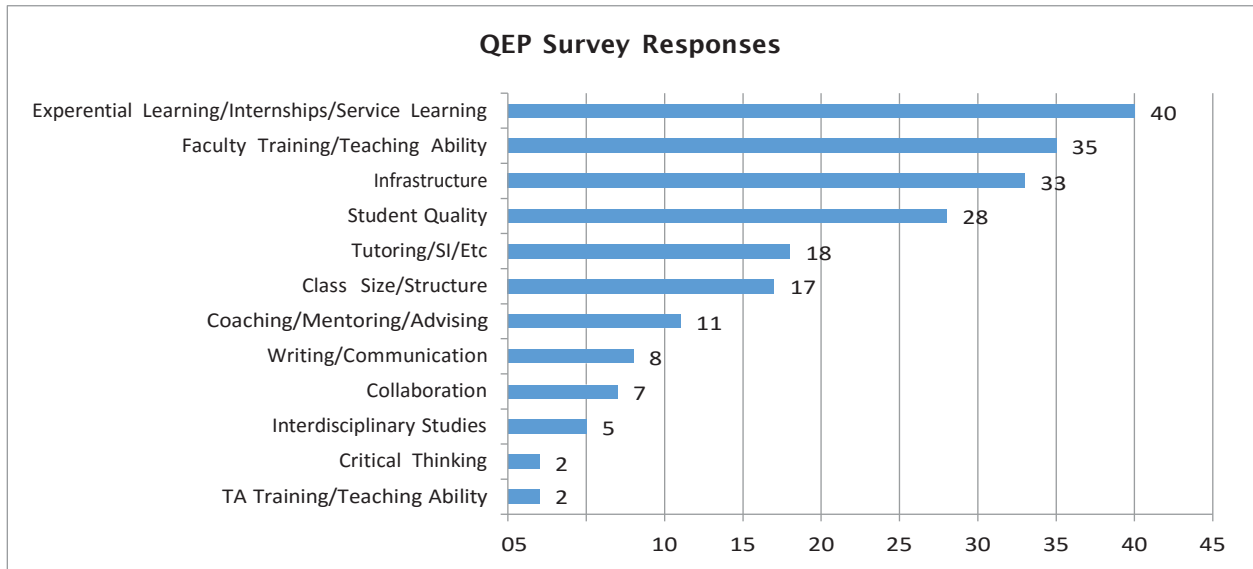
The Purposeful Idea Gallery was also an opportunity to identify faculty and staff who might serve on the QEP Development Team. Using names from those who attended the PIG, as well as nominations from Deans and other University leaders, a team was formed that represented a broad cross section of the University. Faculty from each

college were appointed to the team, with some of the larger colleges having two representatives. The Division of Student Affairs, the Libraries, the Center for Distance Education, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting (IER), and University College were represented as well. Three student representatives were added to the team. (For the full list of team members, see Appendix 1.) After some organizational meetings, the team began meeting bi-weekly with an initial task of choosing a focus or theme for the QEP.

As a preliminary step, UTA engaged the services of Hanover Research, an educational research and consulting firm. In collaboration with UTA’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting, the QEP team developed a set of interview questions, which were given to Hanover. Hanover interviewed faculty and staff members, thereafter performing a qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts. These participants were broadly representative of the University, coming from several academic departments, divisions of Student Affairs, and different advising offices. The questions focused on faculty and staff perceptions of student needs. Through the interviews, Hanover found faculty and staff identified student academic preparation and personal/interpersonal skill development (teamwork) as needs and urged for more opportunities for student engagement, particularly direct engagement with faculty. They also identified experiential and active learning as a way to increase student engagement and support students’ academic growth.

Once the QEP team began to meet regularly, we realized the need to supplement the qualitative approach taken by the Hanover interviews and the Purposeful Information Gallery with broad, quantitative data. A subcommittee was assigned to gather relevant and pertinent data on the areas of focus. We have many rich sources of data here at UTA, gathered by different groups. The lists below show the results examined.

- List 1: Internal Data Surveys Examined
 - Senior Exit Survey, 2014-2015 Cohort
 - Student Affairs Survey, 2014
 - MAVS 1000 (First Year Experience) Survey, fall 2014
 - National Survey of Student Engagement, 2014 and 2015 (Snapshot and Topical Modules)
 - Student Assessment Data on Texas Core Objectives
 - Communication assessed, fall 2014
 - Critical Thinking assessed, spring 2015
 - Disaggregated institutional data on graduation rates, first year retention, second year retention, and transfer student success
- List 2: External Data Surveys Examined
 - National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook, 2016
 - Falling Short: College Learning and Career Success,

Figure 2: Results of campus-wide web survey

1. Includes comments about student/faculty ratio and comments related to curriculum scope/sequence.
2. Any and all responses related to physical and IT infrastructure.
3. Responses related to admission criteria, general student preparedness, or selectivity.
4. 179 responses were coded. Total complete responses were 188. Of the respondents, 66% were students, 26% faculty, and 8% staff.

2015 (Conducted by Hart Research for the American Association of Colleges and Universities)
 – American Association of Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) Essential Student Learning Objectives

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Data from the 2016 survey suggested potential student needs that could be addressed by the QEP. For example, 58% of seniors reported never or sometimes working with other students on course projects or assignments; 60% of seniors reported sometimes or never explaining course material to another student; and only 35% of seniors reported participating in internships, capstone projects, research with faculty, study abroad, or service learning. In all of these areas, UT Arlington was behind UT System schools and peer and aspirational institutions. Thus, collaboration was emerging as an obvious area of need.

Though some themes were already beginning to emerge from the existing data sources, we wanted one additional, direct means of communication from students, staff, and faculty. The team created a very simple, web-based questionnaire that essentially asked, “What can we do to enhance student learning at UTA?” This questionnaire was promoted through Student Affairs, the Faculty Affairs Newsletter, and other

electronic venues. While the questionnaire was live, the QEP Development Team leader and the Provost visited the meetings of student organizations, including Student Congress, the UTA Ambassadors, the UTA Volunteers, and others. At these visits, the Provost and QEP team leader promoted the survey and took direct feedback from these student leaders. At the same time, student leaders asked this same question at a “Meet Your Senator” event, where students left feedback at various places on campus with representatives from Student Congress.

The questionnaire generated meaningful responses and ideas. The responses were coded and analyzed⁵, with two responses emerging as clear priorities: experiential learning and increased faculty development for more engaging teaching practices. The experiential learning theme arose from many responses that said internships were necessary, asked for more research opportunities, or generally asked for more “hands-on” learning (all of which involve teamwork). Collaboration was collapsed with experiential learning, as many of those opportunities desired such as internships and service learning are vehicles for teamwork. Indeed, experiential learning, which has been termed “learning by doing,” by its very nature involves collaborative experiences. The Faculty training responses were also important as it highlighted the need for opportunities such as Professional Learning

⁵ 179 responses were coded. Total complete responses were 188. Of the respondents, 66% were students, 26% were faculty, and 8% were staff

Communities to assist faculty to develop needed expertise in these pedagogical areas.

NARROWING THE FOCUS

Work began in the spring semester of 2016 to narrow the theme into a plan that was workable, aligned with activities already occurring on campus, and fit the needs of UTA's students. The latter was particularly important. As mentioned above, UTA's student body consists of a significant number of transfer and first-generation college students.

The ability of the students, particularly those from underserved populations, to have opportunities to develop skills such as teamwork within a curricular context was a critical factor in the plan's development. The committee returned to this thought repeatedly as they worked through various iterations of the QEP.

Another factor was the existing and emerging opportunities for teamwork already on campus. Three entire schools and colleges—The College of Nursing and Health Innovation, The School of Social Work, and The College of Education—already have mandatory clinical experiences and/or internships, all of which have collaborative elements. The College of Engineering engages in assessment of teamwork as part of its yearly ABET accreditation. The campus Center for Service Learning was already well established, helping faculty incorporate service learning as a pedagogical practice in ways that affect hundreds of student teams annually. The College of Business has an exemplary leadership program and robust internship placements. Student Affairs began discussing how to frame and educate students on team-based activities that would allow them to learn valuable life and leadership skills then translate those experiences into résumé-friendly language. The QEP Development Team made an

inventory of these existing activities and gathered some data on student participation within them to make an educated decision about what the QEP might focus on.

To narrow the focus, campus outreach continued. Members of the Development Team conducted presentations and Q&A sessions in departmental meetings. QEP committee student representatives did small informal focus groups with other students in their major. A questionnaire was distributed at the University's department chairs' retreat early in the spring semester. The Development Team's leader conducted brief presentations for the SACSCOC Leadership Group and the Council of Academic Deans. Leaders of various co-curricular programs, such as Study Abroad, gave presentations to the Development Team.

During Development Team meetings, the group debriefed the information that was being gathered by this outreach, and it became apparent that individual departments and programs had different views or needs when it came to the "how" or implementation. Many departments and co-curricular programs expressed the need for better assessment strategies to ensure their students were getting the most out of the opportunities that were provided. In fact, the need for more robust assessment emerged as a regular issue.

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION AND REFLECTION

While the modes of learning preferred and needed varied from program to program, there was a consistency of learning needs expressed by the programs during the outreach. Reflection and application were mentioned numerous times—students needed to grow their ability to work collaboratively in the messy situations found in an internship or a lab. Similarly, students engaged in teamwork-oriented

Table 2: Core Objectives, Learning Outcomes (SLO), and Employment Skills Schemas (*similar topics are categorized by color*).

Core Objectives	AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes: Intellectual and Practical Skills	NACE Top Skills Employers Want
Critical Thinking	Inquiry and analysis	Leadership
Communication	Critical and creative thinking	Ability to work in a team
Teamwork	Written and Oral communication	Written Communication Skills
Social Responsibility	Quantitative literacy	Problem-solving skills
Personal Responsibility	Information literacy	Verbal communication skills
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Strong Work Ethic
	Problem solving	

activities needed to practice the reflective process that would help them to articulate what they had gained throughout the experience. Working together in teams emerged as a definite need. Students are often put into groups, but the degree to which deliberate cultivation of teamwork skills occurs varies considerably. The Development Team noted a high degree of similarity between the feedback given from programs, vital skill needs articulated by employers, the Texas State Core Objectives, and Essential Learning Outcomes identified by AAC&U (see Table 2). This alignment presented a very good indication of what the student learning outcomes might be as the committee worked to develop a plan that would meet the varied needs of academic programs.

Conferences

The Development Team sent a representative group to the AAC&U's Summer Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success at the University of California Los Angeles in 2016. This group was also representative of the University, consisting of a faculty member from the College of Science, a faculty member from the College of Liberal Arts, senior staff members from the UTA Libraries and Student Affairs, and a representative from University College. There, in consultation with AAC&U Summer Institute faculty and peers from other institutions, the group developed a plan that focused on program and faculty development. What the QEP could do, then, was to help build programmatic and faculty development infrastructure, which would address the needs to enhance collaboration, and assessment.

Later in the summer, three faculty members (two from the College of Liberal Arts and one from the School of Social Work) who were part of the QEP writing team attended the SACSCOC Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation. This valuable conference included sessions on assessment and accreditation, as well as various workshops on developing an effective Quality Enhancement Plan, and preparing for the site visit. The team heard from SASCOC leadership and met with faculty from other institutions that were going through the QEP process or who had recently completed a successful QEP plan. It was also during the summer of 2016 that the Division of Student Affairs began to publicize what they had come to call the Five Distinguishing Activities—areas of engagement in which all students would be encouraged to participate.

