

QEP Proposal #1: 49er Commitment to Community

UNC Charlotte does not have a community engagement identity that instills in students the responsibility to stay connected and give of themselves and their talents to the Charlotte community and UNC Charlotte even after they have graduated.

There are a lot of community engagement initiatives already in place at UNC Charlotte but a more coordinated and cohesive approach to community engagement is needed. A community engagement requirement is necessary if we want all undergraduate students to have this experience.

Structured opportunities for students to reflect on their community engagement experiences are also missing at the present. This reflection is an important part of students' personal and professional growth prior to graduating from college.

Community engagement fits nicely with the proposed initiatives in the UNC Tomorrow Plan and goal 2 of the draft 2011-2016 UNC Charlotte Strategic Plan.

Towards the goal of establishing a community engagement identity at UNC Charlotte, part of the admissions process could be for students to write an essay reflecting on:

- Communities they are a part of coming into college
- Sense of self related to community on the campus
- Identification of at least one other community they will become a part of before they graduate

Implementation: Community engagement might be a required strategic goal for each college just as the diversity goal currently is. It would then be up to each college to determine how to build the community engagement requirement into each major. Again, there would need to be an opportunity for students to reflect on how their community engagement experiences have changed them.

The community engagement proposal could be intertwined with the following other QEP proposals:

- Research, education, and engagement for student success
- Equipping students to facilitate public discourse
- Development of themes within General Education
- Sustainability