Keeping it REAL: Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning

Quality Enhancement Plan, Tarleton State University

Campus visit: March 23-25, 2010

Dr. F. Dominic Dottavio, President

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Contents
I. Executive Summary ........................................................................................................ 1
II. Process Used to Develop the QEP .............................................................................. 2
   II.1. The QEP Team ..................................................................................................... 2
   II.2. Identifying Key Issues Across the Institution .................................................... 4
   II.3. First Broad Involvement of Campus Constituents ............................................ 6
   II.4. Analysis of Results ............................................................................................... 6
   II.5. Second Broad Involvement of Campus Constituents ........................................ 8
   II.6. The QEP Topic ..................................................................................................... 8
   II.7. Endorsement and Approval .................................................................................. 10
III. Identification of the Topic .......................................................................................... 11
   III.1. Characteristics of Applied Learning ................................................................. 11
   III.2. Accomplishing the Mission of the Institution .................................................. 13
IV. Literature Review and Best Practices ........................................................................ 15
   IV.1. Undergraduate Research ..................................................................................... 16
   IV.2. Internships and Practicum Experiences ............................................................ 16
   IV.3. Student Leadership ............................................................................................ 17
   IV.4. Service Learning .................................................................................................. 18
   IV.5. Study Abroad and Study Away ........................................................................... 19
V. Desired Student Learning Outcomes ........................................................................ 20
   V.1. Student Learning Outcomes ............................................................................... 21
   V.2. Applied Learning Areas Student Learning Outcomes ....................................... 22
VI. Organizational Structure .......................................................................................... 24
   VI.1. REAL Council ..................................................................................................... 25
   VI.2. Applied Learning Offices .................................................................................... 27
VII. Actions to be Implemented ..................................................................................... 28
   VII.1. Marketing the QEP ............................................................................................ 28
   VII.2. Incentives for the Students ............................................................................... 31
I. Executive Summary

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Core Requirement 2.12 requires the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) based on institutional assessment that focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and on accomplishing the mission of the institution. The development and implementation must incorporate broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies while embracing a closed loop assessment plan.

Starting in 2007 and continuing through the present, Tarleton State University, a member of the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), has been engaged in a QEP development process driven by the faculty, staff, and students (constituents). The development process was led by the QEP Committee, who followed a deliberate and methodical series of steps to take the development process from the brainstorming stage through topic selection and into implementation. The process resulted in the selection of “Keeping it REAL: Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning” as Tarleton’s QEP.

“Keeping it REAL” is focused on baccalaureate students. This initiative will enhance undergraduate education by integrating applied learning experiences in undergraduate research, service learning, leadership, internships/practicum experiences, and/or study away into the students’ undergraduate experience. Students will develop a distinguishing e-portfolio presentation of their efforts and will be rewarded with special recognition at graduation. The QEP incorporates a set of measurable student learning outcomes and participation outcomes, as well as a plan to assess achievement and impact, thus demonstrating the overall success of the QEP.

What makes REAL initiatives different from existing initiatives is the e-portfolio content related to applied learning. One of the requirements for an experience to count towards recognition is that the students must submit a written reflection in their e-portfolio that answers three prompts. These prompts correspond directly to the student learning outcomes: describe how this applied learning experience helped them integrate their curriculum; how they applied their holistic curriculum/collegiate learning to a real-world experience; and how the applied learning experience broadened their academic, political, social, cultural and economic global view. Compelling the students to think critically about the broader impact of the experience will enhance their overall collegiate experience and better prepare them for life beyond college.

“Keeping it REAL” is fully aligned with the university’s mission and strategic plan. A priority of the university is to develop initiatives that are engaging and transformative in nature and provide a distinctive experience for the students. The QEP will create connections and further engage students in broader university learning outcomes, including writing, critical thinking, diversity, and technology. In this way the QEP will facilitate deeper learning and increase the value and engagement of the Tarleton baccalaureate experience. Additional details may be found at www.tarleton.edu/real.
II. Process Used to Develop the QEP

Parts one and four of SACS Core Requirement 2.12 state that the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) developed by the institution must include “a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment” and “broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development . . . of the QEP.” From the outset of the QEP development, the leadership of Tarleton State University (Tarleton) has been committed to an open, stakeholder-driven process. Allowing the QEP’s theme to develop and evolve in such an organic manner meant that Tarleton needed to begin the process early in order to provide multiple opportunities for constituent (faculty, staff, and students) participation and input.

The QEP was crafted on a foundation of ongoing and active constituent engagement. Development was initiated in the spring of 2007 and it progressed through the following stages, each of which will be detailed in this report:

1. Establishing the QEP Team
2. Identifying key issues across the institution
3. First broad involvement of constituents
4. Analysis of results
5. Second broad involvement of constituents
6. Analysis of results
7. Selection of “Keeping it REAL” (Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning) as the QEP topic
8. Marketing of the QEP to Tarleton’s faculty, staff, and students
9. Pilot experiences

Throughout the process, updates of the QEP development progress were provided to the university by means of campus wide email, presentations to unit managers at the spring 2008 and 2009 University Planning Retreats, and reports to the President’s Executive Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government. Evidence of the development can be found on Tarleton’s SACS website (Tarleton State University QEP Committee, 2009a).

II.1. The QEP Team

Beginning in fall 2006, Tarleton started the process with the support of the university President and the executive leadership team by organizing a series of conversations with faculty and staff regarding the SACS reaffirmation process. These meetings were followed by the selection of the initial QEP Committee, composed of a representative cross section of the university in spring 2007. The cohesiveness of this committee and the scope of the undertaking led to the adoption of the name “QEP Team,” in lieu of QEP Committee. The roster of QEP Team members is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: QEP Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Denise Martinez</th>
<th>SACS Quality Enhancement Plan Chairman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Engineering and Physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Department of English and Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Jeanelle Barrett Head and Associate Professor</td>
<td>Department of Curriculum and Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Melissa Roberts Becker Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Department of Agricultural Services and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Kimberly Bellah Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Division of Finance and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Cynthia Carter Assistant Vice President</td>
<td>Division of Finance and Administration</td>
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<td>Ms. Darla Doty Career Services</td>
<td>Director, Career Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Joe Gillespie, Department of Health and Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Gilbert Hinga Assistant Vice President</td>
<td>Division of Wellness and Career Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Benedda Konvicka, Assistant Professor, English and Languages</td>
<td>Director, Writing Intensive Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Coady Lapierre Associate Professor</td>
<td>Department of Psychology and Counseling, Tarleton State University – Central Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Barbara Lyon, Department of Management, Marketing, and Administrative Systems Tarleton State University – Central Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Betty Jo Monk Head and Professor</td>
<td>Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Karen Murray, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Associate Vice President, Assessment, Curriculum, and Outreach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Russell S. Pfau, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Director, Office of Student Research and Creative Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Terry Pritchett Physical Facilities</td>
<td>Director, Physical Facilities–Building Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Kimberly Rynearson, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling</td>
<td>Director, Waco Outreach Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Johnny Robinson Student Life</td>
<td>Director, Student Leadership Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Marilyn Robitaille, Associate Professor, Department of English and Languages</td>
<td>Director, International Academic Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. B. Mark Shipman Associate Professor</td>
<td>Department of English and Languages</td>
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**Ex-officio Members**

| Dr. Brad Chilton Regents Professor, Computer Information Systems | SACS Liaison, Vice President for Enrollment and Information Management |
The responsibilities of the QEP Team were:

- Use existing institutional assessment data as part of the identification of key issues related to student learning
- Develop and administer surveys of the campus constituents as part of the identification of key issues
- Provide updates to the campus community on the status of QEP development
- Select a QEP topic based on gathered data
- Develop learning outcomes for the selected topic
- Develop and pilot training and initiatives related to QEP implementation
- Develop, with input and approval from upper administration, a budget and action plan for implementation of the QEP

In order to accomplish these tasks, the committee met regularly throughout the development process. Agendas and minutes for these meetings are available on Tarleton’s SACS website (Tarleton State University QEP Committee, 2009a). Furthermore, as development proceeded the QEP Team evolved as the needs of the committee changed.

The QEP Team employed SharePoint, a collaboration and content management web portal, to maintain all relevant documentation related to the development process. The QEP SharePoint site (Tarleton State University QEP Committee, 2009b) includes agendas and minutes, resources such as links to SACS and other references, data such as survey instruments and results, and a discussion log. Using SharePoint enabled all team members to have web-based access to all of the development documentation at all times.

II.2. Identifying Key Issues Across the Institution

The QEP Team began its efforts by seeking to identify student learning issues that needed improvement. Preliminary identification was through a variety of data the university had collected. Because of the volume of data generated by these assessments, particularly the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an ad hoc data review committee was established in 2006-2007 by the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Institutional Research to look at the results.

NSSE was a major source of external data used to seed the brainstorming of the QEP Team. Tarleton has administered this survey to freshmen and seniors in the spring of odd-numbered years since 2001 (2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007). NSSE provides a
wealth of data about Tarleton students and their impressions of their collegiate experiences. The results from the 2007 NSSE were analyzed in groups aligned with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) “Core Competencies” categories or “Perspectives” categories.

Analysis of these survey data identified a variety of areas in which Tarleton students performed lower than the comparator group of Carnegie peers and Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) universities, excluding the Texas A&M University – College Station campus. Notes from the data analyses include the following observations:

- Eight NSSE items were examined for writing and speaking. The data showed Tarleton students had similar experiences and educational growth as the comparator group, but were not as actively involved in writing and speaking as their peers.
- Fourteen NSSE items were examined for critical thinking. The data revealed that Tarleton students were generally below the comparator group, particularly in “Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory” and “Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.”
- Twelve NSSE items were examined related to broad perspectives for a diverse world. These items demonstrated Tarleton students were less likely to study a foreign language or study abroad than students in the comparator group. In contrast, Tarleton students appeared to believe the University does seek to encourage interaction among students of diverse backgrounds.
- Six NSSE items were examined for computer literacy. Tarleton results were largely similar to the comparator group; however, Tarleton students indicated they used technology less for academic purposes than in the comparator group.
- One NSSE item was available related to ethical behavior, and Tarleton students performed similarly to their peers.
- Six NSSE items were examined related to the capacity to be a responsible member of society. Tarleton students were generally similar to the comparator group with one notable exception: Tarleton students were less likely to participate in service learning than their peers.
- Three NSSE items were examined related to integrating knowledge and understanding relationships among disciplines. The results showed Tarleton freshmen appear less likely than their peers to make connections among academic disciplines.

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) data were also collected. The CLA uses the SAT (or ACT) scores for participating students to predict comparable CLA scores, and then analyzes the actual scores versus the predicted scores. Tarleton participated in the CLA in 2007 (first-time freshmen) and 2008 (seniors) for the first time. The CLA is considered to be a holistic assessment of a student’s writing ability and critical thinking skills and provides a combined result for these two areas. The CLA results showed Tarleton students performed below expectation, indicating improvement was needed in
students’ ability to recognize the holistic nature of their education and formulate extensions across their major. In this respect, the CLA results supported the NSSE findings.

II.3. First Broad Involvement of Campus Constituents

Using the NSSE data, CLA data, and Core Competencies as a basis, the QEP Team developed online surveys that were disseminated to faculty, staff, and students in fall 2007. These surveys gathered a variety of faculty, staff, and student perception information including the importance, student preparedness, and student achievement of various skills related to the university core curriculum (general education) competencies, as well as student engagement in enrichment and success initiatives. Examples of questions on the survey included:

- rank your level of agreement with the importance, student preparedness, and student achievement for the following items:
  - effective verbal communication
  - effective written communication
  - contribution to the human community and global welfare
  - ethical decision making
  - leadership qualities
  - respect for different viewpoints and cultures
  - respect for the contributions of the arts to society
  - effective use of technology
  - critical thinking and reasoning
  - understand relationships among disciplines

The surveys also provided constituents an opportunity to propose other topics that could impact student learning. Each team member was responsible for encouraging input from colleagues across the campuses. A total of 143 faculty, 154 staff, and 164 students completed the surveys. A sample of the results (faculty) is provided in Appendix I. The complete results can be found on the Tarleton QEP Committee webpage (2009a).

II.4. Analysis of Results

Over the spring and summer of 2008, the NSSE, CLA, and survey data were analyzed by the QEP Team, taking into account the level, frequency, and intensity of support for each area of need. Early in the discussions the QEP Team determined the focus of the QEP should not focus on an individual discipline. Thus the committee affirmed the QEP should have the capacity to impact a broad segment of the student population while maintaining a manageable scope. The Team also decided early in the process that the QEP should be a mechanism by which collaborations between faculty and staff can be enhanced and increased. The QEP Team continually posed the following question: “How would someone from any given academic program or staff division see himself or herself contributing if this were our QEP theme?” Some of the preliminary ideas which surfaced were deemed too discipline-specific or too broad in nature to appeal to the entire
community. Nearly a dozen possible themes for the QEP emerged from the brainstorming, discussions, and input received in the surveys:

- Critical thinking
- Demonstrate leadership quality
- Effective use of technology
- Ethical decision making
- Freshman year experience
- Respect contributions to the arts
- Spoken communication
- Service learning
- Student engagement
- Undergraduate research and creative activities
- Written communication

In analyzing the data, decisions were made by incorporating the level of importance of the topic combined with the perceived entry and graduation achievement levels. Areas such as “effective use of technology” were removed from priority consideration because the results indicated students were already proficient in this area. Thus technology did not warrant a directed effort.

In further analyses and deliberations “critical thinking” and “respect contributions of the arts” were eliminated as QEP topics because the team judged these to be inherent in many of the other areas. “Freshman year experience” was removed because the Team had decided the QEP should impact more than just freshmen students. Furthermore, if a freshman focus were selected, the university components in Fort Worth, Waco, and Killeen would have opportunity limited opportunity for an active role in what could be a transformational effort for the university. In the spring of 2008, the Team came to consensus on a narrowed list of themes:

1. Demonstrate leadership quality
2. Ethical decision making
3. Spoken communication
4. Service learning
5. Student engagement
6. Undergraduate research and creative activities
7. Written communication

The refinement included discussions regarding the types of initiatives and accomplishments that could accompany each area, plus the identification of individuals likely to be involved in each effort and the anticipated impact.
II.5. *Second Broad Involvement of Campus Constituents*
At this point, the QEP Team sought additional input from the faculty, staff, and students. In preparation for gathering this input, the committee developed a set of pointed questions applied to each refined potential topic. Items included:

- General comments on the topic
- What does the phrase <insert theme> mean to you?
- How would students be different if <insert theme> was the QEP?
- What initiative(s) could address <insert theme> as a QEP?
- How would students in your department/majors be impacted by <insert theme> as a QEP?
- How would we recognize success of <insert theme> as a QEP?

Using these questions as prompts, the QEP Team hosted nine town hall focus group discussions during October 2008. The town halls were held for all six academic colleges, Tarleton – Central Texas, Staff Council, and Student Government. To accommodate faculty, staff, and students who were unable to attend the town hall discussions, the QEP Team encouraged and received participation in online forums through SharePoint.

II.6. *The QEP Topic*
The feedback from each of the town hall meetings was compiled and added to the QEP Team's data repository. The QEP Team met for preliminary discussion and refinement of the responses to the prompts. In November 2008, committee members were tasked with preparing proposals for the QEP that captured individual perceptions of the QEP discussions, data, and constituent input. These proposals were distributed among the team members and incorporated into the decision discussions.

A combination of individual reflection on the data, group discussion, and constituent feedback led to the epiphany that 'student engagement' was the common thread linking the seven potential themes. Student engagement was conceptualized in broad terms to include out-of-classroom experiences in student life as well as the more traditional course-based forms of student activities (e.g. classroom interactions, field trips, internships, etc.). The QEP Team identified the underlying problem that students were failing to make connections across the curriculum and were failing to note relationships between their academic and non-academic experiences. These thoughts crystallized the concept that the QEP should focus on applied learning, that is, a plan that connects out-of-classroom experiences and off-campus learning experiences. Examples include connecting residence hall living, cooperatives, internships, and/or community service learning to valued educational outcomes in every student's major. The QEP Team also concluded that the QEP should improve the communication skills (both oral and written) of all university graduates by stressing the principle that no idea is fully formed until it can be communicated. The conclusion was a desire at all levels to assist students, faculty and staff with the following:

- connecting concepts taught and learned across the content areas,
how those concepts and experiences, within and beyond their discipline, are connected to the students’ chosen future careers and life beyond college, and

how those concepts and experiences impacted the students’ social, political, economical and cultural world view.

Thus, the QEP began to take focus on pursuing an applied learning pedagogy to tie together the learning that occurs within the university’s academic communities as well as to integrate this with out-of-classroom learning activities. Such a QEP topic achieves the Team’s desire to impact the student population broadly, while the identification of target areas provides boundaries for manageability. Further, the topic provides a mechanism to facilitate collaboration between academic and non-academic departments, as it underscores the vital importance of such relationships.

Drawing on the collective feedback received and the analysis of the data culled from the review of surveys, university-wide assessments, focus groups, and deliberations, in January 2009 the proposed QEP was finalized to be “Keeping it REAL” (Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning). Five types of applied learning experiences are included in the “Keeping it REAL” initiative:

1. Undergraduate Research
2. Service Learning
3. Leadership
4. Internships
5. Study Abroad/Away

Each of the applied learning areas will be administered by a corresponding office. The management structure will be detailed in the Organizational Structure section of this report.

The mission of the QEP, known as the REAL mission, is as follows:

The QEP’s mission is to support the achievement of TSU’s strategic goals, known campus-wide as the “Four E’s,” by engaging the student in applied learning in order to broaden and strengthen their real-world connections to experiences inside and outside the classroom, thus transforming the baccalaureate degree at Tarleton into a distinctive educational experience.

At this point in the decision process, the Team determined the QEP would apply to baccalaureate students which resolved logistical implementation issues. As of spring 2009 this undergraduate focus accounted for approximately 7,300 of Tarleton’s 9,100 students. Furthermore, the QEP initiatives that are being developed and implemented can easily be extrapolated to associate students and impact graduate programs by better preparing the undergraduates. Thus this initiative has impact beyond its boundaries.
A significant impact of the QEP lies in the required reflection component. Students will develop electronic portfolios of their applied learning experiences that will enhance their marketability for employment and/or graduate school. These e-portfolios will include reflections in response to specific prompts in which the students think critically and communicate in writing how the experience utilized their curriculum, including components outside the discipline, how the experience integrated in- and out-of-classroom activities to the real world, and how the experience impacted their global views. The e-portfolio will also include at least one additional artifact such as a poster presentation, video, photo story, or PowerPoint presentation. Thus, the QEP will inherently address communication, critical thinking, diversity, and technology. Each of these areas is currently listed as a priority general education learning outcome for the university.

II.7. **Endorsement and Approval**

With the topic identified, the QEP Team gathered official campus endorsements and approval. In February 2009, the QEP Team facilitated a series of conversations on this proposed QEP topic with faculty, staff, and students through their respective governing bodies:

- Faculty Senate
- Deans Council
- Academic Council
- Staff Council
- Student Government

The proposed topic was presented with an elaboration of to the impact the implementation of the QEP will have on Tarleton faculty, staff, students, and alumni. These sessions were well received by the university community. From these meetings the recognition emerged in the Tarleton community that the QEP will allow for innovation across departments (academic and staff). Also, individual faculty and staff within their respective departments, colleges, and divisions should be responsible for creating new and exciting ways to implement learning, avoiding a top-down process.

Subsequently, the proposed QEP topic, along with the endorsements of the aforementioned constituents, and a draft budget were presented to the Executive Leadership Cabinet, which is composed of the President and Vice Presidents. “*Keeping it REAL*” was unanimously approved and a preliminary working definition of the topic was shared with the university community in the following announcement to all faculty, staff, students, and alumni on March 27, 2009:

*Tarleton strives to prepare students to be active participants in their professions and communities. We do this by challenging students to consume, process, and produce information that is of high academic quality and that can be used to address the needs of our ever changing world. However, students do not necessarily connect the broader impact of their educational experiences and are,
therefore, often not truly engaged in that experience. Being engaged means that students no longer view themselves as passive receivers of information but as active participants who take primary responsibility for creating, applying and integrating their knowledge. The “Keeping it REAL” QEP will focus on learning by doing. We will create curricular connections and provide concrete experiences in all venues of the student university experience. By connecting their university experiences to real world situations and their upcoming careers, students will learn to think beyond classroom assignments and, in so doing, create their own educational goals, thus becoming engaged in their own education. This QEP will help students utilize higher order thinking such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critical thinking. This QEP has impact far beyond the classroom. The whole university can be actively involved. It will transform the way many university departments provide, impart, and receive knowledge, skills, and values. It will put the student at the center of the learning process. Thus, the QEP will not only enhance student learning, but it will also help Tarleton to “Excel, Expand, Encourage, and Extend.”

III. Identification of the Topic
The essence of Tarleton’s QEP addresses the age old question of, “When and how am I going to use this?” as it pertains to curriculum, regardless of the content, whereby the student may not see the obvious future relevance. The “Keeping it REAL” topic is both creative in its balance between scope and manageability, and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning. The selected topic will dovetail with existing university initiatives as well as enable the creation of new efforts to transform the baccalaureate degree at Tarleton into a distinctive, experience-based, education.

III.1. Characteristics of Applied Learning
The QEP Team recognized the variety of opportunities that could and should be provided to students. These opportunities will expand and inspire the students’ understanding of how courses and experiences interrelate and better prepare students for their life beyond college. “Keeping it REAL” will focus on five applied learning areas: Undergraduate Research, Service Learning, Leadership, Internships, and Study Away. Definitions have been established for each area to provide structure to the development of experiences:

- **An undergraduate research** experience is defined as an activity involving collaboration between a faculty mentor and a student. This includes original research, scholarly activity, and/or creative activity with the goal of publication, presentation, performance, or exhibition of the results or products.

- **Service-learning**, as defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education (CAS), “is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection that are intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (2009, p.349). Service learning is a broad
topic so to provide parameters to the experiences, a service learning project in the context of the QEP must be at least one (or a combination) of the following types:

- **Short-term service-learning experiences**: these are service learning projects that are introductory in nature, e.g. projects designed to introduce students to service-learning as a critical aspect of their college education. It includes projects that help students learn the types of service that best suit their interests and projects that familiarize students with the Stephenville community. In addition, these projects help the student understand the approaches that different agencies use to address community problems.

- **Course or disciplined-based service learning**: these are service projects that are based in academic courses designed to enable students to deepen their understanding of course content, apply knowledge to practice and test theory through practical application.

- **Community assessment service learning**: these are service learning projects in which students design and conduct assessments, report their findings and then help design protocols from these results to serve community needs and purposes.

- **Intensive service-learning experiences**: These are experiences that immerse students intensively in an unfamiliar setting or culture, whether domestically or abroad, with people whose lives and perspectives differ from their (students’) own. These experiences are designed to facilitate students to engage in dialogue and problem solving with the people in these settings/cultures regarding issues that affect them. It is also designed for the students to develop a deeper understanding about the people in these settings/cultures. Thus, this serves to impact the students’ global views.

- **Leadership**, as defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), is an inherently relational process of working with others to accomplish a goal or to promote change. Tarleton’s leadership program seeks to empower students to enhance their self-efficacy as change agents and leaders. The program helps students to understand how they can make a difference as positional leaders and/or as active participants in a group or community (2009, p. 366). An essential component of an applied learning experience in leadership is that students must include meaningful reflection of their leadership experience/activity.

- **Internship** experiences are defined as career-related forms of experiential learning and include practicum experiences, field experiences, and cooperative education. An applied learning internship for a Tarleton student is a structured, supervised, experiential learning encounter that integrates classroom knowledge and theory with skill development and practical applications that are relevant to students’ career interests. The experience is driven by intentional learning and career objectives as evidenced through structured reflection. The experience
may also place a student in a setting that requires them to interact with individuals of diverse social, economic, and/or cultural backgrounds.

- **A study abroad/away** experience is defined as the pursuit of learning in a foreign country or a domestic environment that is significantly different from the Tarleton environment. For example, an internship or service learning experience in New York City or Los Angeles would qualify as study away due to the stark difference in environment compared to Tarleton. Tarleton’s Study Abroad program has established a number of arrangements by which Tarleton students complete part of their degree program through educational activities outside the United States. Such pursuits include, but are not limited to, classroom study, research, field experiences, and internships.

This information will be available on the REAL website to guide faculty and staff in their development of activities. In addition to the definitions, the criteria for an experience to qualify as applied learning and the student learning outcome expectations associated with each applied learning area will also be provided. These are discussed in detail in upcoming sections of this report.

The importance of these areas to undergraduate education is well reported in the literature (see Literature Review and Best Practices section). Furthermore, by utilizing the QEP as a vehicle for transforming the baccalaureate degree, including recognizing student achievement at graduation, Tarleton will be able to provide a distinctive experience that changes the way its students view and approach their education.

### III.2. Accomplishing the Mission of the Institution

As noted in part two of SACS Core Requirement 2.12, the QEP topic should focus on “accomplishing the mission of the institution”. Tarleton’s QEP directly supports the University Mission and strategic goals. Tarleton State University has a clearly articulated, comprehensive, well-defined mission statement that is reflected in the institution’s planning. The mission of the institution, as published in the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan is as follows:

> To provide an academically challenging educational experience through effective teaching, scholarship, research, and service enabling students to pursue truth and acquire understanding, knowledge, and skills necessary for establishing successful careers and becoming responsible citizens and leaders (TSU, 2009a).

The implementation of the “**Keeping it REAL**” QEP will assist Tarleton in fulfilling this mission. Through applied learning, students will experience and value an academically challenging, personally rewarding, and holistic education. Tarleton is well prepared to offer this type of learning experience and will provide the necessary resources such as staffing, library, career services points of contact, and contacts through international study abroad. The cross-curricular relationships of academic experiences combined with hands on service learning, internships, study abroad, and volunteer opportunities will intertwine the basic message of the QEP. Students will depart the campus with a
unique learning experience and will be better prepared for their careers, futures, and as global citizens.

Tarleton's mission statement addresses teaching and learning, scholarship, research, and service. Each of these areas are currently emphasized in four strategic goals (TSU, 2009b), known campus-wide as the “Four E’s”:

**Excel in Scholarship, Teaching, and Learning**
*Foster an environment that encourages innovation, develops programs of national prominence, engages students in research and learning while maximizing and leveraging resources for the greatest efficiency.*

**Expand Our Horizons**
*Continue enrollment growth, expand the faculty and staff, and enrich the student experience by increasing access and participation, expanding cultural competence and global awareness through the curriculum, and fostering a learning environment that values diversity.*

**Encourage Leadership, Service and Student Success**
*Create opportunities beyond the classroom that foster a continuous learning environment, assure student success and prepare students for leadership and service as alumni in their communities, careers and the world.*

** Extend our Reach**
*Develop and maintain relationships and partnerships that will extend the reach, services, reputation, and impact of the university on its alumni, families, and the people of Texas and beyond in an open and accountable environment.*

At no point in Tarleton’s history has there ever been such a dynamic, campus-wide purposeful vision for threading a transformational process within all university divisions for the ultimate benefit of the education of the students. The “Keeping it REAL” QEP will simultaneously focus on all four of the strategic goals.

The QEP will provide impetus for all constituents to *excel* in scholarship, teaching, and learning. Development and implementation of applied learning experiences will promote an environment that encourages innovation by faculty, staff, and students. This innovation will equip faculty and staff to seek outside grants and produce presentations and publications at the national level. The QEP will engage students in research and learning experiences that have impact far beyond the classroom. All of these combine to help Tarleton *excel* as an institution and make strides towards national prominence.

The learning environment fostered by “Keeping it REAL” will *expand* cultural exposure, provide diverse opportunities, and enhance global awareness more broadly
than ever before. The QEP will provide a way for faculty staff and students to expand participation in multicultural venues via study abroad and study away, service learning, and internships. These types of opportunities will broaden Tarleton’s exposure, prominence, and competitiveness, thus making Tarleton an even more desirable place for faculty, staff, and students.

The essence of the QEP is applied learning experiences. Two of the focus areas are leadership and service learning. Activities that will occur as a result of “Keeping it REAL” are designed to encourage leadership, service, and success via opportunities beyond the classroom. These experiences should prepare students for future leadership roles.

As part of the QEP, faculty staff and students will extend the reach of Tarleton by providing learning experiences related to multiple facets of their education in locations across the world. Also, service learning, internships, and study away require the development of partnerships with multiple external constituents in order to create the opportunities. This extends the reach of the university throughout the surrounding communities, the state, the nation, and across the globe. The success of the QEP in real-world learning should aid in extending Tarleton’s reach as envisioned in the fourth “E”. Dissemination of such effort will extend Tarleton’s reputation and promote the distinctiveness of its undergraduate education.

