

**Refining Rigor:  
Learning in Breadth and Depth at Davidson College**

**Davidson College  
Quality Enhancement Plan**

**Overview**

**Part I: First Year Writing Program**

**Part II: Humanities Program**

**Part III: Depth Studies Across Academic Departments**

**Conclusion**



# **Refining Rigor: Learning in Breadth and Depth at Davidson College**

## **Davidson College Quality Enhancement Plan**

### **Overview**

Davidson College used the opportunity of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation affirmation process to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that its faculty, administration, and trustees have approved with enthusiasm and confidence. The Davidson QEP builds upon the college's rigorous curriculum, which demands that each student study and value the academic disciplines that define the liberal arts, and that each student declare one discipline as a major area for in-depth study. Moreover, the college faculty expects that each student, regardless of academic interest or potential vocation, will learn to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. Thus, this QEP, which springs directly from Davidson's mission, should lead to an enhanced student academic experience.

Addressing the issues raised in the QEP is particularly timely for Davidson College. Like other highly selective liberal arts colleges, Davidson faces the competitive tension between doing more for its students in their first two years and enhancing the experience of the major. On the one hand, we want our first-year students to experience a seminar-like classroom environment with no more than 16 students, as in writing courses and the Humanities Program. Offering an adequate number of these courses strains faculty resources. On the other hand, we strive to provide an in-depth experience within the major, with students doing individual research projects. This effort also requires a significant commitment of faculty resources.

Developing this QEP offered the opportunity to assess these competing demands, as we endeavor to improve the academic experience for students in their first year and to develop enhanced opportunities for students pursuing their major field of study.

### ***The Evolution of the Davidson College Quality Enhancement Plan***

During the 2004 fall semester, the President organized a series of meetings to solicit potential topics for the Davidson College QEP, encouraging the entire college community to provide feedback. In addition to discussion at a general faculty meeting and with the Faculty Executive Committee, an open meeting was held for faculty, staff, and students. Ideas were also solicited from the college trustees.

Having examined a range of ideas, in January 2005 the Faculty Executive Committee recommended five specific topics relating to the curriculum to be studied as potential components of the QEP. These five topics were:

- First-year writing or composition program
- Humanities Program
- Core Curriculum
- Transition from the first and second year academic experience to the major
- Depth of opportunities offered to majors within each department.

Individual faculty committees were organized for each topic, with committee chairs appointed to the SACS steering committee. The other members of the SACS steering committee were the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty (steering committee chair), the Director of Planning and Institutional Research as the SACS liaison, and two faculty members from the Faculty Executive Committee.

The QEP topic committees met during the Spring and Fall 2005 semesters, collecting information from faculty and students about perceptions, needs, and expectations relating to the individual topics. This research contributed to more focused discussions and the determination that three of the topics lent themselves most logically to a formal QEP: the first-year writing program, the Humanities Program, and depth of exposure to a particular discipline. The two remaining topics will continue to receive attention, but are not addressed in the QEP.

Summary proposals for broad plans related to the chosen QEP topics were developed and shared with the steering committee in January 2006, which expressed its strong support for the topics. The QEP proposal was then presented to the Board of Trustees at its February 2006 retreat. Board members met in small groups to discuss the three themes of the QEP. Finally, the proposals were presented at a faculty meeting on February 7, 2006. A motion was presented as follows:

*That the Faculty of Davidson College endorse a QEP (for our SACS self-study) that includes a) a review of our Humanities Program, b) an assessment of our First-year Writing (or W-course) Program, and c) a study and elaboration of the opportunities for optional depth-study, principally those that are not-for-credit, that are offered students in each academic department.*

The faculty passed this motion without dissent.

Davidson College developed this QEP with careful attention to its suitability and challenge, given the institution's overall mission as an undergraduate liberal arts college. With its focus on enhancing the existing curriculum and with the strong support of the faculty and trustees, there is confidence within the college community that this QEP will have a major positive impact on student learning.

## **The Three Components of the Davidson College QEP**

### **Part I: First Year Writing Program (W-Courses)**

#### ***Introduction***

The educational mission of Davidson College is “to teach all students to think clearly, to make relevant and valid judgments, to discriminate among values, and to communicate freely with others in the realm of ideas.” Fostering the communication abilities of our students is critical to this mission. It is a cause to which the college has historically devoted substantial resources, indirectly through its general curriculum standards and through the First Year Writing Program (W-Courses), adopted in 1998. This program requires every first-year student to complete successfully “one of the courses designated by the faculty as meeting the goal of emphasizing writing and discussion.” Offered across the disciplines, W-Courses focus on writing and discussion, and introduce the new college student to rigorous analytical thinking. Students may satisfy the W-Course requirement by successful participation in the Humanities Program, by passing a W-course offered through the Department of English, or by passing a W-Course offered through another department (e.g., Biology or Economics).

Results from a survey that was undertaken as part of developing the QEP reveal that the community perceives the current W-Course Program as having significant unrealized potential. Students and faculty believe that shortcomings of the program largely manifest as substantive inconsistencies across W-Courses. As our expectations are high for the deepening of student research and analytical skills, the W-courses by design are resource intensive, with a maximum of 16 students enrolled per course. With 460 first-year students, approximately 30 such courses need to be offered each academic year. With an average annual teaching load of five courses per faculty member, this represents a commitment of six full-time faculty equivalents to this effort. Enhancement of this program, therefore, has the potential to yield substantial benefits across the college community.

The focus of the W-Course Program QEP, a discussion of its anticipated benefits, a time frame for its implementation, and a proposed budget follow.

#### ***Focus for W-Course Program QEP***

In February 2005, the SACS Steering Committee, charged with ensuring a productive and successful re-accreditation for the college, appointed an ancillary subcommittee on the W-Course Program. Earlier, the Faculty Executive Committee had identified the writing program as one of five areas with the potential to become the focus of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The main task of the committee was to carry out an exploratory assessment of the college’s current writing program, and thus to determine the advisability of a more formal study involving the designation of writing instruction as the object of a SACS QEP.

The committee comprised faculty members with widely varying exposure to and involvement in the W-Course Program. Over the course of the past year, we consulted directors of the writing program, collected samples of student writing from W-courses, and surveyed various college constituencies about their perceptions of the W-Course Program. On February 7, 2006, the faculty endorsed the designation of the W-Course Program as a QEP component. (The document approved by the faculty can be found in Appendix A.)

Following are a brief description of the current W-Course Program, the W-Course Program Committee's work over this past year, and a summary of survey results from faculty and students, and a proposed outline for implementation of the W-Course Program QEP.

