Appendix D1

Quality Enhancement Plan-QEP
Questions from Governor Rick Scott  
Response Document for QEP

Note: The listing of questions A through Q has gaps in the lettering because they correspond to the Governor's request, and the QEP is not being asked to respond to every question. Please use the lettering as they appear below for each of your responses.

C. Do you have measurable goals for each graduate in the areas of writing proficiency and critical thinking? If so, please send them to me with the goals and include the results for the last five to ten years.
Guidance for Response from QEP: Provide brief description of QEP, including why critical thinking was selected (importance to employers, success in the workplace, etc.) List specific measurable goals in the QEP relating to critical thinking. Include rubrics related to critical thinking. Also obtain and provide goals related to writing for ENC 1101 and 1102. Provide summary results of assessment that demonstrate student performance on critical thinking goals, since the inception of such assessments.

Florida A&M University (FAMU) has implemented several integrated curricular and co-curricular initiatives as part of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem solving, and written communication skills. Consistent with the FAMU Mission Statement, developing students' critical thinking skills in and out of the classroom will improve student learning, and produce graduates who are more prepared for the challenges of college, career and society. The FAMU QEP has a specific focus on select courses in the University's General Education curriculum, such as English and African-American History, that most students typically complete during their freshman year. With a focus on the target courses the FAMU QEP is spurring changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment methods in order to increase the likelihood that freshman students will show measurable improvements in their critical thinking skills.

Specific skills targeted for enhancement by the FAMU QEP initiative include the ability of students to:

- Effectively identify, gather, and process relevant information or evidence;
- Effectively analyze and evaluate information or evidence;
- Make informed judgments about the validity of information and the arguments of others, and;
- Use relevant information to solve problems.
Specific goals related to critical thinking include:

1. Students will be able to write and present critical essays demonstrating critical thinking skills on various topics of literary, sociological, political and/or historical significance.

Assessment Approach: This goal specifically targets students who enroll in freshman English courses (ENC 1101 & ENC 1102). Through the QEP initiative these courses have been redesigned to include specific critical thinking student learning outcomes and a focus on the assessment of critical thinking skills via student performance on critical essays.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 80% of freshmen enrolled in Freshman Communicative Skills I (ENC 1101) will show an average increase of 1 point (on a 4-point scale) on critical essays assessed from the beginning (pre-assessment) to the end (post-assessment) of the semester.

- **Summary of Assessment Results:** A sample of student writing products were assessed during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years to generate baseline data on the critical thinking and writing skills of freshmen students. The results of the assessment were shared with faculty in the English department, who used the feedback to assist in the refinement of the critical thinking scoring rubric. Beginning with the fall 2011 term, the revised scoring rubric will be used to assess the critical thinking skill of all freshmen enrolled in ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 courses.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Remembering</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>Argumentation, logical reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Analyzing data, identifying patterns</td>
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<td>Application</td>
<td>Applying solutions, decision-making</td>
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<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>Remembering</td>
<td>Recalling information, retention</td>
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**Holistic Scoring Rubric for Writing and Critical Thinking – Department of English**

- **Score**: 1 = Beginning, 2 = Developing, 3 = Competent, 4 = Sufficient, 5 = Excellent

**Score**
- **1**: Bottom of the page
- **2**: Middle of the page
- **3**: Bottom of the page
- **4**: Middle of the page
- **5**: Top of the page
2. Students will be able to effectively analyze and defend an interdisciplinary case study with historical significance.

**Assessment Approach:** This goal specifically targets students who enroll in African-American History courses (AMH 2091 & AFA 3104). Through the QEP initiative these courses have been redesigned to include specific critical thinking student learning outcomes and a focus on the assessment of critical thinking skills via student performance on case study analyses.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 80% of the students completing African-American history courses (AMH 2091 or AFA 3104) will obtain a minimum mean score of 3 (on a 4-point scale) on a written interdisciplinary case study analysis scored with the University’s uniform rubric designed to measure critical thinking skills.

