

## Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Executive Summary: 2014-2018

Title: "Fast Forward: Using 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tools to Promote Critical Thinking

Institution: Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Alabama

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In February of 2014, JSU submitted a proposal for its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) accreditation reaffirmation process. This proposal, written by a committee of faculty, staff, and students, is titled "Fast Forward: Using 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tools to Promote Critical Thinking." The name encapsulates the most important aspects of the study: a desire to improve the critical thinking skills of our students and increase their knowledge of critical thinking skills, as well as the use of innovative technologies in order to encourage higher-order thinking. The QEP focuses on the development and inclusion of critical thinking methodologies into key freshman courses. It is expected that students' critical thinking skills will improve when they are taught to think independently and critically in courses across the curriculum. The creation of a Faculty Commons (i.e., center for teaching and learning), a faculty mentor training program, and a 1-to-1 iPad initiative are University initiatives, which will provide the foundation upon which the QEP will be built, as faculty development and the inclusion of 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools will be necessary for quality enhancement to occur. This QEP is a response to the University's Strategic Plan and recent assessments provided through the Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

The quality of the QEP will be assessed using the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and Faculty Learning Outcomes (FLO):

SLO 1: JSU first-time freshmen will demonstrate increased critical thinking skills.

SLO 2: JSU first-time freshmen will demonstrate increased technology skills.

FLO 1: JSU faculty mentors will develop and use new critical thinking teaching methodologies in 100 –200 level courses.

FLO 2: JSU faculty mentors will demonstrate increased use of technology in their classrooms.

CR 2.12 states that the institution must "[develop] an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the statement." The QEP meets these requirements, along with those established by CS 3.3.2, developing a QEP that "(1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement."