

## *Executive Summary*

### *LSUA Today: Curricula for the Educated Student*

Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSUA) chose curriculum development and reform as the focus of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). LSUA's QEP will provide a solid rationale and process for curriculum development that results in student achievement of program learning outcomes. LSUA created its QEP under the guidance of a Leadership Team and a QEP Committee assisted by the General Education Assessment Committee and the Honors Program Committee.

LSUA has offered quality education to residents of Central Louisiana for over 40 years. In 2001, the Louisiana Legislature approved the conversion of LSUA from a two-year to a four-year institution. Faculty immediately developed four baccalaureate degrees, which were offered for the first time in Fall 2003. While some basic guidelines for establishing baccalaureate curricula were developed prior to degree development, no changes were made to LSUA's curriculum development and approval process. In retrospect, LSUA recognized that some aspects of its current curriculum development process could and should be improved and that student learning might be enhanced as a result of these improvements.

Current curriculum and course development at LSUA is a complex and time-consuming process involving several forms and all management levels of the institution as well as the Faculty Senate. The process however, does not require faculty to directly address student learning outcomes, library resources, or use of technology in teaching and learning.

LSUA faculty develop student learning outcomes for all degree programs as part of the institution's ongoing Institutional Effectiveness process, but this occurs after the curriculum has

been developed. There is no process for establishing links between courses selected for a curriculum and the learning outcomes faculty hope students will achieve upon completion of that curriculum.

A similar situation exists with LSUA's general education core. General education requirements for bachelor degrees are quite clear. However, although general education learning outcomes have been established for years, and the assessment process for general education is mature, there has never been a direct link between specific courses in the general education curriculum and specific learning outcomes, nor has any rationale been established for selection of courses for the general education course list. Faculty have become increasingly frustrated with trying to use the results of general education assessment for improvement of student learning, because, when deficiencies are noted, it is impossible to target specific courses for changes.

The faculty would like to work more closely with the LSUA library in developing the collection necessary to support future courses and curricula. Though the library houses 157,700 volumes and is a member of all state-wide databases, most new volumes are not requested by faculty. And though the librarians attend meetings of academic departments to discuss integrating the use of library resources with courses and to offer help to faculty with the acquisition or use of library materials, the faculty, for various reasons, rarely suggest titles when proposing new courses.

The faculty also wants to work more closely with the Educational Technology department in course development. While the department trains faculty and assists students in the use of multi-media classrooms, Internet course supplements, and other kinds of technology, LSUA has little formal means of reviewing technological needs as part of the course and curriculum approval process.

The QEP encourages faculty to design learning outcomes for a degree program prior to developing its curriculum. Goals for curricula, course assignments, and assessments should be stated clearly as behavioral objectives and understandable by all who share responsibility for student learning. Departments should seek support of individuals experienced or expert in instructional or assessment design before periodically reviewing their own courses and assessment instruments to see that they remain actively relevant to the mission, purposes, and educational objectives of LSUA and the specific degree program.

In Spring 2004, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) redefined general education at LSUA and proposed a new method for determining which courses were suitable for general education. The QEP recognizes that LSUA needs greater coordination between the curriculum development process and its outcomes development and assessment process, particularly in light of LSUA's newly defined concept of an educated person.

The QEP supports the Honors Program Committee, which suggested an Honors Program to improve critical thinking and leadership skills of highly motivated students. The Honors Committee suggested honors courses that emphasize the use of primary sources, information literacy, group discussion, research, and extra-curricular activities, and proposes to continue studying curriculum structure and administration during the 2004-05 academic year to refine its recommendations and gain campus approval of the proposed program.

To further familiarize faculty with the library's resources, the QEP suggests librarians send faculty hard copy, discipline specific book lists, and submit evaluation checklists for librarian instruction. The library, in collaboration with the Educational Technology Department, could design online journals or information literacy diaries to track which subjects and titles faculty and students seek when conducting research.

The Educational Technology department will make available on its website a glossary of terms to keep faculty and staff updated, and a complete campus-wide resource list. Members of the Educational Technology staff will also shadow professors to determine how technology will benefit their respective teaching styles. Educational Technology needs will be incorporated into the course and curriculum development process.

The Leadership Team has identified nine goals toward full implementation of the QEP by May 2006. The QEP will be assessed in two ways: whether the nine objectives were accomplished on time and whether the accomplishment of the objectives strengthened student learning.

LSUA's QEP can be accomplished with current resources. Much of the work is pertinent to the charges of existing faculty committees (e.g., the General Education Assessment Committee, the Courses and Curricula Committee, the Faculty Library Committee) or groups (e.g., faculty within a department). The only major cost associated with LSUA's QEP is the cost of enhancing Library Resources as needed to support degree programs.

LSUA plans to provide faculty development related to the QEP in the form of two workshops with consultants who are experts in curriculum reform and outcomes development, and with two off-campus retreats. LSUA also plans to hire consultants to assist with analysis of current library holdings so that collections development may be more focused and systematic.

An augmented Leadership Team will provide oversight of the implementation phase of LSUA's QEP. The two QEP Subcommittee chairs will join the current Leadership Team. The role of this team will be to provide advice and guidance for the overall implementation. The QEP Committee Chair will continue to have primary responsibility for coordinating and

overseeing the faculty involvement in implementation. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be responsible for day-to-day administrative oversight.

LSUA's approach to developing its QEP has been based on the understanding that all actions, processes, and procedures at the institution are interdependent—a change in one part of the institution affects other parts of the institution. LSUA offers what it believes is a viable approach to the enrichment of its curriculum development process—one that coordinates course selection, and library and educational technology resources. Student learning is at the core of the QEP, and offers the opportunity for the University to significantly advance its mission through the successful implementation of the Plan, which incorporates the support and involvement of the faculty.

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## *Introduction*

### *Topic and Rationale*

Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSUA) titled its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) *LSUA Today: Curricula for the Educated Student* because of the University's educational growth and commitment to the people of Central Louisiana. LSUA has chosen curriculum development and reform as the focus of its QEP. Understanding the relevance and importance of this topic to the LSUA community requires a context that includes LSUA's history, present realities, and future challenges.

Since 1960, LSUA has proudly offered affordable and quality education to the residents of Central Louisiana. Over the past quarter of a century, LSUA's Mission Statement has consistently included a reference to quality education. LSUA's current Mission Statement states in part that LSUA is committed to "Providing a solid academic foundation." One of LSUA's Institutional Goals is to "Provide and strengthen high quality instructional programs." The LSUA faculty has always considered teaching and learning the most important components of its work.

For many years, LSUA has assessed its success at accomplishing its mission and goals, particularly with regard to instruction. LSUA has had a highly structured institutional effectiveness (IE) process since 1993. As part of the IE process, LSUA faculty have developed and assessed student learning outcomes for all degree and certificate programs, as well as developmental education and general education courses. Although the IE process is now ingrained into institutional culture, faculty have expressed frustration with the challenges of designing meaningful and valid assessments and with using assessment results to improve

student learning. This frustration has been particularly apparent in regard to the general education curriculum where faculty were unable to link established general education outcomes to specific courses.

On June 5, 2001, the Louisiana Legislature approved the conversion of LSUA from a two-year to a four-year institution. While the change was one that LSUA had long desired and worked toward, it brought a new set of challenges with respect to curriculum development and assessment. General requirements for baccalaureate curricula were established, and appropriate LSUA faculty began to prepare upper-level courses and baccalaureate curricula. Early in the Fall 2001 semester, four bachelor programs were submitted for approval to LSUA's governing boards. Early submission was critical because the degree approval process in Louisiana is quite lengthy, and LSUA needed to offer the degrees as soon as possible. At the same time, LSUA began preparing its application for substantive change to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

During Summer 2001, LSUA also began a comprehensive strategic planning process to develop a new mission, vision, institutional goals, and unit and program outcomes suitable to a four-year institution. Throughout this planning process, LSUA reaffirmed its commitment to quality education, resulting in the excerpts from the mission and goals noted above. LSUA's new Vision Statement made this commitment even more clear:

Louisiana State University at Alexandria will be passionately committed to maintaining academic excellence, responding to the diverse needs of students, promoting the value of higher education, and stimulating the intellectual, cultural, and economic development of Central Louisiana.

Faculty also developed educational outcomes for all of the new bachelor degrees. The new Strategic Plan and associated outcomes were submitted to SACS with LSUA's substantive change application in Fall 2002. LSUA's application was approved at the annual meeting of the SACS Commission on Colleges in December 2002. LSUA began to offer upper-level courses and bachelor degree programs in Fall 2003.