### ***Current W-Course Program***

Our current W-Course Program provides a range of student choices, including conventional English composition courses, the Humanities Program, both the traditional Western Civilization and the newer Cultures and Civilizations tracks, and W-courses offered by individual departments. In 1999, the college added these thematic W-courses offered by individual departments to the options for fulfilling the composition requirement in order to ensure that a small seminar setting could be part of the first-year student experience. Concurrently, to ensure that all incoming students took such a course at Davidson College, the faculty removed the option of fulfilling the composition requirement through successful A.P. performance in English Composition.

The specific W-courses available differ from year to year. In 2005–06, the college offered 25 courses satisfying the W-course program requirement. In addition to the Humanities programs, the Classics, English, French, German, History, Philosophy, and Political Science departments offered courses. Students identify the non-Humanities W-Program courses by the “W” suffix on course catalogue numbers. (Sample syllabi can be found in Appendix B.)

In addition to W-course credit, successful completion of these courses may also confer credit towards the core requirements of the college. For example, a student who successfully completes Eco 100W, a writing course offered through the Economics Department, will receive credit for completing a social science course for the core curriculum in addition to receiving W-course credit. Credit towards the major is not conferred.

The faculty must approve the W-course designation for each course. The college Composition Committee, of which the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty serves as chair, first reviews potential offerings. The committee recommendation is then communicated to the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty that then recommends to the faculty as a whole. Other members of the college Composition Committee include the chairs of the English Department, the director of the Humanities Program, the Director of the Writing Center, and the Coordinator of the First-year Composition Courses. This coordinator of the first-year W-Program is charged with recruiting potential faculty to teach in the program and to advise them of the requirements and expectations of W-courses. Additionally, the coordinator is charged with designing a summer workshop to assist faculty in their teaching of writing. (The W-course approval form can be found in Appendix C.)

W-courses typically consist of five to seven writing assignments requiring a variety of writing styles and a research paper. Graded drafts and peer review are typical in such courses. In addition, students acquire research skills, an understanding of academic integrity in writing, and facility in at least one of the major manuals of style. The faculty view W-courses as vital in communicating the importance and understanding of our Honor Code, which takes “writing with integrity” very seriously. Also, each W-course requires library classroom instruction, familiarizing our students with our library resources, both printed and electronic.

A faculty member interested in offering a new W-course must submit an application to the college Composition Committee. The application must describe how the course will specifically meet the goals of the W-Course Program. Students assess a W-course using the standard course-evaluation form used in other courses; the course is not specifically assessed as a writing course, with a separate or distinctive

evaluation tool. Moreover, the “W” designation is permanent; the assessment of a course with respect to the goals of the W-Course Program is done at the time of initial approval.

### ***Background and Methods***

When the SACS W-Course Program Committee first convened in March 2005, divergent ideas among faculty about the program’s goals were immediately apparent. Some faculty perceive the seminar experience as the primary goal; others emphasize writing instruction.

There was no reliable information on levels of either faculty or student satisfaction with the W-course offerings or the overall effectiveness of the program with respect to either goal. Therefore, in Spring 2005, the committee collected final research papers from W-courses across campus; in Fall 2005, faculty and students were surveyed about their perceptions of the program. For the purposes of this report, the results of the faculty and student surveys are most significant.

### ***Survey***

Last fall, students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) and faculty were asked to complete anonymous, online surveys. (Sample notes and the questionnaires can be found in Appendix C.) Generally, faculty were surveyed as to their perceptions of current program performance, the need for faculty training, and their students’ ability to undertake writing assignments. The student questionnaire concentrated on student assessment of content coverage and their perceptions about their W-courses relative to other courses. (Survey results can be found in Appendix D.)

The committee examined student and faculty responses for statistically significant differences in question response rates by subgroups. For example, when considering the faculty survey results, the committee examined the discipline division, the number of years of teaching experience at Davidson, and faculty experience in teaching a course that satisfied the writing requirement. Student subgroups were created along a number of lines as well: by grades, graduating class, and type of course taken to satisfy the W-course requirement. Optimally, perceptions about student preparedness and the efficacy of the W-Course Program would not vary in a statistically significant way across these subgroups.

### ***Faculty Responses***

Generally, faculty respondents made it clear that improvement is needed: only 11.2 percent of the faculty responses indicate that the current W-Course Program is “working well.” Still, most faculty believe that the current program is not a failure: 75 percent of respondents with an opinion believe the program does prepare students for future writing assignments. Another apparent point of consensus among faculty respondents was that more training for those teaching within the program is desirable.

When faculty responses were considered by various subcategories, the data trends for the entire group largely held. Assessment regarding the types of problems identified in student writing, the overall efficacy of the program, and proposed programmatic changes to be considered did not vary by any of the considered subgroups. The most substantive finding by subgroup concerned whether or not program participants should undergo formal training. As noted above, the majority of faculty believe that such training is necessary, but the majority is statistically larger among the program non-participants as compared to the response rates of faculty who have taught in the W-Course Program.

With respect to staffing, the survey confirmed what committee members had anticipated: faculty respondents who self-identified as wanting to participate in the program and as not having done so within the past three years most often cited the following two reasons: training concerns and staffing constraints within their academic departments (i.e., a department could not afford to lose a course that

the faculty member would otherwise be teaching). The tension between meeting breadth and depth requirements affects the ability of the W-Course Program to recruit faculty, since the price of a W-course may be an upper-level elective. Training efforts have largely been restricted to optional multiple-day workshops (a situation which may help to explain the statistical differentiation in responses on the subject of formal training being required).

The discursive responses from faculty indicate a widely-shared sense that the college should place a higher priority on writing instruction. While most faculty appear to approve the basic “writing across the disciplines” concept behind the current program, a significant percentage of those responding express the view that the current W-Course Program, though well-intentioned, needs serious reevaluation and upgrading. As one member puts it, “Since writing is arguably the most important skill that we teach at Davidson, I find it incredible that our W-Course Program is given so little attention and resources.” Since “good writing and clear thinking go hand in hand,” says another, “the college needs to take a more systematic approach in evaluating and improving student writing.”

### *Student Response*

Among students the survey responses were even more varied. Some students describe their W-course as among their most valuable experiences at Davidson; others complain bitterly that their W-course did nothing to help them. Student responses evinced the importance of topic and core requirement satisfaction in W-course choices. The majority of students indicated that composition topics received substantive coverage and 50 percent of respondents agreed that they had “learned a lot about writing.”

A troubling pattern is evident when student responses are compared across different subgroups. The data clearly indicate that a student’s perception about what was learned in a W-course varies in predictable ways, depending upon how the student has met the W-course requirement. Specifically, students were asked how they met their W-course requirement: through one of the Humanities sequences, through the English Department, or through another departmental offering. Survey responses are clear. When asked to evaluate issues ranging from specific course content to program goals, student responses varied in statistically significant ways across these groups. Clearly students perceive these program options as offering very different experiences.

