



**LIPSCOMB**  
UNIVERSITY

Quality Enhancement Plan  
2025



# POWERS

WRITING  COMMUNICATING

## Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence *The Quality Enhancement Plan for Lipscomb University*

**Lipscomb University is committed to mentoring students as they journey toward purposeful lives of service in their communities. As a Christian University, Lipscomb views students as eager citizens, uniquely made to elevate the common good even while navigating challenging times.**

Today's college students have witnessed political upheaval, a destructive pandemic, addictive technologies, and a constantly evolving artificial intelligence revolution. Given this reality, **Lipscomb University understands that our students need to develop transferable thinking and communication skills as they navigate new social and information challenges.** In a polarized society, Lipscomb demonstrates a commitment to every community by developing student learning in a way that allows them to discern truth and collaborate across lines of difference with digital and information literacy skills.

Composition and Rhetoric scholars have long upheld the importance of communicating clearly to persuade, inspire and inform, but Classical and New Rhetorics alone are insufficient for 21st century students. Contemporary notions of rhetoric in the public sphere can be reductive, and Composition and Communications courses that teach rhetoric as divorced from the cultural, civic, social and technological context of students are insufficient. The current digital revolution requires an integrated, multi-modal approach to rhetoric that capitalizes on student strengths, skills, and engagement in their world. Composition courses that assign four analytical essays fail to build a diverse array of skills in students, limiting their ability to impact their communities. Communication courses that ask students to give four speeches to their peers are similarly insufficient for our evolving digital rhetorical landscape. **Students**

**need to think critically, process analytically, and communicate creatively in the 21st Century.** Lipscomb recognizes an imperative to build curricula drawn from best practices in Classical, New and Digital rhetorics for today's rhetorically flexible, digitally savvy, citizen-students.

Lipscomb's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was crafted by and with collaborators in the community, and aims to build effective communication skills with a focus on integration and synthesis that is distinctive to Lipscomb. In the first two years at Lipscomb, students will take concurrent courses called the **Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS)**. In *Writing to Discover* and *Communicating to Influence*, students will be grounded in the classical study of rhetoric and then taught to craft compelling stories and arguments for diverse audiences using a variety of methods. Students will consider many perspectives and types of media as they learn to communicate ethically and persuasively using effective strategies to share ideas with others. Students will take the courses concurrently, helping to integrate their learning as all students build transferable skills needed to navigate intersections among academic speaking, writing, and professional, digital and social media communication. **The centerpiece of the assessment strategy is a Crossover assignment which asks students to address one social quandary in two classes, to three audiences, using three modalities.** This focus on rhetorical agility reflects a commitment to innovate as students will engage in academic rigor, meaningful collaboration, and extra-curricular experiences that reinforce and add to their learning. The QEP will develop skill building with classical and digital rhetoric in part because the workforce requires students to demonstrate rhetorical mastery in the new and evolving settings they will encounter.

**Lipscomb University is committed to educating intellectually curious learners who thrive in our diverse society as they collaborate with others to deliver their best.** Building on Lipscomb's Impact 360 Strategic Plan goal to create a new Liberal Arts Core, the current faculty voted overwhelmingly to approve a Lipscomb Core curriculum which showcases an innovative approach to developing students who master the rhetorical and communicative arts. With a foundation in the humanities and the liberal arts, our students will develop skills that are transferable across disciplines as they find a vocation where they can flourish while serving others.



Brandi Bingham Kellett, PhD

QEP Director

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# Institutional Context and Alignment

## Strategic Plan

During the 2020-2021 academic year, under a new President, Lipscomb University underwent a strategic planning process which resulted in Lipscomb Impact 360, a comprehensive strategic plan that focuses on centering our mission as a Christian community of higher education committed to academic research, vocational discovery and student flourishing. The 11 page plan was released in the fall of 2022 and implementation began immediately. Committed to continuous improvement and the ongoing demonstration of student learning outcomes, the President leads and receives quarterly assessments of our progress on our goals, as well as annual adjustments to the plan. *See Figure 1 for the core tenets of the Lipscomb Impact 360 Plan.*