In the fall of 2016, the Development Team added new students to its roster, worked to refine the plan, and continued outreach. The team presented updates to Faculty Senate, senior leadership groups, such as the Provost's Council, and individual departments. The goals of this outreach were to solicit feedback on specific aspects of the plan while also generating initial awareness of ways in which departments, programs, and faculty could participate. One of the new student representatives to the Development Team was a vice president in the Student Congress; he was thus able to give

updates to the student body through his regular meetings. Student feedback was sought to determine how to generate student interest in the plan, since the students would see the effects of the QEP within existing classes. This led to the development of a student marketing plan in collaboration with Student Affairs. As the QEP was finalized and approved by the Provost, outreach and awareness continued, with the goal of generating excitement related to the QEP to support the opportunities it would bring for students, faculty, and staff.

As demonstrated, and in compliance with CS 3.3.2, UTA's Quality Enhancement Plan is the product of an involved, deliberate process, grounded in institutional assessment data, and involving multiple constituencies. The core of this effort has been a Development Team, comprised of representatives from all academic colleges on campus, multiple units from Student Affairs, academic support staff, and (perhaps most importantly) students. This team gathered information from local, state, and national research and best practices on experiential education, collaboration, and student success. It has involved a broad cross section of students, faculty, and staff throughout the development process in order to create a plan that meets the needs of the University and broader community.

UPDATE

The committee, with assistance from the Division of Faculty Affairs, finished the plan, submitted it to SACSCOC, and prepared for the On-Site visit. Additional meetings were scheduled involving the new QEP Director, Dr. Andrew Clark, and other committee members, the Interim Provost and other university administrators, faculty, and staff. In July, Dr. Clark and the Vice Provost for Planning and Policy attended the SACSCOC Summer Institute to meet with SACSCOC staff and faculty from other institutions and to attend the various workshops. From all of this outreach, the consensus was to pilot a narrowly focused student success initiative directed at enhancing and assessing Teamwork, an area which the data and campus-wide input (as shown previously) consistently highlighted as needed. In refocusing the QEP, the committee was mindful of the need to connect to The Maverick Advantage, an ongoing campus initiative which asks that all students participate in three of five Distinguishing Activities (Leadership, Career Development, Community Engagement, Global Connections, and Undergraduate Research) by the time they graduate. Teamwork is something that is inherent in all of the Distinguishing Activities and Collaborate UTA, through a narrow focus on teamwork, provides a focused platform for assessing and enhancing the quality of those experiences through the Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes. The College of Liberal Arts (COLA) was suggested as a starting point to pilot the plan and work out potential issues before rolling the plan out to other colleges and schools.

Our specific answers to the recommendations from the On-site committee are addressed in a separate document.

WHY LIBERAL ARTS?

- It is one of the largest and most diverse colleges on campus, actively cross-disciplinary, and its faculty is engaged in a variety of collaborative initiatives. The College of Liberal Arts has approximately 4,500 students, 161 full-time Tenured/Tenure-track faculty, 98 full-time non-tenured faculty, and 147 part-time non-tenured/tenure-track faculty. It is comprised of 13 departments and eight centers spanning Humanities, Social Science, and Fine Arts. Group projects including capstones, service learning courses, internships, study abroad projects, and other collaborative activities are prevalent in courses, but there is no college-wide assessment of the improvement during the process of students' higher order thinking skills or of basic improvement in collaborative skills.
- COLA has many opportunities for students to engage in collaborative activities aligned with the Maverick Advantage. However, those opportunities are not always assessed adequately, nor are students always asked to intentionally reflect and evaluate the benefits and challenges of the experience. There are a number of classes in COLA where students gain skills in areas that are part of the Maverick Advantage, and where collaboration takes place, but could be improved through assessment, or where collaboration could be introduced. In each of these courses the extent that students work together differs. For some it is a semester long endeavor, while for others it is a series of collaborative exercises. Listed below are just a couple in each category:

Global Connections

- ART 3313 Backgrounds of Modern Art
- GLOBAL 2301 Introduction to Global Issues
- GERM 4321—Topics in Literature and Culture

Undergraduate Research

- HIST 3300-003/4 Introduction to Historical Methods
- DS 3331—Introduction to Historical Research/Research in Disability Studies
- CRCJ 3340—Criminal Justice Statistics

Community Engagement

- COMS 2304 - Group Communication Principles
- SPAN 3340-001 Introduction to Translation
- ART 4392—Entrepreneurship in the Arts

Leadership

- BCMN 4350—Television Reporting
- COMM 4320—Managerial Communication

Career Preparedness

- PREL 4316—Public Relations Campaigns
- CRCJ 3370—Introduction to Forensics

- Courses in COLA not only reach Liberal Arts majors, but they also touch students across the university through the core curriculum. Six hours of English, History, and Political Science are required in the core, and Philosophy, Communications and literature classes are options chosen by many students. A majority of UTA's First Time in College students begin their college experience through these core classes. By introducing, or enhancing, collaboration in some of those core classes, these important and needed skills will affect students earlier in their college experience, and they may spread beyond COLA even before this initiative begins in other colleges and schools.

The new COLA Dean is very enthusiastic about the QEP's focus, as COLA's faculty and administration were engaged in developing strategies for improving its assessment of student success initiatives. The QEP can help fill this need for COLA. Also, as noted previously, there are other colleges such as the College of Engineering that regularly engage in assessment of teamwork through its accreditation with ABET. In these cases, when the QEP is rolled out to those colleges, it can assist in improving assessment, increase faculty student interaction, and help develop new opportunities for collaboration.

SECTION III: STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

UT Arlington is in the beginning stages of implementing the Maverick Advantage, an initiative where students are asked to engage in three of five Distinguishing Activities before they graduate. The activities fall under the following five areas: Career Development, Community Engagement, Global Connections, Leadership, and Undergraduate Research. It is important to state that the QEP is not the Maverick Advantage, but the High Impact Practices in the Maverick Advantage provide the impetus to engage in the collaborative experiences, and the QEP provides a platform for assessing and enhancing the quality of those experiences through the Student Learning Outcomes.

Working collaboratively is a complicated process, nearly as complicated as the problems teams are seeking to solve. Yet teamwork is an essential marketable skill required for both academic and professional success. According to research by Hart Research Associates for AAC&U, 96% of employers agree that “all college students should have experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own,” and 83% of employers value teamwork skills in diverse groups (Hart, 2015). In a survey completed each year since 2015 by Gray and Koncz (2017) for the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 95% of employers consistently value teamwork as a skill that interns should have (the second highest ranking

of all skills behind information processing). The opportunity for students to engage in Collaborative Learning is enhanced through the Maverick Advantage initiative, but the change in the students, their development of collaborative skills, and their understanding of what it means to be part of a team are not being assessed.

It is important to highlight that being part of a team and developing teamwork skills are not the same thing. There are many reasons a team might be successful, and not necessarily because team members worked particularly well together and developed collaborative skills. There is a difference between the overall quality of a group project or assignment on the one hand and the quality of *each individual member's* contribution to that final product on the other. Hughes and Jones (2011) use the example of an ambitious conscientious student who does most of the work on a group project and earns a high grade for the group, while exhibiting poor teamwork in producing it. The task may have been completed, but there may have been little effort to include the views of others or to consider diverse perspectives, and as such, the collaborative experience for all concerned is less than desirable. Teamwork is therefore *not* to be confused with team success (p. 55).

In looking at the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric it is clear that the rubric was created to measure both climate and



task in the teamwork experience. According to The Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo, “for small groups to function effectively in a course context, students must attend to both the climate within their group and the process by which they accomplish their tasks (Teamwork skills, 2017, p.1). Howard and Mullane (2008) write that team climate encourages members to exhibit behaviors such as citizenship that can affect not only the team but those outside the team as well. Hughes and Jones (2011) argue that it is more important to focus on the process involving the collaboration between team members instead of focusing on the team’s ultimate success or the quality of its end product. This distinction, they write, is particularly important when it comes to determining ways to assess effective teamwork. They stress the importance of all students gaining teamwork skills and not just the leader. They elaborate, “We are assuming that teamwork skills can indeed be acquired as part of students’ educational experiences. This seems reasonable from the fact that the AAC&U identified teamwork as one of the important skills to be developed during college, as well as from the record of substantial financial investments in both the government and the corporate sectors to develop teamwork skills in employees” (p. 57).

Since UTA’s QEP seeks to assess the impact of the collaborative experience on individual students, AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric’s definition of teamwork is particularly applicable:

Behavior under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on the team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions).

In light of the goal of the QEP to enhance and assess teamwork at UT Arlington, the following SLOs have been developed:

- SLO 1a: Students will recognize effective teamwork.
- SLO 1b: Students will practice effective teamwork.
- SLO 1c: Students will value effective teamwork.
- SLO 2: Students will connect teamwork experiences to the classroom.

The complete assessment plan including the various methods used to assess the SLO’s and the feedback loop is detailed in Chapter IX.

SECTION IV: LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

McClellan (2016) writes that collaboration and teamwork can be, and are, used interchangeably. Teamwork may be the most generic term, but each describe a group of two or more working together for a common goal. The ideal would be a combination of the two, what McClellan calls a “collaborative team”, one where “all members accept responsibility for completion of the task” (p.5).

This Literature Review looks specifically at the value of Teamwork, the term used by AAC&U and employers, in general as a High Impact Practice, then focuses more specifically on various aspects of Teamwork including virtual teams, along with the definition, benefits, practice, and assessment. A brief review of Professional Learning Communities follows.

HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES (HIP) AND SKILLS

The AAC&U started the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) Initiative to “align the goals for college learning to the needs of the new global century” (Kuh, 2008, p. v). That report lists learning outcomes and necessary intellectual and practical skills students should receive through their college education. That original list included Teamwork and Problem Solving. AAC&U’s current list of High Impact Practices does not mention teamwork by name but lists Collaborative Assignments and Projects

(https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/HIP_tables.pdf). In that report Kuh and O’Donnell (2013) list the benefits to collaboration as learning how to work with others and solve problems, as well as “sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences” (p. 1). Appropriate activities, according to the authors could include study groups within a course, team-based assignments and writing, and cooperative projects and research. The belief is that students participating in the high-impact practices outlined are prepared not only with a solid education but also with career and life skills necessary as they move to the workplace.

The push for students to engage in High Impact Practices in order to develop skills that employers require continues. There is increased momentum in Texas (through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 60 X 30 plan), around the country, and around the world (Lowden et al., 2011) for universities and colleges to not only pursue excellence in research and teaching, but also to ensure that students are being prepared for life after college. This preparation entails ensuring that students have certain skills (as articulated in the High Impact Practices) that employers feel are necessary for new employees to thrive in the workplace.



Hershey and Wood (2011) focus specifically on business students: “Businesses increasingly seek graduates from business schools who can demonstrate strong communication and collaborative skills. Further, accrediting agencies such as the AACSB now require that member and candidate schools document how such skill development is delivered and documented” (p. 57). Holtzman and Kraft (2011) note that this increased demand in the United States stems from the Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education in 2005 that “held colleges accountable for ensuring students were ready to meet the economic and workforce needs of the country” (p. 173).

The literature (Kuh, 2008; Holtzman & Kraft, 2011; Lowden et al., 2011) shows students want skills that will help them obtain jobs in their fields after graduation, and that employers want students who come prepared with not just the technical skills for their major, but also with additional career and life skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking. This is highlighted in various polls asking employers what skills they desire in interns or new graduates, where as high as 96% of employers in some studies list teamwork as one of the top two desired skills (Gray & Koncz, 2017; Hart, 2015).