LSUA's QEP topic crystallized during the Fall 2003 semester. At the beginning of each semester, LSUA schedules a meeting of all faculty and staff. A presentation of SACS' new reaffirmation process and the QEP was given at the August 2003 meeting. Faculty and staff were invited to submit suggestions for QEP topics to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team received many worthy suggestions, but not all were directly related to student learning. Several of the suggested topics were pertinent to student learning and dealt with developing more meaningful outcomes and more valid assessment methods for existing degree programs and general education courses.

Additionally, during the Fall 2003 semester, interested faculty approached the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost with the idea of creating an Honors Program for LSUA. They were given approval to recruit other interested faculty and draft a program proposal. Although the Honors Program was not among the original QEP topics submitted, the Leadership Team quickly realized that designing an Honors Program would be directly related to curriculum development.

The Leadership Team elected to delay final selection of a QEP topic until after the visit of a SACS Substantive Change Committee in November 2003. The delay was fortunate, as the Substantive Change Committee noted a need for improvement in LSUA's curriculum development process and suggested incorporating technology in the curriculum. This suggestion

fit in very well with LSUA's Strategic Plan, as one of the new institutional goals that had emerged from LSUA's planning process was to enhance and expand the use of technology. The Leadership Team considered campus input as well as the input of the Substantive Change Committee and drafted a proposal for the QEP to send to LSUA's SACS staff liaison, Dr. Gerald Lord. Dr. Lord provided insight and valuable comments on the proposal. A copy of Dr. Lord's comments and the proposal were presented to LSUA faculty and staff at the Spring 2004 meeting.

LSUA recognized that because of the magnitude of change that had occurred in the previous two years and the daunting number of administrative tasks required of faculty, staff, and administration to accomplish the level change, there had been no time to closely examine each course and curriculum developed. Learning outcomes for each degree program and major had been developed after the curriculum was approved, rather than in conjunction with curriculum development. LSUA had established no course selection criteria to facilitate specific student learning outcomes through curriculum development. LSUA's associate degree curricula were either transfer degrees consisting largely of general education courses or technical programs (e.g., Nursing and Criminal Justice) where determining specific courses to be included in the curriculum and identifying specific skills as desired learning outcomes from those courses was easier. LSUA had not fully recognized the need to revise its curriculum development process appropriately and meaningfully in the context of its new mission. Although the best professional judgment of the faculty had been used to develop new curricula, no coherent process for curriculum development had been established.

Changes taking place in higher education in Louisiana due to implementation of the Board of Regents' *Master Plan for Higher Education* make curriculum development even more

important to LSUA. Under the Board of Regents' Master Plan, regional four-year institutions must adopt selective admissions criteria by 2005. Although LSUA was converted to four-year status after the plan was adopted, the Board of Regents gave LSUA only until 2007 to comply with the selective admissions requirement. LSUA must be competitive as a selective admission four-year institution by 2007. Loss of enrollment due to implementation of admissions standards must be offset by an increase in enrollment of students attracted to new bachelor degree programs. Thus, LSUA is poised to develop several more bachelor degree programs and majors very quickly, so a coherent process joining curriculum development and student learning is crucial.

The administration, faculty, staff and students of LSUA are all committed to making LSUA a success as a baccalaureate institution. For LSUA to succeed, it must provide quality academic programs that result in students who master the intended learning outcomes so that they may be successful in their chosen careers and graduate or professional schools. LSUA's QEP is therefore intended to result in well-planned curricula that lead to enhanced student learning.

### ***Intended Outcomes***

The overall goal of LSUA's QEP is to provide a solid rationale and process for curriculum development that results in student achievement of program learning outcomes. The University developed the following associated objectives:

1. Thoroughly review existing literature and practices at other institutions to determine best curriculum development and assessment processes
2. Review basic bachelor degree requirements and definitions (e.g., major, concentration, and so forth) and revise as necessary

3. Define criteria for including classes in the general education core based on each class' contribution to the established general education learning outcomes
4. Develop (or revise) learning outcomes and assessments for all bachelor degree programs
5. Develop clear connections between courses contributing to the major and learning outcomes expected of program graduates
6. Revise existing curricula as needed to incorporate changes in the general education core and ensure inclusion of major courses appropriate for established student learning outcomes, and modify learning outcomes assessment practice to reflect changes in curriculum
7. Ensure that library resources are appropriate to support Bachelor degree programs
8. Define criteria for a campus-wide Honors Program
9. Expose students in all curricula to creative use of technology throughout the learning process.

LSUA is confident of the resources to accomplish each of these objectives.

### ***Organizational Approach***

LSUA created a structure to manage development of the QEP. LSUA's Leadership Team consisted of Dr. Robert Cavanaugh, Chancellor; Dr. Randall Stovall, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Mr. David Wesse, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Carol Corbat, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and Professor of Biology, who is also the Accreditation Liaison; and Dr. Ginger Jones, Associate Professor of English, who also chaired the QEP Committee. At the Spring 2004 faculty meeting, faculty was asked to volunteer to work on development of LSUA's QEP. At least one faculty

member from each department was chosen to serve on the QEP Committee. The QEP Committee was further subdivided into two subcommittees that were each tasked with certain aspects of the development.

#### QEP Committee

- ◆ Dr. Ginger Jones, Associate Professor of English and Chair, QEP Committee
- ◆ Dr. Annette Olsen-Fazi, Associate Professor of English and Chair, Education and Standards , QEP Subcommittee
- ◆ Dr. Jerry Sanson, Professor of History and Political Science and Chair, Policies and Resources, QEP Subcommittee
- ◆ Dr. Bill Calbeck, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- ◆ Dr. Clarence Golemon, Professor of Education and Director of Student Teaching
- ◆ Dr. David Huey, Professor of Biology
- ◆ Dr. David Nassif, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences
- ◆ Mr. Steven Palmer, Assistant Professor of Business Law and Paralegal Studies
- ◆ Ms. Debra Rollins, Assistant Librarian
- ◆ Dr. Mary Treuting, Professor of Psychology
- ◆ Ms. Janeen Whitmore, Assistant Professor of Nursing
- ◆ Ms. Lisa Smith, Staff Senate President
- ◆ Ms. Jennie Monk, Student Government Association President

Two other existing University committees played an important role in development of the QEP. The General Education Assessment Committee, a standing administrative committee of the University, worked on the portion of the QEP involving the general education core. The

newly formed Honors Program Committee developed the portion of the QEP related to the Honors Program and Honors curriculum.

#### General Education Assessment Committee

- ◆ Dr. Randall Stovall, Chair, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost
- ◆ Dr. Douglas Allen, Professor of Biology
- ◆ Mr. Rick Conley, Assistant Professor of Management and Marketing
- ◆ Dr. Carol Corbat, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
- ◆ Dr. Melissa Parks, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology
- ◆ Ms. Sheryl Herring, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences
- ◆ Dr. Syrous Marivani, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- ◆ Dr. Maureen O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- ◆ Ms. Debra Rollins, Assistant Librarian
- ◆ Ms. Janeen Whitmore, Assistant Professor of Nursing
- ◆ Ms. Lillian Wooley, Assistant Professor of English

#### Honors Program Committee

- ◆ Dr. Gregory Marks, Chair, Assistant Professor of English
- ◆ Ms. Patricia Boyd, Assistant Professor of Nursing
- ◆ Dr. Julien Doucet, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- ◆ Dr. Betty Elder, Professor of Biology
- ◆ Mr. Rusty Gaspard, Assistant Librarian
- ◆ Dr. Eamon Halpin, Professor of English
- ◆ Ms. Catherine Robinson, Instructor of Allied Health
- ◆ Dr. James Rogers, Assistant Professor of History

## *Curriculum Development*

### *Current Status*

#### Curriculum Development Process

Current curriculum and course development at LSUA begins with faculty, who may propose new courses or curricula, modifications of existing courses or curricula, or deletion of courses or curricula. After approval by simple majority vote of the departmental faculty, proposals move to the department chair and the dean for approval, and then to the office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for editorial review, and from there to the Courses and Curricula Committee.

The Courses and Curricula Committee accepts a proposal for first consideration, then considers it a second and final time after a two-week waiting period. This delay is built into the system to allow time for thought about the proposals. However, the Committee may dispense with the waiting period by simple majority vote. Proposals approved by the Courses and Curricula Committee proceed to the Faculty Senate.

