COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

As a comprehensive urban university seeking to distinguish itself from other institutions in the state and region, a conspicuous opportunity lies in enhancing UNF’s existing strength in the area of Community-Based Transformational Learning (CBTL). As an institution that defines itself on cultivating high-quality undergraduate learning experiences through “Transformational Learning Opportunities,” UNF’s most compelling QEP might be devoted to expanding its already existing native focus on community-based learning. Community-based learning includes undergraduate internship and field placement experiences, many of the funded collaborative research projects of the UNF faculty and student community, as well as service work undertaken by the student-government volunteer center and fraternities and sororities off campus. A recent campus-wide survey conducted by the newly-formed UNF Community Outreach Council revealed that while there are literally thousands of off-campus academic engagements by UNF students in the surrounding urban metropolis on record, there is currently no oversight nor centralized means of accountability for learning outcomes assessment in these prominent student engagements (see Appendix B).

“Community-based learning” is an emergent focus for many high-profile institutions in higher education and represents a clear opportunity for distinction, specifically by earning a “voluntary” Carnegie designation granted to universities able to meet established criteria. As reflected in such documents as the Boyer Commission Report titled “Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research Universities,” student engagement in real-world settings is a hallmark of excellence in higher education. As noted in a recent QEP proposal by the University of South Florida, for example, “Portland State University successfully used its location in a major metropolitan area to distinguish itself from the Oregon “flagship” universities by integrating service-learning into its general education requirements. ... This curriculum has put Portland State in US News and World Report’s list of top ranked schools with “academic programs that lead to academic success.” Duke University also recently adopted an undergraduate research QEP focused on undergraduate community-based learning “currently being adopted by other noted research universities such as Princeton and Cornell” (ibid). In a fully-adopted QEP project, Rice University’s establishment of a “Center for Civic Engagement,” “Civic Experience Program,” and “Civic Inquiry Program,” exploits the University’s proximity to the Houston metropolitan area to the benefit of both students and the Houston community. As stated by Rice University: “While the value of undergraduate research is well-established and widely understood, there is a growing consensus in higher education that the benefits of research are enhanced when research intersects with real-world experience through service-learning and community-based research” (Rice QEP, 2006).

UNF’s proximity to the Jacksonville metropolitan area and its existing far-reaching connections to organizations throughout the city and region, make a QEP focused on community-based transformational learning an ideal opportunity for distinction.
SECTION 1: GOALS

University Mission and the QEP

The University of North Florida is a public comprehensive urban university that has a long-standing commitment to serving the needs and addressing the problems of the urban community and region. This commitment has been reaffirmed and is explicitly and repeatedly articulated in the current strategic plan of the University.

This proposed QEP, centered on community-based learning, research, and practice, fits squarely with the mission and strategic plan of the University and Academic Affairs. The current mission statement of the University of North Florida includes the following passage: “The University of North Florida’s primary focus is on instruction, informed by scholarly activity and a commitment to community involvement.”

The four principles of the University Strategic Plan -- excellence, focus, relevance, and accountability -- would also be advanced by this QEP in the following ways:

First, UNF’s commitment to community-based learning will enhance academic excellence and student learning by expanding student participation in community-based experiential learning thus strengthening the relationship between theory and practice through the purposeful engagement of academic knowledge. Second, UNF’s commitment to community-based learning will focus academic resources toward the university goals of community involvement and expansion of student opportunities for transformational learning. Third, UNF’s commitment to community-based learning will promote relevance by facilitating connections and relationships between the academic mission and larger external communities. Fourth, UNF’s commitment to community-based learning will strengthen the accountability of UNF as a public urban university through concerted initiatives that address the needs and concerns of the region and state.

One of the four goals of Academic Affairs is to “Advance community outreach and partnerships” through the establishment of a “center for community-based learning to advance and oversee initiatives designed to increase civic awareness and engagement of students”.

Finally, the university core mission statement includes the following passage: “UNF’s commitment to individualized attention includes opportunities to participate in life-changing experiences such as internships, study abroad, on- and off-campus programs and dynamic research projects.” Student participation in community-based-learning activities would advance this “branding promise”.