College graduates are competing for jobs in a global arena that is constantly changing (Starr & Michanella, 2016), and in the midst of all the change, the one constant is the need for career and life skills such as teamwork. As students graduate with these skills developed through High Impact Practices, the value of their degree is enhanced, and as a result, graduates earn better paying jobs and are better prepared to move more quickly into higher level positions within their companies (Starr & Michanella, 2016; Kuh, 2008).

Virtual teamwork is also a desired skill. Rawlings and Downing (2017) write, “participating in virtual teamwork during the college experience provides students an opportunity to develop a skill set that employers routinely seek... almost two-thirds of U.S. organizations [integrate] virtual teams within their operating practice” (p. 117).

Sanchez (2016) recommends that the HIPs developing career and life skills should begin early in a student’s college experience and be carefully and intentionally scaffolded from first year through middle year and onto capstone and signature work, with the integration of assessment, connection by using HIPs developmentally, and collaboration by identifying campus partners and advocates for high-impact practices. Institutions that do this have proven to benefit, as well as students. Research shows that students become integrated as competent members, leading to a sense of belonging and social connectedness (Tinto, 1993; Kuh, 2005; Habley et al., 2012).

There is concern among some professors that the focus on workplace related skills is at odds with the mission of the

university. However, there seems to be no reason why a consensus cannot be reached whereby academic quality and integrity is maintained, and the needs of employers are also met (Lowdon et al., 2011).

TEAMWORK

Background

The skills developed by working collaboratively are important in almost every industry or profession and have been listed as essential attributes by employers (Hills, 2007; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1995; Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010; Watland & Santori, 2014). It would seem, then, that an important role for higher education should involve developing critical teamwork skills among students so as to prepare them for success in life (Hughes & Jones, 2011).

Research out of Creighton University shows Collaborative learning has been “well studied” in higher education since the 1960s, and as a teaching and learning strategy it has been used across disciplines and across all educational levels from elementary to higher education (https://www.creighton.edu/sites/www12.creighton.edu/files/TL-Pedagogies-Collaborative%20Learning_0.pdf). However, in the past few decades, higher education has undergone an instructional paradigm shift. Given the growth in research on learning, from behaviorist perspectives of learning to understanding learning from cognitive and social perspectives, increasingly the focus of higher education is to address the task of engaging students actively in learning (Davidson et al., 2014). There is growing literature to support that working in teams is a valuable pedagogical strategy for engaging learners and that collaborative learning is extremely effective for a wide range of content and differing learning levels (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006).

Definition

Salas, Sims and Burke (2005) reviewed the literature regarding teamwork over a period of 20 years (extending into the 1980s) and found 138 different teamwork models. They write that although there are many models for effective teamwork, there is no clear definition for what constitutes teamwork (p. 558). Through their analysis of the literature and the varying models, they came up with what they call the “Big Five,” which is “five core components that promote team effectiveness” (p. 559): Team leadership, Mutual performance monitoring, Backup behavior, Adaptability, and Team orientation (pp. 560-61). They also note that in order for the “Big Five” to function there must be “Shared mental models, Mutual trust, and Closed-loop communication” (p. 559). They choose to define teamwork as “two or more individuals with specified roles interacting adaptively, interdependently, and dynamically toward a common and valued goal (p. 562).

Hughes and Jones (2011) ask “what makes a team something different from any other group of people?” Teams they posit, are composed of individuals who share defining

characteristics such as a shared collective identity, common goals, interdependence in terms of assigned tasks or outcomes, and distinctive roles within the team, and who are part of a larger organizational context that influences their work and that they in turn can influence (p. 54)

Collaborative learning according to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005), can be “carried out through pairs or small interactive groups” (p. 4). However, they state that collaborative learning takes place when students work together to “achieve shared learning goals” (p. 4).

Working together and having shared goals are common themes. They are echoed in Schermerhorn and Wright (2014), who define teamwork as “The process of people actively working together to accomplish common goals.”

Virtual

In today’s society it is common for people to not just work in a face-to-face environment but also in virtual teams. How is a virtual team defined? According to the Engineering Institute of Technology (EIT), “a virtual team requires minimal face-to-face physical interaction and is often scattered physically using telecommunications-based technologies (such as email, Skype, web conferencing, etc.) to communicate often in an asynchronous manner” (Virtual Teams, 2017, p. 1).

Rawlings and Downing (2017) use the definition for virtual teams as “teams whose members use technology to varying degrees in working across locational, temporal, and relational boundaries to accomplish an interdependent task” (p. 116).

However, this QEP is not just about the group; it is also about the role of the individual and their recognition and practice of effective teamwork, along with the value they place on effective teamwork, and the connection they make of teamwork experiences to the classroom. Accordingly, as noted in Chapter III, “Collaborate UTA” follows the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE rubric definition, which focuses less on the team as a whole and more on the role of the individual in the team. Teamwork then is defined as follows:

Behavior under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on the team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions).

Benefits

Researchers have documented many benefits of teams, including more creativity, adaptability and productivity than a single individual can offer (Gladstein, 1984), as well as providing greater innovation, and more complex and comprehensive solutions to organizational challenges (Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990).

Kuh’s research (2008) shows that collaborative assignments and projects are especially effective in having a positive impact on student development. He suggests that working and solving problems actively by collaborating with others is not simply a desirable *outcome* of student development; it is also an educational *practice* that has a demonstrably high developmental impact. Davidson et al. (2014) support this approach suggesting that the most-often-used practice to get students engaged in the classroom and working with others is *small-group work*, further defined as *cooperative*, *collaborative*, and, more recently, *problem-based learning* and *team-based learning*. Watland et al. (2014) argue that, “the use of student teams in college courses is increasing and considered one of the most valued and necessary skills among college graduates. Most academic programs require *teamwork* as part of the students’ academic learning experience” (p. 91).

The benefits of collaboration include content mastery, development of critical thinking and problem solving skills, and improved interpersonal skills (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Johnson & Johnson, 1994). However, faculty using best practices enhance the benefits that come from teamwork.

Best Practices

As has been shown, collaboration is a valuable pedagogical strategy contributing to student learning and retention, but research suggests that little or no student instruction or preparation is often provided by instructors to teach students how to be an effective team member. Much of the literature and current practices related to teamwork have more to do with managing teams’ productivity and outputs rather than focusing on providing individual team members with training, experiences or other necessary preparation to perform effectively and collaboratively as a team member (Drake, Goldsmith, & Strachan, 2006).

Indeed, this thought that teamwork skills are not being taught is supported by Matusovich et. al. (2012), who conducted a three-year mixed method study on engineering programs in universities across different regions of the United States. They found that even though these programs assessed Communication and Teamwork as part of their accreditation efforts through ABET, teamwork skills were not taught as part of the courses. In interviews with engineering faculty as part of the study, the vast majority of professors said students learn teamwork skills “by doing it.” For many professors, their reasons for not teaching teamwork boiled down to “lack of value, lack of knowledge, and lack of time” (p. 9). In other words, students were put in teams with a task to complete and they had to figure out how to work together.

Without instructional or experiential preparation in teamwork or collaborative processes, team members may be driven by the task but not achieve optimal results (West, 2000).

Effective teamwork therefore does not necessarily happen automatically. Without appropriate preparation from faculty, students focus only on accomplishing the products of the team or attending to the logistical considerations. Students may miss the opportunity to build the collaborative skills and relationships necessary to be an effective team member both in academic programs and in the workplace (Bain, 2004; Fink, 2003). This learning experience is most effective when faculty carefully prepare students for the experience and guide them through the collaborative process (Knowles, 1975; Kolb, 1984; Schroeder, 1993). This can only happen when faculty themselves receive instruction in implementing best practices.

Tinto (2012), in talking about best practices says feedback is key. Ideally, faculty will use feedback gained through assessing student performance to adjust their instructions, which in turn leads to improved student learning within the course. He writes, “Frequent assessment and timely feedback helps establish a classroom environment in which students are not only more likely to adjust their behaviors over time but also think about what they are learning as they are learning. Such ‘critical’ attention further promotes student learning and in turn retention and completion” (p. 6).

Research from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University notes that group work is far more complex than individual work. In doing group it is advised to “clearly articulate your objectives, explicitly define the task, clarify your expectations, model high-quality work, and communicate performance criteria” (<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/design.html>).

In teaching a class involving teamwork, Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) stress clear communication of instructions, openness in terms of why collaborative work is being used, and careful structuring of the groups.

This notion of adjusting instructions or clearly articulating expectations is what Winkelmas et. al. (2016) refer to as “transparency.” With transparent instruction, faculty are much more explicit about their expectations for learning, how work is assessed, and what the benefits, outcomes, and relevance is for the assignments. Their research focused more on under-represented students, and it showed that students receiving transparent instruction showed gains in academic confidence, a sense of belonging, and the skills that employers value.

As shown a large part of the best practices for teaching collaboration and teamwork is faculty involvement during the process. Feedback based on sound assessment practices is important for student success.

Assessment

Hughes and Jones (2011) state that although engaging in teamwork may have appeal, “the phrase good teamwork

may seem so conceptually vague and subjective as to defy rigorous study and systematic practice. Quite a bit is known, however, about what constitutes effective teamwork, how to assess it, and how to develop it” (p. 53). They stress the importance of distinguishing between the interaction of the team members (climate) and the quality of the end product (task) in deciding how best to assess effective teamwork.

Salas, Sims, and Burke (2005) describe it as team performance and team effectiveness. One focuses on the outcome regardless of how the task was accomplished, while the other “takes a more holistic perspective” in considering not just performance, but “how the team interacted (i.e., team processes, teamwork) to achieve the team outcome (p. 557).

Hughes and Jones (2011) further point out the importance, in an academic context, of distinguishing between the overall quality of a group project or assignment on the one hand and the quality of *each individual member’s teamwork* in contributing to that final product on the other. For example, there may be an ambitious conscientious student who does most of the work on a group project and earns a high grade for the group, while exhibiting poor teamwork in producing it. Teamwork is therefore *not* to be confused with team success. Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) recommend a mixture of both individual and group accountability when collaborative learning activities are graded.

The focus of the “Collaborate UTA” Student Learning Outcomes is on the *individual* team members’ contributions to the team and the importance of developing the attitudes and skills in *individual students* necessary for contributing productively to the diverse groups and teams they will serve on later in life. Rhodes (2009) notes that in assessing teamwork it is recommended by AAC&U that work samples or collections of work for this outcome are derived from one (or more) of the following three sources: (1) students’ own reflections about their contribution to a team’s functioning; (2) evaluation or feedback from fellow team members about students’ contribution to the team’s functioning; or (3) the evaluation of an outside observer regarding students’ contributions to a team’s functioning. By using triangulation with multiple measures assessment is strengthened.

Hughes and Jones (2011, p. 61) outline the following implications for educators necessary for introducing effective teamwork in their courses, including the following: committing to the development of teamwork whereby skills are intentionally developed; making assignments that elicit teamwork; assessing students’ teamwork by focusing on the process rather than on the end product; and providing meaningful feedback (p. 57).

There are many ways to assess teamwork, including paper-and-pencil tests or written teamwork tests. However, many



of those tests were created for a corporate setting and were not intended as tools to provide feedback for students to improve their teamwork skills. One example developed for students was a thirty-five-item test in which students read brief scenarios and then chose a response from four multiple-choice alternatives (Hughes & Jones, 2011). A widely used and replicated assessment tool, and one that will be used for this QEP, is the Association of American Colleges and Universities Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics for fifteen of their essential learning outcomes (Rhodes, 2009).

