

**Barry University**

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

**IMPACT REPORT**

*Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility  
Through Experiential Learning*



---

## QEP Implementation Committee

<b>Maria Alvarez, PhD</b>	Associate Vice President, Mission and Student Engagement; Dean of Students
<b>Paige V. Banaji, PhD</b>	Director of First-Year Writing; Assistant Professor of English
<b>Glenn A. Bowen, PhD</b>	Executive Director, Center for Community Service Initiatives; Director, QEP
<b>Sean Buckreis, PhD</b>	Associate Professor of Education
<b>Karen A. Callaghan, PhD</b>	Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Chair, QEP Implementation Committee
<b>Nichole Castater, PhD</b>	Associate Professor of Finance
<b>Pamela D. Hall, PhD</b>	Associate Professor of Psychology
<b>Tamara Hamilton, PhD</b>	Professor of Chemistry
<b>Larry Perez, MS</b>	Director, Office of Student Life
<b>Victor Romano, PhD</b>	Associate Vice Provost for Student Success and Undergraduate Studies
<b>Leticia Vega, PhD</b>	Associate Professor of Biology; Chair, Faculty Senate
<b>Ashley Wright, MSW</b>	Bachelor of Social Work Program Director

---

Report written by **Glenn A. Bowen**

Submitted to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
as Section V of Barry University's Fifth-Year Interim Report

March 2020

# QEP Impact Report

## Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility Through Experiential Learning

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Barry University | Quality Enhancement Plan

### Executive Summary

#### Background

The QEP focuses on undergraduates and centers on the broad areas of social and personal responsibility. These two areas are among those identified by LEAP (Liberal Education – America’s Promise, AAC&U). AAC&U identifies knowledge and skills in these areas as essential components in a liberal arts education. A large majority of employers, more than 80%, identify skills in these areas as important for job success.

The QEP Team has selected three learning domains that fall under the construct of social and personal responsibility. These are (1) ethical and moral reasoning; (2) engaging diverse perspectives; (3) community engagement and collaboration. These domains relate directly to the Core Commitments of the Barry University Mission. Within these three broad areas, we have established six specific undergraduate student learning outcomes. At the time of graduation, students who participate in the QEP will demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes associated with these three domains.

#### The QEP Project

In a pilot study, 70 first-year students will be enrolled in designated sections of courses commonly taken by first-year students. These designated sections will use high-impact practices to engage students in experiential, hands-on learning activities that support the student learning outcomes. High impact practices are those practices that have been demonstrated to foster more meaningful interactions between faculty and students, more time spent on research, writing and analytical thinking by students, and more hands-on and collaborative forms of learning.<sup>1</sup> High impact practices include first-year seminars and experiences, undergraduate research, learning communities, service-learning/community-based learning, writing intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, internships, and capstone courses/projects. A common thread running through these high impact practices is the experiential nature of the learning activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Co-curricular activities are an integral part of the QEP. Selected activities on campus will be identified as emphasizing growth in social and personal responsibility. Activities will be selected based on their alignment with QEP learning outcomes. The co-curricular activities will be organized and monitored through an extension of the Barry Buccaneer Passport program, coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs, to structure student engagement opportunities that are part of the existing First-Year Experience initiative.

The QEP project represents a systematic integration and enhancement of a number of currently discrete efforts that have been initiated by various academic and student affairs units. Student participation is largely driven by these sponsoring units. The goal of the QEP project is to institutionalize a series of courses and co-curricular activities that, eventually, all incoming student will experience with the explicit goal of enhancing their level of personal and social responsibility by graduation.

### Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes of the QEP

Barry University’s QEP has two overarching goals:

1. Facilitate learning that cultivates academic and personal integrity, perspective consciousness, and competence in ethical and moral reasoning.
2. Provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate socially responsive knowledge, values, and skills through engagement and collaboration with communities – local, regional, national, and global.

