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AVERETT UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
(post-visit revision April 20, 2007)

READING CRITICALLY FOR SUCCESS

Submitted to the
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges

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SECTION 1 Executive Summary

Averett's Quality Enhancement Plan, *Reading Critically for Success*, redirects the university's academic focus and resources to address the problem of reading at the post-secondary level. Through data gathered from student and faculty surveys, review of research and best practices, the Averett community has determined that one of the most important factors in academic success is the ability to read college material well. We expect a campus-wide program that encourages better and more frequent reading will help students achieve a higher degree of aggregate improvement across institutional learning outcomes.

As the Averett faculty and administration began the process of reaffirmation in 2004, it became clear that there were many needs that could be addressed in our QEP. The Dean invited the faculty to offer suggestions for a topic and the reaffirmation committee set about developing a list of opportunities from August 2005 to February 2006. Over the next ten months, the committee met often and posted minutes of meetings and drafts of the evolving QEP on the Averett Blackboard site. The faculty attended a number of forums to express their ideas and offer recommendations. November 14, 2006 the faculty voted to accept the QEP. The QEP committee met in December to evaluate the next draft of the document. The completed document was approved by the faculty on January 16, 2007.

More than one third of Averett's entering students characterize themselves as "first generation" college attendees. While we have many student support services in place and a vigorous orientation process, it became evident that many of our students either had difficulty reading or had no interest in reading. These factors led the committee to conclude that reading skills and reading-related activities were common denominators in any equation of academic success for our students. In February of 2006, Dean Fager presented two recommended QEP topics to the faculty. At the faculty meeting on March 21, 2006, the faculty voted unanimously in favor of "reading" as our QEP topic. Two days later, deans Jeff Fager, Mark Govoni and associate dean Larry Wilburn met to recruit faculty members, support personnel and students to serve on the QEP committee.

Averett's Quality Enhancement Plan has one goal: *to establish a culture of reading across the traditional undergraduate program*. The components of the plan reflected the faculty's concerns for its successful implementation. It was decided that three objectives were necessary if the plan were to be successful: faculty development in the field of reading, improvement of students' reading skills, and improvement of students' attitudes toward reading in general. To establish a reading culture on campus, students have to find themselves in an environment in which reading is a highly visible and desirable activity. Faculty need training in strategies to help students read better while students need opportunities to improve their skills and to use those skills.

The three aspects of the plan--training of faculty by skilled consultants, academic support services such as peer-tutoring and a new online *Successful Reading* program, and reading related opportunities on campus--all require the use of assessment tools with specific focuses. The Assessment sub-committee of the QEP Committee chose an array of quality measurements that will help the university monitor the progress of the QEP and provide longitudinal data to adjust components of the plan as needed. The Dean and Associate Dean will work with department chairs to incorporate this assessment into departmental goals. This assessment will become part of the annual review of institutional effectiveness goals and evaluation process. In addition, there will be a standing committee to oversee implementation of the QEP in the context of the university's strategic plan. The university's president has made a commitment that appropriate leadership and resources will be provided to ensure the timely implementation and sustainability of Averett's *Reading Critically for Success* plan.

SECTION 2 Institutional Profile, Mission and Strategic Plan

History

Averett University has served Danville, Virginia, the nation, and beyond since its founding as an all-female college in 1859, and has operated continuously for nearly one hundred and fifty years. In 1917, Averett received its first accreditation as a junior college. In 1969, Averett added a four-year baccalaureate degree program and became coeducational. Since that time, Averett has experienced unusual growth. By 1983, the college added to its offerings Master of Education and Master of Business Administration degrees. The Graduate and Professional Studies program was developed in order to serve adult learners in the region, thus resulting in the addition of twenty-two satellite locations intended to make degree completion convenient and accessible for non-traditional students. In 2001, the college officially became Averett University. The change in status was initiated to reflect Averett's position as an innovative, small, private university that gives students the individual attention traditionally associated with small liberal arts colleges along with the advantages found at comprehensive universities.

Mission

Throughout its history, Averett University has honored its heritage as a liberal arts institution. Through its mission statement, strategic planning, practices and vision, Averett expresses its commitment to:

- an undergraduate curriculum that blends the liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation.
- the importance of teaching and learning.
- individual attention to student needs and learning.
- an atmosphere where both academic and religious freedom are valued.
- its Christian heritage and values.
- intellectual inquiry and excellence in all aspects of college life.
- an environment that promotes collaboration, innovation, and collegiality.

Averett University seeks to develop students as lifelong learners with the appropriate skills and knowledge to become creative and critical thinkers, effective communicators, and positive contributors to society. Moreover, Averett encourages students to examine myriad cultural expressions and values so they may develop an appreciation of the contributions of others and acquire knowledge that may serve as a foundation for continuing development.

Averett Today

Currently Averett University serves 2,467 students, with 775 studying at our main campus in Danville, Virginia. The remaining students are enrolled in Graduate and Professional Studies programs in Danville and at satellite locations located

throughout Virginia. Averett boasts a very diverse student body, with twenty-nine states and fourteen foreign countries represented. Thirty-six percent of students are minorities. While the majority of Averett students are from low to middle-income families, students come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. One-third of our traditional students are first-generation college students. Ninety percent of students require financial assistance.

Strategic Plan: Strengths and Challenges

The Averett Strategic Plan delineates nine “directions” for future success. Among those are *Reputation* and *Learners*. According to the strategic plan, “[i]n 2010, employers and postgraduate schools increasingly recognize the worth of an Averett degree because they can rely on its high value” (p. 6). In the section entitled *Learners*, the strategic plan indicates: “Averett University offers learners the opportunity to become full participants in 21st century life” (p.12). One of the measures of such an objective would be a graduation rate of sixty percent of entering freshmen. Current research indicates that underdeveloped reading skill is one of the most important factors in a majority of students’ lack of academic success. A majority of the faculty indicate a decline in student reading ability and student responses to a reading survey indicate that a staggering number do not read course assignments or read for pleasure. The *Reading Critically for Success* Quality Enhancement Plan will add considerable value to the Averett experience and move Averett in the direction of the strategic plan’s sixty percent graduation rate.

In the past year, Averett has developed and expanded its Academic Resource Center (ARC) to serve better the academic needs of its students. In 2005, Dr. Steve Hecox was hired to direct the writing center. In 2006, Mr. Larry Compton was hired to direct the ARC. Mr. Compton brings knowledge of and experience with reading and reading problems from his previous university. Together these two individuals form a strong academic team. Subsequently, Dean Fager decided to combine the efforts of the two in order to address more appropriately and resourcefully the needs of the students. Averett secured two grants totaling \$21,500 to furnish the center and to equip it with new computers and software. The ARC will play a pivotal role in developing peer tutors as reading helpers and in working with students who need more extensive help with reading weaknesses or disabilities.

The faculty, by vote, has endorsed the *Reading Critically for Success* QEP. This is extremely important because it is the faculty that will more directly raise awareness of reading issues, develop and teach the reading seminars and provide oversight of the plan. Moreover, the faculty has spent the past eighteen months discussing the general education core and how we might better prepare students for life after graduation. This discussion will provide a relevant, contextual basis for the reading program. Responses to alumni surveys identify the faculty and faculty interaction with students as the university’s greatest assets. Averett’s articulation program with Danville Community College is also important because of the number of its students who seek to complete their baccalaureate degrees at Averett. In those cases, the

remedial resources the community college offers to students make for an easier transition to a four-year institution for students who have such a need.

While there is a national trend of a decrease in the level of preparedness for entering students (*ACT: Crisis at the Core* report and the *Greater Expectations National Panel Report*), student survey data also indicate that characteristics and expectations of entering students are changing significantly and rapidly. Averett's strong commitment to liberal education and career preparation will be bolstered by the *Reading Critically for Success* plan. It will direct the university's focus and resources on learning outcomes resulting in an appreciative valuation of an Averett degree.

SECTION 3 Planning for the QEP

3.1.1 Selection of Steering Committee

On August 31, 2005, the committee for the selection of the QEP topic was selected by Dr. Jeffrey Fager, Dean of Arts and Sciences, from the participants on the reaffirmation committee who began their work five months earlier on the compliance document.

3.1.2 Selection of QEP Topic

The Steering Committee narrowed the list of possibilities to recommendations of a plan for campus-wide improvement of oral competency or reading. On March 21, 2006, these recommendations were presented to the faculty at large. After some discussion, the faculty voted unanimously to choose reading as the focus for Averett's Quality Enhancement Plan.

3.1.3 Selection of Plan Development Committee

Drs. Fager, Govoni and Wilburn met and discussed several candidates to serve on the QEP development committee. It was decided that there needed to be representation from students, academic services, administration and faculty. Dr. Fager was the *ex officio* administrator and Drs. Govoni and Wilburn would co-chair this committee. All of the recommended persons agreed to serve.

3.1.4 Selection of QEP Committees and Subcommittees

As the QEP development committee (henceforth identified as QEP Committee) began to meet, it examined the tasks before it and discussed how the academic community would be involved in the development of the plan. It was determined that a number of subcommittees should be organized and charged with certain duties. These committees were identified as Literature Review, Budget, Goals and Objectives, Academic Support, Faculty Development, and Assessment. The QEP committee members identified certain faculty members who might have specific expertise and instructed the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Wilburn, to invite these individuals to serve on the committee. With few exceptions, those invited agreed to serve on the subcommittees. The following is a list of the Reaffirmation Committee participants from which the QEP topic selection committee was drawn. A complete listing of all committee and subcommittee participants can be found in Appendix A. Approximately seventy percent of faculty, staff and administration served on subcommittees. Three have since left the university.

Reaffirmation Committee

Dr. Lee Bash:	Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies
Mr. Don D'Alfonzo:	Director, Information Technology
Ms. Elaine Day:	Associate Prof., Director of Library
Dr. Donald Ethington:	Prof. and Chair of Mathematics Department
Dr. Jeffrey Fager:	Prof. of Religion, Dean of Arts and Sciences, CAO
Dr. Mark Govoni:	Dean of Students
Mr. Charles Harris:	Director of Athletics
Dr. Anna Hatten:	Prof. Of Psychology, Chair of Psychology Department
Dr. Jack Hayes:	Prof. Of History, Chair History Department
Ms. Susan Huckstep:	Director of Public Relations
Dr. Alice Obenchain-Leeson:	Assistant Prof. of Business Administration
Dr. Richard Pfau:	Prof. of History, President
Mr. Richard Pejeau:	VP for Institutional Advancement
Mrs. Jue-Ling Tai:	Director of Institutional Research
Mrs. Kathie Tune:	Dean of Admissions
Dr. Lawrence Wilburn:	Prof. of French, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Registrar
Dr. Peggy Wright:	Prof. of Accounting, VP for Administration and Finance, CFO

3.2.1 Rationale for Averett University's *Reading Critically for Success* plan

The focus and single goal of Averett's Quality Enhancement Plan is to create a "culture of reading" across the traditional undergraduate program. Engaging the students, faculty and staff in this campaign is vital to the success of the plan. Recent data from the *Averett Reading Behavior Questionnaire* and the *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* survey reveal that reading is a low priority for students. While instructors assign reading in their courses, students have shown a collective lack of interest in completing reading assignments or reading outside of the academic setting. Reading at college level across the post-secondary curriculum is one essential element in student success. However, there are numerous problems that confront underachieving college-level readers, not the least of which is the state of unpreparedness for college work.