### *Survey Implications*

The survey results suggest that the current W-Course Program has had at least partial success in fulfilling the goal, articulated in our mission statement, of training students to “communicate freely with others in the realm of ideas.” However, the results also indicate a very broad range of attitudes and significant levels of frustration or dissatisfaction in regard to the program as a whole.

Many faculty and students believe that W-courses vary widely in effectiveness. Responses indicate a widespread sense that these courses show a striking inconsistency in standards. Such inconsistency is particularly troubling in a basic program that involves all first-year students and that stands to influence the performance of our students both during their years at Davidson and in their subsequent careers.

### ***W-Course QEP Implementation***

Upon the recommendation of the Composition Committee, and with the endorsement of the faculty and the SACS Steering Committee, the W-Course Program Quality Enhancement Working Group was formed in May 2006. This campus team will lead the process of analyzing the current writing program and suggesting the changes necessary to enhance the quality of writing instruction. This team includes faculty trained in rhetoric and composition including; the coordinator of the first-year seminar, representatives of the Humanities Program, and representatives from each academic division of the

college. The charge of this working group is to design changes in the writing program that adhere to the general requirements set herein. Such proposed changes will be assessed by the College Composition Committee and the Educational Policy Committee of the faculty.

As the college clearly recognizes through its emphasis on regular external reviews of academic departments and programs, assessment is key to maintaining and sustaining strong programs at all curricular levels. Despite its importance to the overall education process, the W Program has not been assessed, internally or externally. In fact, Davidson's overall approach to first-year composition has never been externally assessed. Our current W Program was developed in 1999 without benefit of an external review and has had no assessment since its inception.

The immediate charge of the W-Course Program Quality Enhancement Working Group is to identify and engage a team of external reviewers who would conduct a visitation during the Fall 2006 semester. This review of the W-Course Program is to include an evaluation of issues related to the curriculum; the procurement, training, and assessment of faculty; and student outcome assessment. Moreover, the experts should specifically consider problems identified through the survey. Funding for this effort has been allocated.

Anticipating initial assessment requirements, funds have been earmarked for student writing portfolio assessment for the summer of 2007. Whether or not student portfolio assessment becomes a long-term program requirement will be considered by the W-Course Program Quality Enhancement Working Group.

Informed by the findings of the external reviewers, the survey outcomes, and the input of the college community, the Writing Program Quality Enhancement Working Group should propose a restructuring of the writing program either by the close of the Fall 2007 semester or early in the Spring 2008 semester. As it is essential that ongoing assessment be used to avoid the inconsistencies perceived to exist in the current program, the proposal is to include guidelines for program assessment, which, at a minimum, require that the W-Course Program Survey be re-administered at a future date. As well, the proposal should specifically address how the reconfigured program will ensure a consistent experience for our students, one that brings us all closer to the fulfillment of our educational mission.

The committee's proposal for a new program should be put to the administration and faculty for approval no later than the end of the Spring 2008 semester. A proposed timeline for the QEP is outlined below.

<b>Writing Program QEP Proposed Timeline</b>	
<b>Academic Calendar</b>	<b>Description / Explanation</b>
<b>Spring 2005</b>	SACS committee on the W-Course Program formed
	Samples of student writing collected
<b>Fall 2005</b>	2006 W-Course Program Survey
	Davidson College participates in the Forum for Excellence and Innovation in Higher Education, sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, hosted by Harvard College. Assessment of the Writing Program is designated as an "area for innovation."
<b>Spring 2006</b>	Grant proposal submitted to the Spencer Foundation: \$17,000 earmarked for the W-Course Program
	Faculty and SACS Steering Committee approve a restructuring of the W-Course Program as a QEP.
	Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty forms the Writing Program Quality Enhancement Working Group.
<b>Fall 2006</b>	External reviewers visit campus.
	Extended training made available for faculty participants in the W-Course Program
<b>Summer 2007</b>	Student writing portfolio assessment
<b>Fall 2007</b>	W-Course Program QEP Group recommendations reported to the community
<b>Spring 2008</b>	Adoption of new writing program
<b>Fall 2008</b>	Implementation of new program
<b>Spring 2010</b>	Re-issuance of 2006 W-Course Program Survey for preliminary assessment of new program as preliminary assessment

### ***W-Course QEP Funding Requirements***

Initial program assessment and ongoing performance assessment will require additional resources. Davidson College is fortunate to have been one of 14 leading liberal arts colleges invited to participate in the Forum for Excellence and Innovation in Higher Education, sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, and undertaken under the aegis of the School of Education at Harvard University. One of the Spencer Foundation's goals for its program is to increase the use of measured outcome assessment in higher education: a goal in concert with the needs identified by the W-Course Committee. (A description of the Spencer Foundation can be found in Appendix E.)

The current grant proposal for Davidson College that has been funded by the Spencer Foundation has budgeted a total of \$17,000 to the W-Course Program. As outlined, these monies would fund immediate increases in the budget of the current W-Course Program, to be used for general faculty training and support. Approximately \$14,000 of these funds are targeted to support the initial steps of this aspect of our QEP. Specifically, monies have been targeted to fund a team of external reviewers for the program and to fund a pilot program which would address any needs identified by external reviewers, directly assess student writing, and support and train faculty.

After using these funds, the college will provide adequate funding to allow ongoing training of faculty and outcomes assessment of the writing program, as mandated by the approved program requirements.

As noted above, the college currently requires each incoming student to participate in a W-course. Net staffing changes associated with a new writing program will be dictated by the requirements of that program and so are not currently known. Other current resources, such as the Davidson College Writing

Center, may require modification and additional funding, depending upon the outcome of the assessment process.

A summary of the anticipated operating budget for this assessment follows:

<b>Operating Budget for Writing Program QEP Development and Implementation Phase</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description / Explanation</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	Faculty training and support for current W-Course Program to be administered through the Composition Committee	Fall 2006–Spring 2007 Fall 2007–Spring 2008	\$3,000
2	External Review: Reviewer fees and expenses	Fall 2006	\$6,000
3	Portfolio Assessment	Summer 2007	\$3,000
4	Discretionary program assessment	Fall 2007–Spring 2008 Fall 2008–Spring 2009	\$3,000
5	Discretionary faculty training		\$2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$17,000</b>

### ***Anticipated W-Course QEP Benefits***

While the implementation of specific changes lies ahead, the year’s work enables us to anticipate the areas in which changes will occur. As the points raised by the survey results will form the basis of the external review, it is reasonable to believe that these points will be addressed in any redesign of the W-Course Program. The anticipated benefits outlined below are based upon this premise.

In the case of the W-Course Program, the interests of students and faculty should be closely aligned. Still, overarching benefits accruing to each group can be considered.

#### *Faculty*

- More extensive faculty training to moderate and assuage concerns about inconsistencies across the program, expand the breadth of disciplines represented in the W-Course Program, and improve overall course quality.
- Increased opportunities for mutual support among faculty participants; weekly lunches to allow faculty from various disciplines the opportunity to learn from one another.