**Table 1: Intended Outcomes of the QEP**

Categories of Outcomes	Specific Outcomes
Ethical and Moral Reasoning (ER)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students take responsibility for their own learning and development, acting ethically to achieve their goals and aspirations.</li> <li>2. Students examine the views and values that influence their own decision-making processes.</li> </ol>
Engaging Diverse Perspectives (EP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students gather, analyze, and thoughtfully use evidence and multiple perspectives to support their own ideas.</li> <li>2. Students recognize the extent to which cultural standards, institutional practices, and values oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create/enhance privilege and power.</li> </ol>
Community Engagement and Collaboration (CEC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students apply and explore the impact of the concepts, theories, and skills learned in class on issues affecting local and global communities.</li> <li>2. Students take informed and responsible action, working collaboratively with others through a social justice framework, to address issues faced by the community.</li> </ol>

Delineated in the QEP are six intended learning outcomes. These outcomes are placed in three categories based on components of personal and social responsibility: (1) Ethical and Moral Reasoning, (2) Engaging Diverse Perspectives, and (3) Community Engagement and Collaboration. Each category contains two specific outcomes (see Table 1).

## **Changes Made to the QEP and the Reasons for Making Those Changes**

Barry University's QEP was approved in 2014, following the onsite visit by the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee in March. The Provost appointed a QEP Implementation Committee, composed largely of members of the QEP Development Committee. An Experiential Learning Coordinator was hired in July 2014 to assist with community partnership development and with gathering resources to support the implementation of the Plan. The Implementation Committee met regularly in academic year 2014–2015, refining the system and process for approving courses and co-curricular activities for the personal and social responsibility (PSR) designation. At the same time, the Office of the Provost began the search for a QEP Director.

The Implementation Committee made three changes to the QEP. As described below, the changes concern the proposed pilot program, the assessment plan, and one of the intended learning outcomes.

### **Proposed Pilot Program**

The proposed pilot program was cancelled in the wake of the retirement of the Provost and a lengthy search for a QEP Director. While the search was in progress, the Implementation Committee concentrated on fleshing out the faculty training and development plan, maintaining all components outlined in the QEP submitted to SACSCOC.

### **Assessment Plan**

Implementation of the assessment plan began in January 2017, shortly after the Provost named a QEP Director. The QEP Development Committee had designed the assessment plan as a multilayered process, with the original plan calling for an exit evaluation of students at the end of their fourth year. As part of that evaluation, students were to be asked to respond to a vignette requiring application of one of the learning outcomes to a “real-world situation.”

The vignette element was excluded from the revised assessment plan and was replaced by student poster presentations at the University's annual Community Engagement Symposium. The required posters would be of community-based or community-focused projects conceived, planned, and implemented by students with guidance from faculty and staff members. As the QEP Director reasoned, the posters would be more effective in demonstrating actual learning as a result of the course, especially in the context of community engagement and collaboration – the third category of QEP-PSR learning outcomes.

### **Learning Outcome: Ethical and Moral Reasoning**

In October 2018, the Implementation Committee decided to modify the first learning outcome (ER 1) by shifting the focus from students' goals and aspirations to students' personal growth. Up to then, no QEP course had included that learning outcome. During the first QEP faculty reflection meeting organized by the Implementation Committee, faculty members indicated that they considered it difficult to assess such a long-term outcome (“achieve their goals and aspirations”). The modified outcome reads: “Students take responsibility for their own learning and development, acting ethically to achieve *personal growth*.”

## Impact on Student Learning and on the Environment Supporting Student Learning

The University has implemented the QEP in all five colleges and schools with undergraduate programs – Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Nursing and Health Sciences, and Social Work – and in the Division of Mission and Student Engagement (formerly Student Affairs). PSR elements have been integrated into undergraduate courses as well as co-curricular programs, projects, and events.