Averett admissions standards, approved by the faculty, require a minimum grade point average of 2.2, four years of English and three years of mathematics and science. The minimum combined SAT score for admission is 920, although course load and other factors are taken into consideration and students with lower scores are admitted. Additionally, the Office of Admissions has limited to 15% the number of the incoming freshmen who do not meet all of the qualifications. While academic assistance is provided through remedial courses and tutoring, the majority of students face significant challenges in adapting to the rigors of college reading. Because most students do not read all assigned materials, let alone outside of

course requirements, the Averett faculty has concluded that improving reading ability and changing students' attitudes about reading will affect a positive outcome in student learning. Bray *et al.* found that "[f]or college students, the amount of their nonacademic reading, as estimated by their familiarity with authors and magazines, was a significant predictor of performance on tests of vocabulary and cultural literacy" (Bray, Pascarelli, and Pierson, p. 310).

Averett's Quality Enhancement Plan, *Reading Critically for Success*, will equip students with necessary techniques for better comprehension of assigned and non-assigned reading materials and position them to develop further their critical thinking skills. The plan will encourage greater completion of in-course reading assignments and provide out-of-class opportunities supporting reading. This single goal of a "culture of reading" has one objective to guide the plan through implementation and assessment:

to improve the reading comprehension of traditional undergraduate students.

In support of this objective, there will be a campus-wide emphasis on reading activities and the development of a track for training faculty to raise the level of effective reading. Furthermore, it will send a clear message to all current and prospective students and to the greater local and regional communities that our efforts and resources will be directed at one of the most important activities of an educated citizenry: reading.

Because the Averett admissions selection process requires at least a high school level of reading competence, this QEP is not a remedial program. The intention of this plan is to *improve* students' ability to read at the college level. Bray found "that cognitive development is a function of the level of student engagement. Other things being equal, the more a student is involved or engaged in the academic experience of college(e.g., through course work, using the library, reading and writing assignments, and so forth), the greater his or her cognitive growth" (p. 311). The faculty believes that a campus-wide program of reading improvement will contribute to such cognitive growth.

The faculty and administration of Averett University have determined through data gathered on campus that the majority of our students are unwilling readers (as detailed in *Reading for Pleasure* 3.2.3). Their collegiate experience and formation are being underserved as a result of student preference for non-reading activities, lack of class preparation because of underdeveloped reading skills, and a general misunderstanding of the correlation of reading and academic success. The objectives and strategies delineated in section four of the QEP will present a focused effort designed to address these crucial issues.

First, Averett will address the challenge defined in The *Greater Expectations National Panel Report* that colleges and universities should "place new emphasis on

educating students to become intentional learners. . . . Purpose implies clear goals, an understanding of process, and appropriate action. Further, purpose implies intention in one's actions" (p. 21). Additionally, Averett's plan will give greater clarity and support to faculty efforts to provide a coherent application of learning opportunities in and across disciplines. Moreover, it will underscore the nature of a liberal arts education at Averett, defined specifically by the faculty, that

[a]n Averett education is a course of study devoted to the intellect in its many capacities. It introduces students to major areas of human knowledge and methods of study, elevating intellectual curiosity. This education fosters in students the ability ask important questions, to form and defend judgments and to understand and to evaluate diverse views thoughtfully (September 19, 2005).

3.2.2 Students' Attitudes and Reading Preparedness

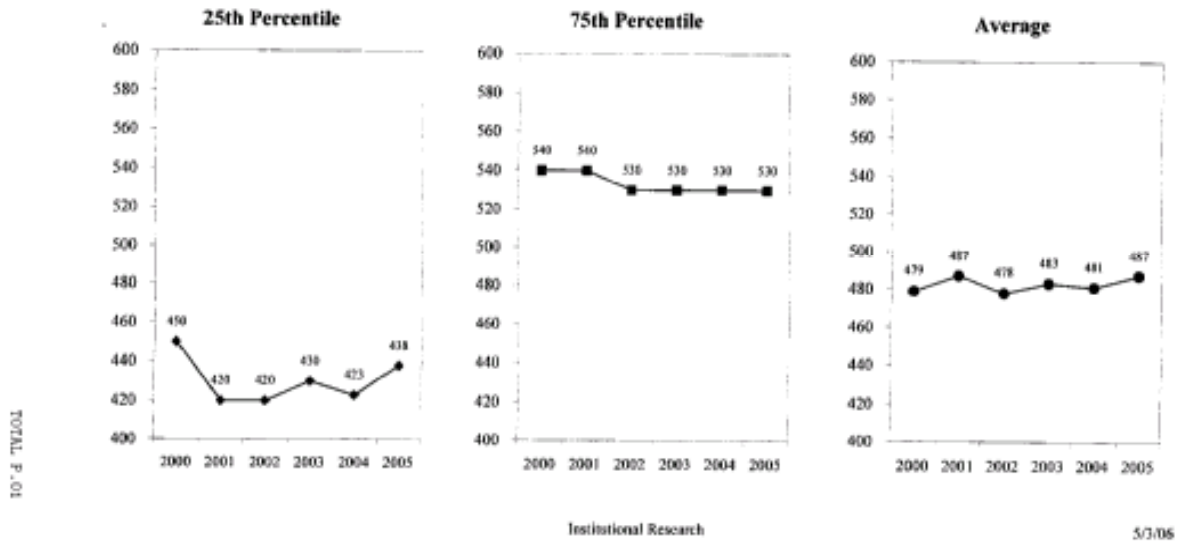
The ACT *Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work* states: "ACT research shows that far too few members of the graduating class of 2004 are ready for college-level work in English, math, or science—or for the workplace, where the same skills are not being expected of those who do not attend college" (August, 2006, p. i). While the intent of this report is to call attention to the growing crisis of preparedness at the post-secondary level, the reality is that these students are currently enrolled in our courses.

Over the past six years the SAT verbal scores for entering Averett freshman have remained relatively constant, ranging from 478 to 487 with an average of 482.5 (see **Table 1**). The faculty and administration have developed a number of curricular measures to address shortcomings in certain skill areas such as writing and technology. The result has been the addition of graduation requirements of demonstrated competency in oral and written communication and technology through writing and oral intensive courses and computer science courses. Also, a number of programs were developed to help students make the transition to the post-secondary level. The Bridge Program helped students during the summer prior to matriculation with remedial work in English and math. While it was felt that this program helped students, no data was gathered to support such a claim. It was subsequently replaced by the freshman Interdisciplinary Studies program (IDS), a combination of introduction to organizational and study skills and reading of a common text and theme courses. This program was determined to be successful in what it was trying to accomplish but staffing the teaching sections became problematic and the program was discontinued.

TABLE 1

Averett University Freshmen SAT Verbal By Percentiles and Average Fall 2000 - Fall 2005

SAT - Verbal	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
25th Percentile	450	420	420	430	423	438
75th Percentile	540	540	530	530	530	530
Average	479	487	478	483	481	487



Subsequently, the START program was developed as part of the orientation process. It introduced students to academic work in a five-day seminar format. Because of the additional costs of bringing students on campus a week ahead of the return of the student body, it became cost prohibitive and was discontinued after two fall orientations. These programs demonstrated faculty concern and administrative willingness to put into place opportunities to address perceived academic problems. What was lacking, and probably contributed to their demise, was a comprehensive, sustainable plan by the university. In subsequent faculty discussions about the general education curriculum, it became evident that weak reading and little motivation for reading were identified as the root causes of high levels of disinterest in learning and poor performance.

In one of the faculty forums on general education, the Dean of Students made a presentation concerning the assessment of characteristics of the 2005 entering

class. One particular item of data caught and held the attention of faculty members present. According to the 2005 CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) survey taken by 218 first-year students, fifty-five percent of incoming freshman men reported that they did not read for pleasure. Another thirty-one percent of the freshman men reported reading less than one hour per week outside of their high school curriculum. Freshman women read at a higher rate but not at a high rate: nearly nineteen percent read not at all, another twenty-seven percent read less than an hour per week, and nineteen percent read less than two hours per week. Faculty members were uneasy with these percentages--that sixty-two percent of the new first year students read less than an hour a week beyond their required high school assignments—but not surprised.

These data were not inconsistent with long-held faculty impressions that incoming Averett students struggle with college reading assignments, but the focus on these data brought into high relief a central problem of student learning at Averett. Faculty have long been frustrated with the number of students who do not complete reading assignments, who struggle with basic reading comprehension with a wide variety of college texts, and who exhibit low abilities to read in depth and critically. Student attitudes toward reading are characterized as resistant, even begrudging. The majority of incoming freshman are, effectively, non-readers. Few have developed habits of reading that prepare them well to engage the Averett curriculum.

CIRP provides rich longitudinal data of college students' self-perception as they enter college. In examining data from 1966-1996, Astin identified several significant trends that have powerful implications for the modern college curriculum:

- Grade inflation in high school advanced markedly over three decades: the number of C's given in the late 60's were greater than the number of A's, but by the mid-nineties, high school students received two A's for every one C. Astin concludes that this gives incoming college students a false sense of optimism. Indeed, the students of the 90's self-assessed their academic abilities and expectations for good grades significantly higher than their predecessors.
- Parallel to increases in high school grade point average is the trend toward academic disengagement. In just ten years (1987-96), the number of students reporting studying six hours per week dropped from 43.3% to 35.7%. Reported incidents of missing class or oversleeping rose by an identical figure. Similarly, students reported higher levels of boredom with their high school classes over the same period

Astin further speculates that these trend lines would likely continue into the new millennium (Astin, Alexander, Parrot, Korn, Sax. *The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends*, 1997, p. 16)

Trend lines at Averett over the same period are similar, but Averett incoming freshmen report even lower levels of study and academic engagement than students entering private four-year institutions. CIRP data for 2002-2005 indicate this continued decline.

The past four entering freshman classes responded as follows about spending 6 or more hours per week studying:

TABLE 2

Year	National four-year colleges	Averett
2002	33.4%	24.9%
2003	27.5%	27.2%
2004	27.7%	24.1%
2005	31.9%	18.3%

3.2.3 Reading for Pleasure

In 2002 Averett incoming freshman reported reading for pleasure as follows: thirty percent reported zero hours per week reading for pleasure; another thirty percent indicated less than one hour. The gender disparity was nine percent. In 2003, self-reported habits of reading for pleasure for men rose to seventy-one percent as reading less than one hour per week, and dropped slightly from 55.4% to 49.3% for women. In 2004 rates of non-reading for men rose another four percent, women improved dramatically to only 32.2% reporting reading for pleasure less than one hour per week. In 2005 these rates remained constant for men but increased to forty-four percent women.

CIRP data identify several competitors for students' time: television, work for pay, household duties, socializing with friends, exercise and sports. Each consumes more hours than pleasure reading or studying. Most notably, time spent on computer and video games has increased dramatically over four years: from forty-two to fifty-five percent for freshman men who report playing from three to five hours per week to over 20 per week, 7.7% to 14.8% for women.

In the fall of 2006, Averett University conducted a survey of students about their reading assignments and reading habits. A sample of over thirty different disciplinary courses from freshman to senior level included 396 students (forty-seven percent of students enrolled in classes at Averett). Ninety-eight percent of the full-time faculty also participated in a faculty reading survey. The results of the student survey confirm the faculty's impression of the low level of reading. Thirty-five percent of students said they did not read a newspaper and thirty-three percent said they did not read for pleasure. An unexpected percentage (73%) said that they read

six hours or less per week in preparation for class. And yet, eighty-five percent of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they have the “necessary ability for college-level reading.”