Overall, the Community-Based Transformational Learning QEP would enhance the profile of UNF in the community and the importance (“relevance”) of the work carried out by students, faculty, and staff, and better define UNF’s role in the community at large.
Goals

This Community Based Transformational Learning QEP will build on the University’s existing Mission Statement and Strategic Plan by focusing on the following goals:

1. Produce students from UNF that have deepened their learning through the opportunity to participate in authentic real-life community-based settings (educational, cultural, civic, social, and business) relevant to their academic program and professional career.

2. Create the administrative and curricular infrastructure that will facilitate, support, and sustain community-based learning across the entire curriculum.

3. Enhance the rigor of the UNF curriculum through the linking of student learning outcomes with authentic real world community-based experiences.

4. Make publicly visible the commitment to and centrality of community-based learning and civic engagement at UNF through the documentation and promotion of all currently existing community-based learning and outreach activities (see Appendix B) engaged in by UNF students, faculty, and staff.

5. Formalize and prioritize UNF’s already-existing commitment to civic engagement as a vehicle for transformational learning opportunities that are uniquely available to UNF students at a metropolitan university.

6. Highlight, cultivate, and document those community-based learning activities that contribute directly to the career development, and employment opportunities, of UNF students.

7. Establish a UNF Center for Community-Based Learning as the administrative unit responsible for coordinating and promoting community-based learning at UNF.

Goals and Student Learning

The CBTL-QEP rests on the assumption that student learning is based on the application of knowledge through active involvement and engagement in relevant authentic learning activities (support and evidence for this relationship is provided in Section 3 below). The proposed QEP also builds on the institution’s TLO initiative which shares the assumption that deep and transformational learning requires such extra and co-curricular opportunities and experiences. The general CBTL-QEP goals outlined above address student-level learning outcomes as well as the institutional-level infrastructure and processes required to create, support and sustain community-based student experiences that will, in turn, advance the specific student learning outcomes delineated in Section 3.
SECTION 2: BENEFITS AND BROAD-BASED INVOLVEMENT

Benefits for the University and its Students

The UNF Community-Based Transformational Learning QEP will enhance the University’s already existing presence in the surrounding metropolitan area while more fully empowering its students to succeed in the real world by further capitalizing on UNF’s current community involvements (see Appendix B) and metropolitan location.

This QEP will also lay the groundwork for establishing UNF as a “Community Engagement Institution” through the elective Carnegie classification system. Unlike the other Carnegie classifications based on the analysis of institutional data thresholds, the Community Engagement classification is a voluntary designation that involves the submission of additional data in support of the designation. The implementation of this QEP will put into place the necessary “curricular” and “outreach and partnerships” infrastructure for a “community engagement” designation. This will place UNF in a select group of institutions with a demonstrated committed to community involvement and civic engagement.

Students will benefit from this QEP through the institutionalization of an academic learning environment, across the entire curriculum, which provides opportunities for authentic hands-on learning experiences in settings relevant to both their major area of study and their professional career aspirations.

Involvement of Multiple Constituencies.

The CBTL-QEP will involve the widest range of constituencies both on and off the UNF campus. First, every academic program in the university will participate through the development or further refinement of community-based curricula for its students. Second, within the arena of Academic Affairs, other offices and programs that will both participate and be impacted are Undergraduate Studies, the Graduate School, the Undergraduate Academic Enrichment Program, the Undergraduate Research Program, the Office of Faculty Enhancement, and the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs. Third, as a QEP that defines student learning and development broadly, the scope and impact will extend into the realm of student affairs and student life through co-curricular community-based leadership and volunteer opportunities, as well as career services and development. Fourth, this QEP project will obviously involve and have implications for the entire Jacksonville community of agencies, organizations, businesses, and non-profit entities. The university will be reaching out to the community, and the community will have a well-defined access point from which to draw intellectual and social capital from UNF. Finally, this project should greatly enhance the potential for institutional advancement as the activities of the university will be visible and prominent, and their will be some clearly identified areas for soliciting external support.