To date, the QEP Implementation Committee has approved more than 70 sections of 31 courses, including 15 major-area courses, for the PSR designation (see Table 2). Multiple-section PSR courses include English 111: First-Year Composition and Rhetoric; English 112: Techniques of Research; English 210: Writing about Literature; and Sociology 200: Perspective Consciousness and Social Justice. Among others on the PSR list are courses in Art, Biology, Business, Education, History, Nursing, Political Science, Spanish, and Sport and Recreation. All PSR courses are identified in the Undergraduate Catalog and in the online registration system.

Additionally, all courses approved through a separate process for the service-learning (SL) designation have been assessed as QEP-PSR courses because they include either one or both outcomes in the Community Engagement and Collaboration (CEC) category. Over the years, the Service-Learning Designation Committee has approved 45 sections of 29 courses for the SL designation. Multiple-section SL-specific courses include Theology 201: Faiths, Beliefs, and Traditions.

**Table 2: Courses Approved for the PSR Designation**

SL-Specific PSR-Designated Courses					
SL courses addressing only CEC outcomes: 23 (31 sections)					
SL courses addressing additional PSR outcomes: 6 (14 sections)					
Total number of SL courses: 29 (45 sections)					
Other PSR-Designated Courses					
PSR major-area courses: 15					
Other PSR non-major-area courses: 16					
Total number of other PSR courses: 31 (72 sections)					
All PSR-Designated Courses					
Total number of PSR courses: 54 (103 sections)					
All PSR-Designated Courses Relative to Specific Outcomes					
ER 1	ER 2	EP 1	EP 2	CEC 1	CEC 2
3	5	8	13	31	22

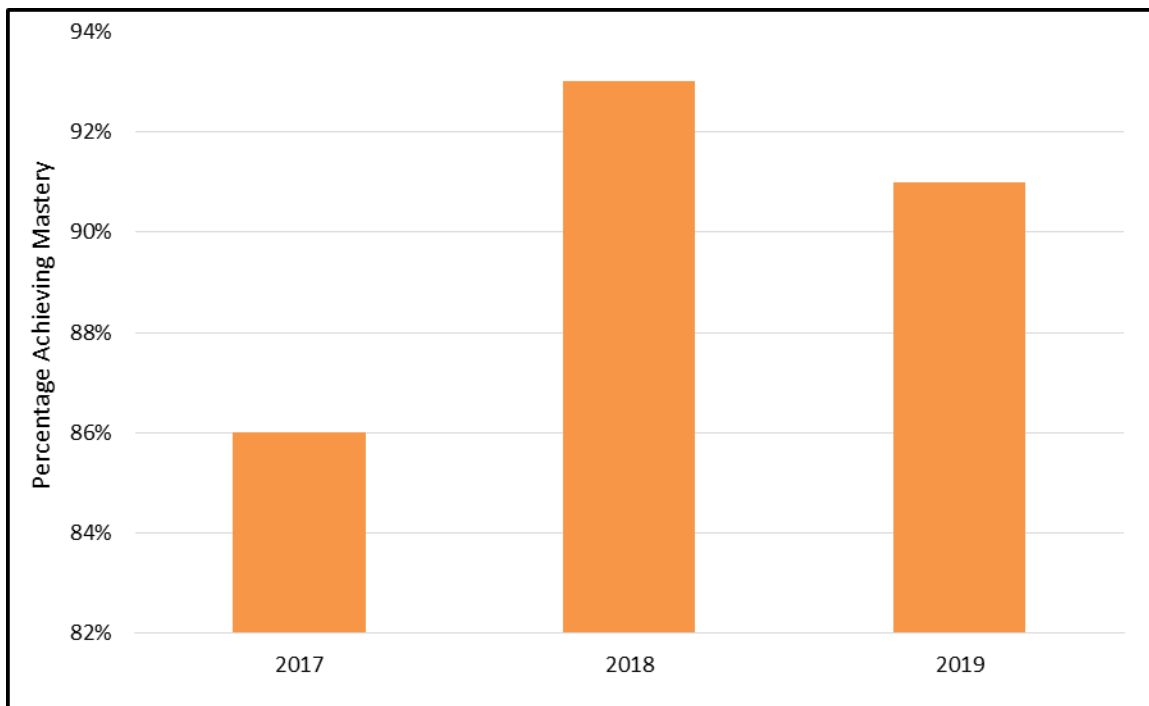
The QEP Implementation Committee has also approved 14 co-curricular programs and events for the PSR designation. They include Alternative Breaks, the Community Engagement Fair, and the Deliberative Dialogue Series (coordinated by the Center for Community Service Initiatives) and the Emerging Leaders Program, Environmental Leadership Experience, and Ethical Leadership Conference (coordinated by the Office of Mission Engagement).