#### *Students*

- Increased diversity in course offerings to allow students to benefit from a broader choice of courses.
- Eradication of perceived differences across courses to increase student confidence that they received the same opportunity in their W-course as did students in other W-courses.

Optimally, students who are more confident in their writing will be more willing to take on writing challenges in subsequent courses. If, as stated earlier, “learning to write is learning to think,” this benefit will prove to be invaluable to all.

### ***W-Course QEP Assessment Initiatives***

Program assessment is key to our ability to correctly identify changes that need to be made to the current program and to ensure that a new program will evolve with the needs of our students. Direct assessment

of student writing will be part of the initial program review and could conceivably be part of the student writing requirement.

We are committed to an external review of the W-Course Program. As noted above, the survey administered in Fall 2005 must be re-administered as a preliminary assessment of the changed program. Specific assessment initiatives beyond these must be decided upon in the course of the program design and will be left to the W-Course Program Quality Enhancement Working Group.

At a minimum, current assessment plans can be summarized in the following points:

- External W-Course Program review
- Portfolio analysis of student writing
- Re-survey of the college community.

### ***Conclusion***

Typical of numerous responses to our faculty survey is the statement that “we need to devote time, resources, energy, and incentives” to the W-courses. And in the words of another faculty member, “[w]ithout better support for those who undertake this labor-intensive task, we cannot expect to see improvement.” Student comments just as clearly elucidate the value they place upon participating in a writing program that substantively improves their writing skills.

The comprehensive QEP developed by Davidson College demonstrates our willingness to face the difficult challenges inherent in providing the breadth and depth of learning experiences required for today’s students. Enhancement of the W-Course Program at Davidson College will play a vital role in our continued ability to meet these challenges successfully.

Through its endorsement of this QEP, Davidson College commits itself to a systematic assessment of the writing program, and ultimately to its strengthening and its continued vitality. While the precise guidelines of a reconfigured writing program are yet to be determined, the commitment to ongoing performance assessment specified herein promises a program that will mitigate current program shortcomings, expand upon current program strengths, and substantially improve the educational experience of each Davidson College student.

## **Part II: Davidson College Humanities Program**

### ***Introduction***

The Humanities Program, now in its fifth decade and a cornerstone of Davidson's liberal arts curriculum, is at a crossroads. Although the fundamental principles of providing an intensive and interdisciplinary examination of western thought and culture remain strong, and one-quarter of Davidson's entering class participates each year, the Humanities Program faces significant challenges. Many longtime Humanities professors are nearing retirement or have recently retired. Current and potential program participants, meanwhile, are interested in introducing new pedagogy and approaches, but lack the time and resources to do so. In order to continue to thrive, the Humanities Program must meet these challenges and invite a new generation of Davidson faculty to define anew how it would like students to examine western thought and culture.

The process of faculty recruitment has proved simultaneously easy and difficult. On the one hand, 21 new faculty members representing 12 academic departments have joined the Humanities staff since 2000, some to teach in the two-year Western Tradition course sequence and others in the one-year Cultures & Civilizations. Western Tradition has, since 1962, offered a chronological survey of western cultural heritage, while Cultures and Civilizations, established 40 years later in 2002, undertakes the comparative study of western and non-western texts and contexts through an approach more thematic than chronological. The interdisciplinary, team-taught nature of both course sequences makes them attractive to faculty, and there seems to be no shortage of "new blood" (or "old blood" for that matter) eager to teach Humanities.

On the other hand, a genuine desire to teach Humanities does not guarantee an opportunity to do so. Many faculty members have expressed interest in participating in Humanities but cannot, due to commitments within their main teaching areas. Indeed, staffing pressures frequently make it impossible for departments to release individuals to teach in Humanities. If Humanities is to remain at the heart of Davidson's liberal arts curriculum, the college community must find a way to balance the competing demands of departmental specialization and interdisciplinary collaboration; it must find a way to staff Humanities without undermining the operation and course offerings of any particular department.

This is not a new problem. In the 1980s and early 1990s, several professors were hired, some under the auspices of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with joint appointments in Humanities and their home departments. This initiative rewarded departments that contributed to Humanities with new faculty lines, while providing additional staff members for Humanities. Today, few of those professors still teach in Humanities. Departmental needs, personal teaching interests, and disillusionment with a program in which it is difficult to effect curricular and pedagogical change have driven away many, even some of those who were brought to Davidson specifically to participate in Humanities. Others, to be sure, have filled their places, but the underlying tensions that inspired those special positions, and subsequently rendered them difficult to maintain, persist. The first step to discovering new and productive means for supporting departments whose members contribute significantly to the Humanities Program is to identify those faculty members interested in Humanities and to define a common vision for its future.

## Focus for the Humanities QEP

### *Humanities Program Goals (Old and New)*

For many years, the syllabus for the Western Tradition Humanities course sequence has included the following statement of purpose:

In every age people seek to understand themselves, society, nature and what they hold to be sacred. The interdisciplinary Humanities Program explores this quest for understanding from the beginnings of western civilization in ancient Mesopotamia through the 20th century. While examining history, literature, philosophy, religion, the arts, and science and their interrelationships, students should aim for these goals:

- an awareness of the different interpretations of human existence that have significantly influenced the development of western civilization;
- a critical appreciation of our cultural heritage, and of the way the past impinges on the present;
- a discernment of patterns in the western tradition;
- an awareness of the interrelatedness of all knowledge, and an understanding of the varied ways of knowing;
- a developing ability to read and to think critically;
- a developing ability to speak and to write well; and
- a critical awareness of the individual within the environment and of the implications of selected values and goals.

Some of these goals are shared not just by Humanities, but by all first-year writing seminars and, indeed, most classes at Davidson: for example, developing students' abilities "to read and to think critically" and "to speak and to write well." Others suggest more specifically the topic of the course: an awareness of trends and patterns within the history of western civilization, and a critical appreciation of the West's cultural heritage. The Humanities Program's new second track, "Cultures and Civilizations," has by design taken a different form each year, reflecting the interests of those teaching it at any given point in time, but it has always been built around the critical inquiry, not just of western civilization, but of what more broadly can be said to constitute and define one civilization as against another.

The Humanities Quality Enhancement Plan will afford those who teach in the program, in both the traditional and the new tracks, as well as other interested faculty who may in the future hope to participate in the program, an opportunity to revisit those goals and to reformulate them for another generation of Davidson students. In substantive terms, this may involve focused discussions about the character of western civilization and the ideas, values, traditions, habits, and heritage through which some distinguish it from other civilizations, and, indeed, whether that very distinction is breaking down. As the history of the Humanities Program at Davidson itself demonstrates clearly, the "Western Tradition" is not simply a topic to be studied, but a living reality that both defines and is defined by our present experience. In a rapidly changing world, it is appropriate for us to rethink periodically—continually—how we define our place in it. In more practical terms, the proposed project will provide teaching staff with a forum in which to share insights derived from and challenges provoked by our experiences in the two courses, and whether the distinctions between them should be reformulated.