Broadly speaking, a rubric is a scoring tool that reveals the standards by which a particular piece of work will be judged (Huba & Freed, 2000; Stevens & Levi, 2005). Hughes and Jones (2011) suggest that a meaningful assessment of students' teamwork skills needs to focus on the teamwork process, rather than on the end product. It is not sufficient to give students a team assignment and then score their final project (or paper, or lab report, or whatever) for its accuracy. The quality of the team process, using something like the VALUE rubric, must also be assessed (p. 57). In order for a teamwork experience to be effective, meaningful feedback must be provided. Effective learning takes place when students have an opportunity to practice, receive feedback, and then try again (Bain, 2004; Fink, 2003; Wiggins, 1998). This feedback may come from their peers, who are most likely to see their teamwork skills in action or from faculty members, coaches, or others

who may see their teamwork in a more limited setting. Regardless of the source, feedback about student performance is necessary, meaning that faculty and staff members need to build in opportunities for it to take place.

Professional Learning Communities

Research into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has been growing over the last 20 years, but PLCs have been used as a vehicle for improving teaching and student learning for much longer (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2010). DuFour (2004) says the "professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn" (p. 1). Portland Community College defines its PLC as "safe and confidential spaces where facilitated conversation supports the exploration of dilemmas relating to our professional practice. We will learn skills, acquire tools, and practice processes that enhance our knowledge of teaching and learning" (<https://www.pcc.edu/resources/tlc/professional-learning-community/>). In a similar vein Stanford researcher Joan Tabert describes a PLC as "a group of individuals who share a goal and work together to achieve the goal, assess their progress, make corrections, and hold themselves accountable for achieving their goal" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2010, p. 35).

For DuFour (2004), there are three basic questions that a PLC must address: What do we want each student to

learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? (p. 1). McLaughlin and Talbert (2010) note that there is increasing evidence of increases in student learning through PLCs, but the big challenge is developing the PLCs. They also note that the emphasis needs to be on learning and not just implementing. In other words, faculty can and will implement a plan, but the focus needs to be on the faculty learning as well. PLCs can be focused in different ways. “Digital Scholarship and Pedagogy” or “Learning Analytics” are two former themes of past PLCs at UT Arlington. Auburn University has a Professional Mathematics Learning Community ([\[www.education.auburn.edu/math-professional-learning-communities\]\(http://www.education.auburn.edu/math-professional-learning-communities\)\). At Appalachian State University, “The Public School Partnership Professional Learning Communities are a vehicle for collaborative efforts among the Reich College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and practitioners in the public schools” \(<https://partnership.appstate.edu/professional-learning-communities>\). Among the many benefits of PLCs are an increased sense of community among the participants \(often from different disciplines\), development of innovative approaches to teaching through collaboration with others, opportunities to learn and grow as a teacher, and new opportunities for engaging in research.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

SECTION V: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As mentioned earlier, teamwork is an important skill that entities within the state of Texas and around the country have highlighted as being important for students to have when they graduate. Yet data such as the annual NSSE survey shows our students lacking in those skills. The “Collaborate UTA” implementation plan is built on the idea of improving the assessment and practice of teamwork in curricular settings where it currently exists in both face-to-face and virtual settings. The vehicle for achieving this is through Professional Learning Communities. As the literature review demonstrated, when faculty receive development in the best practices for teaching and assessing teamwork then implement those strategies in the courses, the students’ experience in participating in the activity is improved, and so is their ability to gain and develop the marketable career and life skills that employers seek. “Collaborate UTA” will be piloted within the College of Liberal Arts and then spread to other colleges/schools on campus.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The following Program Outcomes (PO) have been developed in order to support the QEP.

- PO 1: Students will report that their teamwork experience has prepared them for the real world.**
PO 2: PLC Fellows will report the value of the collaborative experience on their teaching, and on the interaction between them and their students.

ACTIONS

From the students’ point of view, they will progress through their sequence of courses within a degree program, with varying opportunities to participate in innovative teamwork experiences in a variety of settings as they make their way toward their degree. As they participate in the activities and associated coursework, various artifacts to help assess the SLOs and POs will be collected. These will include an in-depth essay detailing their experiences and understanding of what effective teamwork is, peer assessments of the practice of teamwork, journals detailing the practice of teamwork, recordings of team interactions (virtual and in person), and instructor observations, all of which record the practice of teamwork. The exact type of activity will depend on the particular course, and so the assessment tools used to measure the activity may vary. However, the instructor as part of the PLC program will agree to use the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric as part of the QEP where they individually assess teamwork activities.

It is important to note that students realize the value of teamwork not just for completion of a course, but also as part of the marketable skills essential for life after graduation. The incorporation of teamwork into

the curriculum needs to be implemented through careful, structured faculty development.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Background at UTA

Faculty development through Professional Learning Communities will be the primary means of providing faculty with best practices in teaching, developing and assessing teamwork in courses leading to student success in the classroom. The Professional Learning Community (PLC) program at UT Arlington started in 2012 under the direction of Laurel Mayo and Dr. Pete Smith of the Division of Digital Teaching and Learning with funding from the Office of the Provost. The program moved into the LINK Research Lab in 2013. In 2015, Justin T. Dellinger (Associate Director, LINK Lab) assumed the key administrative role along with Pete Smith. Traditionally at UT Arlington, the focus of PLCs has been on the use of educational technology to improve learning. Participants selected for the program worked together in themed communities under the guidance of a facilitator to explore and implement strategies, activities, and projects that use technology to improve the learning experience at UTA.

Due to budget cuts, the LINK Lab is unable to continue to fund the program, and there is uncertainty as to where it should be housed administratively. In fact, until the development of the QEP it seemed as though there would be no PLC program in fall 2017. The PLC program provides an opportunity for the QEP to use the same platform, allowing the QEP to tap into the expertise of Justin Dellinger, Associate Director of the LINK Lab who has guided the PLC program for several years, and refocus it to respond to the QEP theme. The PLC faculty network, its stellar reputation as an innovative space for student learning, and its process for recruiting, managing, and assessing the work of the PLCs will serve the QEP’s goals well and allow for a seamless introduction into the College of Liberal Arts.

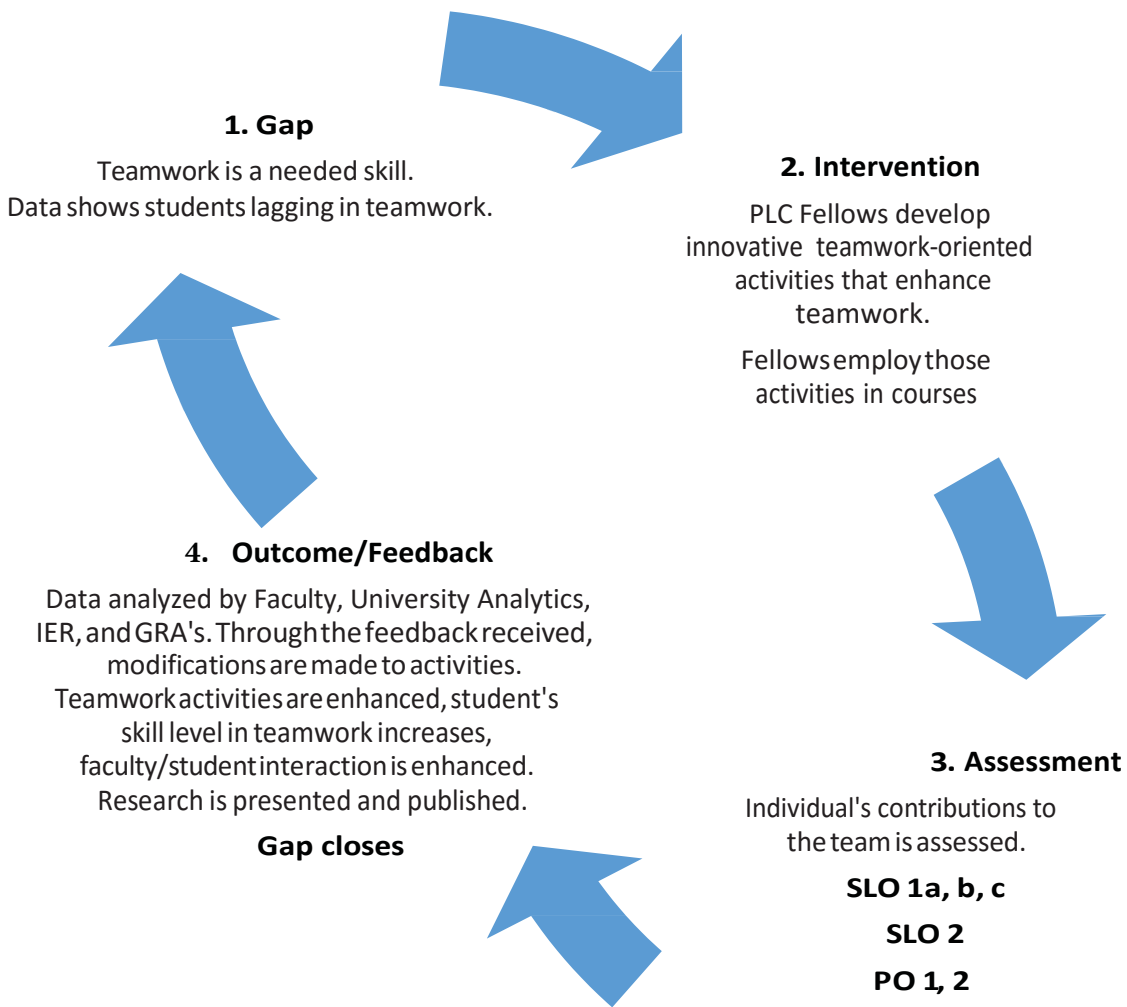
Implementation

The PLCs will be selective; faculty of any rank and status can apply to be a PLC Fellow by submitting a letter of application, describing the professional goals and outcomes the applicant wishes to achieve as it relates to their teaching of teamwork. College Deans and Chairs may also nominate suitable faculty members.

PLC Fellows

The goal is that by October 6, 2017, at least one PLC group will be formed with 10 PLC Fellows focusing on enhancing teamwork in their courses. The groups will consist of a mix of faculty who teach either face-to-face or

Figure 3: The Implementation Cycle



online courses, or both. On-line courses are an increasing area of growth and importance for UT Arlington and their inclusion is important in responding to the needs of our growing student population. The goal is for faculty to learn from each other, brain-storm together, hear from experts, and offer solutions to teamwork problems faced in both types of instruction.

Another objective is for all PLC Fellows to attend a conference together centered around the QEP theme or some aspect of enhancing student learning. This is important not just for the learning that takes place, but also the sense of comradery and team building that takes place. Previous participants in PLCs have stated that they found traveling together to a conference to be an extremely beneficial part of the PLC. One member, who is also a member of the QEP steering committee, stated that the relationships she built during the inaugural PLC group continue to last. This activity is scheduled for spring 2018, or possibly summer 2018 following the end of the PLC.

Each PLC Fellow will receive a small budget, to purchase equipment or resources needed to put together a learning intervention for a particular course. The research will be presented at a mini-conference attended by the Provost and other faculty/administrators, and the PLC Fellows will be encouraged to look for suitable venues to promote and maybe publish research about the experience. More details are outlined below in the “outcomes” section.