Fifty-one percent of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed that they have “noticed a marked decline in the typical student’s ability to read and comprehend...reading assignments.” In addition, ninety percent of the faculty rated the typical student’s ability to read assigned material as “fair to poor.” Student perception (55%) contrasted sharply with faculty perception (78%) about reading being necessary for a good grade. Fifty-one percent of students indicated that completing reading assignments was essential to a passing grade in the class while seventy-one percent of the faculty indicated that completing the reading assignments was essential.

In 2004, the National Endowment for the Arts published *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. The results of this longitudinal study report a ten percent decline in reading of literature from 1982-2002. This is in spite of the population growth and the increase of the percentage of college graduates: “Only the strong growth in overall U.S. population of nearly 40 million adults from 1982 to 2002 allowed the actual number of readers to remain flat at 96 million” (ix). The results provide data that should be alarming to colleges and universities: “[t]he trends among younger adults warrant special concern, suggesting that -unless some effective solution is found- literary culture, and literacy in general, will continue to worsen. Indeed, at the current rate of loss, literary reading as a leisure activity will virtually disappear in half a century” (xiii).

Specific to Averett’s situation, the NEA survey points out the severity of the problem for college-aged adults: “the rate of decline for the youngest adults (18-24) is 55 percent greater than that of the total adult population (-28 percent vs. -18 percent)” (xi). This decline in literary readership corroborates the decline in general readership seen in the CIRP survey and the internal surveys reported above. From these data, it is apparent that reading and studying are relatively low priorities for incoming freshmen at Averett University.

Summary

External surveys indicate a decline in reading at the young adult and collegiate levels and an overall lack of interest in reading. Averett’s own internal surveys of faculty and students show a disparity of perception between the two groups. Students think they read and comprehend better than they do even though they report low levels of reading. The faculty feels that too many students either do not read assigned texts or do not understand at a sufficiently critical level. Therefore, the faculty, staff and students believe that the university’s proactive stance will help students achieve greater academic success. The *Reading Critically for Success* program is a detailed plan to reverse the decline in reading ability, habits of reading and attitudes toward reading in our undergraduate population.

3.3.1 Development of QEP Calendar of Events

A record was maintained concerning dates of meetings with personnel involved in the development of the QEP (Appendix E).

December 2004 Dr. Fager meets with SACS-COC representative.

February 15, 2005 Dr. Fager addresses faculty about new procedures for reaffirmation.

Reaffirmation Committee (page 7) formed and meets on following dates: (2005 June 15, June 28, August 3, September 20, October 11, November 10, December 13).

June 30, 2005 Dr. Fager initiates discussion with Reaffirmation Committee about possible QEP topics.

July 24-27, 2005 Drs. Fager, Bash and Wilburn attend the SACS-COC summer institute for "Quality Enhancement and Accreditation."

August 1, 2005 Dr. Fager calls meeting of selected members of Reaffirmation Committee to discuss the list of topics. Suggestions over the following meeting dates included the first-year experience, assessing learning outcomes, written/oral/technological communication, technological literacy, quantitative literacy, internationalizing the curriculum, service learning, integration of the curriculum and academic support services, enhancement of the honors program, a sophomore research project. The committee met the following dates for those discussions:

August 31, 2005, October 27, 2005, January 24, 2006, and February 7, 2006

February 28, 2006 Topic selection committee refers to the faculty two possible QEP topics: oral communication and reading

March 21 Faculty votes and approves the QEP concerning reading.

March 23 Dean Fager meets with Drs. Govoni and Wilburn to select a QEP development committee.

April 4 Drs. Govoni and Wilburn meet with SACS liaison Donna Wilkinson to discuss proposed QEP.

May 3 The QEP development committee meets for first time (see appendices for minutes and roster of participants).

May 17 The development committee identifies potential student outcomes and begins discussion of critical readings.

May 24 The development committee refines goals and continues critical reading.

May 30 Based on goals and strategies, the development committee forms several *ad hoc* committees and selects faculty to participate in the committee's work.

June 12 A working draft of the goal, objectives and strategies is finalized by the committee.

June 29 The committee discusses how to make the internal surveys of faculty and students more congruent. The *ad hoc* QEP sub-committee for assessment is selected and charged with the responsibility of preparing an assessment plan for approval at the next meeting.

July 20 The QEP Committee reviewed items for the rewrite of the student survey to be administered in the fall. The committee decided to establish a literature review sub committee (Appendix A). The committee took up again the discussion of the goal, objectives and strategies of the focus of the QEP. A report on assessment possibilities, including the CAAP and the Bray survey on attitudes toward reading, was presented.

August 8 QEP Committee reviews final draft and makes changes to student survey; progress report presented from assessment subcommittee chair.

August 18 Faculty participates in *Faculty Survey of Reading* (Appendix D).

August 18 Assessment subcommittee discusses evaluation portions of the QEP.

August 22 Assessment subcommittee meets to finalize its recommendations for QEP.

September 12 QEP Committee meets to review assessment report and determine dates of administration of student reading survey.

September 19 Outline of objectives and strategies presented in faculty meeting.

September 19-24 drafts of budget, assessment grid, timeline for implementation and objectives and strategies completed.

September 22, 27, 29 and October 2 Student *Reading Behavior Questionnaire* is administered (Appendix C).

September 25, 26, 27, October 2, 3 discussion meetings are held with faculty and support staff.

October 3-25 Subcommittees meet and submit reports for the purpose of sending a full draft of the QEP to the faculty for November vote.

October 12 Overview of QEP objectives and strategies presented to the Board of Trustees semi-annual meeting.

November 6 QEP Committee meets to review sub-committee reports.

November 14 Full faculty votes to adopt Averett's QEP.

November 20-23 Student representatives view and discuss QEP.

January 11, 2007 QEP Committee reviews final draft.

January 16 Faculty reviews and approves final draft.

January 22 QEP Committee reviews final version of QEP.

January 26 Final version of QEP forwarded to SACS-COC.

March 15 Visiting Committee designates Averett's QEP as "acceptable."

3.3.2 Supporting Data and Best Practices

The QEP Committee and the Literature Review subcommittee researched literature and best practices that support the *Reading Critically for Success* plan. Works cited in the text are listed in "References". In addition, these committees explored possible assessment measures such as the CLA, the CAAP, Praxis, and COMPASS. The subcommittee on assessment expressed concern that the use of the overall grade point average be used carefully as a predictor of improvement in reading skills and of future academic success. The QEP Committee determined that the grade point average would be meaningful longitudinally the longer students were exposed to the *Reading Critically for Success* program and would provide additional, readily accessible internal measures. The use of the reading portion of the CAAP for freshmen and seniors for the first five years of the QEP, and internally developed rubrics for reading seminars and improvement courses will all serve to measure the impact that the QEP has and will have on the reading level of our students across disciplines. An assessment grid can be found in Appendix B while copies of the *Reading Behavior Questionnaire* for students and the *Faculty Survey of Reading* can be found in Appendices C and D respectively.

3.4 Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) seeks to uphold and support the educational commitment of Averett University to its student body through four primary objectives.

- Provide academic assistance, through tutoring, remediation, drill and skills development to Averett students who request additional help.
- Serve as resource and advocate, ensuring that students with documented special needs are provided reasonable accommodations and assistance defined under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973*.
- Support the educational needs of the faculty by maintaining a close relationship, regular communication, and providing a location for instructors to send students for make up and special needs testing.
- Help students fulfill their future educational goals, making available study resources for students preparing to take standardized tests such as the *GRE*, *MCAT*, and *LSAT*.

The ARC has become an integral part of campus life. Under the leadership of the current director, 243 different students were served by peer tutors in 619 tutoring sessions in the past three semesters. While the faculty development strategy (4.5.1) of the QEP will be to train instructors to recognize, and perhaps correct reading problems, it is the ARC that will provide in-depth assessment and daily support to students who are experiencing academic difficulties due to reading weaknesses.

The current director has worked carefully with the QEP Committee in planning the integration of the *Reading Critically for Success* plan in the tutoring services of the Center. In addition, his experience in working with students with reading disabilities will serve the university well. The Academic Resource Center fully supports the mission and focus of the QEP to enhance, improve and strengthen the level of reading of Averett University students. The ARC will provide reading assistance through the Orton-Gillingham approach to language difficulties which involves sequence and multi-modal learning, as well as drill and decoding in manageable amounts. The ARC is also in the process of acquiring the Kurzweil 3000 reading software, which is an advanced program to help students who are poor readers or have learning disabilities to improve the quality and accuracy of their reading.

Averett University recently provided larger quarters for the ARC. Two grants, one from the Galesi Family Foundation and the other from the Educational Committee of the Danville-Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce have provided over \$21,000 to refurbish the center with new computers and software that will improve reading skills and comprehension. Averett currently provides additional funding in excess of \$23,000 to the center's annual budget.

SECTION 4: *Reading Critically for Success*: Goal, Objective, and Strategies

The Averett community selects one goal for its Quality Enhancement Plan: to establish a culture of reading across the university's traditional undergraduate program. The QEP Development Committee identifies one objective and two strategic support areas that best advance the notion of a culture of reading and directly impact student learning outcomes. That single objective, improving the reading comprehension of traditional undergraduate students, requires training of the faculty in strategies that address reading difficulties in the classroom. Secondly, the creation of university-sponsored reading activities will encourage greater student participation in the campus-wide reading experience.

4.1. Learning Outcome

The intended learning outcome of the ***READING CRITICALLY FOR SUCCESS*** plan is an increase in reading ability, operationally defined as an improvement in reading comprehension.

4.2 Objective

improve the reading comprehension of traditional undergraduate students

4.3. Strategies

4.3.1. develop and offer optional course ***Successful Reading***

Although the thrust of the *Reading Critically for Success* plan is not remediation, the faculty recognizes that some students may need early instruction in how improved reading skills can lead to a positive first step in their academic careers. To this end, one strategy is to offer a *Successful Reading* online course that accepted students may enroll in during the summer *prior* to matriculation. This course will not be required but may be encouraged by the admissions office staff for students admitted in the "limited hours" designation. Coaches, who have a great concern for the academic welfare of their athletes, may also wish to recommend enrollment. Students completing this course will receive one hour of elective academic credit. The course will not carry a tuition fee for incoming students and will be seen as a "value-added" aspect of the curriculum. It will be available to all students during the academic year as an alternative to peer-tutoring through the Academic Resources Center. The course will explore various disciplinary approaches to reading.

Expectations: The goals of this course are to make students aware of the importance of reading for academic success, to help students recognize and identify particular reading weaknesses and to gain a better understanding of techniques for improved comprehension of college-level reading. Students will be made aware of the services of the Academic Resources Center and may be referred there as needed.

Quality Assurance: Those faculty members teaching the course will submit a narrative evaluation of the effectiveness of the course.

Costs: \$2000 funding during each summer school for two online course instructors, \$4,000 funding for course development, including software, the first year.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Successful Reading Course Development	4.3.1		4,000			
Fac Salary Successful Reading Teaching (\$1,000x2)	4.3.1		2,153 ^a	2,261	2,492	2,617
subtotals			6,153	2,261	2,492	2,617

^a Figures on this line include social security and a 5% annual increase

Timeframe: Course development in spring 2009 with courses beginning in summer 2009.

Persons Responsible: Dean of Admissions, Athletic Director, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Students, Registrar's Office, and the QEP Oversight Committee.

Supporting Literature: Bray *et al.* (2004) comment extensively on the seven factors that improve reading comprehension, including the quality of the classroom experience, amount of reading, and level of involvement in specific activities related to reading and writing, and patterns of formal course work.