The Senate requires the official paperwork for the proposed change and a copy of the approved minutes of the Courses and Curricula Committee. Because the Senate and the Courses and Curricula Committee typically meet on alternate weeks, there is usually a two-week delay between the time the Senate receives an approved proposal and the time it receives the Committee's minutes. Following Senate approval, the proposal is forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, then to the Chancellor, for approval. A course is added, modified or deleted once the Chancellor approves the proposal. Curricular changes are sent to the LSU System office for the approval of the System Vice President for Academic Affairs and

President. The flow chart on the next page illustrates LSUA's current curriculum development process.

Proposals for new or modified courses or curricula at LSUA must be made on standardized forms. Table 1 in Appendix I lists the forms used in the current curriculum development process, how they are used, and recommendations from the Policies and Resources Subcommittee for streamlining the process.



## General Education

General Education at LSUA received little attention prior to 1995. Although some of LSUA's associate degree programs listed requirements in broad general education categories, the catalog referred the student to a list of general education courses in the LSU A&M catalog. The reference was a remnant of LSUA's historic mission as a branch campus that existed mainly to prepare transfer students. In 1995, LSUA developed a separate definition of a general education course and a list of courses to satisfy general education requirements. The definition and course list, however, were very similar to those at LSU A&M. There was little campus dialogue about the purpose of general education or selection of courses for the general education list. The definition and course list developed in 1995 have changed little. To add or remove courses from the general education course list, departments simply check a box on the course addition or modification form to indicate whether or not they intend the course to be on the general education list. If the course is approved through the normal campus process, the course can then be added or deleted from the list. Departments are not required to provide rationale for including any given course on the list.

LSUA's General Education courses are intended to be, as the Catalog states, "that core of knowledge and skills that educated people need regardless of what career or vocation they enter." Along with development of this definition and the course list in 1995, LSUA faculty developed the expected student learning outcomes for the general education core. The University also began to assess all graduates. The assessment of general education outcomes is a notable strength in LSUA's institutional effectiveness process. Much time, thought, and money have been invested in this program. However, faculty, especially those on the General Education Assessment Committee, have grown increasingly frustrated with using results of these

assessments for improvement of student learning. No means exists to tie the general education learning outcomes to specific courses. When LSUA graduates perform at a level less than desired, determining what courses might be targeted for improving performance is difficult.

In the last few years, LSUA has devoted more attention to general education as it developed the general education components of its new bachelor degrees. Additionally, a Board of Regents' policy on general education was adopted in April 2001 that required LSUA to make changes to the general education portion of its associate degrees. However, there have still been no clear connections made between individual courses on the general education list and desired learning outcomes for general education.

Currently, LSUA's baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 39 hours of general education credits. The Associate of Science degrees require a minimum of 27 hours of general education credits, and the Associate of Arts and Associate in Discipline degrees require a minimum of 30 hours of general education credits. The Louisiana Board of Regents requires a minimum of 27 hours of general education credits for associate degrees and a minimum of 39 hours of general education credits for bachelor degrees. LSUA's general education requirements meet the Board of Regents' minimums and are comparable to requirements of other institutions in the state. All degrees require general education courses in each of six disciplines: English Composition, Mathematics, Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, as well as demonstrated competency in the use of computers.

### Honors Program

LSUA currently has no Honors Program.

## Library Resources

The James C. Bolton Library, built in 1962, has been upgraded to allow for full access to an online catalog, electronic holdings, and the Internet. The facility houses some 105,200 titles (over 157,700 physical volumes), current periodicals, a reference area, sufficient seating for individual and group study, archives, library offices, and workspaces. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that LSUA's Bolton Library is already competitive with peer libraries in terms of title count. The Library is a member of Louisiana Academic Library Information Network Consortium (LALINC), which consists of all accredited public and private colleges and universities in Louisiana. LALINC provides agreements for reciprocal borrowing, interlibrary loan privileges, and provides direction to the Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS). The Louisiana Library Network, funded by the Louisiana Board of Regents, provides a centralized support staff located on the LSU A&M campus, to support the library consortium. The LOUIS central support staff provides many services to consortium members such as library automation, a digital library, electronic resources, authentication, training, consulting, and hosting related listservs and websites. Because of the number of LOUIS full-text journal articles the library acquires at a very low cost, LSUA, in line with a national trend, relies less and less on print journals. The library secures journal articles as needed through document delivery and interlibrary loan.

The LSUA Library accepts requests for library resources from faculty at any time. Several times throughout the academic year, the Director of Library Services solicits such requests via e-mail or memo. Librarians also attend meetings of academic departments to discuss integrating the use of library resources with courses and to offer help to faculty with the

acquisition or use of library materials. The faculty has ample opportunity to request library resources at LSUA, but not all faculty members take advantage of it.

During Fiscal Year 2003-2004, the faculty requested 510 specific titles from LSUA's Bolton Library. Of those requests, the library staff determined that, as of May 2004, 75 (15%) were already owned by the library. As of May 2004, 1,217 non-duplicate titles were ordered; 36% (435) were titles requested by faculty.

When new courses and curricula are proposed at LSUA, faculty are asked to indicate on a section of the Resource Impact Statement form which additional library resources will be required. This part of the form has received little use or attention in the past.

Librarians also select many titles for acquisition by reviewing the current course catalog. They purchase books to support current courses and curricula recommended for undergraduates by the *Books for College Libraries III*, published by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of College Research Libraries (ACRL). The library also orders many books reviewed by Choice (a review service for academic libraries whose electronic index goes back to approximately 1990) and orders its "Outstanding Titles" suitable for undergraduate readers in disciplines LSUA teaches.

Although LSUA's library is adequate to support its degree programs, and the library will almost always acquire anything a faculty member requests, there is clearly room to improve the process of developing library resources in conjunction with development of new curricula.

### Educational Technology

LSUA recognizes that technology enhances learning experiences and will be used in different ways according to teaching style, student learning style, learning objectives, availability,

and user knowledge. LSUA's Educational Technology department encourages both faculty and students to utilize appropriate technology throughout the educational experience.

There are two major components to using technology in the teaching and learning environment. First, effective use of the hardware or software often requires training or instructional sessions on "buttonology." An analogy can be made to driving a car--operation of the controls has nothing to do with the destination, but if one does not know how to use the controls, one may not reach the destination or the trip may take much longer and be much more stressful. The second component deals with pedagogy. As students become technologically competent, technology can be used to improve the teaching and learning process and convey new ideas and concepts in ways students can observe, process, reflect on, interact with, and apply.

The most commonly used technologies at LSUA are multi-media classrooms with Internet access, mobile labs (carts with wireless laptops for classroom use), symposium devices, compressed video, and Desire2Learn software. The Educational Technology department also offers Impatica (narrated PowerPoint files that stream over the Internet), streaming audio and video, scanners, desktop video capturing, satellite delivery laptops for faculty checkout, and portable projectors for use with laptops. This department has also placed faculty computers on a replace-or-upgrade schedule. LSUA classrooms have a variety of technologies available. Most classrooms have at least an overhead projector. Many classrooms also have a TV and VCR mounted on the wall. AV carts with a TV or DVD/VCR combo are available in some classrooms. Several math classrooms are equipped with a TI Presenter that math faculty use with graphing calculators.

Faculty members also have the opportunity to share innovative uses of technology through demonstration sessions, called "Innovations in Teaching," which allow faculty members

who are incorporating innovative uses of multimedia for research or students to present those ideas to other faculty members. And, to ensure that technology is utilized efficiently by faculty, staff, and students, the Educational Technology staff includes a full-time Educational Technology Specialist, who uses a variety of approaches to identify and address training needs on campus. The Ed Tech Specialist maintains a site for faculty that provides tips on software use and descriptions of technology available on campus. Faculty members use the discussion area to exchange ideas and discoveries. To assist faculty in teaching online courses, Educational Technology offered an online course to faculty, called "Teaching Online," in Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 for 20 faculty members. In turn, the faculty are helping to define the policies related to online learning.

Students are also given opportunities to enhance their use of technology through training sessions, access to Educational Technology staff and trained student workers, written instructional documents, and online resources. At the beginning of each semester, flyers announce the schedule of training sessions offered through Educational Technology. Faculty can arrange for their class to receive orientation topics pertinent to their courses, including course-specific software. Table 1 on the following page illustrates the technological training the Educational Technology Center provides students and instructors.

