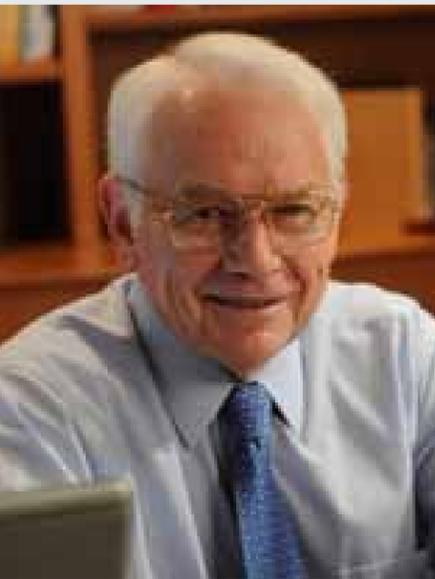


FACULTY GUIDE: *STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS* QEP

*FOSTERING A CULTURE
OF STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP*
2011 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN



**STUDENTS
AS SCHOLARS**



AN INVITATION FROM THE PROVOST

As part of our SACS accreditation process, the Mason community has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Members of the Mason community—faculty, students, staff, alumni, and administrators—have responded in impressive numbers to propose ideas and contribute to the discussions surrounding the plan.

The *Students as Scholars* QEP focuses on student research and creativity and builds on activities that are already in place, although these existing opportunities have never been systematized. We are taking advantage of this occasion to collectively keep pace with the talents of our students.

We know in our own lives that teaching and research commitments can sometimes conflict, but research and teaching can often fructify each other, and we need to play up and value the connection. Let's be imaginative and inclusive in how we pursue the *Students as Scholars* QEP and how we help make student scholarship part of our answer to the challenge of maintaining not just classroom excellence but a real and deserved reputation for teaching quality.

—Provost Stearns



HOW CAN FACULTY BE INVOLVED?

The *Students as Scholars* QEP will give faculty the opportunity to work with undergraduate students on exciting research and creative projects, both in the classroom and beyond. Although working with undergraduate students has unique challenges, it can also be very fulfilling, both personally and professionally. Many of these activities will pilot during the 2011 and 2012 academic years.

THREE MAJOR GOALS OF THE STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN:

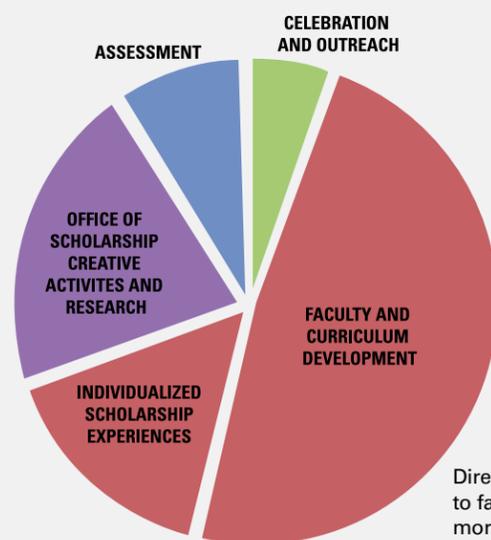
- 1) Enhance the awareness and visibility of scholarship at Mason
- 2) Increase opportunities for scholarly inquiry
- 3) Develop the infrastructure to support student scholarship

HELP US BUILD A CULTURE OF STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Through the broad-based involvement and support of Mason students, faculty, staff, alumni, and administrators since spring 2008, George Mason University has identified "Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship" as the topic of our *Students as Scholars* Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). *Student scholarship is the process of generating and sharing knowledge or creative works.* Faculty participating in QEP activities will help students discover how knowledge is generated through scholarship and how they might engage in the practice of scholarship; help them articulate scholarly questions and place concepts within a broader context; and support them as they create and communicate their own scholarship.

HOW IS MASON SUPPORTING FACULTY AND STUDENTS IN THE STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS QEP?

Mason has allocated over \$4 million to the *Students as Scholars* initiative, to be used over the next five years (starting in the 2011–2012 academic year). The majority of the new resources will support faculty and curriculum development, along with individualized student scholarship experiences. For more information about faculty and student grants, see oscar.gmu.edu.