Simpson and Nist (2002) posit that most high school students enter colleges with very limited reading experience, especially with textbook reading. "Reading tasks in college are far more cognitively demanding" (p. 365). The authors maintain that the key to improved reading at the college is to turn readers from "passive to active readers," i.e., readers who are engaged in what they read, by using a variety of techniques to improve focus and comprehension: "successful students seemed to believe that they were totally or partially responsible for their learning and knowledge acquisition" (p. 366). Comprehension improves when students understand that

“reading is putting ideas into your own words as opposed to rote memorization” (p. 366).

Extensive literature supports the finding that students who take specialized reading improvement courses learn more and better techniques for reading effectively and have improved attitudes toward reading. According to Cox (2003) “underprepared readers’ success is directly and significantly related to taking and passing a reading skills course” (p. 171).

4.3.2 improve student compliance with reading assignments

Faculty report that many students do not read most of what is currently assigned in their courses. Rather than assigning additional reading, the faculty sees the need to improve student compliance with current reading assignments.

Expectations: There will be an increase in the quantity and quality of reading assignments completed by the students.

Quality Assurance: Student self-reports on amount of reading will be collected each semester of the QEP.

Costs: none anticipated for this strategy.

Timeframe: continuous, beginning in fall 2008.

Persons Responsible: instructors, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, QEP Oversight committee.

Supporting Literature: Bray *et al.* (2004) point out that the amount of reading that a student completes is particularly significant in improving comprehension: “[a]mount of reading seems to be among the most pervasive correlates of growth of this study’s outcome measures. Assigned reading was related to growth in reading comprehension, and both assigned and unassigned readings were related to improvement in attitude toward literary activities...” (p. 325). Simpson and Nist (2002) state that “students can improve their planning, monitoring, testing, and evaluating when they are taught a variety of reading techniques and processes” (p. 367).

4.3.3 design and implement a peer-tutoring program in reading

With the guidance of the Director of the Academic Resources Center, students will receive instruction as peer tutors. The Center will also promote advantages and availability of the tutoring program in the context of reading. An opportunity to engage a different segment of the academic community in the QEP is to allow

graduate students in the Education Department, seeking *reading specialist* certification, to train the undergraduate peer tutors. The course description of *ED546 Organization and Supervision of Reading Program Development* states, in part, that “[s]tudents will develop their abilities to instruct and advise teachers in the skills necessary to differentiate reading instruction for all levels of students” (*Catamount: Graduate Studies in Education 2005-2007*, p. 59). Graduate students may be given a tuition waiver for ED546 for their participation in this program. The training of tutors in reading skills will begin in fall 2007. Peer tutoring in academic subjects is already in place. As these undergraduate tutors complete the training in reading skills, they will incorporate them immediately in their tutoring sessions. The peer-tutoring program is the responsibility of the Director of the Academic Resource Center. Tutors will report to the director who will monitor the effectiveness of this aspect of the program.

Expectations: Because of the diagnostic measures learned by the faculty in strategy 4.5.1 and the availability of the peer-tutoring program in reading, it is expected that the number of students obtaining help in reading will increase significantly after the first year.

Quality Assurance: The Academic Resource Center will use pre- and post-tutoring assessments such as the Gates-MacGinitie scale to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutors. Comparisons between students receiving tutoring in reading and those who do not will reveal greater reading comprehension for those receiving tutorials. Records of the number of tutors trained, requested and assigned will be kept by the Center. Pre- and post-tutoring questionnaires will be completed by those being tutored that indicate referring discipline and the students’ perception of the degree of improvement in reading courses. Graduate Education students will report to their professor who will monitor their progress and assess the graduate students’ performance.

Costs: \$3,000 per year for additional tutors’ salaries with a built in increase over the first five years.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Peer Tutoring	4.3.3	3,230 ^a	3,391	3,561	3,739	3,926

^a This row includes social security and annual increases.

Timeframe: Training of students and implementation of program will begin in fall 2007.

Persons Responsible: The Director of the Academic Resource Center, reading specialization professor from the Education Department.

Supporting Literature: Cash and Saumell (2001) find that well-trained tutors can make a dramatic difference for students who have difficult reading and comprehending college-level texts. They recommend formal tutor training courses.

4.3.4 develop required reading seminars as part of the curriculum

To provide a context for the campus-wide *Reading Critically for Success* QEP, a one-credit introductory seminar (IDS1xx) and a three-credit seminar (IDS 2xx) will become part of the general education requirements for graduation.

The first semester one-credit seminars (IDS 1xx) will have a range of reading selections so that instructors may have a choice of teaching preference. These seminars will acclimate students to the campus-wide focus on reading. Students new to Averett will register for one of these seminars offered every fall. There will be fifteen of these *introductory* seminars. IDS 1xx will be a pre-requisite for IDS 2xx.

The second semester seminars (IDS 2xx) will be based on topical reading(s) chosen by the instructors according to their areas of interest and *may* be of a disciplinary-related nature. These seminars will have as a goal the further development of in-depth reading comprehension of a text or texts. During pre-registration, students will select a seminar from a list of topics. A total of ten IDS 2xx seminars will be offered each year beginning with the second year of the implementation of this strategy.

Students must have passed the two courses by completion of their fourth semester at Averett. Students who transfer to Averett with more than 90 semester hours are not required to register for the seminars but are encouraged to do so. In cooperation with the Honors Program, some of the seminars will be designated as “honors” courses.

All faculty who participated in the on-campus training are eligible and may volunteer to teach the one-credit seminars. Those 24 faculty members who participate in the in-depth cohort training will be eligible to teach the three-credit seminars. These seminars will be new courses centered around specific texts and will be different in content and scope from courses found in the current general education core. The faculty, Curriculum Committee and the QEP Oversight Committee will develop guidelines for instructional modalities and assessment.

The promotion of the *Reading Critically for Success* program in recruitment and orientation literature will be crucial to the students’ understanding of Averett’s expectations. Moreover, it is vital that staff, faculty and administrators contribute to a campus reading support system by reading some or all of the texts selected for a given year and interacting with the students. The question “What Are You Reading?” should become a campus catch- phrase.

Expectations: Participation in these seminars will engage the students more directly in the campus-wide reading program. They will learn reading skills that are

applicable to their disciplines and across disciplines. Through instructor-modeled behavior, students will develop improved reading comprehension. Instructors will be able to recognize and address reading problems on an individual basis and make referrals to the Academic Resources Center where appropriate.

Quality Assurance: The faculty will develop a rubric for evaluating the reading ability of seminar participants. Comparisons of CAAP scores will demonstrate the effectiveness of these initiatives in improving reading ability. Data will be kept that summarizes the number of reading courses taught each year and the number of students enrolled in them.

Costs: The projected cost of the fifteen sections of the IDS 1xx taught the first year is \$10,875 and \$10,875 for five IDS 2xx seminars for a total of \$21,750 plus social security. The following year, there is an anticipated increase of \$100 per credit hour taught with the addition of five more sections of IDS 2xx for an annual total of \$37,125 plus social security. Because IDS 2xx will be counted as part of the contractual agreement, the salary requests will be used to hire adjuncts to cover departmental courses not taught by the seminar instructors. It is recommended that each department provide at least one instructor for the seminar programs. *Note:* the current rate of adjunct and overload pay is \$725 per credit hour.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Adjunct and Overload Salaries for IDS 1xx and IDS 2xx	4.3.4			23,414 ^a	39,965 ^b	39,965 ^b

^a 2009-2010: 15 sections of IDS 1xxx and 5 sections of IDS 2xx plus social security

^b subsequent years: 15 sections of IDS 1xx and 10 sections of IDS 2xx

Timeframe: Faculty training, as mentioned in strategy 4.5.1, will begin in the fall of 2008 and the faculty cohort will begin training in spring of 2009. The seminars will begin fall 2009.

Persons Responsible: Dean of Arts and Sciences, Curriculum Committee, Professional Development Committee, QEP Oversight Committee.

Supporting Literature: Beyond developmental courses, Cox recommends elective upper-level courses in reading within the traditional course offerings (p. 174).

4.4 Overview of Assessment

There will be two tracks of assessment incorporated in the QEP. One will measure improvement of reading comprehension and the other will monitor the effectiveness of strategies that support the goal of a culture of reading.

4.4.1 Reading Comprehension

Improving the reading comprehension of traditional undergraduate students addresses the act of reading, diagnosis of reading difficulties, assistance to all students with academic difficulty, and the application of learned reading skills and techniques in courses designed specifically to improve reading at the college level.

The Quality Enhancement Plan, *Reading Critically for Success* is integrated with the Averett's Institutional Effectiveness Plan. It has the status of an academic program that supports the general education goals. Entering freshmen, juniors, and first semester seniors in the traditional program will complete five CAAP objective tests for assessment of reading comprehension for the QEP as well as selected general education goals. The Institutional Research office will analyze CAAP results and identify trends in consultation with the Academic Resource Center and QEP Oversight Committee. These groups will use testing data to develop trend lines for reading comprehension competence in successive cohorts of students at the three class levels. As reading enhancement strategies are implemented, trends will be monitored to determine effectiveness of the QEP and possible changes. The QEP will use the institutional effectiveness plan template for documentation of student learning and service outcomes.

Academic departments and the administrative offices related to student services, in the context of annual planning, will determine and act upon goals that actively undertake strategies outlined in the QEP. These goals and their assessment will be incorporated into the institutional effectiveness plan. While the Oversight Committee bears the responsibility of assessing and monitoring the progress of the QEP, it will also ensure that the plan remains an integral part of the comprehensive institutional effectiveness planning effort. This Committee will make an annual report to the faculty which, in turn, will make needed recommendations.

4.4.2 Monitoring Strategies for Quality Assurance

The online *Successful Reading* program (strategy 4.3.1) will be evaluated at the end of the course by both instructors and students. The initial instructors for the course will develop a rubric to measure perceived improvement in learned approaches to reading. Students will complete an evaluation of their progress.

Completion of reading assignments (strategy 4.3.2) will be measured by an end-of-course student survey in select classes where completion of reading assignments has an impact on the students' final grade.

Averett already has a strong peer-tutoring component in the Academic Resource Center. Student tutors will be trained by the Director of ARC (strategy 4.3.3) to recognize reading difficulties, instruct students with common reading strategies and make referrals to the director when necessary. As is the current practice, tracking the number of student requests for tutoring and the number of appointments completed during the academic year will continue. The Director will be responsible for maintaining a written record of the number of tutors trained, strategies taught and used by the tutors, the kinds of reading problems encountered. Students making use of the peer-tutoring will evaluate the effectiveness of the tutorials.

Strategy 4.3.4, the reading seminars, will be the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Curriculum Committee. These seminars are regarded as the academic focal point of the QEP. While students are participating in reading outside of the classroom and, when necessary, receiving help with reading difficulties, the seminars provide a context in which learned or improved skills are applied. The one-credit hour seminar required of all entering students will set the academic tone of the *Reading Critically for Success* plan. Students will understand that the primary goal of these introductory courses is *to improve their ability to understand a reading assignment of some length at the college level*.