Thus “Keeping it REAL” is an initiative that is vital to long term improvement of student learning. Tarleton seeks to use the QEP as a vehicle to provide a one-of-a-kind experience with invaluable assets for the future use of students in their careers and in their capacities as leaders, volunteers, and citizens. Addressing the faculty and staff at the General Assembly on August 27, 2009, Dr. Gary Peer, Provost, noted by providing students an opportunity to make a deliberate choice among several well designed pathways to a baccalaureate degree that is both truly distinctive and inherently rewarding. This initiative sets Tarleton’s baccalaureate degree apart from the great majority of universities, and thus makes its QEP "real".

IV. Literature Review and Best Practices
A panel established by the Association of American Colleges and Universities published “Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002). In this article, the authors call for an end to the artificial distinction between liberal and practical education. Furthermore, the authors suggest traditional classroom learning is most effective when it is has students apply their developing knowledge skills to concrete problems in the world around them. Five approaches to experiential learning are being addressed with “Keeping it REAL”: undergraduate research, internships/practicum experiences, student leadership, service learning, and study away. Each of these activities places students in new, real-world situations with the goal of helping students become intentional learners. The students will recognize the holistic nature of their education,
can integrate knowledge from different sources, adapt to new environments, and continue learning throughout their lives.

IV.1. Undergraduate Research

In order to include all fields of study provided across all campuses, the University defines undergraduate research as collaboration between a faculty mentor and an undergraduate student in original research, scholarly activity, and/or creative activity with the goal of publication, presentation, performance, or exhibition of the results or product.

This definition closely follows the one developed by the Council on Undergraduate Research and numerous programs already in place at universities across the country (Hakim, 2000; Kinkead, 2003; Pukkila, Gary-Little, & Taylor, 2001). Three key elements to this definition that should be emphasized:

1. The relationship between the student and faculty mentor, whose responsibility is to actively guide student scholars in the methods of their disciplines
2. Originality, partially or totally, of the activity
3. The expectation that the results will be shared with others such that a contribution is made to the discipline.

These elements enable the student to be engaged in a scholarly pursuit rather than simply working on another assignment, whose impact is lost at the end of the course or experience.

Undergraduate research increases confidence and sense of responsibility, teaches content knowledge and skills, teaches when and how to apply these, improves communications ability, and enhances resumes. Student researchers will see themselves as members of the community of scholars by being able to participate in the creation of new knowledge (Merkel, 2001).

Close integration of teaching and research increases students' level of engagement in their disciplines (Boyer Commission, 1998). Research teaches students to see the relationship between acquiring knowledge and learning to solve new problems (Pukkila et al., 2001). A University of Washington faculty mentor’s comment on their program was “The students are raising the bar for each other. They are seeing what is possible and they are going for more. Faculty expectations are higher. We are all learning what can be done and it is impressive” (Merkel, 2001, p. 20).

IV.2. Internships and Practicum Experiences

Experiential learning programs such as internships, cooperative education, and field and practicum experiences have long been a hallmark of undergraduate preparation for teachers, nurses, social workers, and students enrolled in business degree programs. The worth of practical experience as a teaching tool has been noted for generations. Sophocles stated that “One must learn by doing the thing; though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.”
One university effort that fosters student engagement and finds ways to integrate engaging experiences into the curriculum is an internship or practicum experience. This activity is defined as any supervised educational experience in which the student works in a systematic and collaborative way to solve real-life problems. Typically, internship, cooperative education, field and practicum experiences take place in the working environment in which the learner will be expected to gain employment following completion of their degree program. Thus, a nursing student would complete an internship consisting of several rotations in various hospital departments. Internships and practicum experiences in nursing would require nursing students to practice the application of knowledge and clinical skills they learned from textbooks and classroom demonstrations.

Research suggests that internships are an effective means of engaging learners and providing student-centered instructional experiences. Beck and Halim (2008) noted that internships allow students to integrate classroom learning experiences with professional practice. Additionally, the internship experience provides extension to what the students learned in the classroom (Alex-Assensoh & Ryan, 2008). Besides benefitting from practical experience, students also engage in quantitatively more practice in internships and practica learning experiences. The additional practice leads to greater mastery of professional skills and the understanding of concepts within a student’s field of study (Fortune, Lee, & Cavazos, 2007). Finally, Bay (2006) noted that internship experiences provide students with a qualitatively different experience than the regular classroom. Bay argued that internships provide direct experiences with organizational cultures and ethical practice. Additionally, students tend to have greater confidence in their professional knowledge and skills following the completion of an internship or practicum (Bay, 2006).

Integrating internship, cooperative education, and field/practicum experiences into undergraduate and graduate education provides a way for students to practice what they will do in the workplace under the watchful eye of an internship supervisor. The tangible benefits of such opportunities include enhanced field-specific skills and knowledge. The intangible benefits include confidence and a practical understanding of how the student’s field is utilized beyond the college experience. The experiences associated with internships and practicum activities serve to engage students in a way that may not be achieved in classroom learning. These activities permit the students to internalize profession-specific values.

IV.3. **Student Leadership**
Since its earliest times, higher education has identified leadership as an expected outcome (Komives, 1996). Leadership programs on college campuses offer a variety of curricular/co-curricular learning opportunities to aid in the development of student leadership skills and abilities.

Students who participate in leadership training have an increased likelihood of demonstrating growth in civic responsibility, leadership skills, multicultural awareness,
community orientation, understanding of leadership theories, and personal and societal values (Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhart, 1999). These experiences provide the initiative to guide students through their academic and personal endeavors as student leaders on the college campus. In addition, such experiences will prove valuable as students enter their professional careers.

Leadership is a skill that is learned; “Leadership is not a gene and it’s not a secret code that can’t be deciphered by ordinary people. The truth is that leadership is an observable set of skills and abilities no matter the field.” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 345) To apply what is learned, students must first lead themselves through self-development. Learning to lead is about discovering one’s values and what you are truly passionate about in life. Leadership also calls for then putting a plan in action that can be fulfilled.

Dugan (2006) claims the learning environment offered to students must afford opportunities in positional leadership roles, student organizations, formal leadership programs, and community service that can turn student potential into action on the college campus and beyond. Through offering a diverse variety of opportunities, faculty and staff may help students explore their leadership abilities, engage in self-efficacy, and enhance interpersonal relationships.

IV.4. Service Learning

For many decades, higher education has recognized the value in combining service and learning in university settings; however, the practice of service learning has varied greatly among higher education institutions. Today, engaging students in the learning process is becoming increasingly important. The emerging pedagogy of service learning is thus becoming a focus for many colleges and universities (Madsen, 2004). President Obama has made service a “central plank” in his higher education agenda (Ashburn, 2009); and Cesar E. Chavez stated, “Surely the end of all education is service to others.”

Defining a broad topic such as service learning is difficult. The university should strive to enhance student learning and development through engagement. Service learning will be defined as a teaching approach that integrates academic instruction to purposefully engage students in civic responsibility, critical and creative thinking, and thoughtful, structured reflection. Service learning can include volunteering, but in its purest form should include additional elements. Learning and development do not necessarily result from the service learning experience itself, but from reflection explicitly designed to foster student learning and development (Jacoby, 1999). Service learning provides students with opportunities to put theory into practice beyond the university setting and to engage in activities that benefit the community as well as their learning and development (Diambra, McClam, Fuss, Burton, & Fudge, 2009). The global community becomes an extension of the classroom, and the people with whom students interact in a service learning experience collaborate with the teacher to become educators as well.

Research suggests the purposeful combination of theory and practice can be a transforming experience for students. Studies have documented the benefits of service learning to include seven items. These are: a deeper understanding of academic course
concepts, heightened civic engagement, enhanced appreciation of social problems, satisfaction of helping others, personal and professional growth, improved cognitive skills, and an opportunity for career exploration (Diambra et al., 2009). By providing assistance to others, students can better understand the differences among individuals, therefore enhancing the students’ cognitive, personal, and spiritual development (Jacoby, 1999). Moser and Rogers (2005) propose that service learning increases retention rates by making education relevant for students.

Perkins-Gough (2009) conducted a study of students from Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic backgrounds. The research showed over 80% of these students declared they would become involved in service learning programs, if offered. These statistics suggest students desire to dedicate themselves to their community and enhance their overall development as individuals.

IV.5. **Study Abroad and Study Away**

Undergraduate research, leadership experiences, and internships and practicum experiences can also be carried out as part of study abroad. These experiences enhance the benefits of student engagement and study abroad. The advantages of undergraduate research, leadership, and internships tie together all educational experiences that go toward enhancing student engagement. Study abroad strengthens those ties.

In questioning whether study abroad can be proven to enhance student engagement, Lund and Blake (n.d.) assert that analyzing existing data, such as that from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), will reveal some interesting results, namely that study abroad was deemed to have produced more engaged students. Their study analyzes data from Agnes Scott College. The study revealed that “the picture that emerges is that one of the benefits associated with study abroad is a willingness to engage with faculty, peers, and community activities, which we believe contributes to a deeper, more meaningful college experience” (Lund & Blake, n.d., p.1).

Engaging students is a particularly significant focus across college campuses, and according to Godbey, Hunter, Krajza, and Latib (2007) “[i]mproving student retention, performance, and satisfaction are imperative in [a] rapidly-changing educational market, and creating the ‘engaged student’ is the key retention strategy.” (p.1). Students who are engaged in the world and who participate in study abroad, are more confident and more likely to seek out what is needed from faculty, classes, and other resources during the students’ college careers.

Other benefits are evident in the variety of “internationalization” opportunities, contribute to student success. According to McLaughlin and Johnson (2006), “Integrating curricular design and assessment provides an avenue to promote disciplinary learning gains in short-term study abroad courses. Incorporating inquiry-based and active learning in the design of such courses through pre-trip, field, and post-trip activities allows faculty to maximize the value of the field experience and document student learning gains” (p. 75). Assessments of McLaughlin and Johnson’s three-step study abroad curriculum show
more student appreciation for the material and the experiential learning taking place. In addition, “Student comments suggest that the skills learned were perceived as lifelong and applicable to multiple areas of their lives . . .” (McLaughlin & Johnson, 2006, p. 74). Even the more “local” opportunities, typically known as “study away,” keep students closer to home, while exposing them to different environments and experiences than in their home school. Study abroad and study away enhance the experiences and learning taking place as part of undergraduate research, internships and practicum experiences, service learning, and leadership activities.

V. Desired Student Learning Outcomes

Parts two and five of SACS Core Requirement 2.12 state the QEP developed by the institution must focus “on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution” and “identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.”

As an integral part of the university process, the QEP will be structured in the same manner as all of the entities across campus and the QEP will be assessed by using the software package WeaveONLINE®. This requires some explanation of the vocabulary associated with mission, goals, outcomes, and assessment at Tarleton (Tarleton State University, 2009c).

- **Mission:** “The mission statement concisely articulates a clear vision of the desired future. It serves as an anchor to keep a department or organization from drifting or losing its purpose and should correlate with the program’s official catalog description. As an anchor, it provides stability, yet it also allows for some flexibility. A degree of flexibility is important in the rapidly changing world in which we live and, for this reason, a mission statement does not discuss methods to accomplish the vision” (Tarleton State University, 2009c, Mission Section).

- **Goals:** “Long-term in nature [two years or more], program goals form the foundation for student-learning assessment. Directly linked to the program’s mission, goals stipulate the major principles the program serves (e.g., to develop student competence meeting employer demands in the field of practice)” (Tarleton State University, 2009c, Goals Section).

- **Outcomes:** “Short-term in nature [one year or less] and directly linked to the program’s goals, student-learning objectives encompass the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to achieve through their college experience; expected or intended student-learning outcomes” (Tarleton State University, 2009c, Outcomes Section). Effective outcomes/objectives are measurable. They must be stated clearly and directly support one or more program goals. Each outcome/objective must be followed by strategies leading directly to the desired output.
The mission of the QEP, known as the REAL mission, was provided in Section II. It states:

The QEP’s mission is to support the achievement of TSU’s strategic goals, known campus-wide as the “Four E’s,” by engaging the student in applied learning in order to broaden and strengthen their real-world connections to experiences inside and outside the classroom, thus transforming the baccalaureate degree at Tarleton into a distinctive educational experience.

Analysis of the mission statement yields goals. The goals of the QEP, referred to as the REAL Goals, have been establish to enable the achievement of the REAL Mission, thus supporting the university strategic goals and facilitate the development of the distinctiveness of a Tarleton education. The REAL Goals are as follows:

1. To add distinctiveness to the baccalaureate degree at Tarleton by engaging students in experiences adding integrative, real-world value to their education.
2. To enhance the professional development of faculty and staff by promoting efforts and collaborations that integrate applied learning experiences into curricula.
3. To provide experiences that expand and strengthen the student’s ability to connect and value the relationship between their complete curriculum and experiences beyond the classroom.
4. To develop communications, technology, and critical thinking skills, enhance diverse perspectives, and encourage a sense of civic responsibility.

The REAL mission and goals will be accomplished through applied learning experiences having focus in five specific areas. By enabling the students to identify the connections to the real-world within and beyond their discipline, as well as the relationships between their academic and non-academic experiences, students will recognize the inherent rewards of their education, thus becoming more engaged in their educational process. Students will graduate from Tarleton having experienced a distinctive learning experience providing better preparation for future endeavors.

V.1. Student Learning Outcomes
“Keeping it REAL” evolved from the desire to increase student engagement by providing applied learning experiences and causing the student to think critically about the following: how the experience utilizes the curriculum beyond the discipline, how it connects academics to life beyond college, and how it shapes global views. The intent is for students to recognize the true potential afforded by a college education, including obtaining more than basic knowledge from this post-secondary experience. The ability to synthesize the seemingly disconnected pieces of information into applications and solutions is an additional goal. In order to demonstrate achievement of the REAL goals and mission, three measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) were established for the overall QEP effort:
1. Connecting beyond their discipline:
   Students will describe how the applied learning experience integrated their program of study across the curriculum.

2. Connecting to the real world:
   Students will apply their holistic curriculum and collegiate learning to a real-world experience.

3. Shaping their global view:
   Students will analyze how the applied learning experience prepared them to contribute meaningfully to a global society by expanding their view of their academic, political, social, cultural, and/or economic environments.

The QEP will also have an impact on current university-wide SLOs of diversity, civic engagement, communications, critical thinking, and technology. Data from the QEP will contribute to the assessment of these SLOs; however, other initiatives also have an impact these outcomes.