## Impact on Student Learning: Demonstrated Outcomes of the QEP

Assessment of student learning outcomes involved primarily a course-embedded approach, with faculty assessing QEP-focused outcomes as part of the regular assessment of learning outcomes from the course. The Implementation Committee gauged the impact of the PSR-designated courses by reviewing assessment logs reporting scores based on relevant evaluation criteria in a rubric developed specifically for the courses. Assessment data for the fall and spring semesters of academic years 2017–2019 were collected and analyzed. The assessment has provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence of student achievement in relation to the PSR outcomes.

On average, 88% of the students taking PSR-designated courses received a score of 3.0 to 5.0 on a rubric with a 5-point evaluative range (where 3.0 = mastery). Over the five semesters of data collection, mean aggregated rubric ratings showed some improvement, from 86% in 2017 to 91% in 2019 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Course-Embedded Assessment – Mean Rubric Ratings**



In addition, two standardized instruments were used to assess student attitudes and behaviors in relation to personal and social responsibility. To measure personal responsibility, the Student Personal Responsibility Scale-10 (SPRS-10)<sup>2</sup> was administered to students. To measure social responsibility, the 24-item Social Justice Scale (SJS)<sup>3</sup> was administered at the same time. The two-part survey was

<sup>2</sup> Singg, S., & Ader, J. A. (2001). Development of the Student Personal Responsibility Scale–10. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 29(4), 331–336. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2001.29.4.331>

<sup>3</sup> Torres-Harding, S. R., Siers, B., & Olson, B. D. (2012). Development and psychometric evaluation of the social justice scale (SJS). *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 50, 77–88. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-011-9478-2>

conducted as a pretest to a group of incoming freshmen (N = 291) during New Student Orientation in August 2017 and as a posttest to a small sample of the same group (n = 42) in December 2019.

Based on a difference of means test (*t* test), the results of the SPRS-10 data analysis suggest that there were changes in the perception of students regarding their personal responsibility attitudes and behaviors from pretest to posttest (see Table 3). Similarly, the results of the SJS data analysis showed sufficient evidence of changes in student perception regarding social justice. The difference of means test showed statistically significant differences for 76% (13 of 17) of the items in three of the SJS subscales – Social Justice Perceived Behavioral Control (SJPBC), Social Justice Subjective Norms (SJSN), and Social Justice Behavioral Intentions (SJBI). (The fourth subscale is Social Justice Attitudes.)

**Table 3: Partial Results for Personal Responsibility and Social Justice Paired Samples *T* Test**

Items	Pretest Means	Posttest Means	Difference in Means
<b>Student Personal Responsibility Scale-10 (SPRS-10)</b>			
I turn in all my assignments on time.	3.48	3.61	0.13
At home or at college, I do my fair share of the household chores.	3.45	3.57	0.12
I send a thank-you note after receiving a gift from someone.	2.70	3.18	0.48*
<b>SPRS-10 Total</b>	<b>33.30</b>	<b>32.70</b>	<b>-0.60</b>
<b>Social Justice Perceived Behavioral Control (SJPBC) Subscale</b>			
I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering.	6.08	6.35	0.27
If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality.	6.10	6.15	0.05
<b>SJPBC Total</b>	<b>30.62</b>	<b>31.05</b>	<b>0.43</b>
<b>Social Justice Subjective Norms (SJSN) Subscale</b>			
Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social injustices.	4.88	5.30	0.42
Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around social injustices.	5.08	5.60	0.52
Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice.	5.35	5.58	0.23
<b>SJSN Total</b>	<b>21.12</b>	<b>22.23</b>	<b>1.11</b>