### *Faculty Development Seminar*

The Humanities Quality Enhancement Plan calls for a faculty development seminar for professors interested in teaching in the Humanities Program. (The letter of invitation to the seminar can be found in Appendix F.)

The faculty development seminar model has served Humanities well in the past. The Cultures and Civilizations course sequence was planned and its instructors recruited in the context of a faculty reading and discussion group in 2001–02. With support from Davidson College and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a group of professors representing a variety of disciplines from the humanities and social sciences collaborated in a year-long seminar designed to bring new people and ideas into the Humanities Program. The twelve faculty members who had committed themselves to the project under NEH auspices, as well as several others (who, though not formally connected with the group, nonetheless participated fully) read and discussed a series of texts over the course of the Fall and Spring semesters. The texts—mostly, although not entirely, works of fiction—were chosen in part to reflect the interests of the participants, but they cohered around a broad common theme: that of the encounter between one civilization and another. Out of that seminar grew the “second track” Humanities course, “Cultures and Civilizations,” which has explicitly sought to inject a comparative element into the interdisciplinary study of human civilization represented by the Humanities Program.

The Humanities QEP establishes a similar but more comprehensive project for the academic year 2006–07. All faculty members will be invited to participate in a year-long seminar in which they will discuss a series of texts, images, architecture, music, and other aspects of culture. The purpose of the seminar is threefold:

- to re-invigorate the program by encouraging common discussion that will challenge some of the central themes of both Humanities courses;
- to attract new participants to the program by offering them a chance to participate in a stimulating collaborative intellectual project; and
- to consider practical responses to chronic staffing problems, and alternative course designs.

Given the interdisciplinary and voluntary nature of teaching in Humanities, it is vital for faculty to have a forum in which to share interests and methodological approaches; the course they teach must emerge from such discussions and reflect a fresh, common vision. Everything can, and arguably should, be explored. What constitutes “the Humanities”? What should be the role of interdisciplinary teaching and learning at Davidson College, and how might such a venture be most successfully staffed and supported? What is the target student population for interdisciplinary courses in the Humanities? The faculty development seminar will provide focus for a campus-wide discussion of these and other questions while affording interested faculty the means to implement their answers.

The seminar will meet six times during the academic year 2006–07 to explore the purpose, possibilities, and pedagogy of interdisciplinary study in the context of discussing particular texts and cultural artifacts. Faculty members have already been invited to participate and to propose possible topics for study and discussion. The Humanities Program director will oversee the enrollment process, and, if necessary divide participants into small discussion groups of ten members each.

The seminar will culminate in a two-day workshop in May 2007, at which seminar participants will draw upon the experiences of the past year to formulate a proposal for reforming Davidson’s Humanities Program.

### ***Anticipated Humanities QEP Benefits***

In its public statements, be they Admission Office brochures or the President's graduation address, Davidson College proclaims its commitment to developing students' abilities to examine deeply, think critically, and express themselves clearly. Indeed, an individual educated in the liberal arts is someone who recognizes the interconnectedness of texts and times, who values the importance of discourse and examination. For approximately one-quarter of Davidson's students, the Humanities Program actively cultivates the development of such skills and connections. As such, changes afforded through the Humanities component of the QEP will have profound effects on both student learning and the liberal arts mission of the college.

- Approximately one-quarter of Davidson's first-year students participate in the Humanities Program.
- Humanities offers five sections of the Western Tradition course sequence (for a maximum of 80 students).
- Humanities offers two sections of the Cultures and Civilizations course sequence (for a maximum of 32 students).
- For participating students, the Humanities experience begins their first week at Davidson and continues throughout their entire first year.
- All Humanities students benefit from two first-year seminars (one per semester) instead of the usual one.
- For students participating in The Western Tradition course sequence, the Humanities seminar experience continues throughout the sophomore year as well.

The impact of the Humanities faculty development seminar on students promises to be significant. The seminar will not only provide a better-informed and more collegial teaching community for the implementation of the larger goals of the Humanities Program, but will, by recapitulating the student's own experiences in peer discussion groups, allow for considerable faculty experiential learning that will have direct, positive impact in the classroom. Faculty participants in the seminar will practice what they preach, establishing a model for the Humanities Program itself.

- They will examine texts and other cultural artifacts and discuss them in small groups.
- They will think critically about the material and consider how it fits in the tradition being examined.
- They will benefit from the input of those who approach the material from areas of expertise different than their own.
- Ultimately, students who interact with professors who have themselves participated in discussion communities will find their learning enhanced by such shared experience.

For over 40 years, the vexing pedagogical challenge of teaching Humanities has always been connecting the breadth of an overview of western thought and culture with meaningful and in-depth student discussion of texts and the issues raised by those texts. The benefit to student learning of the Humanities component of the QEP will be a stronger program conceived within the framework of the world in which this generation of students lives.

### ***Humanities QEP Time Frame***

Preparations are already underway for the Faculty Development Seminar that will meet during the academic year 2006–07. In May 2006, all faculty members were invited to participate in the seminar and to nominate texts or cultural artifacts as subjects for discussion. The Humanities Program director will

coordinate faculty responses and organize discussion groups over the course of the summer. The seminar will commence at the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester.

There will be six seminar meetings, three each semester. Meetings will be held at night and will be spaced at equal intervals over the academic year. In May 2007, the seminar will culminate in a two-day workshop, to be attended by seminar participants, other interested faculty members (space permitting), and two external consultants. Seminar participants will reflect in writing upon their hopes for the Humanities Program and experiences in the seminar at both the beginning and the end of the year-long process.

Recommendations for changes to the Humanities Program that result from the seminar will be shared with the Davidson College community in the following academic year (2007–08). As some potential reforms might require several years to implement, the Humanities Program director will report at the close of each of the three succeeding years on the progress of any reform efforts. The external consultants who attend the workshop will also return to campus three years later to assess how expectations established during the seminar in terms of both staffing and curricular change have been met.