- **Summary of Assessment Results:** Students enrolled in AMH 2091 and AFA 3104 were assessed during the 2009-10 and 2010-2011 academic years to generate baseline data on the critical thinking skills of freshman students. Results for both years indicate that 45% of students achieved the targeted score of 3. The results of the assessment have been shared with faculty in the history department and have been used to guide faculty development activities for the department.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Good/Adequate</td>
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<td>Observation</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
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<td>Good/Adequate</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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**Examples:**
- **Qualitative:** Field observations, interviews, and document analysis.
- **Quantitative:** Surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis.
- **Expert opinion:** Opinions from subject matter experts.
- **Observation:** Direct observation of phenomena or processes.

**Rubic Criteria:**
- A. Identify, gather information.
- B. Analyze information and make a new information that is generated.
- C. Evaluate the information and process significant and meaningful findings.
- D. Make informed decisions.
- E. Solve problems.
- F. Construct a coherent argument.
- G. Critical thinking rubric for evaluation of case study assignments.

**Updated August 2010**

**Notes:**
- Always consider the reliability and validity of the evidence.
- Ensure that the evidence is relevant and supports the conclusions drawn.
- Be aware of potential biases or limitations in the evidence used.

**Criteria:**
- Relevance: Does the evidence support the conclusions?
- Validity: Is the evidence accurate and reliable?
- Relevance and validity: Does the evidence support the conclusions accurately and reliably?
3. Students will be able to identify and apply effective strategies for improving their critical thinking skills.

This goal is addressed by the two QEP initiatives described below.

The Critical Thinking Assessment Test
The Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) is a direct assessment instrument designed to assess and promote the improvement of critical thinking and real-world problem-solving skills. The CAT instrument is a one-hour short answer essay test that is administered to FAMU freshman students at the beginning of the academic year as a pre-test and again at the conclusion of the freshman year as a post-test. Student performance on the CAT is used to assess improvements in students’ critical thinking skills that result from their participation in curricular and co-curricular activities during the freshman year. The assessment results are also used to assist faculty in identify student strengths and weaknesses in the area of critical thinking and problem solving.

Specific Skills Assessed by the CAT Instrument:

- **Evaluating Information**
  - Separate faculty information from inferences.
  - Interpret numerical relationships in graphs.
  - Understand the limitations of correlational data.
  - Evaluate evidence and identify inappropriate conclusions.

- **Creative Thinking**
  - Identify alternative interpretations for data or observations.
  - Identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis.
  - Explain how new information can change a problem.

- **Learning and Problem Solving**
  - Separate relevant from irrelevant information.
  - Integrate information to solve problems.
  - Learn and apply new information.
  - Use mathematical skills to solve real-world problems.

- **Communication**
  - Communicate ideas effectively.
**Assessment Approach:** The Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) is administered to freshman students at the beginning of the academic year as a pre-test and again at the conclusion of the freshman year as a post-test.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 80% of students assessed will demonstrate enhanced critical thinking skills based on at least a 5% mean score gain between pre and post-test scores on the CAT.

- **Assessment Results:** The CAT instrument was administered to freshman students during the 2009-10 and 2010-2011 academic years. Results for each year are summarized below.
  - 2009 – 2010: 48% (N total = 56) of students assessed showed at least a 5% mean score gain between pre and post-test scores.
  - 2010 – 2011: 56% (N total = 41) of students assessed showed at least a 5% mean score gain between pre and post-test scores.

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**Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series**

The Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series is a co-curricular activity designed to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by involving them in interactive discussions dealing with real-life situations.

**Assessment Approach:** All freshmen are required to participate in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series, which is a co-curricular activity designed to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by involving them in interactive discussions dealing with real-life situations. Students attend up to six sessions per academic year and they are assessed to determine their mastery of specific topics covered during the sessions.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 70% of the student participating in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series will score at least 70% on an assessment test that evaluates their knowledge of successful learning strategies for improving critical thinking skills.

- **Assessment Results:** Student participants in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series during the 2009 - 2010 and 2010 - 2011 academic years were assessed.
  - 2009 – 2010: 70% of the students assessed scored at least 85% on the assessment test, which was administered at the first seminar session of the year, which was entitled Critical Thinking 101 in the College Environment.
  - 2010 – 2011: 90% of the students assessed scored at least 85% on the assessment test, which was administered at the first seminar session of the year, which was entitled Critical Thinking 101 in the College Environment.
4. Students will recognize when they need information and be able to locate, evaluate and effectively use appropriate information materials and resources.