**Table 1: Educational Technology Sessions Offered for 2003-2004**

<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS OFFERED</b>									
<b>2003 - 2004</b>									
	August	Sept.	October	January	February	March	April	May	June
<b>Blackboard Training</b>									
Adding PowerPoint into Blackboard		5	1						
Course Mgt. Software (BB & D2L)	10			15		1	1	1	7
Creating Exams in Blackboard/D2L					5				2
Creating Offline Content						1			
Student Blackboard/D2L and E-mail	12			12					11
Uploading a Syllabus into Blackboard/D2L						1			1
Using the Gradebook in Blackboard/D2L						1			3
<b>Office Training</b>									
Access								1	
Excel Basics							1		
Mail Merge									1
Marking Papers in Word			6						
Outlook 2003 (Overview)						5			
Outlook Calendar/Task Feature		2	4						
Outlook Web Access					4	1			
PowerPoint Basics				2		1	1		
Sharing Calendars in Outlook 2003						3			
Web Design (FrontPage)							2	1	
Word Basics							2		
<b>Miscellaneous Training</b>									
Creating CDs			3			1			
Equipment							1	2	
Internet Searches and Resources						1			
RoboPDF					3	1			
Scanning			6						
Teaching Rubrics							2		
Time Efficiency								1	
Turnitin.com							1		
Working with Images						1			
<b>Total Training Offered</b>	22	7	20	29	12	18	11	6	25
<p>Training documents are available on the ETC website for every workshop offered. Since the start of the 2003-2004 school term, 104 individual training sessions have been provided. Fifty-one sessions were held from August to December 2003; thus far 137 sessions have been held for 2004.</p>									

At present, LSUA has little formal means of reviewing technological needs or use of technology as part of the approval process for courses and curricula. The Resource Impact Statement form that must accompany proposals for new courses or curricula asks about equipment needs and specifically about audio-visual equipment but no process exists to coordinate this information with the acquisition of technological resources. Further, there is no process at all for discussing how a course or curriculum will use technology in student learning or foster technology skills in students.

### ***Proposed QEP Activities***

Table 2, which describes the tasks associated with the implementation of LSUA's QEP, is on page 42 of this document. Brief narrative descriptions relative to each major area included in the QEP are provided below.

#### Curriculum Development Process

Initial research on curriculum development practices, degree requirements, and standard definitions was completed during Spring 2004. The curriculum and course development process at LSUA was found to be a strong one that includes the administration as well as significant opportunities for faculty governance and decision-making. There are checks and balances built into the system by which the Courses and Curricula Committee or the Faculty Senate can question departments about proposals and even send proposals back to the faculty for clarification or complete revision.

On the other hand, several areas of the curriculum development and assessment process at LSUA need to be enhanced. The QEP Subcommittee on Policies and Resources completed a preliminary assessment of LSUA's existing practices. After comparing them to practices and procedures at other universities, the Subcommittee recommended the changes discussed below:

The University needs to streamline the lapse between initial submission of a course or curricular proposal from the faculty of a department to its final approval by the Chancellor. In addition, the LSUA process for course approval should ask the faculty to

- ◆ provide rationale for the creation of a course, including potential benefit to students,
- ◆ discuss educational challenges and opportunities addressed by a proposed course, such as ethical questions appropriate to the discipline or subject matter,
- ◆ describe how the proposed course fits in sequence with other courses in terms of breadth, depth and level of difficulty,
- ◆ identify the student constituency of each proposed course.

Most of these considerations are, at present, completed informally. However, faculty should have a method to document and formalize discussion of courses and curricula. A formalized procedure will also present the opportunity for careful consideration of the criteria that must be met for a course to meet LSUA's General Education requirements.

LSUA has, with its Master Course Outlines (MCOs), started to address the idea of developing course assessment and evaluation methods at the same time a course is designed. However, LSUA needs to further improve this part of the process by requiring

- ◆ documentation of the degree of mastery of material, processes, and skills expected of students,
- ◆ criteria for determining whether students have acquired prescribed knowledge and skills,
- ◆ criteria for determining whether a course has met its objectives ,
- ◆ a plan for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the course.

The recently implemented MCO form accomplishes much of this task for new or modified courses at LSUA, but there is no similar form required for the introduction or modification of a curriculum.

LSUA should also inquire how new courses and curricula incorporate the University's educational support services; how proposed courses, taken together, form an integrated curriculum; and how new courses build upon foundation courses. These aspects of curriculum development are not ignored at LSUA, but their consideration is often informal and not always documented.

Curriculum development at LSUA does not include a formal step in which faculty demonstrate how they reach the conclusion that library holdings on campus are adequate to support new courses or curricula. LSUA should include in its process a formal means of addressing library resources relevant to or required for the proposed course or curriculum.

Research will continue into best practices in curriculum development over the next several months. LSUA faculty will continue to seek information on best practices in curricular development and reform and on the coordination of curricular content with expected student learning outcomes. LSUA plans to hire consultants with expertise in curriculum development and in the assessment and writing of learning outcomes to conduct workshops with the faculty. Ultimately, LSUA faculty will not only revise the process for developing new courses and curricula, but will also revise existing bachelor degree curricula to ensure coordination between curricular content and expected learning outcomes.

### General Education

The General Education Assessment Committee had already realized the need to revise LSUA's process of establishing the general education course list and the general education

component of degrees before LSUA's decision to pursue curriculum development as a QEP topic. During Spring 2004, the GEAC researched literature and websites for definitions of general education, for generally accepted criteria used to assess whether an individual course should be included as a general education course, and for expected learning outcomes of general education programs. After much discussion of their findings, GEAC members proposed a new definition for general education at LSUA and a completely new method for determining which courses should be included on the general education list.

The method proposed by the GEAC includes a new form that departments would use to document whether or not a course should be included on the LSUA list of general education courses. The GEAC proposes to review these forms and approve or disapprove inclusion of the course on this list. In order for a course to be included, it would have to

1. provide a broad overview or introduction to a discipline, rather than a focus on a narrow component or sub-discipline,
2. be taught at the 1000-2000 level,
3. contain a minimum of 10% of course content or pedagogy focused on at least one of the nine established general education outcomes other than those related to reading level and critical thinking skills (outcomes 1 and 7),
4. base a minimum of 10% of the course content or pedagogy on at least one of four dimensions:
  - i. Collaboration – providing opportunities for students to work collaboratively in groups to solve problems or create projects,
  - ii. Information Literacy – providing opportunities for students to identify, locate and responsibly use information from multiple sources,

- iii. Quantitative Application – providing opportunities for students to use and analyze quantitative data,
- iv. Written/Verbal Content – providing opportunities for students to write and/or speak in a structured manner.

The GEAC submitted its proposal to the Courses and Curricula Committee near the end of the Spring 2004 semester. The proposal will undoubtedly be modified to some extent during the campus approval process. Even so, ultimately the result will be a new method for selecting general education courses that connects course content to specific general education learning outcomes.

### Honors Program

As stated earlier, interested faculty approached the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs about developing an Honors Program at LSUA. After being given approval and recruiting additional faculty, the Honors Program Committee worked during the Spring 2004 semester to investigate honors programs at other institutions and make recommendations for such a program at LSUA. The Honors Program Committee believed there were several advantages to establishing an Honors Program. Such a program might be used as a recruiting tool and improve retention rates through its emphasis on faculty/student cooperation. It might enhance faculty development and satisfaction, as the program would allow faculty to experiment with new courses and pedagogies.

An Honors Program at LSUA could nurture students' academic abilities and talents, and support inquiry, critical thinking, and leadership skills for highly motivated, self-reliant, goal-oriented, self-starting students, under the guidance of creative and talented faculty members. The

following general guidelines for an Honors program resulted from recommendations made by the Honors Program Committee along with contributions from the Leadership Team:

- ◆ Honors courses should emphasize the use of primary materials and hands-on investigations rather than secondary sources and textbooks.
- ◆ Honors courses should promote clarity of thought and or oral and written expression, critical thinking skills, and information literacy.
- ◆ Honors students should meet regularly in special seminars, discussion groups, or colloquia to foster a sense of communal achievement .
- ◆ Honors courses should begin where existing courses leave off; courses need to be defined in terms of quality, not in terms of quantity.
- ◆ Honors courses need to allow for individual choices in terms of projects, activities, and assignments, with opportunities for students to engage in research, service projects, or mentoring or tutoring others.
- ◆ Honors courses should provide opportunities for participation in field trips, travel, lectures, conferences, and community volunteering, as well as an international component.
- ◆ Honors students should have a high degree of access to faculty in order to promote a sense of collegiality in learning; honors courses or special seminars should therefore be sufficiently small to promote student participation and faculty guidance.