The CBTL-QEP also intends to draw on the significant number of UNF centers that engage in research, outreach and service, and which provide students with learning and
research opportunities in the community. These include the Center for Community Initiatives, the Center for Criminal Justice Policy Research, the Center for Research and Consulting in Statistics, the Ethics Center, the Environmental Center, the Public Opinion Research Laboratory, the Small Business Development Center, the Center for Economic Education, the Local Economic Indicators Project, and the Florida Institute of Education.

SECTION 3: STUDENT LEARNING

Because the QEP is based on SACS Core Requirement 2.12 that prescribes a course of action for institutional improvement centering on student learning, we provide the greatest detail on the relationship between the proposed CBTL-QEP and the student learning process.

The CBTL-QEP Design and Student Learning

A Community-Based Transformational Learning QEP is based upon the well-established literature documenting the significant impact on student learning of “engaged pedagogies”. In this case, the engagement is associated with the real world application of knowledge, “situated cognition”, learning and practice in professional settings, experiential learning, and civic involvement. This initiative would facilitate the development of community-based engaged pedagogies in all academic programs and curricula. These could take the form of (but are not limited to) community-based research projects, service-learning, fieldwork, internships, and action research. Each program would institute community-based learning experiences most consistent with disciplinary student learning priorities and outcomes.

While this QEP proposal fits squarely with UNF’s mission as an urban comprehensive university to promote community involvement and civic engagement, it is designed, first and foremost, to strengthen student learning. Two of the most significant recent developments in higher education involve the scientific study of human learning and the recognition of the importance of student engagement.

Science of Human Learning. There is a growing literature on the science of human cognition (see Branson, Brown, and Cocking 1999) and, based on this science, the conditions which enhance and deepen student learning. If we conceptualize student learning as involving the retention of information and disciplinary knowledge, and the ability to transfer what is learned to new and different settings, it is clear that confining education to the memorization and recall of information is insufficient. That is, retention and transfer require not simply content knowledge but active participation in a process whereby that information and knowledge is used and applied. In this way it is more likely to be retained and able to be used in subsequent contexts. Such deep and durable learning is based on “significant learning experiences” (Fink 2003) that combine foundational knowledge with application, integration, a human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. Such a process requires an environment and context in which one is able to take the foundational knowledge of a discipline or profession and apply and
integrate that knowledge in a way that promotes human development, commitment, and reflection.

Research on human learning has emphasized the context in which knowledge and expertise is developed and applied. The concept of “situated cognition” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid 1989) suggests that the process of understanding and learning hinges on the context or situation in which it is embedded. Ideally, learners should be situated in real life or authentic environments in which they are able to practice behaviors and apply theories and concepts (Schell & Black 1997). Likewise, Kolb’s (1984) model of “experiential learning” links learning with a process of experience, reflection, integration, and application of knowledge. All of these approaches distinguish between “know what” and “know how”, or “knowing” and “doing”. The “doing”, and the development of “know-how”, require a location and environment where students can practice and apply the tools of their discipline. There is a strong and logical connection between these arguments for situated cognition, or experiential learning, and community-based academic activities such as service-learning (Wolfson and Willinsky 1998; Eyler 2002). In short, the community serves as the venue for situated cognition and experiential learning.

**Student Engagement.** A second major development in higher education centers on the critical importance of “student engagement” for student learning and success. Student engagement is defined as “the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom, and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities” (Kuh 2003). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is currently the most widely-used institutional-level instrument to assess student involvement in activities that are correlated with academic success, retention, graduation, and learning gains. An analysis of institutions that have performed better than expected, given their student and institutional characteristics, in terms of graduation rates and measures of student engagement point to the importance of employing “community connections to enhance teaching and learning both in and out of the classroom” (Kuh et al. 2005).

Two of the leading “pedagogies of engagement” (Edgerton 1997) are service-learning and community-based research. Service-learning is defined as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby 1996:5). This definition of service-learning is broad enough to encompass a wide-range of community-based activities relevant to an equally wide-range of academic programs and professional careers. There is strong evidence for the applicability of service-learning activities across the entire university curriculum (Madden 2000; American Association of Higher Education). Participation in service-learning has been associated with improved ability to apply and use disciplinary principles as well as gains in critical thinking, leadership skills, and personal efficacy (Pascarella and Terinzini 2005; Eyler and Giles 1999).