**The Lipscomb Impact 360 plan privileges an academic and student-focused education, evidenced by Goal 1's strategies listed here:**

**Goal 1:** Provide a premier, learner-focused Christian education

Learning is the beating heart of our vision and mission. To accomplish this goal we will:

- **Strategy 1:** Implement a rigorous Christian liberal arts education.
- **Strategy 2:** Create a faith-centered educational environment with programming that enables learners to be curious, analytical, innovative and resilient supported by advances in scholarship.
- **Strategy 3:** Attract, recruit and retain mission-aligned faculty who excel in teaching and scholarship.
- **Strategy 4:** Enhance student success through improved retention, advising, mentoring and vocational preparation.
- **Strategy 5:** Promote meritorious research and scholarly productivity enabling the transition from a Doctoral/Professional University to a High Research University.
- **Strategy 6:** Implement a continuous data-informed program review and support process.

## Impact 360

**Vision:** Anchored in our Christ-centered mission, Lipscomb University will lead as a top-tier, nationally recognized institution. We will excel in teaching, learning and research; be ambitious in our service to others; and be driven by continuous improvement.

**Mission:** We are a Christ-centered community preparing learners for purposeful lives through rigorous academics and transformative experiences.

**Core Tenets:** We are a community engaged with the life and teachings of Jesus. We are committed to an ongoing search for truth. We provide excellent, whole-person learning experiences to shape lives of character, leadership, service and faith. We equip people to succeed in their vocation and contribute to the common good by living out their faith in action.

**Goal 1:** Provide a premier, learner-focused Christian education

**Goal 2:** Promote and develop spiritual growth and transformation across our community

**Goal 3:** Recruit, support, retain and graduate students with the tools for a purposeful life

**Goal 4:** Build a culture of diversity, equity and belonging where people thrive as image-bearers of God

**Goal 5:** Expand our engagement, influence and impact by forging deep connections with communities.

*Figure 1*

## The Lipscomb Liberal Arts Core: The Origin of the QEP

One of the first initiatives of Goal 1 was to establish the Liberal Arts Core Task Force, charged with designing a new core curriculum centered on the liberal arts. As the Task Force reviewed the current General Education Program, a need to enhance and improve the teaching of writing and communication emerged. This Task Force began weekly meetings in 2022, and the charge was shared in a university memorandum, found in [Appendix A](#).

Responding to the charge in Goal 1 of the Lipscomb Impact 360 Strategic Plan to create a new Liberal Arts Core, the current faculty voted overwhelmingly to approve a Core curriculum which invited students into the deep study of the Liberal Arts. With a foundation in the humanities and the liberal arts, students will have a foundation to build skills that are transferable across disciplines as they find a vocation where they can flourish while serving others. The QEP topic—the Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS)—was born out of student needs exposed in the feedback collected by the Liberal Arts Core Task Force. In line with SACSCOC standards, the QEP is aligned with the goals of the new Liberal Arts Core, and is designed to be foundational to the academic success of every undergraduate student at Lipscomb University.

**The QEP is rigorous in nature, focused on building practical and transferable skills students will need to think critically and communicate effectively in multiple disciplines and to diverse audiences in an increasingly digital world.** The QEP defines two courses every student will take, providing them with the chance to think metacognitively and critically as they encounter new information. The Liberal Arts Task Force designed a Lipscomb Core Curriculum with courses linked to specific disciplines that demonstrate learning linked to three comprehensive goals. [See Appendix B for the Student Learning Outcomes of these Comprehensive goals.](#)

### Comprehensive goals for the Lipscomb Core Curriculum cover:

- **Diverse Perspectives** (Exposure to and appreciation of voices from a variety of backgrounds, identities and experiences).
- **The Christian Intellectual Tradition** (Grounding in the tested and trusted Christian voices that shape the Academy).
- **Discernment Skills** (Critical thinking, ethical reasoning, effective communication, and responsible deliberation).