The Honors Program Committee envisioned a program that would include two categories of courses: Honors components in traditional courses and Interdisciplinary Humanities Courses, which would integrate traditional courses into new interdisciplinary courses with a focus on

general education. These courses would draw upon history, literature, philosophy, arts, and sciences to study four important periods of western civilization:

Freshman Year	The Ancient World
	The Medieval and Renaissance Worlds
Sophomore Year	The Enlightenment and the American Experiment
	The Modern World

These courses would form the basis of the honors experience and lend a unity and cohesiveness to the Honors Program. The Honors Program Committee suggested that all honors students be required to take at least two of them.

The Honors Program Committee also made several suggestions about administration of the program, criteria for admission to the program, funding and budgeting, and on faculty participation. The Committee also suggested appointing a Program Director and detailed some of the duties that person might have.

The Honors Program Committee proposes to continue studying curriculum, structure, and administration during the 2004-2005 year to refine its recommendations and gain campus approval for the proposed Honors Program. Honors courses could then be developed in 2005-2006 for inclusion in the schedule and catalog in order to begin the program in Fall 2006. Once a program structure is in place, an honors component could be developed for applicable degree programs during initial curriculum development.

### Library Resources

As previously noted, the initial research phase of the QEP showed that LSUA lacks a formal and comprehensive process for consideration of needed library resources when

developing courses and curricula. Further, the LSUA faculty is not taking full advantage of current opportunities to participate in collections development.

The QEP Subcommittee on Policies and Resources suggested that LSUA implement a formal step in the curriculum development process that would require faculty to demonstrate whether they have determined that library resources are adequate (or not) to support proposed courses or curricula. Library resources applicable to existing baccalaureate curricula should be re-examined with new scrutiny to ensure that the resources are adequate to support the programs. To assist LSUA faculty and librarians with this task, consultants who specialize in collection analysis will be hired to examine LSUA's library resources and suggest any needed additional resources.

The Policies and Resources Subcommittee also suggested several ways to encourage the faculty to take an active role in developing the library's collections. Faculty should participate in a physical title-by-title review of the collection. Faculty may notice and bring to the attention of librarians the subject areas with little or no appropriate title coverage, which could lead to the selection of more appropriate titles. Librarians should send individual faculty hard copy book lists appropriate to specific disciplines, allowing faculty to suggest new titles. The library should implement the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education approved in June 2004 by the Board of Directors of the ACRL.

The library should submit evaluation checklists for librarian and tutorial instruction, not only to gather feedback from students, but also teaching faculty. And, the library might, in collaboration with the Educational Technology department, modify a suggestion from the ACRL's website to design online journals, or information literacy diaries, used to track which subjects and titles faculty and students seek in the library. Focus groups of students, faculty,

staff, and alumni could address how the library may continue to offer appropriate service to the campus and the community.

### Educational Technology

The Education and Standards Subcommittee suggested that faculty and staff model ways to use educational technology by learning new means of communicating ideas. By becoming actively involved in educational technology, faculty can best determine what technology will offer students the greatest benefit. Technology, through use of online databases and communications with colleagues from around the state, nation, and world, can help faculty members conduct research and readily communicate. Faculty members need to be able to utilize technology to improve their personal teaching experiences—through research, lecture preparation or simply file and time management. Faculty members must have sufficient resources to explore, plan, and create learning units. According to faculty surveys, no existing technology was deemed useless or redundant. However, many faculty members professed ignorance about LSUA’s instructional technologies and which technologies might prove most beneficial to them and to students.

The Educational Technology department has agreed to develop a glossary of terms that would keep faculty and staff updated and make available on its website a complete list of classrooms and the technologies available in each. Educational Technology staff will contact faculty volunteers for participation in “A Day in the Life of a Professor,” a program where a staff member shadows a professor to determine specific technology needs or to identify ways technology might be used to present materials, improve efficiency, or save time. The Educational Technology department offers and should continue to offer individual assistance to faculty members by appointment or over the telephone and by way of e-mail. The Educational

Technology staff might schedule and advertise sessions offered during school breaks and over summer or offer learning retreats for faculty.

LSUA has no formal mechanism at present to address the use of technology in learning on a campus-wide basis and no direct connection between use of educational technology and course and curriculum development. During the 2004-2005 academic year, LSUA faculty, staff and students will research ways that technology can enhance the learning process and make recommendations for a “desired status” for the use of technology in learning at LSUA. During the 2005-2006 academic year, faculty, staff and students will develop a plan to move the use of technology at LSUA toward this “desired status.” As new courses and curricula are proposed, a method for addressing educational technology needs and applications will be incorporated into the course and curriculum development process.

### *Development and Assessment of Educational Outcomes*

#### *Current Status*

LSUA currently identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and for all administrative and educational support services units as part of its strategic planning process and assesses them through its institutional effectiveness process. Planning has occurred at LSUA, in one form or another, since the University was created in 1960. LSUA has had a formal, structured institutional effectiveness process since 1993.

All departments at LSUA assess achievement of unit outcomes through LSUA’s institutional effectiveness process. During each academic year, every unit assesses achievement of three to six outcomes. Similarly, three to six outcomes are assessed for each degree,

certificate, and developmental education program. All nine general education outcomes are assessed each year.

At the beginning of each assessment cycle, units document their outcomes assessments by completing an Annual Assessment Form for each outcome being assessed. Units describe the appropriate criteria and measures they will use to assess achievement of each outcome. The forms are then submitted to the Assessment Review Committee which is responsible for ensuring that high standards for achievement have been set and assessment methods are reasonable and varied. After approval by the Assessment Review Committee, each department carries out its planned assessments and reports the results at the end of each academic year. The Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness summarizes the results of campus assessments with respect to each institutional goal in the Annual Assessment Report Card.

When assessment results indicate that an educational outcome is not being achieved, departmental faculty (GEAC in the case of general education) meets to discuss actions that can be taken to achieve the outcome in the future. Departments must document these planned actions in their Annual Assessment Forms. The plan for improvement is also submitted to the Assessment Review Committee, which must ensure that the planned actions are adequate and appropriate.

### General Education

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) is a standing administrative committee of the University charged with developing specific assessment criteria and methods for each of the nine general education learning outcomes. This Committee also conducts the Graduate Exit Exam (GEE) each fall and spring semester. The GEE includes standardized tests

(ACT CAAP objective modules on writing skills, reading, mathematics, critical thinking and scientific reasoning, and an essay writing module), locally-developed tests, and opportunities for formal and informal speaking. All graduates of associate and baccalaureate programs are required to take this exam, and the results are used by the GEAC to determine how well graduates have met the desired learning outcomes. The results are also provided to the academic departments with request for specific scrutiny and action on those areas where graduate achievement on the GEE was less than desired. Results are formally reported on Annual Assessment Forms as part of LSUA's normal institutional effectiveness process.

LSUA faculty have identified nine current outcomes for the general education component of LSUA degrees. These are

1. the ability to read with comprehension at the college level,
2. the ability to communicate effectively in writing,
3. the ability to communicate effectively through speech,
4. a basic competency in the use of computers,
5. a basic understanding of mathematical and statistical concepts and the ability to apply these concepts to problem solving,
6. a basic understanding of the scientific method and the ability to apply this method to natural phenomena,
7. the ability to analyze and synthesize information logically,
8. an appreciation and an awareness of the value of one's own and other cultures,
9. an understanding that education and personal development are life-long pursuits.

LSUA has accumulated nearly 10 years of assessment data for General Education. In general, on the CAAP exam, LSUA students have scored at or above the national norm for sophomores at two-year schools in writing, reading, critical thinking and science. However, the national norms for students from four-year schools are higher, and LSUA needs to improve performance by its graduates to meet those higher norms. Additionally, although LSUA graduates have consistently achieved most of the general education outcomes, LSUA has been able to pinpoint weaknesses with particular skills (e.g., use of spreadsheets in computer literacy, word problems in mathematics, presenting a proper conclusion to a formal presentation). And, LSUA graduates have consistently failed to achieve the outcome for mathematics.