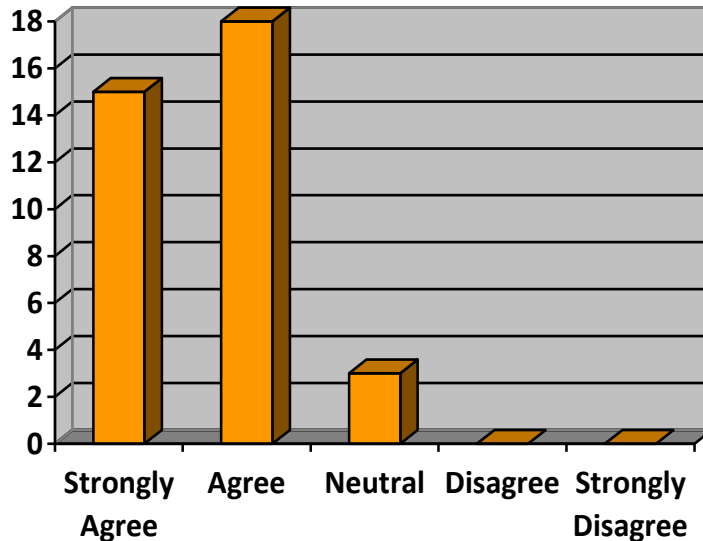
\* $p < 0.5$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

What follows is a description of the QEP impact in relation to each of the three categories of learning outcomes. Both course-based and co-curricular activities were included in the assessment.



**Ethical and Moral Reasoning:** PSR-designated co-curricular programs produced generally positive results pertaining to ethical and moral reasoning. Students who participated in the Emerging Leaders Program, for instance, reported that the program has fostered ethical and moral reasoning. Over 90% of survey respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the program did so by giving them the opportunity to examine the views and values that influenced their decision-making (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Emerging Leaders Program Survey Responses**



**Engaging Diverse Perspectives:** PSR-designated courses as well as the co-curricular Deliberative Dialogue Series offered opportunities for students to gather, analyze, and draw on diverse perspectives to support their own ideas. In a 300-level Spanish course, for example, students were required to write an essay, in Spanish, about a particular cultural aspect linked to any Hispanic country and deliver an oral presentation on the subject. Excerpts from a student essay (with the English translation below) are presented in Exhibit 1.

**Exhibit 1: Student Learning in Relation to Course Elements**

**SPA 307-01: Advanced Conversation**

“La Marginación y La Violencia Hacia la Mujer en los Países Hispanos”

La violencia contra la mujer en los países hispanos es uno de los problemas sociales más comunes y a pesar de que existen muchas leyes y sanciones para darle fin a esta injusticia social aún no se detiene la marginación que existe en la cultura hispana. Pero, los padres y las mismas mujeres son los responsables de esta discriminación y la desigualdad entre los géneros. Los padres son responsables por la manera en que crían a sus hijos e hijas. Mientras que las mujeres son responsables por apoyar esta costumbre machista en la sociedad y quedarse calladas ante la violencia doméstica que sigue creciendo cada día. ... Unos de los principales propósitos en la cultura hispana es poder romper con esos paradigmas sociales sobre los roles de género y comenzar a entender y poner en practica la igualdad de género y los derechos de la mujer en la sociedad. Siempre recordando que los hombres y mujeres tienen las mismas capacidades, habilidades y debilidades.