STRUCTURE

PLC Lead

Each PLC will have a PLC Lead chosen from previous PLC participants who expressed an interest in leading future groups, or from carefully selected faculty with experience in enhancing and assessing teamwork. The PLC Lead will receive a small stipend. Their duties are administrative (organizing and scheduling the group meetings) and facilitative (bringing relevant resources to the group for experimentation and discussion; leading discussion during PLC meetings).

Figure 4: PLC structure



PLC group meetings will take place in on-campus and online sessions among the group members and with national and international leaders in collaboration and teamwork. As shown in Figure 5, there will be about five meetings per semester. Locations will vary according to the team leader’s preference, but the library and various colleges and departments have conference rooms equipped with technology for video conferencing that are available for use. Groups will be encouraged to meet in various settings including on-line to experience what their students may be facing.

OUTCOME

Program Outcome 1: Students will report that their teamwork experience has prepared them for the real world.

PLC Fellows will learn about best practices in teaching teamwork from experts on and off campus. They will employ these practices in their courses to help create a meaningful experience for the students. The goal is that the teamwork exercise or exercises that are developed and implemented will enhance student’s teamwork skills and prepare them for experiences they may face when they graduate. The exercises used will vary according to the course. For some courses it may be a variety of team-oriented activities, for another it maybe a capstone assignment working in teams to deliver a product for a client. The fall will be the time for gaining knowledge, developing strategies, and designing collaborative activities. The spring is for implementation. By participating in a PLC, participants

will be engaging in the very practice (collaboration) that they are seeking to enhance. So, they are learning along with their students, although in a different setting.

Assessment is covered in detail in Chapter IX, but in sum, Students will write an essay at the end of the semester synthesizing their experiences and detailing clearly that they recognize effective teamwork, in addition to describing how the experience benefits them for their anticipated career following graduation. Graduate students trained in data gathering and analysis through the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) or trained in qualitative research through courses in the College of Liberal Arts will conduct focus groups with students in the various courses taught by the PLC Fellows. These focus groups will gather a collective perspective on the activities and the lessons learned and how the experience has prepared the students for the real world. The graduate students will also analyze the data.

Program Outcome 2: PLC Fellows will report the value of the collaborative experience on their teaching and on the interaction between them and their students.

At the end of their time as a PLC Fellow, faculty will be asked to describe the value of the PLC in terms of their teaching. They will have been guided through the reflection process in a session with a staff member from the Center for Service Learning. PLC Fellows will also be asked to reflect on how they were able to use the collaborative activity that they designed or enhanced to increase faculty/student interaction. These reflections will be collected and analyzed by University Analytics. More details on this process can be found in the assessment section in Chapter IX.

PLC Fellows will also be encouraged to find ways to disseminate what they have learned through the PLC experience. It might be a manuscript detailing the creation, implementation, and assessment of an activity; it might be conducting some faculty development activities in their own department. Whatever the method, it is important that faculty learn through this experience, and that that knowledge is shared with others. PLC Fellows will present the results of their intervention at a mini-conference at the end of the spring semester attended by their Dean, the Provost, and other faculty. The PLC Fellows will also be recognized at a Provost luncheon where they will receive a certificate of completion. Other specialty awards will also be given for categories such as “Most innovative learning strategy.”

Figure 5: PLC activities

Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five meetings • Develop course activities • Attend conference (possibly spring or summer depending on suitable conference).
Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Meetings • Employ activities • Assess student learning • Mini-conference • Provost Luncheon

Figure 6: Schedule of Implementation by College/School



PLC Fellows will have the opportunity to become PLC Leads or mentors to new PLC Fellows as the program expands.

The one difference from past PLCs is that, in line with the QEP, the initial class will give preference to faculty from the College of Liberal Arts. However, applications from faculty in other colleges and entities will be considered as it will be advantageous for the implementation to move beyond COLA as quickly as possible. As the QEP is rolled out to other colleges, it is hoped that the number of PLCs will increase and encourage cross disciplinary approaches to teamwork and collaborative learning. Again, not only will faculty learn about teamwork conceptually, but they will also learn about teamwork by engaging in collaborative learning themselves.

SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENTAL/ PROGRAM INCORPORATION:

By the end of the first year, we will have begun to build up our internal assessment data and knowledge of implementation to properly scale incorporation up, and add more PLC’s. The goal is that by Year 5 there will be a PLC in every college conducting and assessing teamwork activities in various courses. The implementation schedule was developed in consultation with the former Provost and Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Number of Students

Initially COLA will be the focus. While the exact courses to be part of the program will be determined in September as faculty apply for the PLC program, it is possible to

estimate how many students will be reached. Assuming 10 faculty each teaching a course with 30 students, that is 300 students representing not just COLA but also other colleges, depending on the course. Year two will see that number tripled reaching 900 students for a total number of 1,200 students reached over two years. This is a conservative estimate and based on one PLC in each college with 10 faculty members. The number of students reached will increase significantly if, with the support of the various colleges, there are several PLCs/year in each college. At the moment the focus is on implementing the program, and the ability to grow will depend on the success of the initial rollout in COLA.

COLLABORATE UTA PARTNERS

Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL)

Collaborate UTA will work with The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning, or CIRTL, in hiring graduate students as needed to help with assessment and other initiatives. CIRTL was founded at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and now includes over 40 institutions such as Yale University, Cornell University, University of Tennessee, Michigan State University, University of Colorado-Boulder, Texas A&M University, and Vanderbilt University. At UT Arlington CIRTL is co-directed by Dr. Jim Grover, Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Studies, College of Science, and T. Lisa Berry, Director, Learning Innovation and Networked Knowledge (LINK) Research Lab. CIRTL

Table 3: Number of students reached by the QEP

Year	Number of PLCs	Number of students/year	Total number of students reached
1	1 (10 Faculty)	300	300
2	3	900	1200
3	4	1200	2400
4	5	1500	3900
5	8	2400	6300

focuses on improving science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education for students by enabling doctoral students to acquire better tools and skills for teaching undergraduate students in STEM fields. As noted throughout this plan, teamwork is an important skill no matter the field. Therefore, the graduate students will gain valuable classroom and research experience as they work with faculty to collect data in their courses. CIRTL has received funding from the NSF for its programs, and has recorded “notable improvement in teaching skills of doctoral students and improvement in undergraduate courses taught by doctoral students” (<http://grad.pci.uta.edu/alumni/newsletter/2011/fall/cirtl/>). Therefore, CIRTL is a logical and valuable partner for the QEP.

Center for Service Learning

An important partner in “Collaborate UTA” will be The Center for Service Learning (CSL). Its Director, Dr. Kevin Gustafson, who is also the Interim Dean of the Honor’s College, has been a member of the QEP committee since the inception of the process. He is also a faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts. The CSL serves as a liaison between faculty, students, and community agencies. It offers support, resources, and placement opportunities to enable students to experience a culture of learning in a real-world setting, in addition to their University classrooms (<https://www.uta.edu/ccsl/about/index.php>).

One of the important tasks that the Center performs is training faculty in Service Learning through the faculty fellows program. One key aspect of that training is teaching about developing and implementing structured reflection. CSL staff will assist in the training of PLC Fellows in reflective writing through a session on the use of reflection.

The CSL will also begin to integrate the facilitation of teamwork as part of its development programs and training. Although collaboration is inherent in service learning (students work in groups and with faculty and community partners), the focus on this skill will be enhanced in their training, and there will be more intentionality in helping faculty learn about sound practices and assessment. CSL’s Faculty Fellows program, offers ongoing instructional and mentoring support for the university community, meaning the focus on teamwork will start to reach the whole university community outside of just the PLC Fellows program.

Division of Faculty Affairs

Another entity that will be involved in assisting with faculty development is the Division of Faculty Affairs in the Provost’s Office. The Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Dr.

Maria Martinez-Cosio, has also been an integral part of the QEP committee. The Department of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will help facilitate general faculty development programming related to teamwork and especially assessment. This programming might include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Workshops on specific topics in experiential learning, such as how to structure student teams for group work;
- Guest speakers who will give lectures and/or lead workshops on teamwork pedagogy;
- Peer observation for faculty developing and incorporating experiential learning activities within a course;
- A brown-bag lunch series on teamwork issues;
- Consultation for faculty developing grant proposals that include teamwork components

Programs in COLA

There are graduate courses in COLA (such as in the Departments of Communication and Sociology) that train graduate students in qualitative research methodologies. The QEP will work with the faculty members teaching those courses to incorporate the QEP as part of their course assignments. That is, students in those courses will, in consultation with the QEP Director and their faculty member, develop a standardized set of questions for the focus groups, and then the graduate students will run the focus groups and analyze the data. This will be a valuable learning experience for the graduate students and a low-cost way of gathering valuable assessment data.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting

If necessary IER will help facilitate the analysis of the data. In conducting analyses, IER uses a multidisciplinary panel of faculty overseen and trained by IER staff to assess student learning in artifacts of scale. In doing so care is taken with issues such as interrater reliability. This service may be useful for scoring the student essay using the AAC&U teamwork VALUE Rubric.

University Analytics

This office is essential for helping analyze both qualitative and quantitative data gathered through our assessment efforts. UA facilitates “teaching and learning by ... performing research analyses and predictive modeling of internal and external data” and engages in “the research and use of learning analytics to promote institutional and student success as well as emerging, complex models of teaching and learning.” Thus, the staff in University Analytics are an essential partner in the gathering and analysis of QEP related data.

SECTION VI: TIMELINE

Table 4: QEP Schedule of activities

Initiatives	Timeframe									
	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
Personnel										
Hire Graduate students as needed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hire Student Worker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PLC Program										
Recruit and select Professional Learning Fellows	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Attend conference		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Administer Professional Learning Community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop teamwork interventions	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Implement interventions		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Recruit qualitative courses to partner with QEP	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Professional Learning Community mini-conference		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Provost Luncheon and Awards Ceremony		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Roll out program beyond COLA			✓		✓		✓		✓	
Faculty Development										
Offer general Faculty development opportunities around QEP theme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing										
Market QEP Initiatives and Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create Social media presence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Update QEP website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment										
NSSE		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Student Essay		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Focus Groups		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Faculty observation and Peer assessment of teamwork		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Baseline survey	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Professional development activities evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Usage numbers: professional development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer observation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual reports from Departments		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Exit survey of graduating seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

SECTION VII: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OVERSIGHT

The QEP will be administered by the QEP Director, Dr. Andrew M. Clark, under the direction of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and University Provost, Dr. Teik Lim. Additional direction will be provided by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Dr. Antoinette Sol, and the Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Policy, Dr. Pranesh Aswath.

QEP Director

Following the sudden departure of the previous QEP Director, and given the proximity to the On-site Committee visit, the decision was made to distribute responsibilities for the QEP among several members of the QEP writing team. Dr. Maria Martinez-Cosio, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, took a key leadership role in the process. Subsequently, following the On-site visit, and after an internal search, the Provost appointed Dr. Andrew M. Clark to the position.

Dr. Clark is an award-winning teacher and researcher and a tenured faculty member in the Department of Communication. He has been actively involved in the QEP process since the beginning of the current initiative and was a member of the steering committee, writing committee, and chair of the communication committee. He is Chair of the Radio and Audio Media Division of the Broadcast Education Association, the premiere international academic media organization. He is a past President of the Texas Association of Broadcast Educators and currently coordinator of the largest sequence (Broadcast) within the Department of Communication. He has successfully used team-based pedagogy in various forms in classes over his 20 years of teaching in Higher Education. Currently his senior TV Reporting class collaborates to produce a weekly newscast and engages in a service learning project with the City of Arlington. He has supervised over 100 internships and successfully built relationships with employers around the country to hire graduates. Dr. Clark also teaches an on-line course as part of the Finish@UT program. He has received certification in on-line teaching from the Online Learning Consortium (OLC).