**Assessment Approach:** This goal specifically targets freshman students. Students enrolled in English courses (ENC 1101 & ENC 1102) are required to attend information literacy workshops conducted by the library faculty at least once per semester.

- **Assessment Measure:** Students who complete the *Information Literacy Workshop* will show an average increase of 30% between pre and post information literacy diagnostic tests.

- **Summary Assessment Results:** Students enrolled in ENC 1101 & ENC 1102 will be assessed on this measure beginning with the fall 2011 term.
D. Does your university offer or require a class that focuses on the development of writing proficiency and critical thinking skills? If so, please send me the data on the success of students who enrolled in that course.

Guidance for Response from QEP: Briefly describe the following and any other information you believe will be helpful:

- Freshmen Summer Reading Program that requires reading a book and essay before they even attend FAMU
- Freshmen Critical Thinking Seminar, level of participation, assessment results since inception
- First Year Experience course begun this fall; critical thinking goals imbedded in the course; include syllabus.
- Infusion of critical thinking into ENC 1101, 1102 and African American History
- CAT assessment instrument, results and how results are used to improve instruction in critical thinking.
- Faculty development workshops, and importance of faculty development on pedagogical strategies to improve student critical thinking.

The institution requires students to participate in curricular and co-curricular activities that focus on the development of critical thinking skills.

**Freshman Summer Reading Program**

Freshmen are required to participate in the Freshman Summer Reading Program. All incoming freshman students are required to read an assigned book and complete a writing assignment during the summer preceding their first fall term. Students subsequently participate in small book discussion groups and a campus-wide forum during Welcome Week in August, and they are given assignments in various courses throughout the academic year based on the assigned reading. Participation in this activity helps to facilitate the students' transition from high school to college by giving them an early introduction to the academic expectations of the University and by allowing them to interact with FAMU faculty and staff before classes begin. This activity also serves to enhance the students' critical thinking and communication skills.

**Assessment Approach:** This goal specifically targets freshman students.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 80% of freshman students will participate annually in the program by writing and submitting critical thinking essays.
- **Assessment Results:** Student participation was assessed for the summer/fall 2009 and summer/fall 2010 terms.
  - **2009:** 63% of the freshman class participated in the 2009 Freshman Summer Reading Program.
Summer Reading Program.
  o 2010: 82% of the freshman class participated in the 2009 Freshman Summer Reading Program.

Beginning fall 2011, the essays will be assessed to evaluate the students’ critical thinking skills based on the following criteria:
  • **Clarity and focus**: Are the ideas presented logically and coherently? Does the thesis statement clearly address the writing prompt?
  • **Organization**: Does the essay contain an introduction, body, and conclusion?
  • **Style and mechanics**: Is the essay written using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation?
  • **Analysis**: Is sufficient evidence and information presented to support the main conclusion(s) of the essay?

**Assessment Approach Beginning Fall 2011**: Students will be required to submit a pre-assessment summer reading essay prior to beginning fall classes. Students will also be required to submit a post-assessment summer reading essay at the end of the fall term. Both essays will be assessed to evaluate improvements in students’ critical thinking and written communication skills over the course of their first semester.

  • **Assessment Measure**: At least 80% of freshman students will show an average increase of 1 point (on a 4-point scale) on critical essays assessed from the beginning (pre-assessment) to the end (post-assessment) of the semester.

**Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series**
The *Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series* is a co-curricular activity designed to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by involving them in interactive discussions dealing with real-life situations.

Seminar Topics:
  • Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking Skills
  • Financial Literacy
  • Ethics
  • Career Development
  • Managing Challenging Personal Situations
  • Entrepreneurship
  • Environmental Literacy

Student participants are expected to demonstrate satisfactory critical thinking skills as shown by their ability to:
  • Effectively identify, gather, and process relevant information or evidence;
• Effectively analyze and evaluate information or evidence;
• Make informed judgments about the validity of information and the arguments of others; and
• Use relevant information to solve problems.