Community-based research is another experiential learning experience that carries all the benefits associated with undergraduate research while adding the connection to problems and issues facing the community. It combines “active learning and problem-centered pedagogy” with “experiential and intellectual learning strategies”
Such research also typically involves a collaborative relationship among the faculty, student researchers, and community-based organizations and agencies. In this sense, the results of the research have greater relevance for understanding and/or addressing problems and challenges facing the community. Students may also combine both a service-learning project with the collection of data (Stoeker 2002; Nyden 2003). This QEP will promote the integration of service-learning and community-based research into the curriculum in all programs and departments.

**Current Community-Based Activities at UNF.** It is important to emphasize the existing community-based activities that are currently underway and have become an institutionalized feature in many departments and programs at UNF (see Appendix B). These are typically organized into the curriculum as requirements in the form of fieldwork, internships, coops, and practicum. They are most common in the pre-professional programs and contribute to all the positive cognitive learning outcomes outlined above. In addition, they allow students the opportunity to apply and develop knowledge in unstructured and unpredictable settings. For example, the work of nursing students in a hospital or rehabilitation center involves “pedagogies of uncertainty” (Shulman 2005) characterized by problem-solving situations that cannot be scripted. “One might therefore say that professional education is about developing pedagogies to link ideas, practices, and values under conditions of inherent uncertainty that necessitate not only judgment in order to act, but also cognizance of the consequences of one's action. In the presence of uncertainty, one is obligated to learn from experience…it's routine, yet never the same; it's habitual, but pervaded by uncertainty” (Shulman 2005: 19-20). This QEP will highlight, organize, and promote these existing activities as a fundamental feature of a UNF education and also use these existing program components as models to disseminate to other academic programs throughout the university.

**Other Student Development Outcomes.** In addition to the role played by community-based academic activities in deepening student learning, they also promote several other valued student outcomes.

First, community-based learning can shape *civic and ethical responsibility*. Placing students into the community -- and exposing them to the issues, challenges, and problems facing different segments of the population -- fosters civic awareness and an appreciation for public service and community involvement. It also shapes an awareness of public affairs that can contribute to higher levels of political participation and citizenship (Astin 1997; Colby et al. 2003). Student leadership skills may also be enhanced through community-based activities.

Second, community-based learning contributes to *professional and career development* that enhances student’s prospects for employment and career success. Many community-based activities involve placement in organizations and agencies that provide work-related experiences in settings directly relevant to students’ career aspirations. Research on the impact of these work-related experiences during the undergraduate years indicates that they have a positive impact on subsequent labor market receptivity and employment conditions such as fulltime job offers, on-site interviews, technical responsibility, job satisfaction, salary, and career progress (Jagacinski et al. 1986; Kysor and Pierce 2000; Schurrman, Pangborn & McCintic 2005).
A 2006 experiential education survey, conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, queried employers about their internship and hiring practices. From the class of 2005, employers reported that the majority of their college hires came to them with internship experience, and for the majority (76%) the primary purpose of their internship and coop programs is to recruit new employees. Employers also reported that employees with internship and coop experience have higher retention rates among their college hires.

Third, there is an ongoing project, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, exploring the hypothesis that engaged learning in community-based activities may reduce depression and substance abuse among college students (Swaner 2005). The AACU Bringing Theory to Practice project has sponsored and funded demonstration sites at colleges and universities across the country to create civic engagement programs that can also empirically assess whether involvement in such activities reduces the prevalence of mental health problems and destructive behaviors. Given the rise in reported mental disorders among college students, the growing concern with student mental health associated with the Virginia Tech tragedy, and the Healthy Campus 2010 initiative at UNF, it is worth noting that this QEP might potentially contribute to our students’ general well-being.