These outcomes will be demonstrated by reacting to the findings associated with the measures. The closed loop process will be discussed in detail in the “Assessment” section of this report.

V.2. **Applied Learning Areas Student Learning Outcomes**

In addition, each applied learning office has established student learning outcomes for the respective area. These SLOs establish evidence that will be used to demonstrate achievement, and serve as a building block in specifying criteria of applied learning experiences that will count towards REAL recognition for the students.

- **Undergraduate Research Student Learning Outcomes**: Upon successful completion of an undergraduate research applied learning experience the student will:
  - Identify an original research question or problem
  - Identify and summarize background information related to their research question or problem
  - Develop a research plan to address their question or problem
  - Collect and interpret data in an attempt to address their question or problem.
  - Articulate findings in written or oral form
  - Demonstrate awareness of the importance of ethical behavior in conducting research

- **Service learning Student Learning Outcomes**: As a result of participating in a service learning experience, students will
  - Demonstrate growth in acquisition, integration, construction, and application of knowledge
  - Improve cognitive complexities
- Enhance intrapersonal development
- Develop interpersonal competence
- Develop an appreciation of humanitarianism and civic engagement

- Leadership Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of participating in applied learning leadership experiences, students will
  o Explore leadership abilities
  o Establish fundamental practices of leadership
  o Engage in the development of self efficacy as leaders
  o Enhance interpersonal relationships which support peer-to-peer mentoring

- Internship Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of participating in applied learning internships, students will
  o Integrate classroom learning, theory and course content with their internship experiences
  o Describe and explain work responsibilities and duties (evidence of understanding)
  o Articulate and demonstrate improvement in professional etiquette (including time management, dress code, formal versus informal protocols, etc)
  o Articulate and demonstrate team work, collaboration and leadership
  o Articulate and demonstrate cultural competence in the workplace
  o Articulate the importance of work ethic and appropriate ethical behavior in the workplace at both the local and global levels
  o Articulate how the internship experiences match up with career options, interests and skills (i.e. how have experiences expanded, directed or confirmed career options, interests and skills?)

- Study abroad/away Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of participating in study abroad/away, students will
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has enhanced intercultural development by creating a better understanding of personal cultural values and biases
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has had a lasting impact on global views
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has served as a catalyst for increased maturity
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has increased their self-confidence
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has enhanced their understanding of the academic field or topic studied
  o Articulate and demonstrate that study abroad/away has reinforced their commitment to academic success

These outcomes will be integrated into the experience and assessment data will be submitted to the appropriate applied learning office by the faculty/supervisor for the
experience. A closed loop assessment plan will be implemented to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes, as described in the Assessment section of this report.

VI. Organizational Structure
The organizational structure of the QEP demonstrates Tarleton’s institutional capability to initiate and sustain this transformative undertaking. The QEP evolved from the faculty, staff, and students as the entire campus has had multiple opportunities to provide input and suggestions. Thus this QEP effort is it a constituent-owned initiative. In order for the QEP to be realized, the constituent ownership, or “bottom-up” process, will be a critical component of maintaining faculty, staff, and student involvement. Administrative supervision will be needed to provide support and monitor accountability.

Tarleton has implemented a well-defined structure with appropriate resources (fiscal and human) to promote the constituent driven. Tarleton established a QEP Coordinator position that reports directly to Tarleton’s SACS Liaison/Vice President for the Division of Enrollment and Information Management. Also, since university-wide assessment data will be gathered to evaluate the overall achievement of the QEP, the QEP Coordinator serves on the Academic Assessment Committee and the University Evaluation and Effectiveness Committee. Accountability will be achieved by weaving the data collection and assessment into the operations of the administration, faculty, and staff.

This positioning within the organization ensures the QEP will be an integral part of university operations for the duration of the QEP. An additional ongoing potential gain for Tarleton is to implement the QEP as a permanent part of the infrastructure. This is shown in the organizational chart below.

![Organizational Chart](image-url)

Figure 1 Organizational Chart
VI.1. **REAL Council**

In fall 2009, the QEP Team evolved from a developmental committee into a permanent oversight group known as the REAL Council. The REAL Council continues to meet regularly regarding implementation of “Keeping it REAL”. Agendas and minutes can be found on Tarleton’s “Keeping it REAL” website (REAL Council, 2010b). The overall mission of the REAL Council is to provide cohesiveness across the five applied learning areas and ensure the implementation of the QEP. The REAL Council is chaired by the QEP Coordinator and consists of the following representation from the university:

- Representatives from the five applied learning offices
- One faculty member from each of the five colleges
- One faculty member representing the off-site programs
- One faculty member representing Texas A&M University – Central Texas
- One representative for assessment and rubrics
- One representative from the Writing Intensive Program
- One representative from technology
- One representative from Staff Council
- One student government representative
- One student body representative from the main campus
- One student representative from Texas A&M University – Central Texas
- One representative from each administrative division: Enrollment and Information Management, Student Life, and Institutional Advancement.
- One ex-officio representative from of the divisions of Academic Affairs and Finance and Administration

The current members of the REAL Council and their role and affiliation are shown in the table below. Vitae for the QEP Coordinator and the applied learning office directors can be found in Appendix II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Title</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Representing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Denise Martinez</td>
<td>QEP Coordinator</td>
<td>Enrollment and Information Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Professor Engineering and Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Russell Pfau</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Office of Student Research &amp; Creative Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Johnny Robinson</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Office of Student Leadership Programs/Office of Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Darla Doty</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Career Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Marilyn Robitaille</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Office of International Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Mark Shipman</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>College of Liberal and Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Arthur Low</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>College of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The objectives of the REAL Council are to maintain consistency in implementation and assessment across the five applied learning areas, serve as a resource and expertise center for applied learning, and assess the overall QEP achievement including action plans where needed. These objectives translate into the following responsibilities:

- Manage the submission requirements and approvals for applied learning courses and experiences.
- Verify and maintain REAL graduation requirements
- Continually develop and improve the applied learning expertise of the members
- Maintain a centralized website resource that includes:
  - Resources for students, including:
    - Opportunities for applied learning experience available to students
    - Instructions for students to develop their e-portfolio
    - Links to each applied learning office
  - Resources for faculty and staff, including:
• Information related to applied learning and assessment
• Criteria for an applied learning experience
• Prompts and rubrics
• Links to each applied learning office
• Application template for an applied learning experience
• Review and adjust reflection prompts as needed
• Review and adjust assessment rubrics as needed
• Develop and implement survey instruments for performance and perception (students, supervisors, etc.)
• Compile, evaluate, and respond to QEP assessment data
• Establish a showcase of QEP examples
• Develop a newsletter, distributed to the campus community each semester, highlighting students, staff, and faculty who are “Keeping it Real”

The clearly defined, manageable, and administratively supported structure built into this QEP will enable its implementation and make it sustainable. The plan developed by the QEP Team will enable this QEP topic to be transformational in its impact on Tarleton and its constituent populations.

VI.2. **Applied Learning Offices**
To manage implementation and assessment of the outcomes, each applied learning area will utilize its corresponding office:

- Office of Student Research & Creative Activities (OSRCA)
- Office of Service Learning
- Office of Student Leadership Programs
- Career Services (Internships)
- Office of International Programs (Study Away/Abroad)

Each of these offices is currently in operation either as a standalone office or as a subset of another office, demonstrating the utilization and enhancement of existing resources. To assist with the additional participation load and logistics, the QEP budget will provide GA positions to support the effort.

While the service learning and leadership applied learning experiences are distinctly different, currently the two areas operate together under Student Engagement Programs. In response to the needs and potential utilization of these offices by the QEP, the Division of Student Life has reorganized Student Engagement Programs to enhance student leadership and service learning components. Specifically, during FY 2009-10, the staff members in the Office of Student Leadership Programs have been examining the structure and programs currently available in student leadership in order to strengthen and enhance options for students at all levels of leadership ability. Similarly, staff members have been identifying opportunities for student service learning, including efforts around the campus, city, county, and the surrounding cities of Fort Worth, Dallas, Waco, and Abilene. Effective in fall 2010, the office will be renamed
Office of Student Leadership and Service Learning. One representative on the REAL Council will represent both areas (with two votes) until the staffing of the office has increased. Development of opportunities in each area will continue to expand.

In general, the QEP-related responsibilities of each applied learning office are as follows:

- Maintain and enforce the definition of what qualifies as an applied learning experience in their respective area
- Contribute to the review of applications submitted for applied learning experiences
- Compile the SLO assessment data in their respective area
- Provide resources for faculty and staff related to finding, implementing, promoting, and assessing applied learning experiences, including but not limited to
  - prompts and rubrics for reflections in the respective categories
  - surveying students, supervisors, and other relevant parties or providing survey instruments where applicable
  - assisting with logistics such as applications, student travel, housing, etc. where applicable
  - soliciting and researching opportunities from the community, industry, etc. and serving as a centralized depository of opportunities
  - establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with community groups, organizations, industries, etc. as needed
- Establish opportunities and promote collaborations between faculty and staff across campus
- Market and promote awareness of these activities and opportunities

The QEP will increase the reach of these offices across campus, and these offices will facilitate sustainability of the QEP beyond the five year timeline.

**VII. Actions to be Implemented**

The foundation of the QEP is to provide experiences that expand and strengthen the student’s ability to connect and value the relationship between curricular components and experiences beyond the classroom. Such an initiative requires a well defined structure and resource system. The work to define the framework for “**Keeping it REAL**” began prior to its selection as the QEP topic. This preliminary development was a necessary step in determining the feasibility and manageability of the QEP. With the selection and approval of the topic, the implementation details were refined. The resulting implementation plan defines an initiative that is woven into the institutional mission and operations, thus demonstrating the institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP.

**VII.1. Marketing the QEP**

One key to the success of the QEP will be campus-wide awareness. Throughout the development of the QEP topic, the university was continuously updated on its progress.
This was accomplished through campus-wide emails, opportunities for input, presentations at the annual presidential planning retreat, and updates to the Executive Leadership Cabinet, Academic Council, Deans’ Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government. Evidence of these communications and presentations is available on Tarleton’s “Keeping it REAL” website (Campus Awareness, 2010c). With selection of the QEP topic, the marketing campaign shifted into branding mode. In spring and summer 2009, the QEP Team developed and began implementing marketing initiatives designed to ensure all constituents (students, faculty, and staff) were aware of the QEP.

Staff Council demonstrated early support of the QEP by making “Keeping it REAL” the theme of its retreat in May 2009. Promotional items with the QEP slogan were provided to participants, and a QEP presentation was part of the agenda.

The QEP Team then sponsored a logo contest during July 2009. The contest served to seed the creativity of Tarleton’s Media Relations office, which developed the official QEP logo, shown in Figure 2.

Marketing continued from September 2009 to present. Marketing methods leading up to the site visit included but were not limited to:

- Promotional items such as wallet/keychains, pens, post-it notes, etc.
- Sign post banners
- Screensavers, backgrounds, and MyGateway content
- Campus-wide emails
- Promotion on the “Tarleton Today” webpage
- Marquis and scoreboards
- Posters, fliers, table tents, etc
- Secret shoppers with prizes – t-shirts, jump drives
- Tarleton’s Facebook and MySpace
- Promotion in DGS classes
- Promotion in residence halls with posters and banners

Marketing contributions came from direct efforts of the QEP Team, as well as departments and divisions around campus. Examples from around campus are documented on the “Keeping it REAL” website and include:
• Kinesiology office posters
• College of Business Administration pennants
• Disney Internships
• Display table and fliers at RecFest 2010
• Light post banners contributed from the President’s Office
• “Keeping it REAL” on the stadium marquis contributed by Athletics

In addition to day-to-day exposure, campus-wide events also serve as advertising venues. During 09-10 these initiatives included Tarleton’s general assembly, Constitution Day events, Presidential Inauguration events, University Planning Retreat, and advertising for the April Excellence in Teaching Conference who’s theme is “How Are You Keeping It REAL?” Other events that will be held in the future that will regularly provide QEP publicity include Freshman Orientation and Texan Tour. Texan Tour is designed to introduce Tarleton to prospective high school juniors and seniors. Thus in this venue, potential students and parents are made aware of the QEP effort.

Another significant awareness event will be held in February. “Campus Conversations on Distinction” will be a town hall forum with the purpose of sharing QEP details, leadership vision for the growth of the university, and constituent input on successfully achieving these missions.

A number of marketing events have already occurred to promote the topic to all constituents. These promotions also serve to spark thinking and planning in faculty and staff about initiatives that may merit QEP funding. In the subsequent years, the promotion of workshops, showcasing of experiences and partnerships, calls for proposals, freshman orientation sessions, etc. will all serve as additional advertising. These efforts will enable the marketing of the QEP to be essentially self-sustained. This approach allows for a more modest budget component for marketing after the first year and redirects these funds to the support of applied learning experiences.

After the 2009-2010 efforts, marketing will shift from the branding mode to maintaining awareness and dissemination of efforts, results, and impacts. Plans include

• Integrate “Keeping it REAL” into 2010-2011 university catalog and/or Student Handbook and Planner cover and/or picture inserts
• Market opportunities for faculty and staff to develop applied learning experiences and submit proposals for initiatives
• Send selected faculty and staff to workshops on topics relevant to the QEP
  o Upon return, the faculty and staff will share workshops and training
• Showcase the efforts across campus by faculty and staff in the “Spotlight” and “News” sections of the Tarleton homepage as well as the Tarleton Today page
• Showcase student involvement in applied learning in the “Spotlight” and “News” sections of the Tarleton homepage as well as the Tarleton Today page
• Working with groups such as Residential Living and Learning and Student Life to incorporate QEP content into their materials
• Working with student recruiting and undergraduate admissions to incorporate QEP content into their materials

One major QEP event will be a university-wide retreat to be held prior to the start of classes in August 2010. Participants will consist of administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders. The event will begin with a presentation by the QEP Coordinator reiterating the mission, goals, and objectives of the QEP and the resource center for applied learning. The event will feature presentations by each of the applied learning offices on resources and support provided for participants in applied learning experiences. Once the background and resources have been presented, participants will be organized into groups consisting of a mixture of disciplines, staff divisions, and student leaders. REAL Council members will be assisting each group to guide discussion. The deliverables of the breakout sessions include action plans for programs, courses or experiences and collaborations across campus to implement these actions. The above is an example of how the campus groups can model the QEP by forming new, broader connections, rather than just functioning in the microcosm of individual programs.