Assessment Approach: All freshmen are required to participate in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series. Students attend up to six sessions per academic year and they are assessed to determine their mastery of specific topics covered during the sessions.

Assessment Measure #1: At least 50% of students participating in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series will confirm in a Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series Feedback Form completed after each event that they find the information stimulating and agree/strongly agree that these opportunities have enhanced their critical thinking skills.

➢ Assessment Results: Student participants in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series during the 2010 - 2011 academic years were surveyed.
  o 2010 – 2011: 57% of respondents indicated that participation in the seminars helped to improve their critical thinking skills.
  69% of respondents indicated that the content of the seminars was useful/relevant.

➢ Assessment Measure #2: At least 80% of freshman students will participate annually in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series.

➢ Assessment Results: Student participants in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series during the 2009 - 2010 and 2010 - 2011 academic years were assessed.
  o 2009 – 2010: 85% of the freshman class participated in at least one of the five Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series sessions that were held during the 2009-10 academic year. The average attendance at the five sessions was 1,036 students (50% of the freshman class).

  o 2010 – 2011: 70% of the freshman class participated in at least one of the five Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series sessions that were held during the 2009-10 academic year.

➢ Assessment Measure #3 (also described above under Section C): At least 70% of the student participating in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series will score at least 70% on an assessment test that evaluates their knowledge of successful learning strategies for improving critical thinking skills.

➢ Assessment Results: Student participants in the Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series during the 2009 - 2010 and 2010 - 2011 academic
years were assessed.
  o **2009 – 2010:** 70% of the students assessed scored at least 85% on the assessment test, which was administered at the first seminar session of the year, which was entitled *Critical Thinking 101 in the College Environment.*

  o **2010 – 2011:** 90% of the students assessed scored at least 85% on the assessment test, which was administered at the first seminar session of the year, which was entitled *Critical Thinking 101 in the College Environment.*

**First Year Experience Course**
The institution implemented a new course (SLS 1101 First Year Experience - College Transition) for freshmen during the fall 2011 term. The course includes a curriculum focus on developing critical thinking and problem solving skills and is designed to assist students in making a successful transition from high school to college. 998 students (~55% of the freshman class) enrolled in the course for the fall 2011 term.

Course Topics Related to Critical Thinking (see attached course syllabus):
- Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking Skills
- Educational Planning and Decision Making
- Career Development
- Time Management
- Environmental Literacy

Student mastery of critical thinking course content is assessed by their performance on written assignments, which include essays and case study analyses.

**Critical Thinking Assessment Test**
The institution implemented a new course (SLS 1101 First Year Experience - College Transition) for freshmen during the fall 2011 term. The course includes a curriculum focus on developing critical thinking and problem solving skills and is designed to assist students in making a successful transition from high school to college. 998 students (~55% of the freshman class) enrolled in the course for the fall 2011 term.

Course Topics Related to Critical Thinking (see attached course syllabus):
- Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking Skills
- Educational Planning and Decision Making
- Career Development
- Time Management
- Environmental Literacy
Faculty Development Program
The institution has initiated a faculty development program in conjunction with the QEP initiative. The faculty development program helps to promote student learning by ensuring that faculty who teach freshman students in English and African-American History courses are aware of and utilize uniform and effective methods of teaching and assessing students’ critical thinking skills. Faculty participants receive training from experts on how to incorporate critical thinking best practices, such as writing assignments and the case study approach, into their course curricula. They also learn how to design and use effective instruments for assessing critical thinking skills, such as rubrics and tests. In addition to the focus on improving student learning at the freshman level, the FAMU QEP also seeks to impact and enhance student learning at all levels of the University. Faculty in all disciplines throughout the University are encouraged to participate in the faculty development program and to incorporate the learned instructional and assessment best practices into their course curricula.