Direct funding available to faculty and students is more than \$2,700,000 over 5 years

GOAL 1: ENHANCE THE AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AT MASON

- **Celebration of Student Scholarship:** **Encourage** your students to participate in this new annual showcase and attend the event yourself.
- **Excellence in Student Scholarship Awards:** **Nominate** your students for the annual Excellence in Student Scholarship Award and your faculty colleagues for the annual Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring Award.
- **Classroom discussions:** **Enhance** your classes by discussing your scholarly career and current work.

The Students as Scholars QEP will help us take student scholarship to the next level and make it much more visible and more prominent, and ensure that more students have this opportunity.

~Rachel Bergman (faculty)

GOAL 2: INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

- **Research and Scholarship Courses:** **Enhance** your courses to involve students in elements of scholarly inquiry.
- **Curriculum Development Grants*:** **Collaborate** with your colleagues to redesign the curriculum in your undergraduate program to include significant scholarly learning experiences.
- **Individualized Student Scholarship Experience*:** **Mentor** students in individual research or creative projects for a semester or over multiple semesters through the expansion of the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program. Faculty mentors will receive modest funds to support the costs of the project.
- **Student Travel*:** **Encourage** your undergraduate students to attend and present at conferences and other professional venues supported by a new, competitive Student Travel Fund.

GOAL 3: DEVELOP THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

- **Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR):** **Join** the QEP/OSCAR Leadership Council or subcommittees to help shape the direction of our *Students as Scholars* initiative.
- **Students as Scholars website:** **Learn** about the OSCAR programs and *Students as Scholars* activities. You can post opportunities for student research or creative activities through a partnership with HireMason.
- **Programs and Resources:** **Expand** your teaching and mentoring strategies for working with undergraduate researchers through workshops, invited speakers, one-on-one consultations, and reference materials on the OSCAR website.

* Curriculum development, student research projects, faculty mentoring, and student travel can be supported by *Students as Scholars* QEP grants. See oscar.gmu.edu in the coming months for information on how to apply.





The goal of undergraduate studies is not just to acquire knowledge, but to use knowledge...if it has no utility, then it's just a series of facts.

– Dan Cox (faculty)

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN?

The *Students as Scholars* QEP student learning outcomes are organized to build on increasing levels of student engagement in scholarship, starting with discovery, moving through scholarly inquiry, and culminating with active student scholarship.

CREATION OF SCHOLARSHIP

At the pinnacle of the pyramid, students will:

- Create an original scholarly project.
- Communicate effectively about their scholarly project in a form appropriate to the intended audience.

SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

At the middle level of the pyramid, students will:

- Situate the concepts, practices, or results of scholarship within a broader context.
- Articulate a scholarly question and support a position by:
 - Assessing the validity of key assumptions, evidence, and ethical dimensions of a scholarly project.
 - Choosing an appropriate discovery process for scholarly inquiry.
 - Using evidence and conventions appropriate to the scholarly project.

DISCOVERY OF SCHOLARSHIP

At the foundational level of the pyramid, students will:

- Understand how knowledge is generated and disseminated through scholarship, and the importance of scholarship to society.
- Discover how they can engage in the practice of scholarship.

WHAT MIGHT STUDENT ACTIVITIES LOOK LIKE?