In spring 2010 and 2011, “Keeping it REAL” will be the theme for the annual Tarleton Excellence in Teaching Conference. Presentations will include initiatives and techniques that are in place across campus including but not limited to the following:

• how curricular or extracurricular activities can or have been modified to fit the QEP framework (such as capstone or study abroad experiences);
• presentations on new faculty/staff partnerships that have been established that support the QEP mission;
• the use of an e-portfolio as a classroom tool;
• the importance of an e-portfolio for job and graduate school searches;
• the impact of one’s “digital self” as it pertains to internships and careers.

These conference presentations will promote awareness, spark new ideas for experiences, and showcase current initiatives, thus highlighting the benefits of QEP participation for all campus constituents.

VII.2. Incentives for the Students
A primary feature of Tarleton’s QEP will be the opportunity for students to earn special recognition at graduation. A tiered recognition structure similar to the honor designations of Magna Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude, and Cum Laude will be established:

• Gold recognition – 5 applied learning experiences in at least two different areas
• Silver recognition – 3 applied learning experiences in at least two different areas
• Bronze recognition – 2 applied learning experiences in two different areas

The physical manifestations of the recognition level will be displayed on the student’s diploma and a distinctive pin for their gown. Students will be allowed to count an experience as multiple applied learning experiences, provided they satisfy the
requirements of both applied learning offices. For example, an internship abroad could count as two applied learning experiences. By utilizing and stretching existing initiatives, students may be able to graduate with applied learning recognition as early as spring 2011.

Target participation will be discussed thoroughly in the “Assessment” section; however the goal is that by the end of five years, the vast majority of baccalaureate students will be graduating with applied learning recognition. The desire is for the QEP to evolve into a graduation requirement distinguishing Tarleton from its peer institutions by enabling opportunities and experiences not found on other campuses, thus making the QEP a transformational undertaking.

VII.3. Incentives for the Faculty, Staff and Departments

Multiple incentives and rewards will be used to facilitate the development of applied learning experiences. The QEP budget includes grant monies for faculty and staff to develop applied learning experiences. The grant process will be competitive and managed by the REAL Council. Grants will be solicited from faculty and staff for implementation of applied learning experiences. Preferred characteristics include

- the development or extension of culminating experiences (capstones) to meet the applied learning requirements,
- partnerships between faculty and staff,
- early experiences that assist the students with making appropriate, proper career decisions.

During years four and five of implementation, the use of this funding as matching funds or components of larger grants will be strongly encouraged. The QEP Team was deliberate and methodical in utilizing established assessment methods and reporting tools. The use of existing procedures facilitates QEP implementation. In this vein, a goal of the QEP is for each academic department offering baccalaureate degrees to implement at least one QEP related administrative objective. An example would be an objective related to the number of programs that include applied learning or the number of applied learning courses being offered in the department. The Division of Academic Affairs may choose to provide priority budget consideration for departments participating in the QEP experience. These incentive items might include additional travel money, a new faculty member, and equipment. The QEP related objective should be developed through discussions with department faculty. The existence and quality of this objective will be assessed by the Academic Assessment Committee during the annual assessment review. The current process of submitting these evaluations as part of an overall assessment summary report to the Deans and Provost will be continued.

Within each department, faculty will decide how degree programs will address applied learning. This can occur through applied learning courses, capstone courses, internships, etc. Many programs already have curricular types of experiences. QEP requirements mandate that the experience must include an e-portfolio reflection and artifact. In many cases, QEP participation will involve the refinement and/or extension of
existing curricula or experiences. Based on faculty driven discussion, participating programs will include a program outcome related to applied learning as part of the assessment process.

Tarleton’s QEP scope extends beyond the classroom and academics. The QEP premise lies in students’ recognition of the holistic nature of their educational experience. Thus, non-academic entities will also contribute to the students’ education. Each applied learning office will be required to have at least one QEP related administrative assessment objective. This objective will address the availability of well-defined non-course related experiences. Other non-academic entities may choose to follow suit. The administrative objective will be added to the rubric used by the University Effectiveness and Evaluation Committee for the annual review of assessment reports. The current process of submitting these evaluations as part of an overall assessment summary report will be continued.

Examples of non-course-based applied learning experiences include executive leadership of Greek organizations and student government. The faculty or staff supervisor for these types of experiences will incorporate discussion and reflection of how the students’ academic experiences are tied to the non-academic experiences. An additional requirement of the supervisor will be evaluation of the students’ reflections.

Another avenue for non-academic entity involvement will be to ensure alignment between student worker positions and the student’s major. For example, student worker positions in business services can be tailored to business majors. Additionally, grounds maintenance positions can be tailored to horticulture and landscape majors. Supervisors can contribute to the QEP in an assessable way by establishing SLOs for their employees, evaluating employee achievement, and enforcing the e-portfolio requirements. The REAL Council will serve as a resource to promote this effort. The initiative allows staff the opportunity to play a more active role in students’ education. At the same time, students will be exposed to career relevant experience.

A second way to involve staff is by establishing partnerships between staff groups and programs. For example, each Student Life subdivision can contact related disciplines (e.g. health center establishes relationships with nursing or clinical laboratory sciences), to discuss the program. Questions posed may include ways for the subdivision to contribute to making program graduates more marketable.

Another incentive that will be used to encourage broad participation relates to the positive value of incorporating applied learning into course and non-course experiences. Some experiences such as a field trip, guest speaker, or job shadow do not meet the contact hour requirements for applied learning credit. However, instructors and supervisors can easily encourage students to add this type of supplemental experience to their e-portfolios. Funding is included in the budget to support some of these activities. A stipulation for receiving such funding will be that the experience must include the reflective component. This component is reviewed according to the rubric by the faculty or staff member, which gives the student the opportunity to refine their e-portfolio entry.
Those who conduct an annual faculty or staff performance review will be encouraged to include QEP participation as a part of the evaluation. Participation activities may include course instruction, experience supervision, and providing supplemental content. Inclusion of QEP participation in the annual review process will assist in stressing the importance of the QEP plus provide recognition for QEP efforts.

VII.4. **Electronic Portfolios**

E-portfolios have become an important part of the job application process. Students who are able to present themselves with professional e-portfolio content are at a distinct advantage with potential employers. E-portfolios are important to support and supplement a résumé with a dynamic online profile. Of employers surveyed in 2007, 83% stated online information was used regarding a candidate (Dehne, 2008). A quality e-portfolio establishes strong component of a positive, digital identity. The typical e-portfolio may include descriptions of work that has been done and actual examples that give employers the ability to learn more about a prospective hire well before entering the interview process.

The use of an e-portfolio has benefits for students, academic programs, and the entire university. Thus, the e-portfolio will be a significant part of the QEP implementation. A requirement of all applied learning experiences will be the use of an e-portfolio to collect student reflections and other artifacts related to applied learning, and provide a record of completed projects. Each student will be assigned an e-portfolio account. Each reflection will be scored and given feedback based on a scoring rubric. This rubric will be preserved with the reflections and artifacts to assist the student in compiling a quality e-portfolio.

Student usage of e-portfolios will begin with implementations in spring 2010 in selected course sections taught by REAL advocates:

- **DGS 102 – University Seminar II** – This section of this course is composed of second semester freshmen in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines and is being taught by the QEP Coordinator. Students will engage in career exploration and peer mentoring. This section will serve as a means of refining the training of freshmen in the use of an e-portfolio as well as how to reflect critically on experiences and curriculum.

- **EDU 320 – Professional Development I** – Four sections of this teacher education course will be taught. One instructor is a REAL Council member, the other is not. This course will serve as a practicum/internship experience. In this course students will be required to tutor school-aged students for a minimum of one hour per week for 10 weeks. Tutor activities will be determined by the school’s TAKS remediation program or the teacher’s assessment of the at-risk student’s needs. The Tarleton student will also be interviewing the teacher about the diverse student population represented in the classroom and how he/she deals with the diversity represented in the classroom. The Tarleton student will also interview the remedial student to identify preferences, needs and/or learning styles. The
Tarleton students will also gather data about the school and community including such things as number of students, special programs, number of teachers, etc. In addition to the applied learning reflection, the student will submit five reflective summaries of the experiences, at least 15 photos in a 3-5 minute photostory of the community, campus, classroom and student work, and a reflective summary of lessons learned from the interviews, data, and experience.

- **COMS 320 – Public Relations** – This will count as a service learning experience. In this course, students plan/manage events for nonprofit organizations, such as fundraising, volunteer recruitment, etc. Students will earn applied learning experience if the project they choose meets all service learning requirements. This pilot will help resolve logistics related to courses in which some, but possibly not all, projects qualify for applied learning credit.

- **ENGR 460 – Engineering Integration (capstone)** – This course will serve as a practicum or undergraduate research experience. In this course, engineering students spend the semester developing and implementing a design project. Projects may be driven by an industry or community need, undergraduate research, or individual creativity. The course integrates the engineering curriculum and is supervised by engineering faculty and/or industry or community representatives.

- **PSY 335-020 – Research Methods** – This course is composed of junior and senior Psychology majors and is being taught by a member of the REAL Council who also is a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and Counseling. Students will complete individual research projects in the field of Psychology. Each student will conduct a literature review on a topic in the field, propose one or more research questions, design a study to answer those questions, collect data, analyze the data, and report the results and conclusions in an APA style manuscript. This section of the course will serve as an undergraduate research experience and will require the learners to use an e-portfolio to reflect critically on the experiences and the curriculum.

- **Tarleton Roundup Director’s staff** – This experience will be an applied learning experience in the area of service learning. Students will complete a service learning project plan in addition to the requirements of the service learning area. This pilot will also refine the implementation and tracking of non-credit-related experiences.

Additional implementations will occur throughout the 10-11 academic year, with full implementation of e-portfolios for every student by fall 2011. The REAL Council will assist faculty and staff in the development of QEP related experiences.

For programs, the e-portfolio system is a means to provide evidence of program outcomes achievement. These data are particularly valuable to external accrediting agencies such as those affiliated with engineering, nursing, and social work, as well as for academic program reviews. For the university, the e-portfolio system provides a means to easily provide assessment data for several university-wide undergraduate
student learning outcomes including writing, technology, and critical thinking (University-wide, 2009).

VII.5. **Training**

A key to QEP success will be training faculty and staff on the process to be followed in recording applied learning experiences using the e-portfolio. Funding has been allocated in the budget to support both on-campus and off-campus training.

An initial training activity will be the attendance of representative from the REAL Council to the 5th Annual Conference on Applied Learning in Higher Education at Missouri Western State University (MWSU). This conference is scheduled for February 19-20, 2010. MWSU is very active in the area of applied learning with over 89% of its 2008 graduates participating in applied learning (Missouri Western State University, 2009). The institution also hosts the Journal of Applied Learning. Those who attend will disseminate findings to other REAL Council members, incorporate the resources and materials into the REAL website, and provide training to the campus community. As Tarleton faculty and staff gain experience in the applied learning area, it is hoped that future participation will involve presentations by the Tarleton community.

Regular workshops will be led by the REAL Council to facilitate the implementation of applied learning experiences. These activities include assistance with logistically challenging experiences such as study abroad, facilitation with locating internship opportunities, instruction on the utilization of rubrics, and transforming an existing course or experience into an applied learning experience.

Training will be required for the e-portfolio component. The Center for Instructional Technology and Distance Education (CITDE) will include this training in the regular regimen of training offered to the faculty and staff. Members of the REAL Council will facilitate the training. The training sessions will highlight the benefits of the e-portfolio to the students, plus outline content expectations, and the use of e-portfolios as an assessment tool.

Prior to each semester, a meeting will be held for all faculty and staff engaged in applied learning experiences. At this meeting, faculty and staff will be trained or refreshed in the requirements associated with their applied learning experience, the use of the rubric (calibration) for evaluating student reflections, and the e-portfolio requirements. Additional training resources will be available on the REAL website.

E-portfolio training will be provided to students through venues such as orientation, seminar courses, and residence hall meetings. Student e-portfolio usage will begin in fall 2010 followed by full implementation in fall 2011. Starting with the fall 2011 freshmen, their first reflective experience will occur at Freshman Convocation.
VII.6. **Criteria for Applied Learning Experiences**  
One component of the QEP structure is the definition of the requirements for an experience to qualify as an applied learning experience, and count towards graduation recognition. The requirements set forth by the REAL Council are as follows:

- Faculty/staff supervisors must justify how the applied learning experience addresses all three QEP student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- Students must provide at least one written artifact in the e-portfolio that answers, at a minimum, three prompts related to the SLOs.
- Students must provide at least one additional artifact in the e-portfolio such as a poster presentation, video, photo story, or PowerPoint related to the experience.
- Faculty/staff supervisors must provide feedback on the content and quality of the artifact(s) and provide an opportunity for students to improve the e-portfolio content.
- Faculty/staff supervisors must have received e-portfolio training.

Furthermore, each office has established specific criteria related to applied learning. These additional requirements are as follows:

- **Undergraduate Research:**
  - Projects may be sought independently (for example, as a paid research technician) or as part of a course (to include Independent Study or Problems-type courses).
  - Students must have a faculty mentor whose responsibility is to actively guide student researchers in the methods of their disciplines.
  - Projects must be original, or have an original component, so they have the potential to contribute new information to the discipline.
  - The ultimate project goal (fulfilled or not) must be that the results will be shared with others in the form of a publication or presentation.
  - Project proposals must include:
    - The question to be addressed
    - The role of the faculty mentor
    - An outline of methodology to be followed
    - Expected results and their significance to the discipline
    - A plan for how the results will be published or presented

- **Service learning:**
  - Projects may be sought independently or as part of a course.
  - Students must submit a service learning project plan to the Office of Service Learning no later than October 1st (for fall projects) or March 1st (for spring or summer projects). All plans must be approved by the Office of Service Learning prior to beginning any project. The REAL Council will serve as the appropriate appeal mechanism for projects not approved by faculty/advisor or Office of Service Learning.
  - Each service learning project plan must include the following:
    - The needs the service will address
- The nature of the service work
- The desired outcomes from the service and the learning that is intended for all participants
- Logistics (e.g. time requirements, transportation, materials required, etc)
- The course assignments that link service to academic content, where applicable
- Roles and responsibilities of students and community members
- Risk Management procedures
- Evaluation of the service, and the degree to which desired outcomes and learning were achieved
- Designated sponsor/advisor that will work with the student throughout the development and implementation of the project (e.g. letter of commitment submitted with plan).
  - Service learning projects may be pursued individually or as part of a group
  - Reflection on personal reactions to the service and learning experiences
  - Students must participate in an orientation training prior to the service (i.e. orientation to project requirements e.g. project plan, risk management, assessment, project completion, etc)
  - Minimum of 20 hours of service
  - Students cannot receive monetary or other compensation for the service, i.e., service must be a volunteer effort.
- **Leadership:**
  - Students must submit an Individual Leadership Plan that must include the following:
    - The needs that the leadership activity or position will address
    - Desired outcomes of the activity/experience
    - Logistics (e.g. time requirements, training, materials required)
    - Roles and responsibilities of students
    - Evaluation of the activity, learning experiences and an assessment of the degree to which desired outcomes were achieved
  - Students must submit a personal reflection on leadership experiences and activities
  - Students must show evidence of knowledge and development in each of the following four competencies for effective leadership:
    - Foundations of leadership: students need to address topics including the appropriate theories, approaches, strategies and historical perspectives
    - Personal Development: students need to address topics including leadership styles and philosophies as well as the relationship between leadership style and social identity, ethical reasoning, critical thinking, etc.
▪ Interpersonal development. Students need to address the movement from independent/dependent to interdependent relationships, development of self-efficacy as a leader, and the recognition and value of leadership identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, nationality, religion, etc.