LSUA has attempted to use the results of general education assessment for improvement of the general education program, but the process breaks down when faculty try to assign responsibility for improvement. For example, with mathematics, the question arises whether the students' skills should be solely the result of the mathematics courses they took or whether mathematics skills (such as solving word problems) are learned in other courses. The responsibility becomes even more unclear when general skills, such as "critical thinking," are identified. LSUA faculty have no concise idea about which courses in the general education curriculum teach critical thinking skills. Clear connections between coursework and learning outcomes would help LSUA faculty do a better job at improving student learning relative to general education.

### Bachelor Degree Programs

Faculty members in the departments responsible for administering each bachelor degree program have developed educational outcomes for each program. At present, departmental faculties develop educational outcomes after curricula are established. Undoubtedly, faculty

have educational outcomes in mind as curricula are developed, but no process presently links specific courses in a curriculum to the outcomes faculty hope students will achieve upon completion of the curriculum.

Outcomes for each of the baccalaureate programs for 2004-2005 are listed below.

#### Bachelor of Science in Biology

1. Graduates will understand the principles and characteristics of living organisms.
2. Graduates will understand and apply the scientific method and analytical skills.
3. Graduates will develop a behavior of questioning that leads to a life-long habit of learning.
4. Graduates will make use of their biological education when making decisions relative to environmental and political issues related to Science.
5. Biology graduates will be able to demonstrate knowledge ecological/environmental concepts, including issues that effect Louisiana.

#### Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education

1. Graduates will construct developmentally appropriate lessons that address the needs of diverse learners and include lesson plan components appropriate for the implementation of selected instructional design.
2. Graduates will incorporate research-based practices of behavior management by promoting a positive learning environment and by organizing available time, space, materials, and equipment.

3. Graduates will facilitate in a variety of field-based settings planned learning experiences based on accurate content through the implementation of a variety of research based and developmentally-appropriate instructional technologies.
4. Graduates will assess the degree of learner ownership of stated objectives through the use of a variety of formative, summative, and diagnostic techniques.
5. Graduates will modify instruction based on assessment data and identified special student needs.

#### Bachelor of Liberal Studies

1. Graduates will demonstrate good citizenship and civic involvement.
2. Graduates will continue to read various types of literature.
3. Graduates will attend or participate in artistic or cultural events.
4. Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of history.
5. Graduates will continue the quest and/or desire to learn.

#### Business Major

1. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Accounting.
2. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Economics.
3. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of the legal and social environment of Business.
4. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Management.
5. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Marketing

## Psychology Major

1. Graduates will demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of the major concepts and theoretical perspectives in psychology.
2. Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the history of psychology.
3. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use psychological resources available via computers and other forms of technology.
4. Graduates will demonstrate critical and creative thinking and skeptical inquiry.
5. Graduates will recognize and understand the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

## Bachelor of General Studies

1. Graduates will demonstrate good citizenship and civic involvement.
2. Graduates will be able to process scientific information.
3. Graduates will attend or participate in artistic or cultural events.
4. Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of history.
5. Graduates will exhibit the ability to think critically.
6. Graduates will write effectively.

## Area of Concentration in Biology

1. Graduates with this concentration will understand the Scientific Method.
2. Graduates will understand the basic principles and characteristics of living organisms.
3. Graduates with this concentration will understand basic cellular structure and function.

### Area of Concentration in Business

1. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Business concepts, principles, and practices.
2. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Economics.
3. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of the Legal and Social Environment of Business
4. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Management
5. Graduates will demonstrate a basic understanding of Marketing.

### Area of Concentration in English

1. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to recognize the difference between literal and figurative language.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to recognize patterns within a text (e.g., imagery, rhetoric, etc.)
3. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use primary and secondary sources of information when interpreting a text.

### Area of Concentration in History

1. Graduates will demonstrate a basic knowledge of history
2. Graduates will understand the uses of information technology relevant to historical research.
3. Graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills as applicable to history.

### Area of Concentration in Mathematics

1. Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental mathematical concepts.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to access and research mathematical information via math journals and other resources.
3. Graduates will demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills by being able to construct mathematical proofs.
4. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to communicate mathematical information both verbally and in writing.

### Area of Concentration in Psychology

1. Graduates will demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of psychology.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to organize and present psychological information.
3. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use psychological resources in a variety of formats.

### Area of Concentration in Speech/Theatre

1. Graduates will demonstrate a fundamental understanding of Speech/Theatre.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to organize and present information.
3. Graduates will demonstrate a fundamental understanding of a variety of communications theories/performance theories relating to Speech/Theatre.

Assessment measures used and/or planned for assessment of these learning outcomes for bachelor degrees include standardized exams (mostly ETS Major Field Tests), projects in

capstone courses, presentations, portfolios, locally-developed exams, and surveys of graduates, alumni and employers. So few students have graduated from these programs thus far that no body of performance data exists.

### Honors Program

Because LSUA has no Honors Program, there are presently no educational outcomes for the program. However, once a program is established, development and assessment of educational outcomes will occur as they do for all LSUA programs.

### ***Proposed QEP Activities***

#### General Education

As noted previously, the GEAC conducted graduate outcomes assessment, analyzed and reviewed assessment results, and struggled to find ways to effectively engage faculty in making curricular and pedagogical modifications to improve student performance. A major challenge in this process has been the lack of connection between specific courses required to satisfy general education distribution requirements and the current nine general education learning outcomes. After a process is developed to select general education courses that directly contribute to the established general education outcomes (see page 30), targeting the courses and faculty needed to make the modifications in instruction necessary to promote better student performance should become much easier.

Although LSUA's general education learning outcomes have been in place for nearly 10 years, they will very likely be modified as a result of the QEP process. An underlying principle of LSUA's QEP, as noted in the title, is that LSUA's curricula should contribute to the development of educated persons. The University had never previously discussed what it meant

to be “an educated person.” After numerous lively and provocative e-mail and face-to-face discussions, faculty responses, tallied by the Education and Standards Committee, resulted in the following description of an educated person:

An educated person can acquire, understand, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and communicate information and knowledge; can think critically, solve problems, and create original work; is proficient in at least one discipline, having familiarity with a broad range of knowledge in other disciplines; and has an ongoing desire to learn, to practice tolerance for others and their ideas, to appreciate aesthetic values, and to maintain a commitment to the improvement of local and global communities.

Following suggestions from the campus community, the Education and Standards Subcommittee recommended several learning outcomes that should apply to educated persons. An LSUA graduate should be able to

1. acquire, understand, analyze, synthesize data/texts/materials of different sorts, and communicate that understanding/analysis in writing and verbally,
2. create or produce original work that may be based on material already extant in the field,
3. possess the skills to be successful in professional employment or pursuit of graduate studies within his chosen discipline,
4. recognize, and respond to, a broad spectrum or palette of fields or achievements other than those associated with his chosen discipline,

5. continuously seek involvement in areas that promote his own learning, culture, and well-being, as well as the learning, culture, and well-being of others, in the community and beyond.

Bachelor degrees at LSUA have only general education requirements in common, so certainly some of the responsibility for producing an educated person (e.g., outcomes 1, 4, and 5 from the above list) lies with the general education curriculum. Over the next academic year, GEAC will study the recommendations from the Education and Standards Subcommittee, as well as suggestions derived from campus-wide discussion of that Subcommittee's work, to determine whether any changes to the general education outcomes are needed. GEAC will also need to re-evaluate the method it has proposed for course selection for the general education list to ensure the method is still appropriate after general education learning outcomes are revised.

### Bachelor Degree Programs

As noted, educational outcomes have been established for all existing baccalaureate programs at LSUA. However, outcomes were established after, and somewhat independent from, development of the curricula. Clearly, a need for more coordination between curriculum development and outcomes development and assessment exists. Faculty should develop stated learning outcomes for a program prior to developing a curriculum for that program. As learning outcomes are established, faculty will need to consider the definition and outcomes established as a result of the campus discussion relative to producing an "educated person." The outcomes for an educated person that have currently been proposed include outcomes that are discipline specific and would need to be addressed as educational outcomes for particular degree programs (see outcomes 2 and 3, page 38) as well as outcomes that might be attributed to a combination of the general education core and discipline-specific courses (see outcomes 1, 4, and 5, page 38-39).