The time frame for implementing the Humanities component of our QEP follows:

<b>Time Frame for Humanities Program QEP</b>	
<b>Academic Calendar</b>	<b>Description/Explanation</b>
Spring 2005	SACS Committee on the Humanities Program formed.
Fall 2005	SACS Humanities Committee considers the strengths and weaknesses of the Humanities Program.
Spring 2006	Faculty and SACS Steering Committee approve a Humanities Faculty Development Seminar as a component of the QEP.
	\$14,000 in funding from the Wall Professorship in the Humanities earmarked for Faculty Development Seminar.
	Faculty invited to participate in Faculty Development Seminar.
Summer 2006	Faculty Development Seminar organized.
Fall 2006	3 meetings of Faculty Development Seminar.
Spring 2007	3 meetings of Faculty Development Seminar.
	2-day workshop with external consultants to conclude seminar.
	Faculty participant portfolio assembled.
Summer 2007	Student questionnaire drafted.
Fall 2007	Faculty Development Seminar recommendations reported to the community.
	Questionnaire administered to incoming class of Humanities students.
Spring 2008	Humanities Program Director's annual report.
	Questionnaire administered to students who have completed course sequence.
Fall 2008	Questionnaire administered to incoming class of Humanities students.
Spring 2009	Humanities Program Director's annual report.
	Questionnaire administered to students who have completed course sequence.
Spring 2010	Humanities Program Director's annual report.
	Questionnaire administered to students who have completed course sequence.
	External consultants return to campus and issue a report.

### ***Humanities QEP Budget***

The Humanities QEP has a budget of \$21,360 for which funds are already committed. Davidson College has made an institutional commitment of \$22,000 to the Faculty Development Seminar and its subsequent assessment.

Davidson College's E. Craig Wall, Jr. Professorship in the Humanities generously endows a seminar every other year, to be organized by the Wall Professor. The SACS Humanities Committee has proposed, and the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, SACS Steering Committee, and Wall Professor agreed, that the Faculty Development Seminar serve as the Wall Seminar in 2006–07. As such, it will receive \$14,000 in Wall Seminar funds.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs has also authorized that up to \$5,000 may additionally be drawn from the Wall account.

Finally, approximately \$3,000 will be required to bring the external consultants back to campus in the Spring 2010. The Office of the VPAA will cover these additional expenses.

The budget for implementing the Humanities component of our QEP follows:

<b>Operating Budget for Humanities Program QEP</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description/Explanation</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	Faculty stipends for seminar	Academic Year 2006-07	\$6,000
2	Books for seminar	Academic Year 2006-07	\$1,800
3	Refreshments for seminar	Academic Year 2006-07	\$600
4	Childcare for seminar	Academic Year 2006-07	\$300
5	Faculty stipends for final workshop	Spring Semester 2007	\$6,000
6	External consultants for final workshop: fees and expenses	Spring Semester 2007	\$3,000
7	Refreshments for final workshop	Spring Semester 2007	\$660
8	External consultants' final assessment: fees and expenses	Spring Semester 2010	\$3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$21,360</b>

All calculations are based on an estimate of 20 seminar and workshop participants. Should more elect to participate in either event, the budget will be adjusted accordingly.

1. The 20 seminar participants will each receive a stipend of \$300.
2. Books will be purchased for seminar participants for each of the six meetings. Book costs are estimated at \$15 per book.
3. Modest refreshments will be provided for each of the six seminar meetings.
4. Childcare will be available for each of the six seminar meetings.
5. Participants in the two-day workshop will each receive a stipend of \$300.
6. Costs for external consultants are estimated at \$1500 per consultant. This figure includes both their fee and transportation and living expenses.

7. Lunch and appropriate meeting refreshments will be served over the course of the two-day workshop. They are figured at a cost of \$15 per day per participant (including consultants).

8. Same as #6 above.

### ***Humanities QEP Assessment Initiatives***

The faculty development seminar will be assessed in the following four ways:

#### *Faculty Participant Portfolio*

Each seminar participant will write a statement at the beginning of the year-long process indicating both the pressing issues facing the Davidson Humanities Program and his or her personal hopes for the faculty development seminar. After the seminar's culminating workshop, each faculty participant will then reflect upon the experience and the prospect of program reforms. The Humanities Program director will review these statements and produce a report outlining the seminar's success in meeting faculty needs and generating new ideas for the future of the Humanities Program at Davidson.

#### *Student Questionnaire*

The seminar participants' statements and the director's report will be used in turn as a foundation for a questionnaire to be given to students at both the beginning and the end of their involvement in the Humanities Program. This exercise will serve to measure the extent to which the faculty's newly articulated goals for the program are reflected in the students' experiences in their Humanities courses.

#### *Annual Reports*

Although the faculty development seminar will conclude in May 2007, the fruits of its discussions will be felt most dramatically in subsequent years. Curricular change takes time and requires college-wide faculty approval. Whatever reform ideas are articulated during the seminar must then be crafted into a formal proposal and presented to both the Educational Policy Committee and the faculty as a whole. The legacy of the faculty development seminar will thus be tracked in annual reports for the remainder of the SACS review process. These annual reports, written by the Humanities Program director, will chart both faculty involvement in Humanities and the implementation of new policies and perhaps even new courses.

#### *External Consultants*

Two faculty members from other institutions with considerable experience teaching in interdisciplinary Humanities courses will be invited to attend the final workshop of the year-long faculty development seminar. Three years later, these consultants will return to Davidson to assess the degree to which the college community has met the challenge of the seminar and the emerging vision for the Humanities Program.

### ***Conclusion***

Our sincere hope is that this experience will either confirm the continued applicability and desirability of our Humanities Program or lead us in some new directions that are more appropriate for Davidson College in the 21st century.

## **Part III: Opportunities for Depth Study Across Academic Departments**

### ***Overview***

Assisting students to learn in depth as well as in breadth clearly is consistent with Davidson's primary purpose. The SACS committee on "Depth" also recognized that these dimensions of learning defy precise definition. Learning in either dimension may occur at any time, in no particular order, in the same course, while doing research alone or collaboratively inside/outside of class, during residence hall conversations or at mealtimes. Learning in depth may occur pursuant to satisfying major or minor or concentration requirements, or when pursuing educational opportunities offered by the college but not necessarily required by one of its programs or for graduation.

The Depth Committee began with an examination of depth-learning opportunities that are provided by the academic departments and other areas of the college. With this inventory, the committee could then assess, to some degree, how to enrich the experience for more Davidson College students. In particular, the committee could assess how such opportunities could be strengthened: with increased student-faculty involvement in the classroom and better publicizing of available opportunities and research results.

In its examination and inventorying of "depth," at Davidson, the committee reviewed the following:

- Mission and goal statements prepared by the college's academic departments and programs.
- Capstone courses (e.g., a course required of all senior majors within a department).
- Study-abroad "immersion" programs (e.g., such as the year-long programs offered by our French and German departments).
- On campus living and eating arrangements (Dean Rusk and Duke Dormitory project).
- Student presentations, performances and publications.
- Student research, on-campus in collaboration with faculty or off-campus under the direction of non-faculty mentors (e.g., with medical/surgical preceptors at Carolinas Medical Center and with clinical psychologists at Broughton Hospital).
- Research requirements associated with departmental majors.
- Financial and other support for student research.

