Students as Scholars

Intentional learning through undergraduate research and creative activities

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- 33,000 total students, more than 20,000 undergraduates
- 198 degree programs at 3 distributed campuses, 75 undergraduate degree programs
- Diverse student population
- Undergraduate research was adopted as our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) initiative
Students as Scholars at Mason

*Students as Scholars* aims to foster a culture of student scholarship through increased participation in and celebration of scholarly activities.

Students will see their education as a process of scholarly inquiry, where scholarship is valued as a core practice of the Mason student experience.
Primary Activities

- Helping students find a project and mentor
- Funding undergraduate research and creative projects
- Providing student travel grants
- Facilitating faculty and curriculum development
- Hosting the annual Celebration of Scholarship
Undergraduate Research

- High impact educational practice (Kuh, 2008)
  - Increased student engagement
  - Improved retention

- Positive student outcomes
  - Written and oral communication skills
  - Academic performance
  - Critical thinking
  - Choice of major and career
  - Motivation and plans for graduate education
  - Personal development
Limitations of Current Research

- Research has largely focused on STEM fields
- Primarily self-reports and surveys
- Either too large for in-depth insight (e.g., NSSE) or too small for generalization
- Primarily focused on structured independent experiences, not on classroom experiences
Student Learning Outcomes

- Discovery of Scholarship
- Scholarly Inquiry
- Creation of Scholarship

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Student Learning Outcomes

Creation of Scholarship
• Create an original scholarly or creative project
• Communicate knowledge from an original scholarly or creative project

Scholarly Inquiry
• Articulate a scholarly question; engage in key elements of the scholarly process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results of scholarship within a broader context

Discovery of Scholarship
• Understand how knowledge is generated and disseminated through scholarship, and the importance of scholarship to society
Rubrics for Program Development

- Rubrics for program planning and development gives structure to your program and expectations for performance (and resources)
  - By achieving consensus on criteria, program stakeholders have a shared vision and goals
  - The levels of quality can help us reflect on the progress of the program in meeting its goals

- A program rubric can define what it looks like to meet your program outcomes
Mason’s Program Rubric

- Developed by faculty
- Levels of learning

How it is used
- Communicates the institution’s expectations for programs, curriculum, and student learning
- Guides assessment strategies for different levels
  - Development of survey instruments
  - Assessment of research courses
  - Collective student work
Issues and Challenges

- Definitions, terminology, and concepts about scholarship differ across disciplines
- Process vs. product: judging performance
- Norming the raters
- Differentiating between performance levels
- Continued focus and use of the rubric over time and with new participants
Small Group Discussion

- How well do these concepts map to your program or campus? Are there disciplinary differences or other challenges to using common criteria?

- How could the rubric be adapted to meet your needs?

- What would be the process for developing a rubric like this for your institution? How might faculty and students be involved?
Discussion and Questions

Assessment materials available at

assessment.gmu.edu

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oscar.gmu.edu