The three-credit hour seminars provide opportunity over a full semester to investigate a topic in depth. Instructors will apply reading strategies learned in training to the needs of individual students. An institutionally-developed rubric will be administered by instructors in each type of seminar. This rubric will measure students' perceptions of level of difficulty, reading strategies taught and used, and the effectiveness of these strategies. The instructor will file a narrative report concerning the appropriateness of the training and the improvement in students' reading comprehension (through course-embedded assessment). The data will be collected by the Office of Institutional Research and results will be linked to the CAAP results forwarded to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences who will make a report to the Oversight Committee.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

4.5. Faculty Development: establish a faculty development track in reading-related issues

Faculty development will be essential to the establishment of a culture of reading across the campus. Faculty participation in specialized training and the implementation of reading techniques and strategies in the classrooms by the faculty will provide the curricular context for the QEP. Through a series of semi-annual workshops, Averett University will provide instructors with a variety of techniques for incorporating assessable course-related reading strategies. All instructors who teach the student-optional *Successful Reading* (strategy 4.3.1) or the required

reading seminars (strategy 4.3.4) will use a common rubric to ensure reliability of the data. Instructors will also learn to develop supplemental rubrics to obtain data that is discipline specific. Department chairs will report courses in which reading strategies were used and describe their effects. In addition to training workshops for the entire faculty, two cohorts of faculty members will receive further in-depth training. The faculty members will serve as a resource and will train the remainder of the faculty.

Faculty training in reading-related activities will be measured and assessed *annually* by the number of faculty who receive training, the number of training opportunities made available through Averett, a course evaluation rubric that measures faculty discernment of improvement in student reading ability and reported faculty perceptions of the usefulness of the training received. In addition, two cohorts of faculty volunteers, representing forty-six percent of the full-time faculty, will participate in Averett sponsored workshops with reading specialists. Members of these cohorts will, in turn, train the remainder of the faculty. The QEP Oversight Committee (page 37) will report to the Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Strategies will be assessed through faculty evaluations of the initial consultant-led reading workshop in the fall of 2008 and subsequent training sessions (strategy 4.5.2). Also, the specialized cohort training (strategy 4.5.1) will be evaluated for effectiveness in preparing instructors to aid in the development and the teaching of the *Successful Reading* program. Faculty will be asked to record and evaluate use and effectiveness of techniques learned in the training sessions. Data will be gathered by the Office of Institutional Research for inclusion in the institutional effectiveness plan and reported to the Oversight Committee. Based upon faculty comments, the Oversight Committee will make recommendations to the Dean of Arts and Sciences for necessary adjustments in the training regimen.

4.5.1 provide training of the faculty concerning reading skills at the college level

This training will help faculty analyze the reading assignments they give, identify typical reading problems, and learn a variety of techniques for incorporating reading strategies across the curriculum.

Expectations: By the end of year four, all of the traditional faculty should have received training and half of that number will have taught at least one reading seminar.

Costs: The initial in-service faculty training will be led by an external reading consultant at a cost of \$2,000.

During the following spring semester, a cohort of twelve participants, chosen from faculty volunteers, will receive additional training in diagnosis and correction of reading problems by an external reading consultant. Participants will be compensated \$500 each for this training.

In successive years, instructors selected from the cohort will lead workshops for the remainder of the faculty and will be compensated \$1000 each per training session taught. Two years later, a second cohort will be trained in the same manner.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Training of Faculty at large	4.5.1-.2		2,000			
Faculty Cohort Training Consultant	4.5.1		2,000		2,000	
Cohort Participant Training Stipend (\$500 x12)	4.5.1		6,459 ^a		6,459	
(Cohort) Faculty Teaching Faculty (\$1,000x2)	4.5.1			2,153 ^b	2,691	3,230
subtotals			10,459	2,153	11,150	3,230

^a includes social security

^b includes social security and \$500 increase in 2010-11 and 2011-12

Timeframe: The consultant-led workshop for reading instruction for all faculty will take place in fall of 2008 and cohort training in spring of 2009 and 2011.

Persons Responsible: Dean of Arts and Science, the QEP Oversight Committee, and the Office of Institutional Research.

Supporting Literature: Many researchers stress the importance in training in literacy development and the need for intentionality in reading assignments, including techniques for such training, to maximize students comprehension of complex reading assignments (Dixon, 1993, Hass, 1988, Ray and Barton, 1989, Bray, 2004). But as Bosely points out, most instructors struggle to define what they mean by “critical reading,” and freely admit that they do not teach reading (p. 206).

College and university teaching faculty are trained in their disciplinary fields and have developed skills in comprehending their professional reading. They often lack training in reading techniques to enhance their students’ reading skills. Bosely points out that “[W]hile improvement in critical reading is an often-cited objective of many introductory college courses, there is little indication in the research that the teachers of introductory courses are trained in the teaching of critical reading” (p. 206). Moreover, most college professors do not fully grasp the nature and depth of students’ reading problems. The norm is to assign reading appropriate to a given discipline, not to assess students’ ability to handle the level and complexity of the

assignments or to teach specific reading strategies. Indeed, most faculties are better versed in teaching writing within their discipline than reading (in Elbow as cited by Bosely).

Bosely's comments on the teaching of reading in English courses have strong applicability to other disciplines: "a strong professional development program that encourages conversation among those trained in literature, rhetoric/composition and reading would encourage a broader view of reading and a stronger pedagogy in critical reading" (p. 4). Bray points out that when students perceive that they are receiving "effective (clear and well-organized) instruction" there is a measurable improvement in comprehension (p. 326).

4.5.2 conduct faculty workshops that provide instructors with a wide variety of techniques designed to increase student compliance with reading assignments

Faculty members report that many students do not read most of what is currently assigned in their courses. Rather than teachers assigning additional reading, compliance with current reading assignments will be encouraged and increased through a clearer understanding of problems facing student readers.

Expectations: By the end of year four, all of the traditional faculty should have received such training and half of that number will have applied techniques to increase student compliance with reading assignments.

Costs: from the funding designated in 4.5.1 above.

Timeframe: Training will begin in fall of 2008.

Persons Responsible: Dean of Arts and Science, the QEP Oversight Committee, and the Office of Institutional Research.

Supporting Literature: see 4.5.1 above.

4.6 Changing Students' Attitudes toward Reading: a campus-wide reading program

Bray *et al.* (2004) indicate that for students who enter college with below average attitudes toward literacy activities, the number of assigned and unassigned books read and exposure to arts and humanities courses were positively related to enhancement of attitude. The researchers also stress that students' involvement in academic activities such as word-processing, course learning, writing assignments and library use improve their overall attitudes toward reading.

Attitudes toward reading and reading-related activities will be assessed by a seven-item Likert scale, whose construct validation is described in a study by Bray, Pascarella, and Pierson (2004). In their study, this attitude scale predicted: library

use, number of unassigned books read during the three-year study, amount of writing done and third-year CAAP scores. This brief evaluation will be administered thereafter annually at the end of each academic year.

The effectiveness of this supporting strategy (improve student attitudes toward reading and reading-related activities) will be measured specifically by the number of participants in these activities and their evaluation of same. The university expects the percentage of students engaged in one or more of these activities to increase by ten percent in each successive year of the plan. Moreover, through these activities, an increase in the number of students who indicate that they read more for pleasure is expected. Averett faculty also anticipate an improvement in students' attitudes about reading. These two aspects will be measured by surveying students' reading habits. Research noted in Bray, Pascarella and Pierson, suggests that positive student attitudes toward reading and the amount of reading are correlated with improved learning. The university believes that the vigorous application of Averett's *Reading Critically for Success* plan will bring about such a result. The survey will be administered and data gathered by the Office of Institutional Research and forwarded to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences who will make annual reports to the Oversight Committee.

4.6.1 make daily newspapers freely available to all students and for inclusion in classroom activities as appropriate

Averett will participate in the *USA Today's* "Collegiate Readership Program." This program will deliver newspapers at pre-designated sites on campus. *USA Today* will supply the campus with copies of its publication and the university will designate two additional daily papers. *USA Today* staff will monitor the number of papers removed from sites on a daily basis and will record number of copies made available. The Dean of Students office staff will determine distribution sites on campus. Faculty will be encouraged/trained in the use of this media in the classroom where appropriate.

Expectations: Students will increase the frequency of their reading beyond course assignments. Instructors, whenever appropriate, will make use of this medium to stimulate discussion in and out of the classroom.

Costs: \$6000 annually funded in the QEP budget.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
USA Today	4.6.1	6,000 ^a	6,300	6,615	6,946	7,293

^a There is an anticipated annual 5 % increase for this service.

Timeframe: This program will begin fall semester 2007 and run through the fall semester of 2012. The program will be evaluated each summer to collect adequate longitudinal data about its effectiveness.

Persons responsible: The Activities Director in the Dean of Students Office will have oversight of the project and will report to the QEP Oversight Committee. The office of Institutional Research will collect the data.

4.6.2 make reading and reading materials pervasive in the campus environment

In addition to the newspaper program, Averett will make reading materials more accessible by placing magazines on popular topics in public areas and establishing free book exchange zones. These magazine and book zones will be placed on campus where students tend to gather: the commuter lounge, the student center, dormitory lobbies and lobbies of classroom and administrative buildings and will be designated as reading zones.

Expectations: It is expected that students will become more engaged in reading when the reading materials are more readily accessible.

Costs: We will have a book drive day for faculty to donate books to the reading zones. This will encourage faculty and staff involvement in the project. Faculty may wish to donate reading materials from their disciplines.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Reading Zones	4.6.2	1,000 ^a	800	500	300	100

^a Funding is for capital expenses for furnishings and will decrease through year five.

Timeframe: The reading zone project will begin in fall 2007 and continue indefinitely.

Persons responsible: Director of Student Activities for the reading zones, the Office of Institutional Research for data retrieval, the QEP Oversight Committee for evaluation.

4.6.3 schedule periodic literacy-related group activities for students

Under the direction of faculty and staff, students will have the opportunity to visit new and used bookstores, discipline-related libraries, rare book dealers, lectures by authors off campus, book signings, and similar activities throughout the academic year.

Expectations: The pervasive campus reading program will generate interest in activities and students will become familiar with and make use of opportunities related to reading. Students participating in these literacy activities will show enhanced attitudes toward reading compared with equivalent groups not participating.

Costs: \$750 will be budgeted annually.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Literacy Activities	4.6.3	750	750	750	750	750

Timeframe: This strategy will begin in the fall of 2007 and continue indefinitely.

Persons responsible: Faculty and staff will organize these activities and will secure travel arrangements with the Dean of Students Office. Reports of all activities, with evaluations, will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences.

4.6.4 develop reading discussion groups

To help develop a culture of reading and to promote the idea that reading does not occur solely in the classroom, the university will establish reading discussion groups. This strategy will clearly indicate to students that liberally educated individuals should engage in academic conversation about topics and readings of interest. Such discussions will encourage further reading. Some groups will be discipline-specific while others will take a more open approach to selection. These discussion groups may be led by faculty, staff or students and will be held in relatively informal settings. A budget will be provided for incidentals and honoraria. A central location in the student center will have times and dates of upcoming discussions posted. These will also be posted on the Averett website. Everyone in the campus community will have the opportunity to attend. As part of the external promotion of the *Reading Critically for Success* QEP, Averett will also publicize the readings and upcoming discussions. This will be done through the news and publicity office. The larger off-campus community will be invited to participate.

Expectations: The social and peer contexts of these reading circles will contribute to an increased volume of reading on campus. Such non-graded opportunities in informal settings will improve students' attitudes toward reading. Students will also be engaged with community members who will be invited to participate.

Costs: \$500 will be budgeted annually to offer honoraria to group leaders, light refreshments for discussions and the purchase of paperbacks for students.

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Reading Groups	4.6.4	500	500	500	500	500

Timeframe: This strategy will begin in the fall of 2007.

Persons responsible: The Director of Student Activities will monitor posting of announcements. Group leaders will complete a brief post-discussion evaluation. The Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences will oversee this activity and report semiannually to the QEP Oversight Committee.

4.6.5 bring authors of selected books to campus for discussions of their work with students, faculty, and staff

As an outreach to the campus community and the regional community, the Averett Concert-Lecture series will invite several authors per year to present lectures about one of their books.