▪ Development of groups and organizations. Students need to demonstrate an understanding of group development and the components and roles within organizations.
  o At least ten (10) hours of leadership development and/or training.
  o At least ten (10) hours of leadership experience and/or application of leadership skills and responsibilities.

▪ Internship:
  o To be eligible for applied learning internships, students must have completed at least 30 semester credit hours.
  o The internship experience must include a minimum cumulative total of 225 hours.
  o Each student must have at least (a) an on-site supervisor and (b) a supervisor from the Office of Internships (applied learning supervisor). If the student is pursuing the applied learning internship for academic credit, the student must also have a faculty supervisor (typically, the instructor for the course).
  o Applied learning credit cannot be granted retroactively, e.g., for prior internships or work experiences.
  o Ongoing places of employment cannot qualify as internships; however, students can submit proposals to develop their current places of employment into internship sites.
  o Self-owned businesses cannot qualify as internship sites for these business owners.

▪ Study abroad/away:
  o To be eligible for study abroad students must in good standing with the university.
  o To be eligible for an International Education Fee Scholarship, students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and be enrolled full time the semester before they travel.
  o For faculty-led program, students must make formal application to participate in study abroad/away programs through the Program Director meeting the April 1 deadline for May and summer term programs and the October 1 deadline for participation in December mini-semester or Spring programs. Faculty will have additional requirements for faculty-led program approval.
  o For independent programs, students must make formal application to participate in study abroad/away programs through the International Programs Office, meeting the April 1 deadline for May and summer term.
programs and the October 1 deadline for participation in December mini-
semester or Spring programs.
  o For participation in credit-bearing transfer study abroad/away programs,
    students must coordinate the transfer of academic credit through their
    academic advisor and have the program approved by the Director of
    International Programs
  o Students should self disclose any medical circumstances to program
    directors, a process which would help administrators to assist the
    students appropriately.
  o Students must secure required medical coverage through the
    International Programs Office.
  o Students must attend a pre-departure safety workshop.
  o Students must complete a program evaluation form upon their return.

The REAL Council will be responsible for approval of all experiences. An application will
be provided on the REAL website that specifies the requirements of the experiences,
along with the reflection prompts and the rubric. These materials are included in
Appendices III and IV.

VII.7. Developing Experiences
Beginning in spring 2010, the REAL Council will issue a call for proposals annually for
the development and implementation of applied learning experiences. Faculty and staff
can receive a stipend as well as activity support funds totaling approximately $2,000
each. Half of the funds may be awarded prior to development and the remaining funds
awarded upon completion of deliverables. The REAL Council will fund approximately 25
initiatives per year. Initially, proposal applications will be limited to one application per
program in order to maximize breadth of participation. Preference will be given to
proposals linked to external grants.

Some applied learning experiences will be associated with a course. Instructors of these
courses should align the learning outcomes given on the course master syllabus with the
learning outcomes of the associated applied learning area. This alignment optimizes the
collection of assessment data for the course. Furthermore, the instructor will be
responsible for ensuring the e-portfolio content is submitted and reviewed. These data
will be submitted to the appropriate applied learning office for collection into related
WeaveONLINE® findings. Other applied learning experiences will be non-course
activities under the direction of a faculty or staff member. This supervisor will be
responsible for gathering data related to the student learning outcomes of the applied
learning area(s) as well as submission and review of the e-portfolio content. This data
will be submitted to the appropriate applied learning office for collection into the
appropriate WeaveONLINE® findings.

VII.8. Assessment Data Collection
Assessment and participation data will be collected and compiled each semester.
Faculty and supervisors of applied learning experiences will submit assessment data to
the appropriate applied learning office as directed on the experience application and the REAL website.

Annual reporting of QEP impact and participation is the responsibility of the QEP Coordinator and will be generated each summer. Data from each office will be compiled and compared to targets for each assessment measure. The results will be used to continually refine and adapt the “Keeping it REAL” program to the dynamic needs of the students, faculty, and staff.

VIII. Timeline
Implementation of QEP related activities began in fall 2009. The timeline for implementation of initiatives is given below in Table 3. Note that the timeline for QEP development can be found on the Tarleton QEP Committee website (2009a).

Table 3: Implementation Timeline

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<th>Year 0</th>
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| Fall 2009 | Transition QEP Team to REAL Council  
|          | Marketing across campus  
|          | Major marketing events: General Assembly, Constitution Day, Inauguration events  
|          | Develop reflection prompts for each SLO and the corresponding rubrics  
|          | Complete the QEP Report  |
| Spring 2010 | Submit the QEP Report  
|          | Continue to market the QEP  
|          | March 23-25: SACS campus visit  
|          | Educate and Showcase “Keeping it REAL” at the Tarleton Excellence in Teaching Conference  
|          | Pilot reflection prompts and rubrics in e-portfolios  
|          | Solicit the first round of proposals for developing REAL experiences  
|          | Attend appropriate workshops  
|          | Bring appropriate workshops to campus  
|          | Develop e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff  
|          | Develop the REAL Resource Center website  
|          | Finalize prompts and rubrics  |

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<th>Year 1</th>
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| Fall 2010 | Continue to market the QEP  
|          | Update the REAL Resource Center website  
|          | Identify existing initiatives that can be enhanced to support the QEP  
<p>|          | Provide appropriate workshops and training to campus  |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Spring 2011</th>
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<td>• Continue to market the QEP</td>
<td>• Continue to market the QEP</td>
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<td>• Publicize QEP initiatives</td>
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<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
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<td>• Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
<td>• Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
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<td>• Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
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<td>• Continue to market the QEP</td>
<td>• Continue to market the QEP</td>
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<td>• Publicize QEP initiatives</td>
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<th>Year 3</th>
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<th>Spring 2013</th>
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<td>• Continue to market the QEP</td>
<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
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<td>• Publicize QEP initiatives</td>
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<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>• Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
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<td>• Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
<td>• Solicit the proposals for developing REAL experiences</td>
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<td>• Solicit the second round of proposals for developing REAL course sections and capstone experiences</td>
<td>• Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
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<td>• Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
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<th>Year 4</th>
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<th>Spring 2013</th>
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<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>• Conduct e-portfolio training for students, faculty, and staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
<td>Update the REAL Resource Center website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solicit the proposals for developing REAL experiences</td>
<td>Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
<td>Collect QEP assessment data and develop action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop the QEP Impact Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IX. Resources**

“Keeping it REAL” is going to be a critical component of achieving the strategic goals known as the Four E’s. It will provide one means by which Tarleton will become distinctive from her peer institutions. The framework of the QEP has been established to make the QEP completely feasible and realizable when properly supported and managed. Appropriate resources have been allocated in conjunction with the management and accountability structure described in the previous section. The details of the allocation of financial resources are presented in the QEP budget in Table 4.
Table 4: QEP Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating Budget</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(w/o support personnel)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Consulting (review of QEP proposal)</td>
<td>$6,300</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$6,300</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
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<td>$600</td>
<td>$14,700</td>
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<td>Off-Site Workshops/Conferences</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Site Training</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
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<td>Grants to develop Applied Learning Experiences (FY 13-15: Part will be used as matching funds)</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$67,000</td>
<td>$62,000</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$334,000</td>
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<td>QEP Related Expenses for Student Travel, Speakers, etc.</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$57,000</td>
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<td>Software/ Technology Support (prorated share of Chalk and Wire - 30%)*</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$152,000</td>
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<td>Experiential Scholarships (study abroad/away)</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$81,500</td>
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<td>Other Operating</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$69,000</td>
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<td>TOTAL <em>(w/o support personnel)</em></td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$30,300</td>
<td>$158,000</td>
<td>$161,500</td>
<td>$151,500</td>
<td>$143,100</td>
<td>$134,100</td>
<td>$780,500</td>
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<td><strong>Direct Support Personnel</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Five GAs to be shared by the Indirect Support Offices noted below (5 @ 9 mo)</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
<td>$315,000</td>
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<td>Student worker budget</td>
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<td>$12,000</td>
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<td>$12,000</td>
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<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>QEP Coordinator (60% 12 month appt) <em>(assume 2% annual increase in salary)</em></td>
<td>$26,517</td>
<td>$67,472</td>
<td>$68,821</td>
<td>$70,198</td>
<td>$71,601</td>
<td>$73,034</td>
<td>$74,494</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 admin. Assistant <em>(assume 2% annual increase in salary)</em></td>
<td>$19,680</td>
<td>$20,074</td>
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<td>$20,885</td>
<td>$21,303</td>
<td>$102,417</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL (Direct Support Personnel)</td>
<td>$26,517</td>
<td>$67,472</td>
<td>$163,501</td>
<td>$165,272</td>
<td>$167,077</td>
<td>$168,919</td>
<td>$170,797</td>
<td>$929,554</td>
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</table>
### Indirect Support Personnel Salaries and Benefits

*(assume 2% annual increase)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2027</th>
<th>2028</th>
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<td>Career Services</td>
<td>$20,368</td>
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<td>$21,191</td>
<td>$21,614</td>
<td>$22,047</td>
<td>$22,488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership/Service Learning</td>
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<td>$5,892</td>
<td>$6,009</td>
<td>$6,130</td>
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<td>Student Research</td>
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<td>$28,050</td>
<td>$28,611</td>
<td>$29,183</td>
<td>$29,767</td>
<td>$30,362</td>
<td>$174,023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Away</td>
<td>$40,056</td>
<td>$40,056</td>
<td>$40,857</td>
<td>$41,674</td>
<td>$42,507</td>
<td>$43,357</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL (Indirect Support Personnel Salaries and Benefits)</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$94,365</td>
<td>$94,772</td>
<td>$96,668</td>
<td>$98,601</td>
<td>$100,573</td>
<td>$102,585</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$28,517</strong></td>
<td><strong>$192,137</strong></td>
<td><strong>$416,273</strong></td>
<td><strong>$423,439</strong></td>
<td><strong>$417,178</strong></td>
<td><strong>$412,592</strong></td>
<td><strong>$407,482</strong></td>
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</table>

*Total cost/year - $50,000 (already budgeted to SACS account--"Chalk and Wire" software)*

---

### Quality Enhancement Plan Tarleton State University

- **Indirect Support Personnel Salaries and Benefits**
- **Career Services**
- **Leadership/Service Learning**
- **Student Research**
- **Study Away**
- **TOTAL (Indirect Support Personnel Salaries and Benefits)**
- **GRAND TOTAL**
The components of the budget are defined as the following:

- **External Consulting**: The QEP budget includes the use of an external consultant to review and provide comment on the QEP report prior to the submission to SACS.
- **Marketing**: Marketing the QEP and garnering awareness, support, and participation will be most intense during the 09-10 academic year; marketing funds will continue to be devoted to QEP but in lesser quantities in subsequent years as the initiative becomes self-sustaining.
- **Off-Site Workshops/Conferences**: Funds are allocated to send faculty and staff to off-site training for initiatives related to the QEP such as applied learning workshops. Once QEP initiatives are established, these funds will also support sending faculty, staff, and students to conferences to make presentations related to QEP efforts. These efforts start in the 09-10 school year since their relevance extends beyond the QEP.
- **On-Site Training**: Funds are allocated to bring expertise to campus to provide workshops and training related to QEP initiatives such as for technology, study abroad, service learning, and assessment. These efforts will begin in the 09-10 school year since their impact encompasses more than the QEP.
- **Grants to Develop applied learning experiences**: The largest portion of the funding will be allocated to competitive grants by faculty and staff to develop applied learning experiences.
- **QEP Related Expenses for Student Travel, Speakers, etc.**: This portion of the budget will be used to support grants for student travel on REAL field trips; student travel to applied learning related conferences; facilitate bringing guest speakers on applied learning topics to campus in collaboration with the University Speaker Symposium Series; and similar activities with student impact. This budget item excludes study away or abroad as these experiences are reported as indirect expenditures.
- **Software/Technology Support**: These funds will be used to support special software needs that may arise in applied learning experiences or to contribute to the license renewals of existing QEP related software.
- **Experiential Scholarships**: These funds will be available through the submission of an application to assist students with the expenses associated with study away or study abroad experiences.
- **Other Operating Expenses**: These funds will cover miscellaneous supplies and overhead incurred in the management and operations of the QEP.
- **Personnel**: QEP Coordinator, GA support for applied learning office, etc.
- **Indirect Support Personnel and Benefits**: These costs are associated with time dedicated to the QEP effort which is budgeted through other university accounts.

This budget demonstrates that support for the QEP is not within just a single entity, but from all around campus. This sharing of support, responsibility, and accountability
corroborates Tarleton’s capacity for the successful initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP.

X. Assessment
Part five of SACS Core Requirement 2.12 states the QEP will identify “goals and a plan to assess their achievement”. Assessment of the QEP will be in three areas: student learning, participation, and impact. This section will describe the measures and targets associated with each outcome as well as the implementation of closing the loop using action plans.

The assessment plan developed for the QEP is concise, comprehensive, and flexible. The data collected will show achievement of learning outcomes by students participating in applied learning. The plan outlines the methods by which the data will be collected as well as how it will be utilized in a closed loop manner to make adjustments to implementations and logistics to continually improve the results.