The Policies and Resources Subcommittee began preliminary work on the outcomes and assessments issue this past year. The Subcommittee recommended that goals for curricula, course assignments, and assessments should be clearly stated as behavioral objectives and understandable by all who share responsibility for student learning, and that departments should seek support of individuals experienced or expert in instructional or assessment design before periodically reviewing their own courses and assessment instruments to see that they remain actively relevant to the mission, purposes and educational objectives of LSUA and the specific degree program.

LSUA will hire a consultant with expertise in outcomes development and assessment to conduct a workshop with LSUA faculty. After this faculty development workshop, LSUA will conduct a retreat at an off-campus location for faculty and students to work on revising outcomes and assessments for existing bachelor degree programs.

### Honors Program

The Honors Program will have outcomes and assessments similar to all other academic programs at LSUA. The Honors Program Committee will be charged with developing the outcomes and assessments for the Honors program and will work in conjunction with faculty in disciplines where Honors courses are taught. As new degree programs with Honors courses emerge, intended outcomes will be considered prior to development of the Honors component of the program.

### QEP Implementation Timeline/Responsibility/Cost

This QEP will begin in August 2004, with implementation complete by May 2006. The following table shows the activities planned to accomplish each objective of LSUA's QEP, the persons responsible for carrying out the activity, the time frame for accomplishment, the costs (when applicable) and the completion status.

**Table 2: Implementation Timeline**

**Objective 1. Thoroughly review existing literature as well as practices at other institutions to determine best curriculum development and assessment processes.**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1.1 Review existing curriculum development process at LSUA	Subcommittee on Policies and Resources	February - April 2004	None	Completed
1.2 Conduct review of existing literature on curriculum development and assessment and examine practices at other institutions to determine best practices.	Subcommittee on Policies and Resources	February 2004 - February 2005	None	Ongoing: Initial review completed April 2004; More in-depth review Sept. 2004 - Feb. 2005
1.3 Provide faculty/staff development regarding the QEP at the Fall faculty/staff meeting.	Leadership Team	August 2004	None	
1.4 Provide faculty development regarding best practices in curriculum development at January faculty meeting.	Academic Vice Chancellor, Deans	January 2005	\$3000 for consultant	
1.5 Compare LSUA's existing curriculum development process to best practices and suggest changes in LSUA process.	QEP Subcommittees	August 2004 - February 2005	None	Initial suggestions have been made by sub-committee on Policy and Resources but will need to be refined as further information and expertise obtained

***Objective 2. Review basic bachelor degree requirements and definitions (e.g., major, concentration, and so forth) and revise as necessary.***

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
2.1 Review any definitions and/or degree requirements established by the Louisiana Board of Regents.	QEP Subcommittee on Education and Standards	February - April 2004	None	Completed
2.2 Review definitions and basic bachelor degree requirements at other Louisiana Universities.	QEP Subcommittee on Education and Standards	February - April 2004	None	Completed
2.3 Review LSUA's definitions and requirements in view of the finding in 2.1 and 2.2. and make recommendations for changes.	QEP Subcommittee on Education and Standards, Academic Departments, Coordinating Committees	February - December 2004	None	Completed for BGS in March 2004; September - December 2004 for other degrees
2.4 Propose/gain approval for needed changes in LSUA's definitions and requirements through the normal campus process.	Departmental Faculty, Coordinating Committees, Courses and Curriculum Committee.	April - December 2004	None	Initial changes for BGS degree completed April 2004; remainder ongoing

***Objective 3. Define criteria for including classes in the general education core based on each class' contribution to the established general education learning outcomes.***

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
3.1 Research best practices in defining general education courses and linking these courses to learning outcomes established for the general education program.	General Education Assessment Committee	February - April 2004	None	Completed
3.2 Develop a campus definition of an "educated person" and recommend this definition as the basis of LSUA's general education program and general education learning outcomes.	QEP Education and Standards Subcommittee	February - April 2004	None	Completed
3.3 Revise LSUA's learning outcomes for general education, if needed, based on the definition of an "educated person."	General Education Assessment Committee	September - December 2004	None	
3.4 Develop a method/rubric for deciding which courses should be general education courses that is based on a linkage between course content and the general education learning outcomes.	General Education Assessment Committee	February - April 2004	None	Completed
3.5 Propose/gain approval for this method through the normal campus process.	General Education Assessment Committee; Courses and Curricula Committee	April - December 2004	None	GEAC submitted to Courses and Curriculum Committee April 2004

***Objective 4. Develop (or revise) learning outcomes and assessments for all bachelor degree programs.***

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
4.1 Provide professional development for faculty and selected students on the topic of developing and assessing learning outcomes.	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness	February 2005	\$3000 for consultant	
4.2 Review learning outcomes and assessments for existing bachelor degree programs and revise as necessary.	Departmental Faculty; Coordinating Committees; Students	February - May 2005	\$1500 for retreat	
4.3 Develop learning outcomes for new bachelor degree programs/majors prior to designing the curriculum for the program.	Departmental Faculty; Coordinating Committees; Students	Ongoing after February 2005	None	

***Objective 5. Develop clear connections between courses contributing to the major and learning outcomes expected of graduates.***

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
5.1 Review existing bachelor degree curricula to ensure connections between the majors courses required in the curriculum and the learning outcomes established in 4.2.	Departmental faculty; Coordinating Committees	September - December 2005	\$1500 for retreat	
5.2 As new bachelor degrees are developed, establish learning outcomes and linkages to required majors courses as a standard part of the curriculum development and approval process.	Departmental faculty and prospective students	Ongoing after May 2005	None	

***Objective 6. Revise existing curricula as needed to incorporate changes in the general education core and to ensure inclusion of major courses appropriate for established student learning outcomes.***

ACTIVITY	FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME	COST ESTIMATE	STATUS
6.1 Review existing list of general education courses with respect to new standards for inclusion of courses on the list. Revise list as necessary.	General Education Assessment Committee; Courses and Curricula Committee	December 2004 - April 2005	None	
6.2 Revise existing bachelor degree curricula based on newly-revised general education course list	Departmental Faculty; Coordinating Committees; Courses and Curricula Committee	September - December 2005	None	
6.3 Revise existing bachelor degree curricula based on newly-established linkages between learning outcomes and courses required for the major (see 5.1)	Departmental Faculty; Coordinating Committees; Courses and Curricula Committee	Ongoing after January 2006	None (see 5.1)	

***Objective 7. Ensure that library resources are appropriate to support bachelor degree programs.***

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
7.1 Review existing process at LSUA for acquiring library resources as new courses and programs are developed.	QEP Chair; QEP Subcommittee on Policies and Resources; Director of Library	February - April 2004	None	Completed
7.2 Recommend changes to existing curriculum development process so that consideration of library resources needed to achieve student learning outcomes is part of the process.	QEP Subcommittee on Polices and Resources; Library Personnel; Courses and Curriculum Committee	April - December 2004	None	Initial suggestions completed April 2004 but need to be enhanced in Fall 2004
7.3 Review library resources relative to existing bachelor degrees to document adequacy or request needed materials	Departmental Faculty; Librarians; Library Committee	September 2004 - May 2005	\$5,000 for analysis	

**Objective 8. Define criteria for a campus-wide Honors Program.**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
8.1 Research Honors Programs at other institutions and best practices in administering Honors Programs.	Honors Program Committee	February - October 2004	\$3500 for 3 people to attend National Honors Conference in New Orleans	Ongoing
8.2 Propose an Honors Program structure for LSUA and solicit campus input.	Honors Program Committee; Faculty; Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	December 2004 - February 2005	None	
8.3 Finalize Honors Program structure and processes	Honors Program Committee; Faculty; Courses and Curricula Committee; Administration	February-April 2005	None	
8.4 Develop honors courses	Departmental Faculty; Courses and Curricula Committee	September 2005 - March 2006	None	
8.5 Offer Honors Program/Courses beginning with the 2006-2007 Catalog and Fall 2006 Schedule of Classes	Department Chairs; Deans; Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	April 2006	None	
8.6 Develop Honors courses and components for new curricula during the curriculum development process	Departmental Faculty	Ongoing after Spring 2005	None	

**Objective 9. Expose students in all curricula to creative use of technology throughout the learning process.**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
9.1 Review current status of use of technology in learning at LSUA.	QEP Subcommittee on Education and Standards; Director of Educational Technology	February - December 2004	None	Initial work completed by May 2004; will be resumed in September 2004
9.2 Research best practices in use of technology in learning.	QEP Subcommittee on Education and Standards; Educational Technology Staff	September 2004 - March 2005	None	
9.3 Recommend a "desired status" for use of technology in learning at LSUA..	QEP Committee; Educational Technology Staff; Students	March - May 2005	None	
9.4 Develop a technology plan to enable LSUA to reach the "desired status."	QEP Committee: Information Technology Advisory Committee	September 2005 - March 2006	None	
9.5 Incorporate a review of use of technology in LSUA's standard program and course review so as to ensure that courses and programs achieve "desired status" in use of technology.	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Department Chairs; Departmental Faculty	Ongoing after September 2005	None	
9.6 Incorporate consideration of technology needs and use in learning as part of the course and curricular review for new courses and programs.	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Department Chairs; Departmental Faculty; Courses and Curriculum Committee	Ongoing after September 2005	None	

**Source: Leadership Team**

### *Assessment of the QEP*

Assessing the success of the implementation of LSUA's QEP will require assessment of two very different aspects of the project. The first aspect involves assessing the project itself to determine whether the objectives of the project were accomplished in the specified time frame. The second aspect involves assessing whether the QEP resulted in the intended benefit to the campus with respect to student learning.

