UNV 101: The First-Year Student Experience

Our QEP and Social Responsibility

Anyone heard of “QEP?” How? Where?

Quality Enhancement Plan
Plan and measure the effectiveness of a university-wide endeavor:
- Enhancing student learning through service-focused research and
- Foster a culture of civic engagement through scholarship and service

Our QEP: *Research That Reaches Out*
What might that mean? Purpose?

Let’s look at how we might be able to “reach out” through “research”...

Share some adjectives that describe you now? What adjectives do you want people to use when they describe you in your senior year of college? (characteristics/traits?)

one characteristic of a college graduate=ethical responsibility to help others/benefit society

Define “social responsibility.”

having an obligation to benefit society

• Do you agree? Why/why not?

Mercer University Mission Statement
Have students/small groups read different sections of the statement and explain what they mean. Faculty and Peer Advisors can share how they have personally seen these ideas “in action” at Mercer.

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**Mercer University's mission is to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.**

In fulfilling this mission, the University supports undergraduate, graduate, and professional learning as well as basic research and its application in service to others. As a university committed to excellence and innovation, Mercer challenges members of its community to meet and exceed high standards in their teaching, learning, research, scholarship and service.

Founded by Baptists in 1833, Mercer is an independent university that remains grounded in a tradition that embraces freedom of the mind and spirit, cherishes the equal worth of every individual, and commits to serving the needs of humankind. As a reflection of this heritage:

- We encourage our students to discover and develop fully their unique combination of gifts and talents to become leaders who make a positive difference in the world.
- We seek to inspire members of our community to live virtuous and meaningful lives by using their gifts and talents to serve the needs of humankind as an expression of their love for God and neighbor.
- We seek to enrich the mind and spirit by promoting and facilitating an open and rigorous search for truth and understanding, including an examination of the moral, religious and ethical questions of this and every age.
- We affirm and respect the dignity and sacred worth of every person and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences.
Also, the newer branding statement adopted by the Board of Trustees last spring can illuminate these ideas:

For more than 180 years Mercer University has provided distinctive educational experiences that equip and transform it students to achieve their life and vocational aspirations. Mercer’s uniqueness is found in how it integrates five defining components of its mission—liberal learning, professional knowledge, discovery, service to humankind and community. The Mercer brand is rooted in a commitment to serve and a mission that instills in its graduates a passion to use their knowledge and talents to shape a better world.

Understanding the Mercer brand is the University’s reputation for:
• Educating men and women who go on to assume leadership positions in most every sector of society.
• Valuing religious and intellectual freedom.
• Integrating research and service to address some of the world’s toughest and greatest needs.
• Strengthening communities across the globe.
• Equipping people to lead virtuous, meaningful and responsible lives.
• Embracing diversity by recognizing the dignity and worth of every person.

We see the QEP and our first-year focus on social responsibility as a natural extension of what we are about!

What activities have you engaged in thus far that could be considered as benefiting others? 
(probably lots of community service examples)
You can now think bigger about how informed research can be used to help others (and not necessarily only “doing” community service).

What types of opportunities will expose you to more of this while you are at Mercer? 
classes, research projects/opportunities, organizations, etc.

academic goals that could contribute to social responsibility:
1. Striving for excellence; developing a strong work ethic and consciously doing one's very best in all aspects of college
2. Acting on a sense of personal and academic integrity, ranging from honesty in relationships to principled engagement with an academic honors code
3. Recognizing and acting on the responsibility to contribute to a larger community, both the educational community (classroom, campus life, etc.) and the wider community
4. Recognizing and acting on the obligation to take seriously the perspectives of others in forming one's own judgments; engaging the perspectives of others as a resource for learning, for citizenship, and for work
5. Developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning, and, in ways that incorporate the other five aims, using such reasoning in learning and in life
(AACU, 2005)

Watch the very short video that shows some specific Mercer examples:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ctl4zwL0P4Y
- Why are the ideas of social responsibility and research that reaches out important for you to consider now?
  - College/School-specific examples?
  - also...using research to help others, co-curricular opportunities, job responsibilities

- How do you get started?
  - Do you have any initial research ideas?
  - Talk to QEP staff to get connected to faculty and staff.
  - Check out the “Student Guide to the QEP” at http://qep.mercer.edu/resources/studentguide.cfm
  - Investigate service opportunities that interest you and expand your understanding of the issues. Could research further improve these issues?
  - Attend the First-Year Friday that further addresses the issue.

Much More to Explore and Help You Plan:
http://qep.mercer.edu/