**Student Learning Outcomes Enabled By The CBTL-QEP**

It is important that a QEP enhance and extend, rather than simply add to, those existing student learning outcomes at UNF that have been identified in the General Education curriculum and the major academic programs. At present all academic programs have established Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs) that contain student learning outcomes pertaining to disciplinary content knowledge, critical thinking, and communication skills. The CBTL QEP will enhance the following cognitive student learning outcomes:

1. Students will develop and enhance their **discipline specific knowledge and skills** through
   a. The identification of appropriate theoretical and scientific literature used to inform a deeper understanding of community based issues and problems
   b. The identification of appropriate methods and strategies for researching and addressing community based issues and problems
   c. Demonstration of how disciplinary knowledge is applied to practical problems

2. Students will develop and enhance their **critical thinking skills** through
   a. The critical analysis of community issues and problems that can benefit from the application of disciplinary knowledge and practice
   b. The development of approaches and solutions to community issues and problems
   c. The demonstration of problem-solving skills in unstructured real world settings
3. Students will develop and enhance their **communications skills** through
   a. Communication and interaction with diverse audiences and constituencies in the community
   b. Demonstration of the ability to communicate – in oral and written form – research results, analysis, and recommended strategies to address community issues and problems

In addition to enhancing and deepening the realization of existing student learning outcomes included in the General Education program and Academic Learning Compacts, the CBTL-QEP will advance the following additional student developmental outcomes:

4. Students will develop and enhance their appreciation of **community engagement and civic responsibility** through
   a. Direct hands-on involvement in organizations and agencies that are an integral part of the social and economic fabric of the community
   b. The building of social capital that results from collaborative efforts among community institutions and organizations

5. Students will develop and enhance their **professional and career development** through
   a. The ability to use and apply disciplinary and professional knowledge in real-life organizational and community settings
   b. The placement in community organizations that can translate into career networking and employment opportunities

**SECTION 4: INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Practicality of and Institutional Capability for the CBTL-QEP**

The great advantage of the CBTL-QEP is that it builds upon the existing academic program infrastructure currently in place at UNF while extending the classroom, and student learning, into the community. It’s practicality, and universality, lies in the fact that every academic program can further integrate its curriculum with community-based learning activities. In many colleges and programs, community-based learning is already an integral part of the curriculum through internships, fieldwork, coops, and practica. However, these community-based activities have not been organized and consolidated into a unified initiative that communicates the centrality of community engagement to the mission of UNF. Academic programs also often lack the necessary administrative support structure required to effectively initiate, formalize, monitor, and sustain community-based activities. Finally, for academic programs hoping to develop community-based activities, there has been no university-level administrative apparatus to support and assist in establishing such programs.
Resources for the CBTL-QEP

For all the reasons cited above, the CBTL-QEP will require the creation of a Center for Community-Based Learning to not only address the existing gaps in the community-based learning activities currently underway, but also to extend and support the institution-wide commitment to community-based learning. The Center for Community-Based Learning would serve as the clearinghouse and fulcrum for all community-based activities at the University of North Florida.

Creation of a Center for Community-Based Learning. The proposed Center represents the most significant resource requirement that must be in place for the CBTL-QEP to achieve its objectives. The development of this type of center is long overdue for a public urban comprehensive university, such as UNF, that includes community involvement as a central part of its mission. The center would clearly signal and advance the university’s commitment to community involvement and civic engagement. The Center would develop and facilitate mutually beneficial relations and partnerships between university and community members and, most significant for this proposal, provide our students with opportunities for transformational learning and academic enrichment.

The Center for Community-Based Learning will be responsible for the following:

- develop and manage a systematic long-term plan that will consolidate and inventory the various community-based and outreach activities currently underway in various departments, programs and colleges;
- document and provide co-curricular transcript recognition of student community-based activities;
- expand and promote the number and range of community-based opportunities;
- network with community agencies, organizations, businesses, and not-for-profit entities to establish mutually beneficial arrangements for UNF students and the Jacksonville community;
- serve as the UNF point of contact for students, faculty, and community organizations interested in forging collaborative relationships;
- seek funding opportunities to support civic engagement and community-based partnerships;
- develop methods for assessing the success and continuous improvement of community-based efforts particularly regarding student learning outcomes;
- and work with the Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Studies to integrate community-based learning into the undergraduate experience of UNF students.