The committee focused its evaluation on three issues: college support for student research; student living arrangements and their relationship to learning in depth; general knowledge of opportunities for learning in depth (i.e., whether Davidson students, faculty, and prospective students are sufficiently informed about research and other depth opportunities).

The committee did not do a formal review of whether each of the college's academic departments and programs reasonably adhered to their announced self-understandings as outlined in their SACS submissions. Each academic department within the last seven years has had a formal review by external professionals in the field. These reviews are linked to each departmental mission statement. The committee discussed but did not resolve whether the college's current academic calendar and its "division of the day" policy promote or inhibit depth at Davidson.

The principal finding of the Depth Committee was that Davidson College had made strides toward providing excellent depth opportunities for students. Many students are now doing substantive research, either relatively independently or more collaboratively with faculty. Our principal goal should be to expand opportunities for student research and study, as well as to better publicize our research program

and projects. Success in this regard should benefit all students, lifting the level of student engagement with academic material and challenging more students to embark on a research experience.

### ***Findings***

The committee's work revealed some important conclusions that were accepted by the SACS Steering Committee. These conclusions have helped us form the basis for our QEP relating to depth.

- The college currently offers students a remarkable array of opportunities for learning in depth. (A listing of these opportunities can be found in Appendix G and a chart describing other opportunities can be found in Appendix H.)
- Many opportunities for depth learning at Davidson are not widely publicized, nor easily discoverable by Davidson students, faculty and administration, nor by prospective students and their parents.
- Davidson does not maximize the value of currently offered opportunities for depth learning.
- The current level of college financial support for learning in depth, especially for student research and for presentation of their results, is inadequate.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on our assessment and findings, the following recommendations involving funding, the campus environment, and publicity, have emerged. If implemented successfully, we should enhance the depth learning experience for a larger number of students, principally through greater engagement with challenging research questions.

### ***Funding***

The college should substantially increase financial support for student research over the next five years.

Progress toward this goal can be measured by:

- % increase in funds available to support student research, performances and travel-related expenses for presenting at academic meetings.
- % increase in number of departments offering students collaborative research experiences.
- % increase in funds to enable faculty to plan, develop, and participate in collaborative research with students.
- % increase in students receiving support for collaborative research.

In June 2006 the college announced the formation of the Davidson College Research Program, an institutional initiative funded by The Duke Endowment with a commitment of \$750,000 per year for the next five years. This program should permit us to make significant progress in the area of depth learning. (A description of the Davidson College Research Program can be found in Appendix I.)

### ***Campus Environment***

The college should support more affirmatively a campus environment and ethos that encourages learning in depth. As a model, the committee cites the new residential facility dedicated to international studies.

In 2007, the college's Dean Rusk International Studies Program will relocate to the ground floor of the renovated Duke Residence Hall in the heart of the campus. This move will enable the Rusk Program to promote depth learning more effectively by coordinating speakers, seminars, discussion groups, etc.

from its more central location. The new facility will also feature international news programming, extra-curricular language instruction, and opportunities for faculty-student collaboration.

A portion of the residence space will be occupied by students who create internationally-themed living clusters. Students who want to live in a foreign language speaking environment or who share a common interest in a particular region, culture, or topic might live and work together. This facility will enable the Dean Rusk Program to bridge classroom learning with residence hall living, adding depth to the residence environment and creating new opportunities for extended exploration of international issues outside of the classroom.

Additional environmental enhancements for learning in depth over the next five years could follow from the success of the Dean Rusk Program-Duke Residence Hall project. To this end, Student Life (in particular Residence Life) and Academic Affairs should discuss the possibility of one or two additional residential units that would enable the grouping of students by interest, e.g., ethics and the professions; law and public policy; the performing arts; classics and archeology; environmental studies, etc.

Davidson's admission policy and practice could more explicitly emphasize recruiting students who have already demonstrated a passion for research, in addition to an exceptional level of performance in one discipline, such as math, science, the performing arts, or creative writing. Such a change would require discussion by the Admission staff, the Faculty Admission Committee, and the Trustee Committee on Admission and Financial Aid.

In 2006–07, the VPAA should consult with the Educational Policy Committee about the impact, negative or positive, of the college calendar and “division of the day” policy on depth learning.

### *Recognition and Publicity*

Better promotion and visibility for depth learning opportunities at Davidson College would attract more student interest in research. This increase in publicity also will ensure that all students, regardless of the expectations of their major, will have better access to our opportunities.

Progress toward this goal can be measured by achieving within two years:

- Communication with prospective students
  - A link to depth learning opportunities on the Office of Admission web site
  - Increased communication with prospective students about opportunities for both independent and collaborative research
  - Specific opportunities for learning in depth highlighted on each academic department and program web site.
- College-wide celebrations of student research
  - On Family Weekend, a focus on results from student Summer Research projects.
  - On Decision Davidson Weekend, a celebration of all student research at Davidson.

### *Student Groups Affected by Depth Committee Recommendations*

All students seeking increased depth from their Davidson education will be affected by this aspect of the QEP, including, but not limited to, students collaborating with faculty on undergraduate research. Initially, our recommendations will most affect students and faculty in those disciplines that already engage in undergraduate research. The ultimate goal of our recommendations is to expand these learning opportunities to all Davidson students, regardless of discipline.

As a side benefit, institutionalizing these opportunities will make Davidson more effective as it competes for and yields the most qualified prospective students.

Since both current and future students will benefit from the collaborative research model, our admission policy should target more aggressively students who have already demonstrated a passion for research and for depth learning. Our recommendations also seek to promote an environment that encourages students to become involved in research at Davidson earlier in their undergraduate experience, thus providing them with increasingly varied in-depth experiences.

### ***Expected Benefits***

Our recommendations will benefit students, faculty, and the college as a whole. Based on a systematic review of 50 years of educational research, Chickering and Gramson outlined “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” [*American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, March 1987] as follows:

1. Encourages contact between faculty and students
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Uses active learning techniques
4. Gives prompt feedback
5. Emphasizes time on task
6. Communicates high expectations
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

Substantial evidence says that collaborative undergraduate research promotes all seven of these good practices. For example, the CUR/NCUR Joint Statement in support of undergraduate research (<http://www.cur.org/SummitPosition.html>) refers to numerous studies on the effectiveness of collaborative undergraduate research. This statement summarizes the key findings of this research, undergraduate researchers:

- experience gains in skills such as making use of primary literature, formulating research hypotheses, interpreting data, and communicating the results of research.
- show measurable gains in sophistication of epistemological reflection.
- experience personal gains in independence and self-confidence.
- show gains in career clarification and career preparation.
- persist in their pursuit of an undergraduate degree at a higher rate than comparison groups.
- pursue graduate education at a higher rate than comparison groups.
- as alumni retrospectively report higher gains than comparison groups in skills such as carrying out research, acquiring information, and speaking effectively.