“Marginalization and Violence Against Women in Hispanic America”

Violence against women is one of the worst and most common social problem in Hispanic countries. Despite the many laws put in place to help end these injustices, marginalization of and violence against women continues to exist across Hispanic cultures. Men in their role as fathers as well as women in their role of mothers are responsible for gender discrimination and gender inequality. If fathers are responsible for raising their children according to unjust and biased norms, women themselves foster and support toxic habits and they stay silent when witnessing or experiencing domestic violence. ... One of the main goals of Hispanic cultures nowadays is to break up with old and unfair standards as regards gender roles in order to understand and practice equality as well as respect women’s rights. As a society, we should always remember that both men and women have the same capacities, abilities, and challenges.

The Deliberative Dialogue Series brings together students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members to work toward a shared understanding of social issues, practical solutions to those issues, and recommendations for workable public policy. Since the spring 2015 semester, forums in each year’s Deliberative Dialogue Series have covered such topics as hunger policy, the opioid epidemic, global warming, human trafficking, voting rights for felons, and the school-to-prison pipeline. To varying degrees, each series of forums has inspired both individual and collective action. For example, students have assisted in developing an urban garden to provide fresh produce to food deserts, participated in campaigns to raise awareness of human trafficking, and lobbied lawmakers at the State Capitol in support of proposed legislation that would result in alternatives to incarceration for juveniles who commit nonviolent offences.

***Community Engagement and Collaboration:*** Posters presented by students at the Community Engagement Symposium reflect their efforts to apply knowledge and skills in addressing social issues. A sampling of the titles of posters presented in 2017–2019 provides some indication of the issues and concerns that students have addressed:

- Developing Public Science Literacy to Address the Disparity Affecting Inner-City Youth
- Developing Resources for the Student/Farmworker Alliance to Engage Peers in Supporting Farmworker Rights
- Educating Newly Resettled Refugees about American Collegiate Opportunities
- Girl Power: Empowering Young Girls to Advocate for Women by Supporting the Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act
- Growing Calculus: Using Calculus to Design a Garden
- Providing Knowledge about Healthy Food to At-Risk Youth through a Fun, Interactive Zine Series
- Refugees of North Miami: Navigating Health Care
- Researching with the Community: Exploring the Connection between Spirituality and Reproductive Health
- Undergraduates Provide Support for Science Education at the K–12 Level

The assessment of outcomes of the QEP indicate that, on the whole, students have demonstrated that they embrace the obligation to strive for excellence, demonstrate integrity, develop competence in ethical reasoning and action, and contribute to the community as local and global citizens. Many have begun to show a “sense of agency” – the understanding that they can make a difference by developing self-awareness, awareness of social issues, and a commitment to take informed action.

### **Impact on the Environment Supporting Student Learning**

As a result of the QEP, the environment supporting student learning has improved considerably. The University now has an established process for designating courses that incorporate personal and social responsibility objectives; a faculty development model featuring experiential learning; and a highly regarded Community Advisory Committee. Moreover, requisite resources for experiential learning are now available.

**Course Designation Process:** The University has systematized the criteria and process for approving courses and co-curricular activities for the PSR designation with a view to ensuring that elements of personal and social responsibility are integrated effectively into the core undergraduate curriculum. The criteria include (1) the relationship between course goals and selected PSR learning outcomes; (2) the correspondence between PSR outcomes and lecture topics, readings, and assignments; (3) active learning strategies and their relationship to the intended learning outcomes; and (4) critical reflection as part of the experiential component. Evaluators of the PSR application use a rubric with a 4-point evaluative range (1 = beginning, 2 = developing, 3 = good, 4 = exemplary). The evaluation summaries given to applicants include exemplars (readings, assignments, learning strategies, etc.) that faculty find instructive.

**Faculty Development Model:** The QEP Implementation Committee has created a faculty development model with experiential learning as a key component. Experiential learning – defined in the QEP as “a process in which students acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and values in a relevant setting” – is considered synonymous with active learning. The faculty development model is operationalized in a comprehensive workshop titled “Integrating Personal and Social Responsibility (PSR) Learning Outcomes into the Curriculum.” Designed to encourage pedagogical innovation grounded in an active learning paradigm, the two-day workshop covers such topics as ethics and social responsibility; critical pedagogy; experiential learning (including service-learning and community-based undergraduate research); and effective reflection activities. All faculty members who will teach PSR-designated courses are expected to participate in the workshop.