#### *Assessment of Project Outcomes*

Nine project outcomes will be assessed:

1. LSUA will revise its curriculum development process to incorporate best practices as determined to be appropriate by the LSUA faculty. This process revision will be complete by May 2005.
2. LSUA will establish a method for deciding which courses are included in the general education course list and make clear the links between course content, pedagogy, and general education learning outcomes. This method will be in place by December 2004.
3. All new curricula proposed at LSUA after February 2005 will be developed by first establishing learning outcomes and then building a curriculum designed to achieve those outcomes.
4. LSUA's curriculum development process will include formal consideration of library resource needs and use of library resources to facilitate student learning after May 2005.
5. LSUA's curriculum development process will include formal consideration of technology needs and use of technology to facilitate learning after May 2005.

6. Learning outcomes for currently existing bachelor degree programs in Biology, Elementary Education, General Studies, and Liberal Studies will be reviewed and revised by May 2005.
7. The general education component of currently existing bachelor degree programs in Biology, Elementary Education, General Studies, and Liberal Studies will be reviewed and revised as necessary by December 2005 after consideration of revisions to the general education course list.
8. Library resources in support of the currently existing bachelor degree programs in Biology, Elementary Education, General Studies, and Liberal Studies will be reviewed for adequacy and any needed resources requested by May 2005.
9. LSUA will have an Honors Program in place and begin offering Honors courses by Fall 2006.

### ***Assessment of Student Learning***

LSUA's QEP is designed to have a strong impact on student learning. If faculty members determine intended learning outcomes for a degree program as an initial part of developing that program and then build the curriculum with those outcomes in mind, the result should be a much more coherent process of curriculum development where learning outcomes are the central theme. However, assessing the impact of implementation of LSUA's QEP on student learning will be difficult for three reasons:

1. Time constraints are imbedded in the structure of the QEP process established by SACS.
2. Bachelor degree programs to be impacted by this project are new for LSUA.

3. Much of the impact of this QEP will be on degree programs that have not yet been created.

LSUA assesses learning outcomes for program graduates. Because LSUA's bachelor degree programs were initiated in Fall 2003, there have been only a few graduates. Although assessments have been made of those few students, the sample is too small to establish a reliable baseline for performance with which to measure post-QEP performance against. Additionally, the QEP process developed by SACS requires a report on the QEP implementation after five years. Any curriculum reform that takes place over the next couple of years as a result of the QEP will not have been in place long enough for LSUA to have assessed graduates who have completed the "reformed" curricula. Nonetheless, LSUA will continue to assess graduates with regard to the currently established learning outcomes and will maintain that data, limited as it is, for future comparisons with graduates from "reformed" curricula. LSUA will consider the QEP successful at impacting student learning if student performance on exit assessments improves after a better process of matching outcomes and curricular content is in use.

One large area of the QEP where LSUA does have sufficient baseline data for an assessment of project impact is General Education. LSUA now has approximately nine years of data on performance of graduates on exit exams. Although most of the data were collected for associate degree graduates, initial data for bachelor degree graduates indicate there is not a large difference in performance between the two groups. LSUA will consider the QEP successful at improving student learning relative to general education if student scores improve on the general education portion of exit examinations.

LSUA has some baseline data regarding the use of library and technological resources. The library has maintained, among other data, information about materials borrowed, materials

used in the library, and interlibrary loan requests. The Educational Technology department has collected data on the use of various technologies by faculty and students. While these data cannot provide a direct measure of student learning, they can be used as general indices to determine whether instructors incorporate increased use of library and technological resources in their courses after curriculum reform is complete.

### ***Budget and Oversight***

LSUA's QEP can be accomplished with current resource levels. Much of the work is pertinent to the charge of existing faculty committees (e.g., the General Education Assessment Committee, the Courses and Curricula Committee, the Faculty Library Committee) or groups (e.g., faculty within a department). The QEP Committee is composed of volunteers. Additional volunteers will be solicited for 2004-2005. While this committee work will certainly involve a commitment of time on the part of the faculty involved, committee service is a normal part of faculty workload and no one group will have an unreasonable workload under this plan. LSUA plans to provide faculty development related to the QEP in the form of two workshops with consultants who are experts in curriculum reform and outcomes development. LSUA also plans to provide two off-campus retreats for faculty in order to provide time and surroundings with fewer distractions to work on several of the major components of developing learning outcomes and revising curricula.

An augmented Leadership Team will provide oversight of the implementation phase of LSUA's QEP. The two QEP Subcommittee chairs will join the current Leadership Team. The role of this team will be to provide advice and guidance for the overall implementation. The QEP Committee Chair will continue to have primary responsibility for coordinating and

overseeing the faculty involvement in implementation. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be responsible for day-to-day administrative oversight. The QEP Committee Chair will continue to be provided with one class release time each semester.

The only major cost associated with LSUA’s QEP is the cost of enhancing Library Resources as needed to support degree programs. LSUA typically receives some funding from the state each year that is earmarked specifically for library acquisitions and scientific equipment. However, LSUA will commit to providing another \$50,000 from general operating funds for library acquisitions the faculty determine to be needed to support existing bachelor degree programs.

A draft budget for the QEP is presented below.

**Table 3: Proposed QEP Implementation Budget**

<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Object Code</b>	<b>2004-05 Budget</b>
288320500	Reg Emp. Pd Monthly	1110-1	\$ 6,675
288320500	Travel/Consultants	2000	9,500
275010300			5,000
288320500	Operating Services	3000	0
288320500	Supplies	4000	0
288320500	Professional Services	5000	0
288320500	Other Charges (Retreats)	6000	3,000
275100300	Capital Outlays (Library Resources)	7100	50,000
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$74,175</b>

<b>Detail:</b>	
QEP Committee Chair Released Time, Spring 2004	\$ 2,325
QEP Committee Chair - Additional Comp, Summer 2004	2,175
QEP Committee Chair Released Time, Fall 2004	2,175
Library Acquisitions	50,000
National Honors Conference	3,500
Retreat, November 2004	1,500
Consultant visit, January 2005	3,000
Retreat, February 2005	1,500
Consultant visit, February 2005	3,000
Library Collections Consultants	5,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$74,175</b>

*Source: Office of Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services*

### **Conclusion**

LSUA has a well-qualified and well-prepared faculty committed to providing quality educational programs and opportunities to a student body with diverse needs. By virtue of its historic open-admission policy, LSUA had provided the general education and foundation courses in the liberal arts and sciences necessary for the residents of Central Louisiana to pursue study at the undergraduate level and achieve their lifetime goals. As it makes the transition from two-year to four-year status, Louisiana State University at Alexandria has the necessary strategies in place to improve its effectiveness. The QEP includes critical proposals for evaluating and refining the University's curriculum development process to coordinate intended learning outcomes, as well as library and educational technology resources, with course selection. LSUA will have curricula necessary to student success, and the new curricula will be at the heart of the University's service to Central Louisiana. Assessment processes are ongoing, and the new assessment initiatives will provide the University with more meaningful data upon which to

make decisions and improvements. The University's momentum will be sustained and processes refined. Revising LSUA's curricula will contribute to an educated community.

The administration, faculty and staff at LSUA are vigilant and steadfast in endeavoring to offer service of the highest caliber. LSUA prides itself in the positive changes growing out of its daily work and in the potential for continued progress. LSUA holds a future filled with promise, possibility, and determination.

## *Appendix I*

## *Appendix II*