In keeping with this vision, the Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS) integrates learning across the disciplines of Composition, Rhetoric and Communication, while also building transferable/discernment skills in students. Because of POWERS, students will be prepared to advance through the Lipscomb Core Curriculum with diverse and high impact communication skills, having developed an expanded capacity for disciplinary discovery, contextualized learning, and collaborating across lines of difference. Finally, POWERS reflects an institutional commitment to building upon a foundation of trusted and tested wisdom. In addition to integrating learning across disciplines, the QEP grounds students in the classical study of the rhetorical arts while helping them demonstrate the valuable workplace skills of written, digital and visual communication. **The commitment to developing**

diverse rhetorical skills in our students grows out of Lipscomb University’s desire to empower students to collaborate with others in order to solve problems, increase experiences of belonging, and serve their communities in practical ways as part of their Christian practice.

## QEP Sequence Overview

In their first two years at Lipscomb, students will take concurrent courses called POWERS. These two classes will give students a foundation in classical rhetorical arts and then teach them to craft compelling stories and arguments for diverse audiences using a variety of methods. **Students will consider many perspectives and types of media as they learn to communicate ethically and persuasively using effective strategies to share ideas with others.**

POWERS consists of two courses: Writing to Discover and Communicating to Influence. These courses address a need illuminated by faculty and designed to impact the intellectual growth and practical learning of the majority of Lipscomb University students. **The purpose, design and structure of the QEP has been vetted and shaped by collaborators throughout the academic community in an iterative process described below.** It is designed with best practices in mind and an assessment strategy that will fuel continuous improvement.

The methodology of research and process of development are presented below, followed by a summary of collaborative efforts across Lipscomb University. POWERS Student Learning Outcomes, objectives, and assessment strategy follow. The report concludes with the administrative structure, approved budget and evidence of the institutional commitment to and support of Lipscomb University’s QEP.

## Lipscomb History and Profile

Lipscomb University has a strong history of adherence to educating our students in the Liberal Arts. Founded in 1891 as the Nashville Bible School by David Lipscomb and James Harding, the early curricula were designed to help students, “hav[e] something to say,” and “know how to say it” (Brown 10). Indeed, in the 1900-1901 “Annual Announcement,” the founders asserted that they “should not only have in view the making of intelligent, honorable, influential, and successful citizens,” but that one of the primary ways to demonstrate this learning among students was through “work done by the students in the preparation and recitation of lessons” (9). The Nashville Bible School, and David Lipscomb College and Lipscomb University after it, believed that critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, cogent writing and effective public communication were foundational hallmarks of a worthwhile education.

In the early days of the school, “Elocution” was one of 12 original courses, 5 of which were languages. This commitment to a deep study of classical languages and thinking was always coupled with an equally robust commitment to developing the public expression of ideas in students. In the 1911-1912 “Annual Announcement of the Nashville Bible School,” we find the impetus for this focus on thinking, writing and expression from S.P. Pittman, the founding Chair of the “Department of Expression”:



In knowledge there is power, but power is frequently lost by the inability to express. Thoughts are powerful, but expressed thoughts are more so...Among the many points that distinguish man from the brute is the power of articulate speech. This gift may be neglected or it may be cultivated. (21)

*See Figure 2 for an image of a faculty member of the Department of Expression.*



**Figure 2**

*Fundamentals of Public Speaking*, written by faculty from David Lipscomb College's Department of Speech, explains why this institution was committed to an educational practice that integrated the classical with the current, and the interior thinking life with the public speaking life. In his "Foreward," Editor Carroll B Ellis writes that the "principals essential for efficient oral communication"... "embrace logical thinking, clear organization, audience analysis, clear and artistic use of language, ethical considerations and methods of presentation" in an effort to thoughtfully present ideas (Ellis 10). **The founders and early educators who shaped the educational practice of Lipscomb University were convinced that the way students read, think, write and speak were not only related and intertwined, but they were vital for the expression of ideas required in an engaged citizenry.** *See Figure 3 for a description of the Department of Speech Arts.*

Other historical artifacts confirm that the institutional values that established Lipscomb University were focused on teaching rhetorical theory and practice, both within the classroom and in public spaces. While students were required to give lengthy recitations and to share their own ideas publicly, the early twentieth century saw the rise of events outside the classroom that reinforced the curricular focus and design within it. In "A History of Speech Teaching at David Lipscomb College," Paul Brown writes that "a very large debating club had been formed which met regularly for study and practice argumentation," in addition to a speech contest which broadcast participant contributions on the radio station (WLAC) (Brown 35). Created to honor David Lipscomb, and held in January of each year, "The Founder's Day Oratorical contest was an important event each year" (Brown 31).