While these outcomes directly benefit students who engage in research, the entire student population will benefit indirectly from the intellectually vibrant learning environment that collaborative research promotes. In addition to benefiting students, strengthening undergraduate research will have a positive effect on the college. The opportunity to direct undergraduate research is one of the primary reasons many faculty are attracted to Davidson College. The strengthening of undergraduate research opportunities, and faculty support of such opportunities, will also help faculty secure additional external funding, which in turn allows more opportunities and programs to facilitate undergraduate research.

For the foreseeable future, the importance of undergraduate research will only increase, not only in numbers, but also in fields such as the social sciences and humanities. This importance is reflected by funding agencies which increasingly require a substantial investment in undergraduate research, even at large R1 institutions, to receive federal support for research. Thus, implementation of these recommendations must continue indefinitely, if not increase over time.

***Budgetary Implications***

Drawing from funds recently awarded for the Davidson College Research Program and from those already available through the Faculty Study and Research program, we recommend a substantial increase in support of collaborative undergraduate research.

***Implementation***

We recommend that the college institute and support a two-pronged system for students to receive support for collaborative research with a faculty member—a standard model operated through existing FS&R procedures and an enhanced model supported by funds marked for the Davidson College Research Program. The enhanced model, to be developed under the direction of its own oversight committee, will require additional student initiative to procure funds.

Specific recommendations and their budgetary implications are as follows:

<b>Depth of Learning QEP Committee Budget Recommendations</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description/Explanation</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
1	Support of college-wide poster fairs	Academic Year 2006-07		\$2,000
2	Travel funds for students presenting at professional meetings	Academic Year 2006-07	30 students x \$400	\$12,000
3	Summer student housing stipend for students supported on FSR and other grants.	Summer 2007	\$21,600 from Davidson summer research and \$ 5,000 from FS&R	\$26,600
4	Summer student research stipend for students supported on FSR grants: increase research stipend to remain competitive with other programs such as NSF REU programs.	Summer 2007	10 x \$ 3,200	\$32,000
5	Davidson Summer Research Program	Summer 2007	Stipends: 18 X \$ 4,800	\$86,400
6	Faculty development: establishment of a fund specifically to support workshop and training opportunities to ensure the continued development of faculty.	Academic year 2006-07		\$10,000
7	Workshop on Collaborative Research	Summer 2008		\$20,000
8	Stipends for faculty in Davidson Summer Research Program.	Summer 2007	Maximum of 20 at \$ 3,500	\$70,000
9	Teaching-research post-doctoral fellowships desirability and feasibility to be studied during 2006-07.			
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$ 259,000</b>

Consistent with an increased emphasis on depth learning at Davidson, the college should better track:

- the number of students in each discipline involved in undergraduate research;
- the number of student-authored publications in peer-reviewed journals;
- graduate school acceptances and fellowships;
- student presentations at professional meetings; and
- student awards received at professional meetings.

The Davidson College Research Program will permit us to begin to undertake a number of the suggestions above. (Our initial effort at identifying uses for these funds is in Appendix J.)

Depth Learning QEP Timeline	
Academic Calendar	Description/Explanation
Spring 2005	SACS Committee on Depth formed.
Fall 2005	SACS Depth Committee evaluates strengths and weaknesses of depth learning at Davidson.
Spring 2006	February: Faculty receives Depth Committee's report and qualitative recommendations for the QEP.
	May: Depth Committee transforms qualitative recommendations into quantitative recommendations for the QEP.
Summer 2006	VPAA finalizes QEP
Fall 2006	SACS site visit
Spring 2007	Planning for First Conference on Collaborative Undergraduate Research
	Spring Celebration of Student Research coincident with Decision Davidson
Fall 2007	Fall Celebration of Student Research
	Web sites uniformly modified to highlight opportunities for research and depth learning
	First Conference on Collaborative Undergraduate Research held
Summer 2007	Davidson College Summer Research Program Begins
Fall 2007 and Spring 2008	VPAA initiates conversation with the EPC about "division of the day" policy.
Fall 2008	EPC reports findings on whether the college's academic calendar and division of the day appropriately promotes depth learning.
	Report by the VPAA on the tracking of student research, professional meeting attendance, and graduate school admission
Fall 2009	Task Force appointed to evaluate progress on the QEP

### ***Conclusion***

The work of the Depth QEP Committee has provided a formidable challenge for Davidson College to enhance research opportunities for our students. In the course of the next few years, funds from the Davidson College Research Program will permit us to expand opportunities toward the ideals shown in this part of our QEP. There will be continued discussion allowing us to integrate this new funding with many of the suggestions provided by the Depth committee. This will be an on-going process, as the Davidson College Research Program funds were only formally approved in June 2006, after the Depth Committee had completed its work. The Dean of Faculty has been working with our Faculty Study and Research Committee to harmonize a program that will include many of the Depth Committee's suggestions. We look forward to meeting this challenge to enhance learning opportunities for all students, increase their engagement with their academic program in general, and introduce them to the challenges and rewards of serious study and research.

## **Davidson College QEP Conclusion**

The Davidson College QEP developed for our SACS reaccreditation will permit the college to explore and address one of the fundamental issues confronting the nation's leading liberal arts colleges, one that emanates from the explosion of knowledge and technology that characterized the latter part of the 20th century.

Liberal arts colleges, more than pre-professional educational institutions or programs, must find the appropriate means to reform and broaden their common core curricula while ensuring appropriate depth in their academic majors and other advanced curricular options. The challenge is significant. First, what are the appropriate means to achieve the two goals? Second, what are the resource and funding implications of these means? Third, given the competing resource demands from simultaneously increasing breadth and depth, how does an institution prioritize and sequence the needed changes?

Addressing both issues of breadth (the first-year writing program affecting all students, and the Humanities program) and of depth (principally research opportunities within academic departments and concentrations), this QEP will help answer the key questions raised above. If these efforts are successful, Davidson students will be the primary beneficiaries. The first-year experience will be improved, preparing students for the communication challenges that will confront them in subsequent Davidson College courses, regardless of their major. Students in the Humanities Program should have an enriched experience as a result of the measures outlined in the QEP. Finally, the focus on depth learning should increase the engagement of all students with difficult material and with the successful design and investigation of challenging research questions.

The Davidson College community is excited by the opportunities presented in and offered through this QEP.

Appendix A  
Faculty endorsement of the W-Course Program as a QEP component

Appendix B  
Sample W course syllabi

Appendix C  
W-course approval form

Appendix D  
Survey results from student questionnaire on W-courses

Appendix E  
Description of the Spencer Foundation

Appendix F  
Letter of invitation to the Humanities faculty development seminar

Appendix G  
Chart of opportunities for depth

Appendix H  
Listing of departmental opportunities for depth

Appendix I  
Description of the Davidson College Research Program

Appendix J  
Uses for Duke Endowment Funds