In addition to creating an organizational unit within the Office of Academic Affairs/Undergraduate Studies, and the provision of physical office space, there will be some staffing needs as well. This will include a Director of the Center for Community-Based Learning, a faculty coordinator (half-time) who will work with programs and departments to integrate community-based learning into the curriculum, two fulltime coordinators, and a fulltime program assistant. It is assumed that such staffing would be added incrementally over several years. While the creation and staffing of a Center for
Community-Based Learning represents a significant expense associated with this project, we suggest that this QEP be viewed as an occasion to put into place an administrative infrastructure that is conspicuously absent, is a necessary condition for the realization of the university’s community-based mission, will strengthen compliance with SACS criteria 3.3.1 regarding assessment of student learning, and is a routine component of an urban public university. It should also be noted that the funding for a Director of the Center has already been included in the Academic Affairs 2007-08 budget.

Below is a tentative estimate of the various costs associated with the QEP project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director, Center for Community-Based Learning*</td>
<td>Lead, direct, and manage the new center</td>
<td>Covered* ($115,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-Time Faculty Member</td>
<td>Work with faculty on curricular integration</td>
<td>$18,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator – Credit Bearing Activities</td>
<td>Monitor and coordinate credit bearing</td>
<td>$38,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator – Volunteer Activities</td>
<td>community-based learning activities</td>
<td>$38,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Assistant</td>
<td>Office support for center</td>
<td>$25,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Training</td>
<td>Faculty workshops</td>
<td>$10,000/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Development Funds</td>
<td>Faculty stipend for course design/re-design</td>
<td>$10,000/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This position has been included in the Academic Affairs 07-08 budget  
** Does not includes benefits

**Plan for Initiating the CBTL-QEP Design and Monitoring Progress**

The CBTL-QEP will be initiated at UNF through the following actions:

1. The CBTL-QEP will need to be named for the purpose of promotion and dissemination to the university and Jacksonville community. Some universities have employed terms such as “commun-iversity” or “univer-city” as a way to highlight the centrality of the community connection to their mission.

2. The Center for Community-Based Learning will need to be created and staffed. The Center will serve as the administrative unit conducting much of the planning and strategy for the QEP implementation in consultation with colleges, academic departments, and relevant faculty governance committees.

3. An analysis of the entire undergraduate curriculum – including lower division General Education and upper-division programs of study – will need to be conducted to determine existing, and potential areas for, integration of community-based learning opportunities.

4. An inventory will be created of the existing academic programs that currently include community-based learning as a required part of the curriculum. These
activities will need to be highlighted and used as models for dissemination among other college and department programs.

5. A strategy will be developed to incorporate community-based learning opportunities and requirements in those departments and programs that do not currently include such experiences as part of their program.

6. Community-based learning activities and courses will be developed for the General Education program through Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs) and stand-alone courses. While more advanced community-based intellectual experiences will be included in a student’s major program of study, UNF must introduce the importance of community engagement and involvement at the earliest stages of a students academic career through the General Education program. The Center will work closely with the General Education Council in this effort.

7. The Office of Faculty Enhancement (OFE) will provide resources and workshops on the best pedagogical practices for all the different varieties of community-based learning from community-based research to internships, and the most effective methods for integrating these activities into the academic curriculum. In collaboration with the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, OFE will also develop and disseminate instruments and methods for the outcomes assessment of community-based learning activities.

8. The Center will engage in community outreach and solicitation to identify those organizations and agencies in the community – profit and non-profit – that are interested in serving as sites for student internships, fieldwork, coops, and practica. In addition, the center will identify organizations that are hoping to draw on the intellectual capital of students and faculty to initiate research projects that can have a direct impact on the quality of their operations and the life of the region’s citizens.

9. There are two currently-existing and readily apparent opportunities for UNF to develop community-based linkages that will enhance student learning while also contributing to the quality of life of the city and region.