As the QEP Director he provides day-to-day leadership of the QEP. He will coordinate the implementation, monitoring, and execution of the plan's initiatives, along with the QEP Advisory Committee, and he will be a liaison among the numerous individuals, departments, and units that are involved with the QEP. He will provide direction and administrative support for the Professional Learning Communities and help facilitate other faculty development opportunities across the university.

Administrative Support

Dr. Clark will be supported by Ms. Denise Cobbs who also supports the Division of Faculty Affairs. She will assist with the budget, travel, scheduling, and other duties as assigned pertaining to the successful implementation of the QEP

Graduate Students for Assessment

As previously outlined in Chapter IX, the QEP will use multiple measures to assess the student learning outcomes and overall QEP progress and impact. As the need arises, we will hire Graduate Assistants trained through the Center for Innovation, Teaching, Learning and Research (CIRTL) or through courses in COLA to help collect and manage assessment data. Under the supervision of the QEP Director and faculty, these graduate students will assist the faculty in the collection of data such as focus groups, student essays, peer assessments, recordings of team meetings, and other material related to the QEP. They will work with the faculty, Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting, and University Analytics to compile the necessary assessment data and produce reports.

PLC Lead

The initial PLC lead will be Dr. Peggy Semingson from the College of Education, Curriculum & Instruction. Dr. Semingson is an award-winning teacher and researcher and has directed PLC's from the beginning of the program. She is a UT System Regents' Outstanding Teacher and has experience in both face-to-face and online teaching. Dr. Semingson has been trained in peer evaluation, which is part of the assessment plan for the QEP. She will work closely with the QEP Director, facilitate the PLC meetings, and coordinate guest speakers and other activities that are part of the PLC program.

QEP Advisory Committee

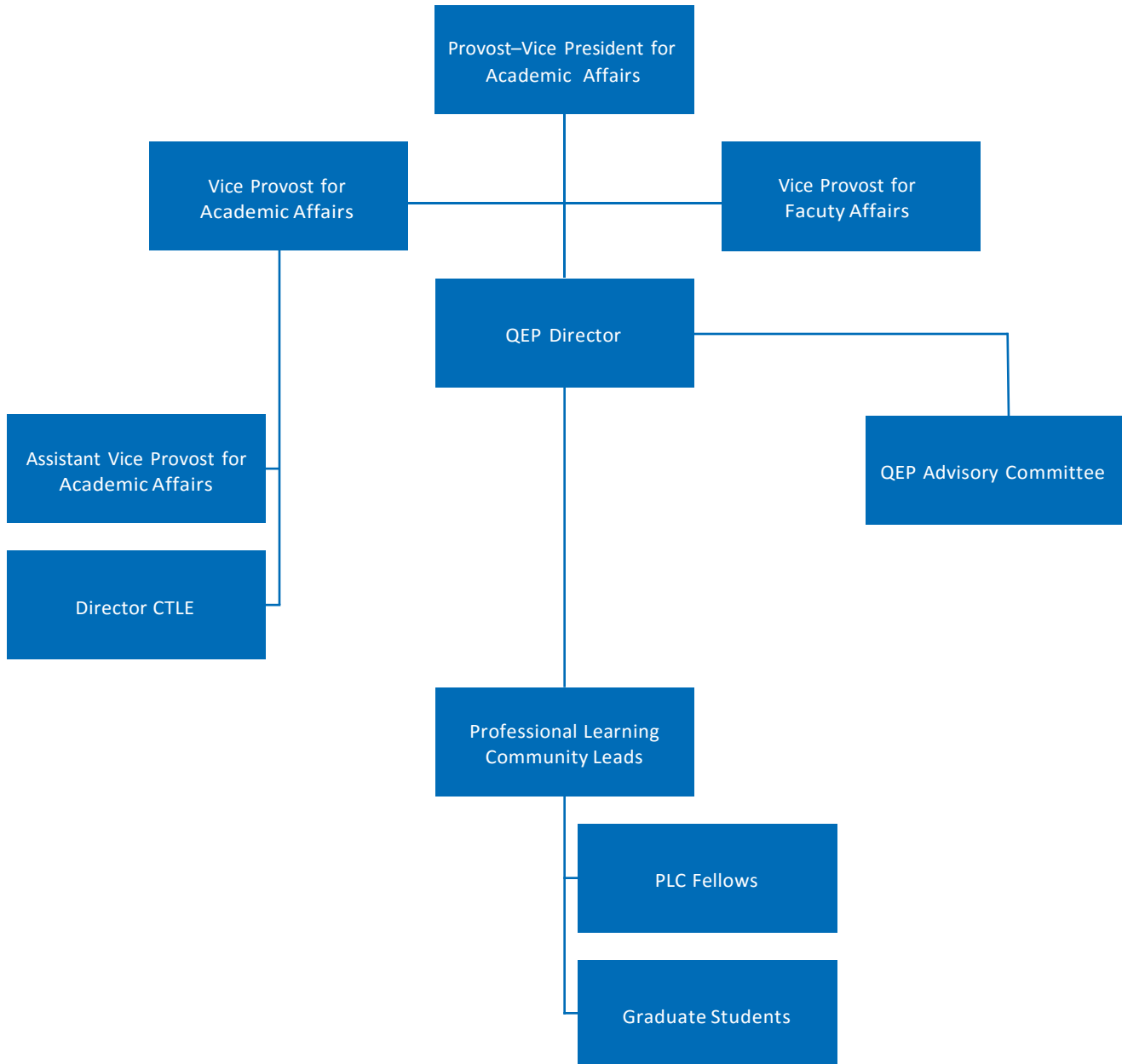
The success of the QEP will depend on close working relationships with the various colleges and other entities across campus. To facilitate these partnerships, the QEP will create an advisory committee consisting of individuals from programs on campus that are essential partners for progressing the QEP. This Advisory Committee will provide feedback about QEP direction and programming and assist the QEP Director as needed. This group will be responsible for providing specific direction related to aspects of the QEP and communicating progress back to the larger campus community. These essential members include the following:

- PLC Liaisons (Associate Deans or appointed faculty from each college)
- Center for Service Learning Director—Dr. Kevin Gustafson
- Center for Innovative Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Co-Director—T. Lisa Berry
- PLC Lead—Dr. Peggy Semingson

- LINK LAB Assistant Director, Justin Dellinger
- Vice President for University Analytics—Dr. Pete Smith
- Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs—Dr. Maria Martinez-Cosio
- Director, University College Learning Center—Catherine Unite

- Interim Vice Provost, Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting—Dr. Rebecca Lewis
- Director of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Student Success—Molly Albart
- Department Head for Experiential Learning & Undergraduate Research, UTA Libraries—Gretchen Trkay

Figure 7: QEP Organizational Chart



SECTION VIII: RESOURCES

BUDGET DESCRIPTION

Personnel

QEP Director

The expectation is that 50% of the QEP Director's time will be dedicated to administration of the plan, including providing faculty development support opportunities related to the QEP. This includes developing, scheduling, and promoting the general faculty development programming, working with the PLC Coordinators to administer the program, engaging in general campus outreach, and preparing reports and presentations related to the activities and success of the QEP.

Division of Faculty Affairs Administrative Assistant

The existing administrative assistant for the Division of Faculty Affairs will provide basic administrative support for the QEP, including budget reconciliation, purchasing, and other organizational duties such as arranging meeting space.

Graduate Students for Assessment

Graduate students trained by the Center for the Integration of Teaching, Research, and Learning will be hired for specific data collection tasks, including assisting the PLC Leads and PLC Fellows with collecting SLO assessment data from courses, and working with other units on campus (Student Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting,

Table 5: 5-year budget

Budget Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Personnel						
QEP Director	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	225,000
Administrative Asst.	6,714	6,714	6,714	6,714	6,714	33,570
Grad. Assist. stipends	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Student Worker	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200	36,000
PLC Liaisons (Assoc. Deans)	140,674	140,674	140,674	140,674	140,674	703,370
PLC Leads stipends	7,000	21,000	28,000	35,000	56,000	147,000
PLC Co-administrator	5,334					5,334
Total Personnel	216,922	225,588	232,588	239,588	260,588	1,175,274
Fringe						
QEP Director	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	67,500
Total Fringe	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	67,500
PLC Activities						
PLC Fellows materials and travel	10,000	30,000	40,000	50,000	80,000	210,000
PLC expenses	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000
Assessment IER	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Total PLC	17,000	37,000	47,000	57,000	87,000	245,000
Programming Activities						
Marketing communications	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000
Faculty Development activities	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000
Total Programming Costs	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	20,000
Total	251,422	280,088	297,088	314,088	365,088	1,507,774

University Analytics) to gather other needed data. They will receive a stipend for the activity in the range of \$500–\$1,500 depending on the time involved. Graduate students used through COLA courses will not be compensated because they will be engaging in activities for course credit. They will be eligible to participate in future paid opportunities after completion of the course.

Student Worker

The student worker will be hired to assist with developing the QEP web presence and building a database of teamwork oriented opportunities campus-wide for the QEP website. Anyone will be able to search the site for opportunities within courses as well as extra and co-curricular opportunities. As surveys are created and sent out this person will also compile data from the surveys for presentation.

PLC Liaisons

These are the Associate Deans at the various colleges. The expectation is that they will dedicate 10% of their time helping to administer PLC related activities such as faculty development in their own colleges even before the plan is implemented in full at their college/school.

PLC Lead

This is the PLC group facilitator. Each PLC Lead will be paid a stipend of \$7,000 (\$3,500/semester).

PLC Co-administrator

This person has administered the PLC program in the past and will spend about 10% of his time in the first year helping transfer the administration of the PLCs over to the QEP.

Fringe

The University of Texas at Arlington assesses fringe as 30% of salaries for faculty and staff.

PLC Activities

PLC Fellows Materials

Each PLC Fellow will receive a budget of \$1,000 for travel, for equipment, or for instructional materials related to the activities they will implement in the classroom.

PLC Expenses

This is for administrative expenses related to running the PLC groups.

Assessment IER

This is for the gathering and assessing of various assessment artifacts administered by UTA's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting (IER).

Programming

Marketing Communications

This item covers the initial cost for marketing materials, including communication about the QEP to faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and marketing of teamwork available to students.

Faculty Development Activities

This reflects the activities currently taking place throughout the colleges. As the QEP is implemented, the expectation is that many of the activities will be oriented toward the focus of the QEP.

Funds Management

Funds will be placed in a dedicated fund for the Quality Enhancement Plan. The designation of a specific budget tracking code in UT Share will allow the administrative assistant and director to track expenses accurately and ensure that the University appropriates sufficient funding to support the proposed project.

