



VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE

Note: During each interview (approximately 30 minutes), we will gather as much information as possible. Some questions may not apply to some departments.

I. Introductions and Purpose

- Introduce self.
- Explain purpose of interview.
 - ✓ VSU is scheduled to undergo our reaffirmation of accreditation by SACS in 2010. As part of this process, VSU must develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that adds to student learning. In fall 2008, the Phase I QEP Taskforce collected ideas and suggestions through a broad-based campus effort. The ideas were then evaluated and vetted before a final selection was made, which is Undergraduate Research.
 - ✓ SRA has been asked by the Phase II QEP Taskforce to complete an inventory of existing undergraduate research as part of the development of our QEP.
 - ✓ These interviews are an important part of the research and planning of the QEP.
 - ✓ Your ideas and suggestions will assist the university in forming the QEP for VSU.

II. Explain Procedures for the Interview

- Set of prepared questions for discussion.
- Questions focus on efforts/programs/opportunities that currently exist within your department for undergraduates to participate in research with faculty and/or graduate students. It is through a better understanding of existing undergraduate research efforts/programs/opportunities that the Phase II QEP Taskforce will be able to increase and/or enhance undergraduate research at VSU.
- Approximately 30-45 minutes.

III. Closing

- Thank participant(s) for their time.
- Your comments and feedback are critical to this part of the development of the QEP and will be taken into consideration by the Taskforce.

Definition of "Research" for your discipline

First, we would like to learn a little about how you would define "Research" for your discipline/department.

1. The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) defines undergraduate research as "An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline" (CUR). Another institution that has chosen a similar QEP project defined research as "A diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover facts or principles, and increase the sum of knowledge, enhance design, or enrich artistic ability" (University of Houston, QEP).

How would you define undergraduate research in your discipline? The following two definitions are provided as examples to set our conversation.

Participation in Undergraduate Research

Next, we would like to talk about participation of students, faculty, and staff in undergraduate research.

2. What opportunities are available for undergraduates to engage in research within your department? What opportunities are available for faculty to engage in research with undergraduates within your department?
3. How are students/faculty made aware of existing opportunities? Are opportunities available year-round? What summer research or internship opportunities do your students/faculty participate in?
4. Do any graduate students in your department engage undergraduate students for research assistance?
5. Are there stipends available? (If yes, explain.)
6. How many students (majors) are participating in some form of research (specify inside/outside of coursework) in your department this semester (number and percentage)? How many faculty are participating with undergraduates in some form of research in your department?
7. Which faculty members in your department have initiated/mentored/sponsored undergraduate students in an extensive research project? Give specific examples of faculty members and students who have collaborated, co-presented, or coauthored research.
8. What reasons do your students give for not engaging in research? (i.e., need to work, not presented the opportunity, do not want to hurt GPA, etc.)
9. Are your students engaged in interdisciplinary research? If yes, give examples.

10. Does your department require majors to take a research methods course? (i.e., is there an emphasis placed on research in the program?) Does your department offer a research methods course?

Resources for Undergraduate Research

Next, we would like to talk about resources available for undergraduate research.

11. What percentage (or dollar amount), if any, of your department budget is allocated to undergraduate research? (e.g., supplies, materials, undergraduate travel, symposium).
12. Does your department have external support (i.e., grant) to support undergraduate research?
13. Is there a limitation to research resources (faculty time, lab space, etc.) available in any given term? (i.e., is there a cap on student participation?)

Assessment/Feedback of Undergraduate Research

Next, we would like to talk about any feedback or assessment that you have obtained regarding undergraduate research.

14. What feedback have you received from students who have participated in research opportunities?
15. What opportunities exist for undergraduates to share their research? (i.e., off-campus conference, on-campus opportunities, etc.)
16. Has your department considered assessment of your current undergraduate research efforts? If so, describe (rubrics, efforts, reports, etc.)

Suggestions for Improvement

Finally, we'd like to hear any suggestions you may have for improving undergraduate research.

17. What changes, if any, would increase undergraduate research participation at VSU? Why? What changes should receive the highest priority?
18. Do you have any suggestions on how to better involve or raise the commitment of the entire university community to increase undergraduate research?
19. Do you have any other suggestions/comments regarding VSU's QEP on Undergraduate Research?