

RISE QEP – Executive Summary

Radford's mission is "Cultivating relationships among students, faculty, and staff" and to provide "an educational environment and the tools to address the social, economic, and environmental issues confronting our region, nation, and the world." The RISE QEP grew out of concerns about low retention rates and low success rates in required 100 and 200 level courses, along with survey data showing low sense of belonging among some student groups. The QEP aligns with the mission, the values (student success, excellence, community) and the strategic plan and is based on institutional data identified through our ongoing and comprehensive evaluation and planning processes.

The RISE QEP is about building community on campus and in the classroom and enhancing students feeling of academic competence, so they have the confidence and motivation to participate in class and seek out faculty outside of class. This increase sense of belonging is expected to lead to increased success in required 100 and 200 level courses. The RISE QEP will enhance student success for all students through faculty development and fostering student-faculty relationships.

Instructors of 100 and 200 level required courses will be targeted for invitation to participate in the RISE Faculty Institute. Each year, 20 faculty will participate in the yearlong Institute which involves a semester and summer of workshops and redesigning a course, followed by a semester of implementing the redesigned course and engaging in a community of practice. The Faculty Institute will offer workshops in student centered pedagogy, active learning, and how to foster academic belonging in the classroom. It will include training in backwards course design, creating effective teams, teaching reading and notetaking, metacognition, open educational resources, and problem-based learning. In addition to the classroom interventions, RISE Community Action Teams (R-CATs) will address sense of belonging outside the classroom and create student success focused events.

Research (Connell and Wellborn, 1991 & Zumbrunn et al., 2012) has shown that a supportive classroom environment leads to an increased sense of belonging which in turn leads to increased engagement in academic activities and achievement in the course. Research (Cox, 2011 & Walton et al. 2012) also tells us that even small interactions between faculty and students, if they are high quality, can favorably affect a student's entire perception of all faculty members and that small interactions can cause shifts in student motivation. The RISE QEP seeks to send a signal to all students that they belong in the classroom and on campus.

Student Success Outcome:

- Students who take the RISE redesigned 100 and 200 level required courses will show significant increases in course success (defined as earning an A, B, or C in the course).

Student Development Outcomes:

- Students in RISE Faculty Fellows courses will exhibit evidence of academic belonging.
- Students will exhibit affective and behavioral campus belonging

To monitor the plan, we have identified an organizational structure including a Director, an Educational Developer, an Assessment Director, and an advisory board. The program director and assessment director will be reporting to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement Director who reports to the President, demonstrating the importance of this plan to Radford University. All parts of the plan from the institute to the classroom to the R-CATs will be regularly assessed to identify strengths and weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement in student success.