X.1. Outcomes
The student learning outcomes associated with the QEP were presented in the “Desired Student Learning Outcomes” section and are repeated here:

1. Connecting beyond their discipline:
   Students will describe how this applied learning experience helped them integrate their program of study across the curriculum.

2. Connecting to the real world:
   Students will apply their holistic curriculum/collegiate learning to a real-world experience.

3. Shaping their global view:
   Students will analyze how the applied learning experience prepared them to contribute meaningfully to a global society by broadening their view of their academic, political, social, cultural, and/or economic environments.

In addition to student learning outcomes, two additional outcomes will be used to evaluate the success of the QEP: participation and impact.

4. Participation
   Faculty, staff, and students will be actively engaged in the QEP.

5. Impact
   The QEP will impact alumni as well as recruiting by becoming a distinctive feature of Tarleton.

The strategies used to achieve the student learning outcomes are to develop and provide a variety of engaging applied learning experiences, encourage the students to
identify their own experiences, highlight student achievement, and require the students to think critically and articulate the effect and impact of the experience in each student learning area. This will then underscore for the students the value of their collegiate experience and the connections to life beyond the classroom.

The strategies used to achieve participation include incentives such as stipends, resources, recognition, and the intrinsic rewards of student success. To achieve impact the REAL experiences, student stories about their experiences, and assessment data related the learning outcomes will be highlighted and featured in the University literature and web presence.

X.2. Measures
The primary measure of achievement of the three learning outcomes will be the evaluation of the student’s written response to the corresponding reflection prompt:

1. Describe your applied learning experience. Relate essential knowledge acquired in various college classes which enhanced this experience. Provide specific examples of these “lessons learned” and analyze the explicit connections to your experience.
2. Explain how you made application of your college experience (academic curriculum and extra-curricular experiences) to the real-world. Provide insights gained through your actions/interactions in the applied learning experience.
3. Examine the development of your academic, political, social, cultural and economic awareness. Analyze the impact of your applied learning experience on the current state of your global awareness in each of these areas. Articulate the value placed on global awareness.

The reflection will be submitted to the student’s e-portfolio and evaluated using a rubric provided in Appendix IV. The rubric consists of a performance score related to each of the three SLOs, written organization and mechanics, and evidence of critical thinking.

The evaluation will be done on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing no evidence and 5 representing a well developed, in depth analysis. The achievement target for this measure is that 70% of the students will score an 80% or better on the reflection on the first attempt.

This assessment data will be collected by the faculty/staff member who is responsible for the experience. The data will be submitted to the appropriate applied learning office. The applied learning office will compile the data, some of which will apply to their administrative and learning objectives, and enter the data under the QEP entity in WeaveONLINE®.

The second measure will be a set of related NSSE items. NSSE provides national benchmarks to which engagement can be compared. The specific NSSE items which will be used for QEP assessment include

- Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE) composite score
• “Participated in a community based project as part of a regular course”
• “Number of written papers or reports fewer than 5 pages”
• “Coursework emphasizing synthesis and organizing of ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships”
• “Included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments”

The targets for these measures will be that Tarleton results meet or exceed Tarleton’s Carnegie peers, and Tarleton results meet or exceed the TAMUS universities excluding the flagship institution. Tarleton’s current results are lower than these two comparator groups in these categories. Another target is to demonstrate improvement as compared to Tarleton’s own scores prior to implementation.

The third measure will enable triangulation of the assessment data. This measure will be based on student focus group discussions of the value of the applied learning experiences. This process will allow evaluation of the impact and improvement of the processes, student incentives, and experience areas.

The fourth measure of student learning will be CLA results for students who participated in applied learning. The two targets are as follows:

• Students who participated in applied learning score better than students who did not;
• CLA scores for students who participated in applied learning should score higher than the Carnegie and TAMUS comparator group, corresponding with the NSSE results.

Measurement of participation will occur in a variety of ways:

• Measure 1: number of baccalaureate students completing at least one applied learning experience. The target for this measure will be a graduated increase from 10% in year 1 (10-11) to 100% by the end of year five (14-15).
• Measure 2: number of degree programs with at least one applied learning related SLO. The target for this measure will be a graduated increase from 10% in year 1 to 75% by the end of year five.
• Measure 3: number of graduates at each tier. This measure will take effect in year two, with a target for year 2 of 5% of baccalaureate graduates achieving bronze recognition or higher. By year five the target is 70% of baccalaureate graduates at bronze, 10% at silver, and 5% at gold.

Measures of impact objectives include alumni surveys, freshmen orientation surveys, and NSSE data. Questions related to the impact and availability of applied learning experiences will be added to the existing surveys. For alumni, the target is for the responses to indicate that applied learning enhanced their Tarleton baccalaureate experience; for freshmen, the target is for the responses to indicate that the applied learning opportunities influenced their decision to attend Tarleton. The number of
responses meeting this achievement level should increase each year for the duration of the QEP.

The assessment will be a closed-loop process. Targets that are not fully met will prompt implementation of action plans based upon consideration of the causes of missing the target. Targets that are fully met will prompt an evaluation of the target level. If the target is too low, it will be moved higher; if the target is appropriate, it will remain the same, allowing resources to be committed to unmet targets. The above listed targets may be adjusted upwards or downwards as the QEP implementation evolves. All assessment action will be managed by the REAL Council.

XI. Conclusion

Tarleton has developed a QEP that has potential for broad campus involvement and significant student impact. Participation in the QEP should be intrinsically rewarding for all involved and a key component in transforming the Tarleton baccalaureate degree into something truly distinctive. Every aspect of the QEP has been designed with a framework and specificity that makes it easily manageable and achievable. Furthermore the QEP is intentionally designed to be expandable and adaptable so that it may grow as the university grows.

The QEP is well integrated into the university mission. In addition, as part of the strategic planning for 2011-2015, the university has refined its mission statement to be

Tarleton State University provides an academically challenging education where learning is grounded in real-world experiences and effective teaching, research, scholarship, and service. As a member of The Texas A&M University System, Tarleton is rich in history and tradition while being committed to student success and diversity. Tarleton strives to develop moral and ethical thinkers, scholars, and leaders who contribute meaningfully and responsibly to a global society.

The commitment of the university to “Keeping it REAL” is clearly evident in the new mission statement, which is under review by the Texas A&M University System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The QEP supports and provides additional assessment data related to university undergraduate student learning outcomes including writing, critical thinking, and technology. These data will contribute to continuous improvement in student learning in those areas. In addition, the QEP will inspire refinement of existing curricula and experiences, thus contributing to continuous improvement of programs across campus.

While such a university-wide QEP is extremely ambitious, years of careful planning, input from every possible area of the campus, and serious budgetary analysis and commitment have made this QEP a visionary initiative. Such a sweeping yet practical and sustainable QEP will yield great results for Tarleton graduates in the years to come. Tarleton believes that the implementation of this transformative QEP will be the catalyst which will later be described as the beginning of a campaign which resulted in raising the
bar for Tarleton and setting our students apart as having had a truly remarkable addition to their collegiate experience which benefited their academic, experiential, and global growth.
References


Appendix I: Survey Results Sample

Faculty QEP Survey Results: Questions 1-5

- Effective verbal communication
- Effective written communication
- Human community and global welfare
- Ethical decision making
- Leadership qualities

Faculty QEP Survey Results: Questions 6-10

- Respect different viewpoints and cultures
- Respect contributions of the arts to society
- Effectively use technology
- Demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning
- Understand relationships among disciplines
Appendix II: Vitae for QEP Coordinator and Applied Learning Office Directors

Dr. Denise M. Martinez
Tarleton State University
College of Science and Technology
Engineering & Physics
(254) 968-9924  dmartinez@tarleton.edu

Education
Ph D, Texas A&M University, 2001.
   Major: Electrical Engineering
   Dissertation Title: Modeling and Control of the Czochralski Crystal Growth Process

MS, Texas A&M University, 1992.
   Major: Electrical Engineering
   Dissertation Title: Subband Coding of Monochrome and Color Images Over a Binary Symmetric Channel with Error Correction

BS, Texas A&M University, 1990.
   Major: Electrical Engineering

Professional Positions
Lecturer, Texas A&M University. (September 1, 1998 - December 31, 2000).

Faculty/Staff Rank
Starting Rank: Assistant Professor (January 15, 2001)
Associate Professor: September 1, 2008
Tenure Decision: September 1, 2007

Professional Memberships
American Society for Engineering Education.
Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers.
Sigma Xi - Tarleton Chapter. (January 2004 - Present).

Development Activities Attended
Workshop, "WEAVEonline Community Meeting," WEAVEonline. (Oct. 23, 2008).

**TEACHING**

**Teaching Experience**
University Seminar I & II; Foundations of Engineering I & II; Principles of Engineering I & III; Electronics; Signals and Systems; Linear Control Systems; Image Processing; Solid State Physics

**RESEARCH**

**Published Intellectual Contributions**

**Presentations Given**
Martinez, D. M., Becker, M., Konvicka, B. M, 10th TAMU Annual Assessment Conference, "The P’s and Q’s of a QEP," Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. (February 21, 2010).
Chilton, B., Styron, K., Martinez, D. SACS Commission on Colleges Annual Meeting, "The Light at the End of the Tunnel," Atlanta, GA. (Dec. 6, 2009)
**Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research**

Martinez, Denise M. (Principal), Barker, Tommy G. (Co-Principal), Bell Chacon, Peter (Co-Principal), Jones, Dennis G. (Co-Principal), White, Peter (Co-Principal), "Program to Increase College Opportunities and Successes," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, Federal, $598,000.00. (September 2007 - August 2012).

Martinez, Denise M. (Principal), Rinard, Bethany D. (Co-Principal), "Girls in Engineering College Camp," Sponsored by THECB, State, $11,111.11. (April 1, 2009 - August 31, 2009).


Martinez, Denise M. (Co-Principal), "Launching the Texas Engineering Education Pipeline: Deploying the Infinity Project Statewide," Sponsored by Texas Engineering and Technology Consortium (TETC), State, $23,014.00. (2002 - 2007).


**SERVICE**

**Department Service**

Committee Chair, Engineering Programs Oversight Committee. (Sept. 2007 - Present).

Committee Chair, Engineering Physics Oversight Committee. (July 2004 - May 2007).

Student Organization Advisor (Non-Professional Org), Engineers Club. (September 2003 - Present).

**College Service**

Committee Member, Science Olympiad. (2005 - Present).

**University Service**

Chairperson, Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Committee Member, Academic Assessment Committee. (January 2006 - Present).

University Senate Service, Faculty Senate. (September 1, 2005 - August 31, 2009). Chairperson, (September 1, 2007 - August 31, 2008).


**Professional Service**


**Public Service**

Guest Speaker, Expanding Your Horizons, American Association of University Women, Stephenville, TX. (November 2001 - November 2008).

Guest Speaker, Girl Scouts, Stephenville, TX. (October 2001 - October 2007).
Dr. Russell S. Pfau
Tarleton State University
College of Science and Technology
Biological Sciences
(254) 968-9761
pfau@tarleton.edu

Education
Ph D, Oklahoma State University, 2000.
  Major: Zoology
  Dissertation Title: The Major Histocompatibility Complex in the Hispid Cotton Rat (Sigmodon hispidus): Molecular Evolution, Evolutionary Toxicology, and Patterns of Geographic Variation

MS, Midwestern State University, 1994.
  Major: Biology
  Dissertation Title: A Late Pleistocene Mammal Fauna from Stonewall, County Texas

BS, Midwestern State University, 1992.
  Major: Biology

Professional Positions
Research Associate, Natural Science Research Laboratory, Texas Tech University. (July 2007 - Present).
Presidential Research Fellow, Oklahoma State University. (January 1, 1997 - August 31, 2000).
Adjunct Instructor, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City. (September 1, 1999 - December 20, 1999).

Faculty/Staff Rank
Starting Rank: Assistant Professor (September 1, 2000)
Associate Professor: September 1, 2007
Tenure Decision: September 1, 2007

Professional Memberships
Sigma Xi. (2003 - Present).
Southwestern Association of Naturalists. (1996 - Present).
Newsletter Editor, Executive Committee, Texas Society of Mammalogists. (2000 - Present).

Development Activities Attended

TEACHING

Teaching Experience
General Biology; Heredity; Parasitology; Genetics Research; Biological Problems;

Directed Student Learning
Served as a mentor to undergraduate students engaged in research.
Served as Master's Thesis Committee Chair to three Master's level graduate students.

RESEARCH

Published Intellectual Contributions
Refereed Journal Articles
Lee DE, Ammerman LK, Pfau RS, Ammerman LK. Accepted for Publication. Taxonomic status of the Davis Mountains Cottontail, Sylvilagus robustus, revealed by amplified fragment length polymorphism.
Thompson CW, Pfau RS, Choate JR, Genoways HH, Finck EJ. In Press. Identification and Characterization of the Contact Zone Between Two Species of Short-Tailed Shrew (Blarina) in Iowa and Missouri.

Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research
Pfau, Russell S. (Co-Principal), Richman, Adam (Principal), "Estimating the Intensity of Selection at the MHC," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, $157,650.00.
Pfau, Russell S. (Co-Principal), Richman, Adam (Principal), "Evolution of the MHC in Peromyscus," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, Federal, $415,532.00.
Pfau, Russell S. (Principal), "RUI: Characterization of a hybrid zone between divergent lineages of Sigmodon hispidus," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, Federal, $155,000.00.
Pfau, Russell S. (Principal), "RUI: Characterization of a hybrid zone between divergent lineages of Sigmodon hispidus," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, Federal, $190,802.00.
Pfau, Russell S. (Co-Principal), Sudman, Philip D (Principal), Rathburn, Harold B (Co-Principal), Bertis, Little (Co-Principal), Nelson, Allan Dale (Co-Principal), "Acquisition of an Automated DNA Analysis System for Biology Teaching and Research," Sponsored by National Science Foundation, Federal, $99,677.00. (1999 - Present).

Research in Progress
"Genetics Texas Kangaroo Rat" (On-Going)
AFLP and sequence analysis of this state threatened mammal.
Johnny A. Robinson  
Tarleton State University  
Office of Student Leadership Programs  
(254) 968-9497  
jrobinson@tarleton.edu

Education
MED, Tarleton State University, 2007.  
Major: Educational Administration

BS, Tarleton State University, 2002.  
Major: Exercise & Sports Studies  
Supporting Areas of Emphasis: History

Administrative Assignments
**Director, Student Leadership Programs**, August 1, 2008 - Present.  
Responsibilities: Manages and oversees a department with the initiative of developing student leaders through outside the classroom experiences.  
Mentors and coaches student leaders to help them reach affective decisions to lead their groups. Facilitation of Tarleton L.E.A.D.S. (Leadership, Engagement, Action, Development, Service) leadership certification program.