**Community Advisory Committee:** The Provost-appointed Community Advisory Committee has supported the implementation of the QEP primarily by providing feedback and recommendations to the Implementation Committee. Advisory Committee members have contributed critical analyses and independent perspectives on various aspects of students’ community-focused experiential learning projects. They have also provided critical analyses of student poster presentations at the Community Engagement Symposium. The Advisory Committee (currently consisting of 11 members) will continue to function beyond this QEP, with members providing “insider perspectives” on issues faced that the community that can be addressed effectively through collaborative efforts.

**Resources:** The QEP has served to augment the resources of the Center for Community Service Initiatives, the administrative unit that coordinates community engagement, including service-learning and community-based research. Resources include additional staff, an Experiential Learning Manual and Resource Guide, books and journal articles on experiential education and related topics, and a video featuring experiential learning activities at Barry.

## **Reflection on What the Institution Has Learned as a Result of the QEP Experience**

The most significant outcome of the QEP is the institutionalization of personal and social responsibility as an integral component of the undergraduate curriculum. In particular, the University now requires the integration of PSR elements into all general education distribution (GED) requirements, with at least one of the six QEP-PSR outcomes added to each GED course. The University's General Education Curriculum Committee will administer the procedure for the full integration of PSR across the curriculum for courses in Oral and Written Communication, Theology and Philosophy, Humanities and Fine Arts, Mathematics and Science, and Social and Behavioral Science.

Much has been learned from the development, implementation, and assessment of the QEP. Regarding assessment, the Implementation Committee noted the difficulty of assessing ethical and moral reasoning vis-à-vis academic and personal integrity as an element of personal responsibility. Continued efforts will be made to engender attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate the extent to which students base their choices and actions on ethical/moral reasoning and consider the consequences of the decisions they make.

The QEP experience has confirmed that courses in which faculty employ an experiential learning approach typically provide students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions for personal and social responsibility. Experiential learning should be carefully planned to incorporate performance tasks – activities or pieces of work based on goals set within a realistic context of challenges and possibilities, which could yield tangible products and/or performances that serve as authentic evidence of learning. Sharing with faculty the outcomes of courses enhanced by experiential learning should be a future priority in light of the apparent skepticism among faculty members in certain departments and disciplines. In this regard, it has been noted that some faculty members seemed set in their ways and content with traditional course delivery methods (especially lectures). Those who have attended QEP faculty workshops have shown the willingness to venture from their comfort zone by experimenting with nontraditional modes of instruction, including classroom- and community-based experiential learning methods.

Further, the QEP experience has shown how out-of-class activities can complement classroom instruction and, in the process, get rid of silos in higher education. Because of their shared objectives (i.e., PSR learning outcomes), co-curricular programs are now organized more intentionally to align with courses in the undergraduate curriculum. Consequently, courses and co-curricular programs now involve mutually reinforcing activities designed seamlessly to facilitate significant student learning. The annual Community Engagement Symposium allows students to share with a large audience what they have learned in the classroom, elsewhere on campus, and in the wider community.

Barry University's QEP builds on and extends institutional initiatives in community engagement, which encompass curricular (e.g., service-learning, community-based research) as well as co-curricular (e.g., civic learning/leadership) programs and projects. The QEP has strengthened the institutional culture undergirded by four core commitments: knowledge and truth, inclusive community, social justice, and collaborative service. Through the QEP, students have begun to demonstrate significant learning focused on elements of personal and social responsibility, which have been embedded in the core curriculum and in some major areas of study. Also as a result of the QEP, the quality of community engagement activities and related experiences has improved. From course redesign by faculty to experiential activities by students, the QEP has been effective in enhancing student learning and enriching the environment supporting student learning while fostering personal and social responsibility.