First, under this QEP, the University of North Florida will form interdisciplinary research/service-learning groups to address and develop responses to each area of the JCCI (Jacksonville Community Council Incorporated) Quality of Life Progress Report. These areas are education, the economy, the environment, social well-being and harmony, arts/recreation/culture, health, civic participation and government responsiveness, transportation, and public safety. Students from almost every academic program at the UNF campus will work in collaboration with the various organizations and agencies devoted to addressing this range of issues and problems.
A second similar opportunity exists with the City of Jacksonville’s *Blueprint for Prosperity*. The blueprint advances six core principles: increasing economic opportunity and jobs, increasing public safety, increasing early literacy, enhancing the quality of life, increasing infill housing, and streamlining government. Again, in each and every one of these areas UNF faculty and students will provide intellectual capital, in the form of research and service, for these public projects.

As a collaborative partner with JCCI and the City of Jacksonville, on projects of public concern, UNF would heighten its visibility and enhance its reputation in the community and region, while at the same time providing students with real-life hands-on experience studying, and contributing to the solution of, social problems. This would serve to improve the public perception of higher education and demonstrate its valuable role in promoting the public good.

The CBTL-QEP will include an ongoing “process evaluation” component which involves *monitoring the progress* in implementing the design of the project. The nine-point list above outlines the critical pieces of the project that must be implemented in order for the outcomes to be realized. A timeline, with benchmark indicators, will need to be developed for measuring and evaluating progress toward implementing the necessary administrative processes and structures for successful realization of outcomes. The process evaluation plan will be monitored and organized by the Center for Community-Based Learning.

**SECTION 5: ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

In addition to a “process evaluation” or assessment that monitors progress in implementing the QEP design, there is also the “outcomes assessment” or “evaluation” of the QEP that involves gauging the extent to which student learning outcomes and institutional benchmarks are being achieved. Further, based on the results from the outcomes assessment, the QEP project will be regularly revised and modified to guarantee its effectiveness. This is the “continuous improvement” component.

**Assessment of Outcomes**

The success and effectiveness of the CBTL-QEP will be determined by an analysis of the following types of information:

1. Knowledge and awareness of the CBTL-QEP as determined by surveys of on and off-campus constituencies.
2. Student participation rates in community-based learning activities as measured by the number of and total enrollment in all courses including community-based components and co-curricular transcript notations.
3. Indirect assessment of student learning as determined by surveys of all students participating in community-based learning activities. These surveys will gauge perceived benefits in cognitive ability, application of knowledge, critical thinking, communication skills, value for and appreciation of civic engagement, career development, and general transformational impact.
4. Direct assessment of student learning as determined by forms of assessment embedded within community-based learning courses (journals, assignments, portfolios, research presentations). Rubrics will be developed for the purpose of assessing outcomes across courses and programs.

5. Extent of UNF community involvement and engagement as measured by the number of community organizations in which UNF students are placed, the number of community partnerships established, and the total number of outreach programs.

6. Expansion of community service as measured by the number of opportunities available to UNF students and the number of students engaged in community volunteerism.

7. Career development of UNF graduates as measured by job placement rates of students participating in community-based learning activities and surveys of graduates.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement does not flow automatically from outcomes assessment data. It requires that the data be analyzed, that the results are communicated to relevant participants and stakeholders, and that some unit take responsibility for implementing modifications and improvements to existing programs. The Center for Community-Based Learning, as the administrative unit that can organize and coordinate the assessment and continuous improvement process, is absolutely vital for the success of this process. The various pieces of outcomes assessment data described above will be collected annually, and included as part of an annual report submitted by the Center. The Center would, in consultation with the various constituencies, develop strategies for continuous improvement operating at the course, program, university, and community levels.
APPENDIX A

REFERENCES


APPENDIX B

Throughout this proposal, reference is made to the significant number and wide range of existing community-based activities and opportunities at UNF.

Information on current UNF outreach activities can be found at:
http://www.unf.edu/outreach/survey.html

Information on current academic courses that include a community-based learning component can be found at:
http://www.unf.edu/dept/cdc/elit/undergraduateinternships06.doc

The CBTL-QEP proposes to extend these experiences and activities across the entire curriculum, assess their ability to enhance student learning, and make these activities a highly visible feature of UNF’s mission and identity.