Professional Positions

**Academic**
Teacher/Coach, Santo ISD. (September 1, 2003 - July 15, 2005).

**Professional**
Director, Tarleton State University- Student Leadership Programs. (August 1, 2008 - Present).  
Senior Residential Coordinator, Tarleton State University- Residential Living & Learning. (June 1, 2007 - August 1, 2008).  
Residential Coordinator, Tarleton State University- Residential Living & Learning. (July 1, 2006 - June 1, 2007).  
Graduate Assistant, Tarleton State University- Residential Living & Learning. (January 6, 2006 - July 1, 2006).

Professional Memberships
 Association of Fraternity Advisors. (September 1, 2008 - September 1, 2009).  
National Association for Student Personnel Administrators. (September 1, 2008 - September 1, 2009).  
Association of College and University Chief Housing Officers International. (September 1, 2006 - September 1, 2008).

Development Activities Attended


**TEACHING**

**Non-Credit Instruction**

LEADS, Student Leadership Programs, 25 participants. (October 1st - Present).
Risk Management Training, Student Activities & Risk Management, 100 participants. (September 15, 2008 - Present).
Faculty Focus Groups, Student Activities & Student Leadership, 25 participants. (January 15, 2008 - Present).
Residential Leader Training, Residential Living & Learning, 45 participants. (February 15, 2006 - August 15, 2006).

**RESEARCH**

**Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research**

Hinga, Gilbert (Co-Principal), Anglin, Thad (Principal), Wallace, Elizabeth (Supporting), Robinson, Johnny (Supporting), "Can You Hear Me?: Student Centered Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Education and Support," Sponsored by Tarleton State University, Federal, $265,561.00.

**Research in Progress**

"Linking Classroom and Out-of-Classroom Experiences" (On-Going)
Identify ways to support classroom learning with out-of-classroom experiences. Preparing students for success beyond the gates of Tarleton.

**SERVICE**

**Department Service**

Committee Chair, Tarleton Round-Up Planning Committee. (February 2, 2009 - Present).

**College Service**

Committee Member, Presidential Encounter Planning. (November 15, 2008 - Present).

**University Service**

Committee Member, Homecoming. (August 30, 2008 - Present).
Ms. Darla K. Doty
Tarleton State University
Career Services
(254) 968-9487, ddoty@tarleton.edu

Education
MED, Tarleton State University, 2000.
Major: Counseling

BS, Texas Tech University, 1977.
Major: Agricultural Education, Communications option

Administrative Assignments
Director, Career Services, June 15, 2000 - Present.
Responsibilities: Provide leadership in planning, marketing, delivery and evaluation of career planning to students and alumni; Manage staff, student workers, and interns; Develop, evaluate and communicate the vision of Career Services; Provide career counseling, presentations and consultation.

Professional Positions
Director of Career Services, Tarleton State University. (June 2000 - Present).
Director of College Relations, Western Texas College. (June 1987 – Aug. 1994).

Professional Memberships
Metroplex Area Career Consortium, President-Elect; President, Past-President, (August 1999 - Present).

Development Activities Attended
Conference Attendance, "Capturing Our Heritage; Building a Legacy; Catching Our Dreams," Southwest Association of College of Employers (SWACE). (June 4, 2002 - June 7, 2002).

**RESEARCH**

**Presentations Given**


**Publications**

Amy Stevens, Randy Harp, James M Mueller, Darla Doty, Joe Cadle, Marlin Priddy, David Kattes. "Describing Characteristics Desired in Potential Employees—An Employer Survey; pending publication

**SERVICE**

**College Service**


Committee Chair, Services for Off-site Academic Programs Task Force. (Nov. 2006 – Jan. 2007).

Committee Member, Texas A&M Student Affairs Symposium Committee. (Jan. 2002 – June 2002).

**University Service**

Committee Member, Associate VP for Marketing/Communications Search committee. (August 1, 2009 - Present).

Committee Member, Commencement. (September 2008 - Present).

Committee Chair, University Discipline Appeals Committee. (Sept. 2008 - Present).

Committee Member, Financial Aid Appeals. (September 2003 - Present).

Committee Member, Interdisciplinary Degree Programs. (Sept. 2002 - Present).

Student Organization Advisor (Professional Org), Sigma Alpha. (January 2002 - Present).


Committee Member, Advising Center Search Committee. (March 2008 - May 2008).

Committee Member, Director of Student Leadership Search Committee. (April 2007 - June 2007).
Professional Service
Committee Chair, Metroplex Area Career Center Consortium, DFW area, TX. (January 2008 - December 2008).
Officer, President/Elect/Past, Metroplex Area Career Center Consortium, DFW area, TX. January 2002 - December 2005).

Public Service
Cross Timbers Family Services (CTFS), Officer, President/Elect/Past, Stephenville, Texas. (May 2005 - Present).
Board Member, Foster's Home for Children, Stephenville, TX. (December 2004 - Present).
Board Member, Emergency Food and Shelter (ESFP), Stephenville, TX. (January 2000 - Present).
Hotline and Victims' Assistance volunteer, Cross Timbers Family Services, Stephenville, TX. (June 2000 - May 2005).

Awards and Honors
Service, Community
Woman of the Year Nominee, Cross Timbers Business and Professional Women. (October 19, 2003).

Service, University
Outstanding Student Services award, Student Services Division. (May 1998).
Dr. Marilyn M. Robitaille  
Tarleton State University  
College of Liberal and Fine Arts  
English and Languages  
(254) 968-9281  
robitaille@tarleton.edu

**Education**

- **Ph D**, Texas Woman's University, 1995.  
  Major: English  
  Supporting Areas of Emphasis: Rhetoric  
  Dissertation Title: Earning the Right to Speak Her Mind: Etiological Authority in the Prose Narratives of Aphra Behn


  Major: English-French

**Administrative Assignments**

- Director, Office of International Programs, January 2007 - Present.  
  Responsibilities: Administration of all phases of international student acculturation and study abroad programming

**Professional Positions**

- Teacher, Mineral Wells High School. (November 1, 1978 - May 31, 1982).  

**Licensures and Certifications**


**Professional Memberships**

- Conference of College Teachers of English. (September 1, 1987 - Present).

**Awards and Honors**

- Zonta Woman of the Year, Zonta Club of Mineral Wells.

**TEACHING**

**Teaching Experience**

- Tarleton State University  
  - Readings in Adolescent Literature; Adv Studies in Secondary English; British Literature;  
  - English Seminar; Film Adapt Graphic Novels; Thesis; Methods of Bib and Res Analysis, 1 course.
Awards and Honors
O.A. Grant Teaching Award, Tarleton State University. (May 15, 1999).

Media Contributions
Newspaper
Stephenville Empire Tribune. (April 15, 1999).

Other
Appendix III: Applied Learning Application

**Keeping it REAL:**
A goal of “Keeping it REAL” is to provide experiences that expand and strengthen the student’s ability to connect and value the relationship between their complete curriculum and experiences beyond the classroom.

**REAL Student Learning Outcomes:**
1. **Connecting beyond their discipline:** Students will describe how this applied learning experience helped them integrate their program of study across the curriculum.

2. **Connecting to the real world:** Students will apply their holistic curriculum/collegiate learning to a real-world experience.

3. **Shaping their global view:** Students will analyze how the applied learning experience prepared them to contribute meaningfully to a global society by broadening their view of their academic, political, social, cultural, and/or economic environments.

**Applied Learning Definitions:**
- See the REAL website, www.tarleton.edu/real for characteristics and examples of applied learning under each area.

**Requirements:**
- Faculty/staff supervisors must justify how the applied learning experience addresses all three QEP student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- Faculty/staff supervisors must have received e-portfolio training.
- Faculty/staff supervisors must provide feedback on the content and quality of the artifact(s) and provide an opportunity for students to improve their e-portfolio content.
- Students must provide at least one written artifact in their e-portfolio that answers, at a minimum, three prompts related to the SLOs.
- Students must provide at least one additional artifact in their e-portfolio such as a poster presentation, video, photostory, or PowerPoint presentation related to the experience.
- Students must meet any additional requirements specified by the relevant applied learning office(s). See www.tarleton.edu/real for details.

*Submit this application to the REAL Council via email (real@tarleton.edu) or campus mail (attn: Denise Martinez, Box T-0390), at least one month prior to the start of the course or experience.*
Application for Applied Learning Experiences

1. General Information

Instructor/Supervisor: ________________________________

Department/Division: ________________________________

Is this experience being done for course credit? (circle/boldface/underline one)

Yes   No

If this is for course credit, provide the following information:

Subject Prefix: _________ Course number: _________ CRN: _________

Course title: ________________________________

Credits: _______ Semester/Year: _________________________

This experience will repeat every (circle/boldface/underline one):

none   semester   year

2. Have you (the supervisor/instructor) been trained in utilization of the e-portfolio system? (circle/boldface/underline one)   Yes   No

3. Which type of applied learning experience is this (check all that apply):

_____ Undergraduate research
_____ Service learning
_____ Leadership
_____ Internship
_____ Study abroad/away

4. Briefly describe the applied learning experience.

5. Estimate the number of hours the participant will spend on the activity. _________
6. Justify how the applied learning experience addresses each of the three REAL student learning outcomes (SLOs):
   a. Connecting beyond their discipline:

   b. Connecting to the real-world:

   c. Shaping their global view:

7. List any partnering faculty, staff, disciplines, organizations, companies, etc.

8. What additional artifacts or products will be submitted as part of this experience (examples include research paper, photostory, presentation, etc.)?

9. Attach a syllabus/contract for the course/experience that includes:
   a. A statement notifying the student that this activity is being conducted as an applied learning experience and a description of how that will be accomplished.
   b. The addition of the REAL student learning outcomes to the course outcomes (see www.tarleton.edu/real for SLOs defined by the REAL offices).
   c. The inclusion of the e-portfolio reflection as a required component of their grade.
   d. The inclusion of at least one additional e-portfolio artifact as a required component of their grade.

10. By offering this course/experience as an applied learning experience, you agree to:
    a. Fulfill the conditions set forth in the syllabus/contract.
    b. Evaluate the required reflection according to the REAL rubric.
    c. Require and evaluate at least one additional artifact related to the experience.
    d. Provide feedback to the student on their reflection and other e-portfolio submissions so as to help them develop a quality e-portfolio.

Printed name of instructor: ____________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________________

(electronic signature is accepted)
Appendix IV: Assessment Tools
Prompts and rubric

**QEP PROMPT FOR ALL APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCES:**

**Across the Curriculum**
**Highest SLO indicator:** The reflection moves beyond simple description of the experience to an analysis of how the experience contributed to student understanding of the connectedness of material across the curriculum (know).

**Prompt:** Describe your applied learning experience. Relate essential knowledge acquired in various college classes which enhanced this experience. Provide specific examples of these "lessons learned" and analyze the explicit connections to your experience.

**Curriculum to the Real-world**
**Highest SLO indicator:** The reflection moves beyond simple description of the experience to an analysis of how the experience contributed to student understanding of the connectedness between the student’s academic experience and meaningful real-world application (do).

**Prompt:** Explain how you made application of your college experience (academic curriculum and extra-curricular experiences) to the real-world. Provide insights gained through your actions/interactions in the applied learning experience.

**World/Global View**
**Highest SLO indicator:** The reflection demonstrates ability of the student to question their own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions and define new modes of thinking as a result (value).

**Prompt:** Examine the development of your academic, political, social, cultural and economic awareness. Analyze the impact of your applied learning experience on the current state of your global awareness in each of these areas. Articulate the value placed on global awareness.
### QEP RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Across the Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>The reflection moves beyond simple description of the experience to an analysis of how the experience contributed to student understanding of the connectedness of material across the curriculum.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates how this applied learning experience helped the student realize the connectedness of material across the curriculum.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates how this applied learning experience helped the student realize the connectedness of material in two areas of the curriculum.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates how this applied learning experience helped the student realize the connectedness of material in one area of the curriculum.</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum to the Real-world</td>
<td></td>
<td>The reflection moves beyond simple description of the experience to an analysis of how the experience contributed to student understanding of the connectedness between the student's academic experience and meaningful real-world application.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates how this applied learning experience helped the student realize connections between the student's academic experience and meaningful real-world application of this academic knowledge.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates how this applied learning experience helped the student realize connections between the student's academic experience and a general real-world application of this academic knowledge.</td>
<td>The reflection is a simple description of the applied learning experience and a general connection between the student's academic experience and a real-world application of this academic knowledge.</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World/Global View</td>
<td></td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates ability of the student to question their own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions and define new modes of thinking as a result.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates ability of the student to consider their own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions and define modes of thinking as a result.</td>
<td>The reflection demonstrates ability of the student to list their own possible biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions.</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

74
| Organization and Mechanics | Well written, clear organization, uses standard English grammar, contains no spelling errors | Well written, clear organization, uses standard English grammar, contains minor spelling errors | Clear organization of thought, uses standard English grammar, and contains spelling errors which distract from the content | Organization of material is confusing to the reader, standard English grammar applied, but mistakes distract from the purpose of the reflection, contains spelling errors which distract from the content | No evidence |

| Evidence of Critical Thinking | Reflection includes application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Arguments are clear and show depth of insight into theoretical issues, originality of treatment, and relevance. Unusual and unique insights expressed. Arguments are well supported. | Reflection includes application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Arguments are stated but show lack of depth of insight into theoretical issues, originality of treatment, and relevance. Insights are expressed and arguments are supported. | Reflection includes at least one of the following: application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation. Arguments are stated in simplistic terms. Insights are expressed but not supported. | Reflection implies at least one of the following: application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation. Arguments are missing. Insights are expressed but not supported or related to the experience. | No evidence |

General Guidelines:
Each submission will be scored on all five categories.
Submission of supporting documentation is encouraged.
Submitted to Chalk and Wire on/before stated due date.
Appendix V: Index of Acronyms

CLA  Collegiate Learning Assessment
FSSE  Faculty Survey of Student Engagement
MOU  Memorandum of Understanding
NSSE  National Survey of Student Engagement
QEP  Quality Enhancement Plan
REAL  Real-world Experiences Applied to Learning
SACS  Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SLO  Student Learning Outcome
TAMUS  Texas A&M University System