CREATION OF SCHOLARSHIP

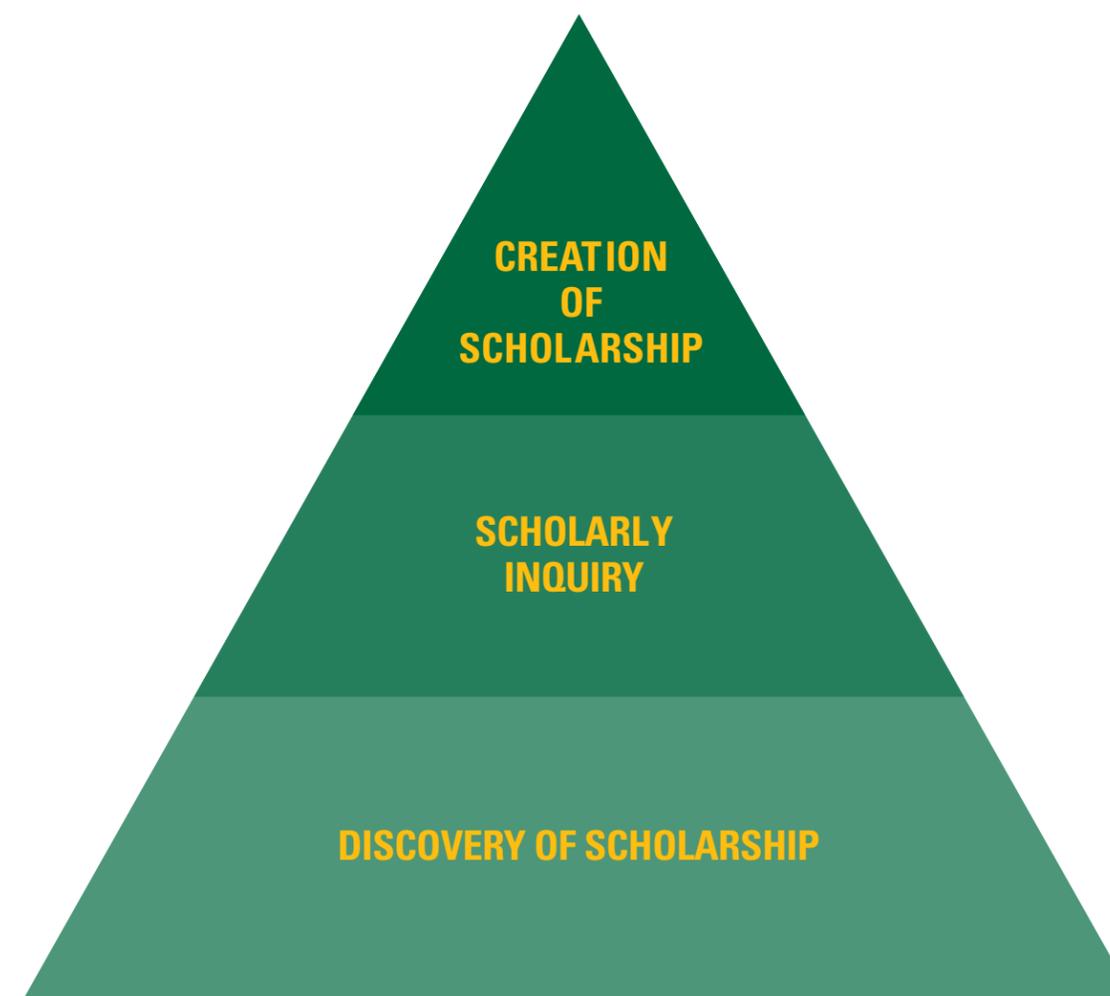
- Create and perform, direct, publish or exhibit an original artistic production
- Construct, implement, and analyze a survey about voter attitudes
- Develop a new method for using biological signals to control tools
- Present research-based suggestions for improving campus life to a meeting of administrative faculty
- Submit a grant proposal to provide external funding to answer a research question
- Use a policy analysis framework to analyze an issue and recommend solutions to a government agency or business
- Present at the Celebration of Student Scholarship, College of Science Undergraduate Research Day, or College of Humanities & Social Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium

SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

- Explore the nature and meaning of diversity in higher education
- Sample and analyze environmental conditions around the Potomac River
- Observe and analyze the flow of information in a workplace
- Write a computer code to help solve structural biological problems
- Discover how museums are organized and how exhibitions are designed
- Work with a local historical society on a historic preservation project
- Examine solutions to enhance university resource conservation
- Participate in the creation of an original artistic production
- Participate in an archaeological field school

DISCOVERY OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Discover different disciplinary methods of inquiry in an introductory course
- Learn about a professor's research in an introductory class
- Participate in the Vision Series or Fall for the Book
- Go behind the scenes of a Great Performance at the Center for the Arts or Hilton Performing Arts Center through the Pre-Performance Discussions
- Discuss the ways the media reports and interprets scholarly studies
- Enroll in a *Students as Scholars* University 100 course
- Attend the Celebration of Student Scholarship and other campus showcases of undergraduate scholarship



When it comes to teaching and interacting with undergraduates, I tend to try and present information in the form of questions because that's much more exciting.