SECTION IX: ASSESSMENT

“Collaborate UTA” will enhance and assess collaboration in on-line and face-to-face settings across UTA by offering a Professional Learning Community program dedicated to creating new approaches to teaching teamwork and refining methods that already exist. As best practices are employed,

faculty/student interaction will increase and students’ teamwork skills will be enhanced, providing more opportunities for success as they continue with their studies or seek employment. However, it is important to have a clear and concise assessment plan with which to measure the success

Table 6: SLO Assessment process

Student Learning Outcomes	Assessment Method	Measure	Benchmark	Feedback
SLO 1a – Students will recognize effective teamwork.	Student essay scored by machine using rubric	Direct	80% of students will receive a 3 or better	UA ⁶ /Faculty/QEP/PLC
	NSSE scored by machine	Indirect	By the end of Year Five UTA will rank above other schools in the UT System on questions 1h and 17f	IER ⁷ /UA/QEP
	Faculty observation of student scored using rubric	Direct	80% of students will receive a 3 or better	Faculty
	Peer assessment scored using rubric	Direct	80% of students will receive a 3 or better	Faculty
	Exit survey scored by machine	Indirect	Yearly improvement in reporting preparation for life after college through teamwork activities	UA/IER/QEP
	Survey scored by machine	Indirect		UA/Faculty/QEP
	Faculty observation of student scored using rubric	Direct	80% of students will receive at least a 3 or better	Faculty
	Peer assessment scored using rubric	Direct	80% of students will receive at least a 3 or better	Faculty
	Focus group scored by graduate students and machine using thematic analysis	Direct/Indirect	The majority of students will value teamwork	Faculty/QEP/UA
	Focus group scored by graduate students and machine using thematic analysis	Direct/Indirect	The majority of students will connect previous teamwork experiences to the classroom	Faculty/QEP/UA
	Student essay scored by machine using rubric	Direct	80% will receive a 3 or better	Faculty/QEP/IER/UA
	Peer assessment using rubric	Direct	80% will receive a 3 or better	Faculty

⁶UA refers to University Analytics, the campus entity responsible for all machine scoring and analysis of assessment data.

⁷IER refers to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting.

Table 7: PO Assessment process

Program Outcomes	Assessment Method	Measure	Benchmark	Feedback
	Student essay scored by machine using rubric	Direct	80% will score at least a 3 or better	UA/Faculty/QEP/PLC
	Focus group scored by graduate students and machine using thematic analysis	Direct	The majority of students will report the activity has prepared them for the real world	Faculty/QEP/UA
	Student feedback survey scored by machine	Indirect	80% of those surveyed will indicate satisfaction with the activity	Faculty/UA
	Faculty Reflection scored by machine	Direct/Indirect	All faculty will report value in the experience, and in enhancing the interaction between them and their students	QEP/PLC/UA
	PLC observation of peers scored using peer evaluation form	Direct	All faculty will score at least a 4/5	Faculty/PLC/QEP

of the plan, and its effectiveness in contributing to student success. The assessment plan for this QEP uses both direct and indirect measures as tools of assessment for both the Student Learning Outcomes and the Program Outcomes.

Rogers (2006) notes that direct assessments provide for the direct examination or observation of student knowledge or skills against measurable learning outcomes” (p.1) such as exams, quizzes, and reports. “These techniques provide a sampling of what students know and/or can do and provide strong evidence of student learning” (p.1). “Indirect assessments of student learning ascertain the perceived extent or value of learning experiences. They assess opinions or thoughts about student knowledge or skills” (p.1).

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

For the Student Learning Outcomes, three standard assessment tools will be used at the course level to triangulate results and provide faculty with assessment data. In addition, focus groups will also be used to provide additional data. It is important to have several measures, because some may not be so reliable when examined in isolation. The Eberley Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational innovation at Carnegie Mellon University notes: “process assessments are subjective and students are not always straightforward when evaluating one another or themselves. However, in combination with product assessments and individual assessments, they can offer valuable glimpses into how teams function and alert you to major problems (e.g., particularly problematic team members or serious conflict), which can

help to inform your feedback and grading.” (<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/assess.html>).

These methods of assessment include both direct and indirect measures.

Student essay (SLO 1a, PO 1). This direct measure assesses the student’s understanding of effective teamwork. Students will be asked to describe clearly the components of effective teamwork using both what they have learned in class from a theoretical perspective and what they observed through their participation in the collaborative experience. They will also be asked to describe how the collaborative experience in the classroom has prepared them for the real world. The document will be uploaded to Blackboard and assessed by machine scoring using Coh-metrix software in University Analytics using the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric and a line from the Integrative Learning rubric (see Tables 6 & 7). Details on the Coh-metrix software and process is provided later in this chapter. This essay will be part of course assignments.

Student peer assessment (SLO 1b, SLO 1c, SLO 2). With this direct measure the performance of individual team members is assessed by their peers. The method of assessing is the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric. Students will be trained by the faculty member on the use of the rubric for the assignment. The document will be uploaded to Blackboard where the faculty member will receive this

feedback on the individual team member's contribution to the project in terms of both creating a positive team climate and contributing to the completion of the task. Further details on the rubric and its suitability for individual assessment is described later in this chapter in the section titled "AAC&U VALUE Rubrics."

Faculty observation (SLO 1b, c). This direct measure can be utilized both in person and via assignments recorded in Blackboard depending on the activity and on whether the group meets face-to-face or virtually. Some activities will take place during the class period when the instructor is able to monitor team activity. Other meetings will take place in another location or a virtual environment. Wherever the team meets, the instructor will use the Teamwork VALUE Rubric to assess collaboration and receive feedback. The instructor does not have to be present to observe in real-time the interaction. Technology such as smart phones make it easy to video a team meeting and upload it to the Blackboard CMS. There are also other tools within Blackboard where team member interaction can be captured. These are detailed later in the section titled "Blackboard".

Focus Groups (SLO 1c, SLO 2, PLO 1). Depending on whether focus group participants are talking about their perceptions of the value of the experience or reporting directly on what they did and how they value the experience, this may be both a direct and indirect measure. Focus groups will be conducted at the end of the semester by trained graduate students and will provide qualitative data on the value students place on teamwork, the connection they made between teamwork experiences and the classroom, and on the extent that they feel the teamwork experience has prepared them for life after college. Graduate students will conduct thematic analysis on the transcripts and will the transcripts will also be analyzed by University Analytics using the Coh-matrix software. Feedback from the focus groups will be given to the faculty member after grades have been submitted and to the QEP Director.

Baseline Survey

In fall 2017 PLC Fellows will administer a survey in a course where they teach teamwork, or a course they feel is comparable to one they will teach in the spring. The tool used for this assessment is "The Team Climate Inventory" (Anderson & West, 1998). This is a 38-item survey that has been shown to be both valid and reliable using either a 5- or a 7-point scale (Valentine et al., 2012; Bosch et al., 2008). The survey will be scored by University Analytics and will provide baseline data for comparison with our PLC classes in the spring.

AAC&U VALUE RUBRICS

As illustrated in Chapter III, teamwork can often be difficult and complex to assess. The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics were developed by faculty from across the country and are used by many institutions and faculty for many different assessment purposes. "The core expectations [are that] the VALUE

rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success" (AAC&U VALUE Rubric).

Institutional vs. Individual

Hughes and Jones (2011) note that:

AAC&U VALUE rubrics are intended for institutional-level use, rather than for grading individual students. However, the teamwork rubric could be easily adapted to serve as a guide for students enrolled in a specific course. Then the rubric could be used ...for students to rate teammates on their performance, and faculty members could also rate individual students on the basis of their observations of team functioning. (p. 60)

Indeed, as outlined earlier, two approaches to be used by the QEP for collecting teamwork data for assessment at the course level will be through observation of the contribution of the individual within the project by the faculty member or facilitator of the project, as well as peer assessment of each member's contribution. The plan is initially to use the rubrics as they are. However, depending on the outcome of the assessment process they may be modified in future PLCs.

In order to assess the Student Learning Outcomes and PO 1 effectively, students, PLC Fellows, and University Analytics will use the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric for assessing the individual student's contribution to the team. The rubric is particularly suitable as it measures both contribution to team climate and contribution toward completion of the task.

For SLO 2, one line of the Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric was adapted for the assessment. SLO 2 assesses how students connect their previous teamwork experience to the classroom.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

It is not the goal of the QEP to designate specific types of assignments that will be used by the PLC Fellows. As Kuh (2008) noted, activities could range from study groups, to a full-scale project involving a group working together over the course of a semester. Further, the type of assignment may differ according to the discipline. For example, Hershey and Wood (2011) describe an exercise used in a business course:

Since managers often work in geographically dispersed teams, Kaiser, Tullar, and McKowen, (2000) chose a human resources project to prepare their students for future management roles. Students from two schools in North Carolina and one in Worms, Germany, formed

Table 8: AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric

Teamwork VALUE Rubric



	Teamwork VALUE Rubric			
	Capstone 4	Milestones 3 2		Benchmark 1
Contributes to Team Meetings	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the group.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the group.
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by both constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them to engage.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by restating the views of other team members and/or asking questions for clarification.	Engages team members by taking turns and listening to others without interrupting.
Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. 	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. 	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. 	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.
Responds to Conflict	Addresses destructive conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.	Identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.	Redirecting focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).	Passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.

Table 9: AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric⁸

	Capstone 4	3	2	Benchmark 1
Reflection and Self-Assessment <i>Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (maybe evident in self-assessment, reflection or creative work)</i>	Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts).	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

search committees and watched digitized videos of job interviews. Teams then participated in electronic meetings that led to group consensus. (p. 58)

The assignments used by the PLC Fellows may be modified versions of activities already taking place or new activities developed through the PLC. However, in modifying or creating the assignments, it is important that several issues are considered. Hughes and Jones (2011), suggest that teamwork skills need to be intentionally developed by faculty going out of their way to teach students what it means to be an effective teammate, asking students to practice working in teams, and, as shown below, offering feedback about the development of students’ teamwork skills (Bain, 2004; Fink, 2003). To assess students’ teamwork, it is important to create assignments that elicit teamwork behaviors (Walvoord and Anderson, 1998). This may be a change for faculty members who are accustomed to giving tests and assignments that are completed individually.

The Eberley Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational innovation at Carnegie Mellon University (<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/assess.html>) offers the following example for reviewing the process and individual contributions to groups:

Professor Montoya assigns a multi-stage information systems project where students work together in teams over much of the semester. Over the course of the semester, he periodically asks students to evaluate both the dynamics of the team as a whole and their own contributions, and to reflect on ways to improve both as the project continues. At the end of the project, he asks students to complete a peer evaluation for every member

of their team, indicating each member’s contribution to the group. Professor Montoya’s total grade for the project combines a group grade (75%) and an individual grade (25%). The individual grade is based, in equal parts, on how each student’s teammates evaluated his contribution to the group and on the quality of the feedback he provided to them. (p.1)

Feedback

There are two types of feedback in this process: feedback during the activity and feedback following the completion of the activity. Feedback during the activity gives team members the opportunity to correct issues either individually or as a team. Feedback following the activity assesses the totality of the experience. Both students and faculty will receive feedback from the various assessment tools. As noted earlier, a team’s success or failure can occur independently of the teamwork skill of its members. PLC Fellows assessment of students’ teamwork skills will focus on the teamwork process, rather than on the quality of the end product. It is not sufficient to give students a team assignment and then score their final project (or paper, or lab report) for its accuracy. Feedback is an important component of the teamwork process (Hughes & Jones, 2011; Bain, 2004; Fink, 2003; Wiggins, 1998). Therefore, students developing their teamwork skills must receive feedback about the quality of those skills during the process. This feedback can reasonably come from peers using the rubric (they are most likely to see their teamwork skills in action), or from faculty members who oversee the activity.

Whether the feedback comes from peers or a faculty member, feedback about student performance is necessary. This means that faculty and staff members need to build in opportunities

⁸In using part of a rubric, the example of other institutions such as the University of Tennessee’s “Experience Learning” QEP, was used where they had a similar SLO and method of assessment (<http://qep.utdev4.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2015/06/QEP-Report.pdf>).

for it to take place. Faculty members will be encouraged to find creative ways to take an active role with the students in order to be able to assess progress effectively and provide feedback both during the course and at the end of the course. They will be encouraged to meet with students occasionally outside of class to discuss progress and to discuss the students' future goals.