Expectations: Students will gain a greater understanding of the craft of writing and the importance of the open exchange of ideas as a basis for a liberal arts education. Students attending such lectures will show enhanced attitudes toward reading and reading-related activities as compared to non-participating students.

Costs: The cost of securing two authors per year will be in the range of \$4000 for the first full year and increase \$500 per year. The Concert-Lecture series would include these authors in its yearly budget. In addition, Institutional Advancement will develop a fund entitled "Authors on Campus Fund."

Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Authors on Campus	4.6.5	2,000	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,500

Timeframe: The Concert-Lecture committee will incorporate at least one author in its 2008-2009 season and two authors per season from that time forward.

Persons responsible: The Concert-Lecture Committee, under the direction of the Dean of Students, would be responsible for selecting and scheduling authors' speaking engagements. The house manager for each lecture will see that the evaluations are forwarded to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences for analysis.

TABLE 3 TIMELINE OF INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	F07	S08	F08	S09	SU09	F09	S10	F10	S11	F11	S12	F12
<i>Successful Reading</i> 4.3.1				✓	✓							
Assignments 4.3.2			✓									
Peer Tutors 4.3.3	✓											
Reading Seminars 4.3.4						✓						
Faculty Train. 4.5.1-2			✓		✓			✓				✓
Cohort Train. 4.5.1				✓			✓		✓		✓	
<i>USA Today</i> 4.6.1	✓											
Reading Zones 4.6.2	✓											
Lit. Activities 4.6.3	✓											
Reading Grps. 4.6.4	✓											
<i>Authors on Campus</i> 4.6.5	✓											

SECTION FIVE: Oversight and Continuation of Plan

5.1 Plan Oversight

The QEP Oversight Committee will consist of one student, two faculty members, a staff member from Dean of Students office, the Director of the Academic Resources Center, the Director of the Writing Center, the Director of the Office of Institutional Research, and the Director of Public Relations. The Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance will all serve *ex officio*. This *ad hoc* committee will meet biannually to review assessment reports and to make recommendations to the faculty and the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Faculty Council will be invited to make this a standing committee.

The Director of Public Relations will serve as information officer and will be responsible for gathering information on all reading related events on campus and in the community and dissemination of that information to the appropriate university departments and associations. The Oversight Committee will have an annual discretionary budget for publicity purposes and to support activities that do not fall under the purview of any one group or individual responsible for a particular strategy.

This committee will also have the responsibility for the fifth year report to SACS. As such, it will be within the purview of this committee to examine any aspect of the quality of the program, including budget and personnel matters, to request the timely submission of assessment reports, to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and to affect its successful administration. Ultimate accountability for the plan lies with the Dean of Arts and Sciences.

5.2 Budget Review and Planning

Financial support for the QEP will be implemented and adjusted as needed in the preparation of the annual budget. The Vice President for Finance and the Dean of Arts and Sciences will review funding for the QEP in the context of its function within the university's institutional effectiveness plan. The Vice President for Finance will serve *ex officio* on the Oversight Committee.

Costs: The Support Services subcommittee recommended that the QEP Oversight Committee have an annual budget to cover costs of publicizing the QEP to the campus community and to the local and regional communities. The budget would also include the ancillary costs for the collection and analysis of data and the preparation of assessment reports.

	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Oversight Committee budget	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000

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APPENDIX A

Committee and Subcommittee Appointments

Reaffirmation Committee (shown in section 3.1.4)

Quality Enhancement Plan Committee

Ms. Bernadette Barksdale:	Student
Dr. Jeffrey Fager:	Prof. of Religion, Dean of Arts and Sciences, CAO
Dr. Richard Ferguson:	Prof. of Physical Education, Wellness and Sports Science
Dr. Ann Garbett	Prof. of English
Dr. Mark Govoni:	Dean of Students
Dr. Jean Hatten:	Prof. of Psychology
Mr. Steve Lemery:	Associate Prof. of Mathematics and Computer Science
Ms. Jessica Marlowe:	Student
Mr. Jim Verdini:	Assistant Prof., Librarian Humanities and Access Services
Dr. Larry Wilburn:	Prof. of French, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Registrar

QEP Subcommittees

Support Services

Mr. Larry Compton:	Director of Academic Resources Center
Dr. Steve Hecox:	Assistant Prof. of English, Director of Writing Center
Mrs. Katlin Hecox:	Director of Career Services
Dr. William Trakas:	Prof. of History, Director of the Honors Program
Mr. Jim Verdini:	Assistant Prof., Librarian Humanities and Access Services
Dr. Larry Wilburn:	Prof. of French, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Registrar
Mr. Joey Wilkerson:	Director of Student Activities

Faculty Development

Dr. Mark Govoni:	Dean of Students
Mr. Kevin Harden:	Associate Prof., Librarian Social Sciences and Electronic Resources
Dr. Laura Hartman:	Associate Prof. of Sociology/Criminal Justice
Ms. Barbara Kushubar:	Associate Prof. of Physical Education, Wellness and Sport Science
Dr. Anne Lewis:	Associate Prof. of Music
Ms. Laura Meder:	Assistant Prof. of Biology, Chair of Faculty Council
Dr. Sue Rogers:	Prof of Education

Assessment

Dr. Bobby Carlsen:	Assistant Prof. of Psychology
Dr. Richard Ferguson:	Prof. of Physical Education, Wellness and Sports Science
Dr. Jean Hatten:	Prof. of Psychology
Ms. Tonja Hudson:	Assistant Prof. of Mathematics
Mr. Karl Wallhauser:	Instructor of English
Dr. Darcy Wudel:	Prof. of Political Science

Budget

Dr. Lee Burton:	Assistant Prof. of Physical Education, Wellness and Sport Science
Ms. Elaine Day:	Associate Prof., Director of Library
Dr. Jeffrey Fager:	Prof. of Religion, Dean of Arts and Sciences, CAO
Dr. Thomas Vick:	Associate Prof. of Aeronautics, Chair Aeronautics and Business
Dr. Jeffrey Woo:	Assistant Prof. of Business Administration
Dr. Peggy Wright:	Prof. of Accounting, VP for Administration and Finance, CFO

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Dr. Gail Allen:	Prof. of Music, Chair Music Department
Dr. James Caldwell:	Prof. Biology, Chair Biological and Physical Sciences
Mr. Jackie Finney:	Associate Prof. of Theater
Dr. John Guarino:	Associate Prof. of Business
Dr. Betty Heard:	Prof. of English

Literature Review

Ms. Elaine Day:	Associate Prof., Director of Library
Dr. Ann Garbett	Prof. of English
Dr. Mark Govoni:	Dean of Students
Mr. Steve Lemery:	Associate Prof. of Mathematics and Computer Science
Dr. Sue Rogers:	Prof of Education
Mr. Jim Verdini:	Assistant Prof., Librarian Humanities and Access Services
Dr. Lynn Wolf:	Associate Prof. of Education, Chair Education Department

APPENDIX B ASSESSMENT PART ONE

Measures of Effect: desired changes in our student population

Learning Outcome	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Timetable/Schedule	Person(s) Responsible
Traditional undergraduate students will demonstrate gains in reading comprehension.	ACT's CAAP test of reading comprehension	significant improvement in reading comprehension	comprehension test administered each year to entering freshmen, juniors, and first-semester seniors beginning in Fall 2007	Office of Institutional Research Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences

APPENDIX B ASSESSMENT GRID PART TWO

countable products that point to which and how many resources Averett deployed

Measure	Timetable/ Schedule	Person(s) Responsible
Number of students enrolling in courses on reading improvement	Summer 2009	Registrar
Number of peer-tutors trained for reading program	2007-2012	Director of ARC
Number of newspapers/publications made available	2007-2012	<i>USA Today</i> and Activities Director
Number of newspapers/publications taken from the stands	2007-2012	<i>USA Today</i> and Activities Director
Number of magazines and books available in reading zone sites	2007-2012	Activities Director
Number of literacy-related group activities	2007-2012	Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences
Number of reading circles/discussion groups	2007-2012	Activities Director
Number of participants in reading circles/discussion groups	2007-2012	Activities Director
Number of authors brought to campus	2007-2012	Concert-Lecture Committee
Number of attendees to lectures given by authors	2007-2012	House manager for the lecture
Number of faculty receiving training in reading skills	2008-2012	Professional Dev. Committee
Number of published/recommended strategies for increasing students reading of assignments	2008-2012	Professional Dev. Committee
Number of courses where faculty report use of published/recommended strategies	2008-2012	Department Charis Dean of Arts and Sciences
Number of reading courses taught	2009-2012	Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences
Number of students enrolled in reading courses	2009-2012	Registrar

APPENDIX C

Reading Behavior Questionnaire (and percentages responses)

We are conducting a survey to understand how reading relates to your educational experience at Averett. As part of this study we are gathering information about your reading habits and interests in and out of class. Please take a few moments and answer the following questions:

Biographical information id# _____

(Percentage of respondents is based on 396 participants)

A1. What is your gender?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	161	(41%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	235	(59%)

A2. My ethnic background is

<input type="checkbox"/>	White, non-Hispanic	287	(72)
<input type="checkbox"/>	White, of Hispanic origin	9	(2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	African-American	81	(20)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Pacific Islander	2	(<1)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Native American	0	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify	10	(2)
<input type="checkbox"/>			

A3. What is your anticipated major? (answers vary)

A4. What is your expected year of graduation? (answers vary)

<input type="checkbox"/> 2007	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011
<input type="checkbox"/> 2008	<input type="checkbox"/> 2012
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009	<input type="checkbox"/> 2013
<input type="checkbox"/> 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> 2014

A5. What is your class standing?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Freshman	115	(29.0)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sophomore	91	(22.9)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Junior	84	(21.2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior	104	(26.2)

Reading style and reading habits

A6. How much time do you spend reading per week? (Reading includes direct viewing of printed and electronic sources.)

<input type="checkbox"/> 0-3 hours	122 (30.8)
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 hours	170 (42.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 hours	67 (16.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 hours	36 (9.0)

A7. My preferred form of reading is

<input type="checkbox"/> Print based	265 (66.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic media	107 (27.0)
<input type="checkbox"/> Audio format of printed material	19 (4.7)

A8. I read a newspaper

<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	57 (14.3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Two to three times a week	113 (28.5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Once per week	86 (21.7)
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not read the newspaper on a regular basis	137 (34.5)

A9. What sources do you read in preparing for your Averett assignments?
(check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Textbooks	383 (96.7)
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic journals	156 (39.3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers	76 (19.1)

A10. What types of on-line materials do you use in preparing for your Averett assignments? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Web pages	366 (92.4)
<input type="checkbox"/> Journals	177 (44.6)
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers	118 (29.7)
<input type="checkbox"/> Blogs and/or wikis	42 (10.6)
<input type="checkbox"/> Chat rooms set up for course discussion	23 (5.8)
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)	29 (7.3)

A11. What type of books or magazines do you read for pleasure?
(check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Fiction	195	(49.2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-fiction	192	(48.4)
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not read for pleasure on a regular basis	132	(33.3)

A12. I would find it helpful if Averett and Averett instructors would:
(check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Provide instruction on how to read assignments	72	(18.1)
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide study guides for readings	318	(80.3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Take into consideration reading levels of students when making reading assignments	134	(33.8)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	30	(7.5)

A13. When given a reading assignment, I
(check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Start reading immediately	113	(28.5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Look/think about the chapter selection/title	113	(28.5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Read the discussion first	76	(19.1)
<input type="checkbox"/> Scan the text for important ideas	199	(50.2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Think about how the reading selection relates to class discussion	99	(25.0)
<input type="checkbox"/> Take notes	170	(42.9)
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimate how long it will take to read this assignment	200	(50.5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wait until the day of class to begin reading the assignment	68	(17.1)

B1. I enjoy reading poetry and literature.