– James Willis (faculty)

I think the most enjoyable thing is that I get to know my students. For as much as I'm giving out, they're giving all of that back.

– Susan Shields (faculty)



WHAT ARE THE MEASURES OF A SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS QEP?

The following program outcomes have been identified as important measures of the success of our QEP.

- Student scholarship is pervasive on campus.
- Undergraduate degree programs offer opportunities for student scholarly inquiry, creative activities, and research.
- Faculty support undergraduate students in scholarly inquiry, creative activities, and research.
- Students participate in scholarship, creative activities, or research.
- Students have opportunities to communicate the results of their research or creative activities.
- Students who have participated in scholarly activities are prepared for their career goals and advanced study.

As Mason starts to ingrain that idea into its curriculum and across curricula, I think that that is just going to be a really great experience for the students.

– Sabrina Speights (student)



Scholarship is something that helps people in some way, whether it helps them to understand something, whether it helps them to become something, whether it helps them to do something.

– Toby Jenkins (faculty)

BENEFITS OF THE STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS QEP

The *Students as Scholars* QEP will help the **Mason community** address issues of student engagement in active learning, student-faculty interaction, and academic challenge, which will benefit from strengthening as indicated by institutional and national survey data. **Students** will have increased opportunities to engage in original scholarship, research, and creative activities that will enhance their undergraduate education and better prepare them for their future goals. **Faculty** will benefit from the opportunity to work with undergraduate students on exciting research and creative projects, both in the classroom and beyond.

MISSION OF THE STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS QEP

As the Mason community discussed the role of the QEP in transforming the undergraduate experience, it became clear that we had a vision in which scholarship would be pervasive across the university. The *Students as Scholars* QEP affords us the opportunity to connect our students with the research and creative mission of the institution and our faculty. **The mission of our QEP is to foster a culture of student scholarship through increased participation in and celebration of scholarly activities.** Students will see their education as a process of scholarly inquiry, where scholarship is valued as a core practice of the Mason student experience.



OSCAR COLLABORATORS

Center for Teaching Excellence
English Department Composition Program
Honors College
Information Technology Unit
Office of Institutional Assessment
Office of Institutional Research and Reporting
Office of Research & Economic Development

Office of the University Registrar
Student Academic Affairs, Advising, & Retention
University Career Services
University General Education
University Libraries
University Life
Writing Across the Curriculum

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STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS: CONNECTING FACULTY AND STUDENTS – TRANSFORMING A CAMPUS

Culture implies a shared set of values, traditions, and language. In fostering a culture of student scholarship at Mason, our vision is that the *Students as Scholars* QEP will transform the university climate. The value of educating students as scholars will become stronger as faculty engage their classes in discussions, assignments, and events that enrich students' experiences with scholarly inquiry. A robust tradition will develop in which students learn about scholarship and opportunities to engage in research and creative activities. Through infusing undergraduate scholarship, creative activities, and research more intentionally into the student experience, the language of the institution will reflect scholarship as a core practice and expectation of the university.

Providing undergraduates with increased opportunities to participate in scholarly or creative endeavors is a critical step in teaching them how to think and behave as scholars in their discipline or field. Through participation in these activities, students will become part of a community of lifelong learners, encountering opportunities to discuss and explore ideas with their peers and with those more advanced in the discipline. If we are to better prepare our undergraduates, as an institution of higher education, to succeed after graduation, making these kinds of opportunities available to students is imperative.

In five years, our aspiration is that Mason will be seen as a model of student scholarship. OSCAR will be supported through a combination of campus support, alumni gifts, and outside grants. We will be highlighted in the media as a leader in undergraduate research and creative activities. Students will enroll at Mason because of the unique opportunities for engaging in active scholarship and the university will continue to attract exemplary faculty because of our integration of scholarship and teaching.

What I think the Students as Scholars QEP is going to do is change the trajectory of research experience for students.

– Mills Kelly (faculty)



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