Blackboard

One way of monitoring the progress of each team and observing interaction will be through Blackboard, the content management system (CMS) used by UT Arlington. Blackboard offers many different options including blogs, group chats, discussion boards, etc., where interaction between team members can be recorded and assessed. Blackboard is used in both face-to-face and online classes, meaning interaction in both types of classes can be observed and later assessed. PLC Fellows will encourage students to keep a log or journal in Blackboard of their interactions with their team members. This can serve as a reflective tool as well as an accountability measure.

Hershey and Wood (2011) highlight some unique advantages that the Blackboard CMS offers over traditional team meetings. These include “asynchronous collaboration, tracking features, a permanent record of group member’s contributions, and a mechanism for helping faculty and administrators collect data for accrediting agency reports” (p. 61). As mentioned at the beginning of this report, UT Arlington’s student body is diverse in many ways. It is not solely comprised of 18- to 22-year-old students living on or near campus. UTA’s students may be older, have family obligations, and work full or part time away from campus, making scheduling for team activities difficult. But, as Hershey and Wood note in talking about asynchronous collaboration, “the Blackboard CMS creates meeting rooms that are always available and in which students can ‘meet’ and ‘converse’ at their individual convenience, making much of the logistics of traditional meetings less time intensive” (p. 61). These meetings can be recorded for later viewing. Similarly, face-to-face meetings can also be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard as a record of interaction. In sum, Blackboard is flexible, continuously being improved, and a

robust tool for both collecting data and providing means for assessing teamwork.

OTHER ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR SLOs AND POs

There are a number of other assessment tools available. Some of these are already used by the institution on a regular basis, while others are specific to the QEP. Some will give more immediate feedback while others will show change over time.

National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered annually to UT System institutions. In the report, each institution, in this case UT Arlington, is compared to other institutions in the UT System, then a comparison is shown between UTA and baseline peers, and finally between UTA and aspirational peers. Results from this important indirect assessment tool were the genesis for the focus on Teamwork and the creation of the SLOs. Although there are some questions that indirectly refer to teamwork, Table 10 highlights two specific NSSE questions addressing students’ involvement in teamwork, where UTA students score significantly lower than other institutions. NSSE data will be monitored and reviewed as indirect measures of the QEP’s success. The assessment plan allows for monitoring of progress, measurement of incremental change and provides opportunities for corrections as data is analyzed at the end of the semester but also yearly.

Faculty Reflection

This is a direct and indirect measure. It is direct in that the faculty will be describing what they did and how they employed the practices learned in to the classroom. They will also report on ways in which the feedback received will change their teaching moving forward. It is indirect in that they will also be describing their recollection of events, and of their perceptions of the attitudes of the students. University Analytics will collect the reflections through Blackboard or another on-line depository such as Box.

Student Feedback Survey

Students receive the survey in an email near the end of every semester to get their feedback on the course and the

Table 10: NSSE questions mapped to student learning outcomes

NSSE questions mapped to SLO	
During the current school year, how often have you done the following?	
1h Worked with other students on course projects of assignments.	SLO 1
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas	
17f Working effectively with others.	SLO 1/PO 1

instructor. There is a Likert scale and the opportunity for students to submit written comments. It is an indirect measure of the student’s perception of the class. It is another measure of the effectiveness of the teamwork activity used in the class.

Evaluation of Professional Development Activities

Faculty and staff attending professional development activities will be asked to complete a survey regarding their level of satisfaction with the professional development activity as well as learning because of the activity. A version of these assessments already exists as part of the professional development opportunities that currently take place on campus via the Division of Faculty Affairs and with AVID. These measures will be modified as needed.

Peer Observations (Professional Learning Communities)

As faculty participate in the PLCs, they will also participate in peer observations in one another’s classrooms. These observations will provide data on the implementation of activities. Departments across the university already have peer evaluation forms that are suitable for this exercise. A form will be selected by the PLC Lead and the QEP Director and used as a standardized measure for the PLC.

QEP Impact Report

The QEP Director will be responsible for submitting a yearly Impact Report. This report will indicate raw numbers of faculty and students participating in the project, as well as indicate the ways in which the project is moving forward in the college year to year. The QEP team will design a report format that asks for the necessary data needed to determine the progress of each college partner.

Exit Survey

UTA sends out an Exit Survey to graduating seniors. One SLO and one PO are mapped to two questions. We will gather the data from the Exit Surveys to help us triangulate with other data collected.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS:

Coh-Metrix

One very important way for assessing the QEP, particularly the reflections generated by both the students and PLC

Fellows, is the software Coh-Metrix. *Coh-Metrix* is a theoretically grounded, computational linguistics system that provides over 100 measures of types of cohesion, including co-reference, referential, causal, spatial, temporal, and structural cohesion. *Coh-Metrix* measures linguistic complexity and the characteristics of words, as documentation of complex learning processes. More than 200 published studies have demonstrated that *Coh-Metrix* indices can be used to detect subtle differences in text and discourse. These sophisticated natural language processing techniques have been shown to be valid and reliable markers of a variety of psychologically meaningful constructs and learning processes.

Within the educational contexts, there are many critical, learning-related constructs that cannot be directly measured, but can only be inferred from measurable signals such as written materials, learner artifacts, or other means. UTA’s Learning Innovation and Network Knowledge (LINK) lab collaborates with fellow researchers at the University of Louisville, where *Coh-Metrix* was developed, and is active in the use of automated linguistics tools in the search for new sources of data from which to make such inference for complex constructs such as student learning and growth.

Graesser et al. (2011) and Dowell et al. (2016) together provide a good overview of this analysis package. The system is able to analyze text data (“unstructured data”) at scale, and *Coh-Metrix* has garnered considerable attention from researchers in learning analytics (LA) and educational data mining (EDM), researchers working in emerging environments such as online learning, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), computer-mediated learning (CML), and massive open online courses (MOOCs) (Dowell et al., 73). Automated linguistic analysis can provide rich contextual information on the learning and behavioral patterns of learners. Evaluation of student writing and language analysis is increasingly used as a means to gain deeper insights into learner growth in content knowledge (expertise), as well as giving greater insight into the holistic complexity of thought, depth of understanding, and growth as a student.

Coh-Metrix will be used to assess all written work of at least 350 words or more. This includes the student essays, focus group transcripts and faculty reflections.

Table 11: NSSE questions mapped to student learning outcomes

Exit Survey question mapped to SLO/PO	
As a result of your experience at UTA, how prepared are you in the following areas?	
Applying what I learned in the classroom to situations in the real world	PO 1
Collaborating with people in a team setting	SLO 1

NOTE ON ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the visions of the UTA QEP is to assist faculty and staff in making meaningful use of data collected. As the plan progresses, professional development opportunities will help them plan, collect, and analyze data related to teamwork opportunities. For example, faculty would be encouraged to build their own rubrics to assess projects connected to the SLOs or to adapt the AAC&U VALUE rubrics to meet their very specific needs. While this kind of assessment will be encouraged, it is not a part of the overall assessment plan of the QEP. However, in the end, it could help lend context and detail to our QEP's impact and success.

The assessment plan we have constructed is robust, utilizing both existing assessment practices in place at UTA (for example NSSE, Student Feedback Survey, and the Exit Survey) along with some new assessments at the course level (the student essay). In line with guidance from SACSCOC, the assessment plan utilizes both direct and indirect measures and uses a tested rubric for assessment. Feedback from the assessments will inform students, faculty, and the university with data not currently being gathered in any meaningful or consistent manner and enhance university initiatives such as the Maverick Advantage. Ultimately, through the QEP, students' skills and experience in teamwork will be enhanced, faculty across the university will receive development to continue to teach those skills, and as the Maverick Advantage grows, a key part of that initiative, teamwork, will continue to be assessed and enhanced.

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SECTION XI: APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Table of QEP Development Team Membership

Name	Department	College or School	Title	Sub-Team
Nakia Pope ¹	Philosophy, Division of Faculty Affairs	College of Liberal Arts	Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence; Associate Professor	All
Molly Albart	Student Affairs		Director of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment and Student Success at V.P. for Student Affairs	Student Learning and Assessment; Writing Group
Karabi Bezboruah	Public Administration	College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs	Associate Professor	
Edgar Carrazco	Computer Science	College of Engineering	Student (Senior)	Communication
Andrew Clark	Communication	College of Liberal Arts	Associate Professor	Communication (Chair); Writing Group
Danish Dawood	Accounting	College of Business	Student (Graduate); Vice President, Student Council	
Mridual Dhapola	Mechanical Engineering	College of Engineering	Student (Sophomore)	
Brian Saul Duran Fuentes	English	College of Liberal Arts	Student (Senior)	
Frank Foss	Chemistry and Biochemistry	College of Science	Associate Professor	Institutional Organization (Chair)
Becky Garner	Public Health	College of Nursing and Health Innovation	Clinical Assistant Professor	Student Learning and Assessment; Writing Group
Kevin Gustafson	English	Honor's College, College of Liberal Arts	Interim Dean of Honors College; Director, Center for Service Learning; Associate Professor	Process/Context
Jane Himarios	Economics	College of Business	Clinical Professor	Communication

Name	Department	College or School	Title	Sub-Team
Holly Hungerford-Kresser	Curriculum and Instruction	College of Education	Associate Professor	Student Learning and Assessment (Co-Chair); Writing Group
Graham Hunt	Music	College of Liberal Arts	Professor and Theory-Composition Area Coordinator	Process/Context
Douglas Klahr	Architecture	CAPPA	Associate Professor	Communication
Christian Koll	Biology	College of Science	Student (Senior)	Process/Context
(Mary) Beth Mancini	Nursing	College of Nursing and Health Innovation	Associate Dean and Chair, Undergraduate Nursing; Professor	Institutional Organization
Maria Martinez-Cosio	Division of Faculty Affairs		Assistant Vice-Provost for Faculty Development, Associate Professor	Institutional Organization
Lisa Nagy	Student Affairs		Interim Vice President	Institutional Organization
Lynn Peterson	Engineering	College of Engineering	Senior Associate Dean	Student Learning and Assessment
Lorraine Phillips ²	Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting	Provost's Offi	Assistant Vice Provost of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting	Student Learning and Assessment
Regina Praetorius	Social Work	School of Social Work	Associate Professor - BSW Director	Process/Context (Chair); Writing Group
Fayruz Quazi	Mechanical Engineering	College of Engineering	Student (Senior)	Student Learning and Assessment
Mike Roner	Biology	College of Science	Associate Professor	Communication
Sarah Sarraj	Center for Distance Education		Instructional Design Manager	Institutional Organization
Barbara Tobolowsky	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	College of Education	Associate Professor	Process/Context

Name	Department	College or School	Title	Sub-Team
Gretchen Trkay	Library— Experiential Learning & Undergraduate Research	Library	Librarian	Student Learning and Assessment (Co-Chair); Writing Group
Catherine Unite	University College Learning Center	University College	Director, University College Learning Center	Writing Group
Kimberly Van Noort ³	University College	Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies	

¹Dr. Pope has left UTA to become the Director, Academic Assessment and Compliance at UT Health Science Center San Antonio.

²Dr. Phillips has left UTA to become Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness at Georgia Tech University.

³Dr. Van Noort has left UTA to become the Vice President for Academic Programs at UNC.