1 (6.3) 2 (8.3) 3 (14.6) 4 (25) 5 (15.2) 6 (14.1) 7 (16.2)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B2. I enjoy reading about science.

1 (6.6) 2 (8.1) 3 (14.9) 4 (24) 5 (17) 6 (13.9) 7 (15.2)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B3. I enjoy reading about history.

1 (11.4) 2 (17.2) 3 (18.2) 4 (18.4) 5 (13.9) 6 (10.2) 7 (9.6)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B4. I prefer reading things that are relevant to my personal experience.

1 (28.8) 2 (30.8) 3 (19.2) 4 (11.1) 5 (3.3) 6 (3) 7 (3)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B5. If I have something good to read, I am never bored.

1 (26.8) 2 (15.4) 3 (11.6) 4 (15.9) 5 (10.4) 6 (10.9) 7 (8.6)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B6. I enjoy expressing my ideas in writing.

1 (10.8) 2 (11.1) 3 (15.4) 4 (23.7) 5 (15.6) 6 (11.1) 7 (11.1)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B7. After I write about something, I see that subject differently.

1 (7.3) 2 (10.1) 3 (15.9) 4 (31) 5 (15.9) 6 (10.3) 7 (8.5)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B8. My advisor considers the reading difficulty of courses when advising me about course selections and course load.

1 (4.7) 2 (605) 3 (8.5) 4 (31.8) 5 (14.3) 6 (15.9) 7 (16.1)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B9. In general, the reading assignments in my courses are too difficult.

1 (2.5) 2 (4.5) 3 (12.8) 4 (20.7) 5 (20.9) 6 (21.7) 7 (16.1)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B10. I have the necessary ability for college-level reading.

1 (39.1) 2 (30.8) 3 (14.8) 4 (6.8) 5 (4.7) 6 (1.5) 7 (1.5)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B11. My greatest difficulty with reading is encountering words I do not understand.

1 (5.6) 2 (10.1) 3 (15.9) 4 (17.2) 5 (13.6) 6 (21.7) 7 (15.2)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B12. I rarely have trouble following an author's argument.

1 (7.1) 2 (15.9) 3 (20.5) 4¹ (30.6) 5 (16.7) 6 (6.8) 7 (2.3)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B13. Sometimes I have difficulty understanding and answering discussion questions about a reading assignment.

1 (4) 2 (9.9) 3 (22.2) 4 (22.8) 5 (19.7) 6 (15.2) 7 (6.1)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B14. I find that most college reading assignments are clearly relevant to the course.

1 (5.8) 2 (16.9) 3 (25.8) 4 (24) 5 (16.7) 6 (7.8) 7 (2.5)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B15. I read too slowly to complete reading assignments easily.

1 (6.1) 2 (7.8) 3 (12.9) 4 (16.4) 5 (15.1) 6 (24) 7 (17.4)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B16. I receive instructions from my instructors on how to read assigned material.

1 (1.5) 2 (4.8) 3 (8.8) 4 (22.2) 5 (16.7) 6 (23.5) 7 (22)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B17. In my courses, completing assigned readings is essential to earning a good grade.

1 (27.8) 2 (25.8) 3 (19.2) 4 (14.9) 5 (6.6) 6 (3.8) 7 (1.8)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B18. In my courses, completing the assigned reading is essential to earning a passing grade.

1 (27.8) 2 (23.7) 3 (15.4) 4 (20) 5 (5.6) 6 (3.8) 7 (3.5)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B19. Reading will be important in my work after college.

1 (26.5) 2 (19.4) 3 (15.4) 4 (19.2) 5 (7.6) 6 (8.1) 7 (3.5)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

B20. Reading after college will make me a better member of society.

1 (24.5) 2 (17.7) 3 (17) 4 (22.2) 5 (6.1) 6 (7.3) 7 (5.1)

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D

FACULTY SURVEY of READING ISSUES 2006 TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE

(percentage responses based on 51 participants)

1. In my four-course teaching load, I typically assign the following types and amount of reading:

(Please complete the blanks with the letters of the appropriate range of approximate pages assigned.)

A. Less than 100 B. 101-200 C. 201-300 D. 301-400 E. more than 400

	#Pages in Course 1	#Pages in Course 2	#Pages in Course 3	#Pages in Course 4
CIRCLE COURSE LEVEL	100 200 300 400	100 200 300 400	100 200 300 400	100 200 300 400

(RESPONSES VARY GREATLY BASED ON CONTENT AND COURSE LEVEL)

Textbook	_____	_____	_____	_____
Newspaper	_____	_____	_____	_____
Magazine	_____	_____	_____	_____
Scholarly Journal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Book (not a textbook)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poetry, plays, essays	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. I assess the students' ability to absorb information from the readings in the four courses above by (check all that apply):

<u>Methods</u>	<u>Course #1</u>	<u>Course #2</u>	<u>Course #3</u>	<u>Course #4</u>
Reading Quiz	(41.1)	(39.2)	(33.3)	(19.6)
Generating paraphrase	(29.4)	(31.3)	(31.3)	(21.5)
Questions on Exam	(86.2)	(86.2)	(78.4)	(70.5)
In class writing	(49.0)	(45.0)	(37.2)	(39.2)
Discussion	(80.3)	(80.3)	(74.5)	(72.5)
Other	(37.2)	(41.1)	(41.1)	(29.4)
Do Not Assess	(0)	(0)	(1.9)	(1.9)

3. In syllabus development, I give thought to the reading level of my students.

Always			Seldom	Never	NA
1 (21.5)	2 (23.5)	3 (27.4)	4 (19.6)	5 (7.8)	6 (0)

4. As an advisor, I take the perceived reading difficulty of each course into account when advising a student concerning course selection.

Always			Seldom	Never	NA
1 (23.5)	2 (33.3)	3 (19.6)	4 (13.7)	5 (3.9)	6 (5.8)

5. As an advisor, I take the student's self-reported reading difficulty into account when advising a student concerning course selection.

Always			Seldom	Never	NA
1 (37.2)	2 (25.4)	3 (21.5)	4 (7.8)	5 (0)	6 (7.8)

6. In selecting a textbook, I take its level of reading difficulty into account.

Always			Seldom	Never	NA
1 (45.0)	2 (15.6)	3 (21.5)	4 (11.7)	5 (5.8)	6 (0)

7. In making reading assignments, I take the level of reading difficulty into account.

Always			Seldom	Never	NA
1 (19.6)	2 (41.4)	3 (13.7)	4 (15.6)	5 (9.8)	6 (0)

8. In recent years I have noticed a marked decline in the typical student's ability to read and comprehend my reading assignments.

Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree		NA
1 (25.4)	2 (25.4)	3 (37.2)	4 (1.9)	5 (7.8)	6 (1.9)

9. I would rate the typical student's ability to read assigned material as:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Below Average	Poor
1 (0)	2 (9.8)	3 (62.7)	4 (17.6)	5 (9.8)

10. I would rate the typical student's ability to comprehend reading assignments as:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Below Average	Poor
1 (0)	2 (7.8)	3 (60.7)	4 (21.5)	5 (9.8)

11. In making reading assignments, I am most interested in making sure students obtain

Coverage of course material			In-depth understanding of some material		NA
1 (5.8)	2 (5.8)	3 (25.4)	4 (23.5)	5 (37.2)	6 (1.9)

12. I provide instruction to my students concerning how to read assigned material.

Always			Seldom	Never
1 (25.4)	2 (27.4)	3 (25.4)	4 (19.6)	5 (1.9)

13. I think Averett should do the following to assist our students in developing the ability to read at the college level (check any or all strategies):

_____ train peer tutors to help students with reading skills	(72.5)
_____ train faculty in techniques to improve reading skills	(45.0)
_____ offer courses on reading improvement	(66.6)
_____ incorporate required reading seminars in the curriculum	(45.0)
_____ develop "reading circles"	(35.2)
_____ other (please specify):	

14. In providing instruction concerning how to read assigned material, I do the following:

15. In my courses, completing the assigned reading is:

Essential to a <i>good</i> grade in the class			Unnecessary for a <i>good</i> grade in the class	
1 (49.0)	2 (29.4)	3 (13.7)	4 (7.8)	5 (0)

16. In my courses, completing the assigned reading is:

Essential to a <i>passing</i> grade in the class			Unnecessary for a <i>passing</i> grade in the class	
1 (41.1)	2 (29.4)	3 (17.6)	4 (9.8)	5 (1.9)

17. Please circle the letter of your academic area at Averett.

A. Aeronautics, Equestrian Studies, Psychology

(13.7)

B. Education, Physical Education, Wellness and Sport Science

(13.7)

C. Biology, Computer Science and Statistics, Mathematics, Phy. Sci. and Chem.

(17.6)

D. Art, Music, Religion, Theatre, and Sociology/Criminal Justice

(23.5)

E. History, Political Science, English, and Modern Languages

(23.5)

F. Business

(7.8)

18. Identify your status:

Full-Time

Adjunct

APPENDIX E

TIMELINE OF DEVELOPMENT OF QEP

DATE	ACTIVITY
December 2004	Dr. Fager meets with SACS-COC representative
February 15, 2005	Dr. Fager addresses faculty about new procedures for reaffirmation
June-December	Reaffirmation committee formed and meets
June	Dr. Fager initiates discussion with reaffirmation committee about possible QEP topics
July 24-27	Drs. Fager, Bash and Wilburn attend the SACS-COC summer institute for "Quality Enhancement and Accreditation"
August	Dr. Fager calls meeting of selected members of reaffirmation committee to discuss the list of topics (Appendix A)
August 2005-February 2006	Possible topics for QEP researched and discussed
February	Topic selection committee refers to faculty two possible QEP topics: oral communication and reading
March 21	Faculty votes and approves the QEP concerning reading
March 23	Dean Fager meets with Drs. Govoni and Wilburn to select a QEP development committee
April 4	Drs. Govoni and Wilburn meet with SACS liaison Donna Wilkenson to discuss proposed QEP
May 3	The QEP development committee meets for first time
May 17	The development committee identifies potential student outcomes and begins discussion of critical readings
May 30	Based on goals and strategies, the development committee forms several ad hoc committees and selects faculty to participate in the committee's work
June 12	A working draft of the goal, objectives and strategies is finalized by the committee
June 29	The committee discusses internal surveys of faculty and students and the ad hoc committee for assessment is selected
July 20	The committee reviewed items for the rewrite of the student survey to be administered in the fall. The committee decided to establish a literature review sub committee
August 8	QEP committee reviews final draft of student survey
August 18	Faculty participates in "faculty reading survey"
August 18	Assessment subcommittee discusses evaluation portions of the QEP
August 22	Assessment subcommittee meets to finalize its recommendations for QEP
September 12	QEP committee meets to review assessment report
September 19	Outline of objectives and strategies presented to faculty
September 19-24	drafts of budget, assessment grid, timeline for implementation and objectives and strategies completed
September 22, 27, 29 and October 2	Student "Reading Behavior" survey is administered
September 25, 26, 27, October 2, 3	Discussion meetings held with faculty and support staff
October 3-25	Subcommittees meet and submit reports
October 13	QEP presented to Board of Trustees
November 14	Faculty votes to approve QEP
November 20	Student representatives review QEP
January 11, 2007	QEP Committee review final draft
January 16	Faculty reviews and approves final draft
January 22	QEP Committee reviews final version of QEP
January 26	final version of QEP forwarded to SACS-COC