Topics of Recent Workshops:
- Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking Skills in Composition Courses
- Faculty Development to Enhance Student Critical Thinking Skills
- The Case Study Teaching Method
- Effective Strategies for Enhancing Student Learning
- Active Learning Strategies
- Improving Student Learning Through Course Redesign
- Using Narrative Writing to Enhance Critical Thinking
E. Are professors required to integrate writing proficiency and critical thinking into all courses? If so, what oversight is provided to ensure that these skills are being taught? How are these skills integrated into course assessments?

Guidance for Response from QEP: This is related to your response to item C above. Elaborate on your response, relative to specific activities of faculty in English and African American History, and now broadening to other disciplines. What oversight does QEP provide to verify the activities are addressed? How are critical thinking skills integrated into course assessments? Include sample syllabi if pertinent.

As part of the QEP initiative, faculty who teach courses in the areas of English, African-American History, General Chemistry, General Biology, General Physics, Linear Algebra, and College Algebra are required to integrate critical thinking instructional and assessment activities into the courses. Faculty who teach these courses participate in professional development activities each year in which they are provided with training on how to design and implement effective teaching and assessment strategies for developing students’ critical thinking skills. Course syllabi are reviewed regularly by members of the QEP staff to ensure that critical thinking learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessment approaches are included in course curricula each semester.

The primary approaches used by faculty to integrate critical thinking into course assignments are via critical essays and case study analyses. Faculty who teach English courses assign critical essays that require students to express their own intelligent and informed opinions based on thoughtful reflection on and responses to claims made in the respective readings. The essay assignments are assessed using a critical thinking rubric developed by FAMU faculty. Specific critical thinking skills assessed include the ability to organize thoughts in a logical and cohesive manner, effectively examine ideas or evidence, and proficient use of information literacy skills.

Faculty who teach science and mathematics courses use the case study method as a primary instructional tool for developing critical thinking skills. Case studies involve real or hypothetical scenarios in which students engage in problem identification, information analysis and evaluation, and decision-making. Students are required to develop written analyses of the case studies, which are assessed using a critical thinking rubric that was developed by FAMU faculty.
M. What programs do you have to educate students regarding job opportunities? What are your measureable goals for each program? Do you use information similar to the data available from the Florida education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) to prepare students prior to admission and prior to selection of major? Please provide me the results for the last five to ten years.

Guidance for Response from QEP: Briefly describe the goal on the First Year Experience Course related to selecting appropriate major and exploring job opportunities, how this is addressed and assessed.

The institution has recently implemented two initiatives, First Year Experience Course and Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series to assist in educating students about job opportunities.

First Year Experience Course
The institution implemented a new course (SLS 1101 First Year Experience - College Transition) for freshmen during the fall 2011 term. The course includes a curriculum focus on educational planning and career development and is designed to assist students in making a successful transition from high school to college. 998 students (~55% of the freshman class) enrolled in the course for the fall 2011 term.

Course Topics Related to Career Development (see attached course syllabus):
- Educational Planning and Decision Making
- Career Development
- Goal Setting, Motivation, and Character
- Time Management

Assessment Approach: Students will be surveyed at the conclusion of the course to evaluate the extent to which the course objectives were met.

- **Assessment Measure:** At least 80% of students surveyed at the conclusion of the course will report that they “agree” that the course was helpful in increasing their awareness of potential career options and in selecting an appropriate major.

- **Assessment Results:** Student will be assessed for the first time at the end of the fall 2011 term.
Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series
The Freshman Critical Thinking Seminar Series is a co-curricular activity designed to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by involving them in interactive discussions dealing with real-life situations.

Seminar Topics Related to Career Development:
- Financial Literacy
- Career Development
- Entrepreneurship

Assessment Approach: Students who attended the seminars during the 2010-11 academic year were surveyed to assess their impressions of the effectiveness of the seminar program.

- Assessment Results 2010 - 2011: 69% of students surveyed indicated that the content of the seminars was useful/relevant.

Q. Please provide me with any additional information you think way be helpful, including your thought process to make sure we are headed in the right direction.

Guidance for Response from QEP: Include any other pertinent thoughts.

General thoughts: emphasize that FAMU has developed a focused, integrated approach for developing critical thinking skills. Efforts of QEP, GEAC, Retention are all geared towards improving critical thinking skills via curricular and co-curricular activities.