APPENDIX F

TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	STRATEGY	ACADEMIC YEAR INITIATED
Peer Tutoring	4.3.3	2007-08
USA Today	4.6.1	2007-08
Reading Zones	4.6.2	2007-08
Literacy Activities	4.6.3	2007-08
Reading Discussion Groups	4.6.4	2007-08
<i>Authors on Campus</i>	4.6.5	2007-08
Faculty Training	4.5.1-2	2008-09
Faculty Cohort Training	4.5.1	2008-09
<i>Successful Reading Course</i>	4.3.1	2008-09
Compliance/Assignments	4.3.2	2008-09
Reading Seminars	4.3.4	2009-10

APPENDIX G BUDGET OUTLINE AND ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

line 1	Strategy		07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
line 2	Training of Faculty at large	4.5.1-2		2,000			
line 3	Faculty Cohort Training Consultant	4.5.1		2,000		2,000	
line 4	Cohort Participant Training Stipend (x12)	4.5.1		6,459		6,459	
line 5	(Cohort) Faculty Teaching Faculty (x2)	4.5.1			2,153	2,691	3,230
line 6	<i>Successful Reading Course</i> Development	4.3.1		4,000			
line 7	Salary <i>Successful Reading Course</i> (x2)	4.3.1		2,153	2,261	2,492	2,617
line 8	Reading Compliance	4.3.2	0	0	0	0	0
line 9	Peer Tutoring	4.3.3	3,230	3,391	3,561	3,739	3,926
line 10	Reading Seminars Dev.	4.3.4	0	0	0	0	0
line 11	Salaries for Reading Seminars	4.3.4			23,414	39,965	39,965
line 12	<i>USA Today</i>	4.6.1	6,000	6,300	6,615	6,946	7,293
line 13	Reading Zones	4.6.2	1,000	800	500	300	100
line 14	Literacy Activities	4.6.3	750	750	750	750	750
line 15	Reading Groups	4.6.4	500	500	500	500	500
line 16	Authors on Campus	4.6.5	2,000	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,500
line 17	Assessment (CAAP+ reporting and linkages)		5,300	5,550	5,813	6,088	6,378
line 18	Oversight committee budget		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
line 19	TOTAL: 263,939		20,780	39,903	52,067	78,930	72,259

Notes:

Resources for funding of the QEP will be shown as a line item in the annual university budget.

line 4 includes social security

line 5 includes social security and a \$500 increase in years 10-11 and 11-12

line 7 includes social security and 5% annual increase

line 9 includes social security and annual increases

line 11 year 09-10, five 3 credit sections and fifteen 1 credit sections at \$725 per hour + social security; subsequent years ten 3 credit sections and fifteen 1 credit sections at \$825 per credit hour + social security

line 12 projected 5% annual increase

line 17 projected 5% annual increase. This is subject to change based on linkages we may wish to add based on 365 freshmen and seniors.

APPENDIX H OBJECTIVE

Objective/ Strategies	Expectations	Quality Assurance	Costs	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible	Status	
Objective improve reading comprehension of traditional undergraduates						in progress	completed
Strategy 4.3.1 develop/offer optional course <i>Successful Reading</i>	reading for success in college level workshop/help students identify reading weaknesses and corrective strategies	pre- and post-test of reading skills/CAAP scores compare participants and non-participants/attitudinal survey at end of course	6,153 2,261 2,492 2,617	2008-09 2009-2010 2010-11 2011-12	Dean of Admissions Athletic Director Dean of Students Registrar's Office Oversight Committee		
Strategy 4.3.2 improve student compliance with reading assignments	an increase in the quantity and quality of reading assignments completed by students	student self-reporting on amount of reading completed at the end of semester	0	Fall 2008 and continuing	instructors Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences		
Strategy 4.3.3 design and implement a peer-tutoring program in reading	the number of students seeking help with reading will be recorded. It is expected that this number will increase as the QEP becomes more prevalent	pre- and post-tutoring assessments will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutors. Graduate education students will record evaluation information in their portfolios that will be monitored by their professor	3,230 3,391 3,561 3,739 3,926	Fall 2007 and continuing	Director Academic Resource Center, reading specialist from Education department		
Strategy 4.3.4 develop required reading seminars as part of the curriculum	students develop improved reading comprehension; seminars engage students more directly in the campus-wide reading plan	a rubric will be used to analyze the success of the seminars. The reading specialist in the Education department will provide guidance in developing this rubric	23,414 39,965 39,965	Fall 2009 and continuing each semester	Dean of Arts and Science, Curriculum Committee, Professional Development Committee		

APPENDIX I SUPPORT STRATEGIES 4.5

Strategies	Expectations	Quality Assurance	Costs	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible	Status	
4.5 Support Faculty will receive training in reading-related activities						In progress	Completed
Strategy 4.5.1 Provide significant training faculty concerning reading skills at college level	By the end of year 5, 100% of traditional faculty will have received training and ½ of that number will have taught at least one seminar.	End of semester narrative report from faculty incorporating techniques in their classes	\$2,000	Spring of 2009 2011	Dean of Arts and Sciences Oversight Committee		
Strategy 4.5.2 Conduct faculty workshops for teaching techniques to increase student compliance with reading assignments	By the end of year 5, 100% of the traditional faculty will have received training and ½ of that number will have reported making use of learned techniques	track number of sessions and participants/end of semester reports	\$2,000 per year	Fall of 2008	Dean of Arts and Sciences Oversight Committee		

APPENDIX I SUPPORT STRATEGIES 4.6

Strategies	Expectations	Quality Assurance	Costs	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible	Status	
4.6 Support improve student attitudes toward reading and reading-related activities campus-wide						in progress	completed
Strategy 4.6.1 daily newspapers available to all students for inclusion in class discussions	Students will increase the frequency of their reading beyond course assignments.	Self-reported use of publications in and outside of class discussion, and scores on attitudinal questionnaire will be collected and analyzed.	6,000 6,300 6,615 6,946 7,293	Fall 2007 through Fall 2012	Activities Director, Dean of Students Office		
Strategy 4.6.2 make reading and reading materials pervasive in campus environment/reading	Students will become more engaged in reading when reading materials are more accessible.	Evaluation cards available at each site will provide information about students' ideas of availability, selection, number of books borrowed and environment of reading space.	1,000 800 500 300 100	Fall 2007 and continuing	Activities Director, Institutional Research Office		
Strategy 4.6.3 literacy-related group activities	Students will become familiar with and make use of opportunities related to reading.	Faculty and staff will notify Associate Dean of Students of schedule events and indicate student participation and evaluation of the activity.	750 750 750 750 750	Fall 2007 and continuing	Faculty and staff/Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences		
Strategy 4.6.4 develop reading circles/discussion groups	The social and peer contexts of these reading circles will contribute to an increased volume of reading on campus.	Reports describing readings discussed, number of participants in attendance and student reactions to the process will be submitted.	500 500 500 500 500	Fall 2007 and continuing	Activities Director Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences Group Leaders		
Strategy 4.6.5 <i>Authors on Campus</i> project	Students will show enhanced attitudes toward reading and reading-related activities.	post-lecture evaluation by students	2,000 4,000 4,500 5,000 5,500	Fall 2007 and continuing	Dean of Students' Office Concert-Lecture Committee		

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE MINUTES OF QEP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Minutes from QEP Steering Committee for May 30, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 p.m. Present were: Jean Hatten, Ann Garbett, Richard Ferguson, Steve Lemery, Jue-Ling Tai and Larry Wilburn.

The minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved.

A packet of the following information was distributed to all present: copies of proposed reading surveys for faculty and students, copies of articles researched by Jim Verdini, a draft of "goals and strategies, and a worksheet entitled "Personnel Recommendations for QEP Committees."

The committee members discussed the reading surveys and decided that the one designed for students did not have the same depth as the one for the faculty. The members will work on the student survey to make it more complementary to the faculty survey.

The "Goals and Strategies" document was reviewed and changes were made to present a more coherent grouping of goals and strategies. This new draft will appear on the Blackboard site.

The committee discussed and designated members of the faculty and support staff as possible members of *ad hoc* committees to help complete the QEP. It was understood that participation may be limited during the summer and that these committees should be ready to work diligently at the beginning of the fall semester. An outline report is due to the faculty on September 19, 2006.

The committees (with nominees in parentheses) are:

-support services (Steve Hecox, Kat Hecox, Larry Compton, Bill Trakas, Joey Wilkerson, Jim Verdini)

-faculty development (Laura Meder, Barbara Kushubar, Sue Rogers, the rest of the standing professional development committee)

-assessment plan (Jean Hatten, Karl Wallhausser, Randy Cromwell, Darcy Wudel, Tonja Hudson, Bobby Carlsen)

-budget committee (Peggy Wright, Tom Vick, Jeff Woo, Lee Burton, Elaine Day)

-goals and strategies (Jim Caldwell, Betty Heard, John Guarino, Jackie Finney, Gail Allen).

It was decided to have Jeff Fager and/or Larry Wilburn contact these individuals and ask for their help in the process.

Assignments for the next meeting, Monday, June 12 at 2:00 p.m.:

Larry Wilburn will continue to work on the history of the QEP process and the institutional profile, Jim Verdini will continue to search for relevant articles and studies, the committee will make changes to the student reading survey and will continue to revise the "goals and strategies." A paper copy of the strategic plan will be sent to all members.

submitted May 31, 2006 by Larry Wilburn

Minutes from QEP meeting August 8, 2006

present: Mark Govoni, Larry Wilburn, Jean Hatten, Steve Lemery, Richard Ferguson, Jim Verdini, Darcy Wudel

The literature review and best practices was discussed. Steve Lemery's reading and selection of salient quotations is a helpful practice. The committee was advised to keep reading and finding quotations that support our rationale/need to do this project. In addition, examples of best practices in this area should be sought out.

Mark Govoni made a report on a very rough first draft of the rationale. This was a good start but, of course, needed a great deal more work that would be supported by literature review and faculty and student surveys.

The objectives and strategies recent draft with recommendations from the committee was discussed. Consideration was given to further subdividing the objectives to a third objective concerning faculty training. Larry said that he would reorganize the strategies and send it out to the committee for further discussion.

The assessment report was discussed in depth. The recommendation from the subcommittee was that all reference to and use of gpa as a benchmark and indicator of further improvement (or lack of improvement) would not be incorporated in the assessment plan. The reading portion of the CAAP would be the prime instrument for measuring student improvement. In addition, the Academic Resource Center (ARC) would provide pre and post testing of students who sought tutoring in reading. The CLA may be a possible addition. A common rubric would have to be developed for end of reading course evaluations.

The committee reviewed the draft of a timeline for implementation of the strategies.

The budget committee will meet next to determine specific information about projected costs, salaries, training, newspapers, consultants, etc.

The literature review committee will pull together quotations and send them to Mark for further development of the rationale. Jim Verdini wanted to know if a decision had been made about the "Works Cited" format. Would it be MLA or APA?

The assessment sub committee is to revise the assessment plan according to today's comments.

The QEP committee will email Larry with suggestions about revising the format for the objectives and strategies section of the QEP.

Larry will discuss with Jeff the best times to administer the student survey. The faculty survey will be administered at the opening faculty workshop August 18. The next meeting will be determined on an as needed basis after the faculty has had a chance to comment on the objectives and strategies section of the QEP.