This heritage of classroom and extra-curricular alignment is honored in the design of this QEP, where demonstrated student learning is reinforced and advanced in extra-curricular activities. Today, Lipscomb University is committed to educating students who are able to communicate effectively with diverse audiences in order to serve their communities well.



Figure 3

# Methodology of Research and Literature Review

## Peer Programs

In November of 2023, the QEP Director sent a work packet to the Working Group members (a group defined below). It contained links to and descriptions of peer and aspirational programs, whose approach to rhetoric, composition, or communication was helpful. [Appendix C shows the instructions given in early December to the Working Group.](#)

In January of 2024, the Working Group reconvened, having studied and commented on areas of inspiration and resonance from many programs. They shared ideas from the most influential programs, and **Figure 4** summarizes the findings gathered from our review of peer programs.

Dartmouth University	We like the clear move from Writing and Rhetoric, to Writing about Literature, to, now, Writing across the disciplines for distinct purposes and audiences. Clear scaffolding for students with a trajectory that includes student areas of study. They are also exploring how to help students
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*Figure 4*

As the QEP Working Group built out the Sequence, two other programs were identified as more closely related to this design that intentionally places them in a connected and interactive sequence.

In 2008, The University of Kentucky began examining their approach to composition and communication. In 2011, they launched a two term course called the University of Kentucky Core Composition and Communication Class. Their approach is scaffolded to build skills, and they intentionally remind students that as they develop written, oral and visual communication skills, they do so as producers and consumers of information. Additionally, students are charged to solve a community problem and then decide how to share their findings with the most impact.

Additionally, Purdue University began to design a relevant program in 2015. Piloted in 2017, it was fully launched by 2020. In their Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts Program, Purdue promises to “enhance your ability to communicate with precision and to think critically and creatively” (www.purdue.edu). Students can choose to take a special sequence called “Transformative Texts, Critical Thinking and Communication.” Doing so satisfies their Written and Oral communication requirements, and promises to “reinforce and enhance our students’ foundation knowledge while also deepening their ability to see unity across disciplines, to appreciate ambiguity, and to love learning” (www.purdue.edu). Purdue’s Cornerstone program is expansive, while Lipscomb’s POWERS is focused deeply on the Rhetorical and Communicating Arts. That said, their linking of communication skills to metacognition, nuanced civic engagement and lifelong learning aligns with our program.

**Lipscomb University’s POWERS responds to sustained trends in the workforce and across the educational spectrum.** It benefits from innovative developments in our peer institutions, while establishing a distinctively Lipscomb experience for students. POWERS, unlike other programs, contains transformative extra-curricular elements, will be taken by students as corequisites, and showcases a crossover assignment with 3 iterations developed in 2 courses. Simply put, POWERS represents an innovation in the practice of teaching the communicative arts.

## Higher Education Trends

Higher Education trends are changing rapidly as many Americans reconsider the purpose of higher education. Some points of tension have been building over time, like the increasing cost of college for many families, the reconsideration of the necessity of debt over time, the increasing suspicion of elite educational institutions as untrustworthy, the push for professional degrees, and the reinvigoration of practical skill certificates and careers based on manual labor. These sentiments, trends and concerns have slowly created stress in the higher education space as schools attempt to assert their relevance and lower barriers to entry.

While these tensions grew gradually, the last 5 years brought two developments that introduced a sudden and possibly devastating new reality: the Covid 19 pandemic and the rapid development of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). The disruptive and alienating nature of the pandemic accelerated the challenges facing collegiate institutions around cost, accessibility, and return on investment. Students and faculty alike began to entertain questions about the purpose of learning communities, the broad learning involved in general education curriculum requirements and even the robust learning associated with any degree program. These questions challenged the cultural norm of the collegiate trajectory for many students. In the spring of 2023, generative AI reached a tipping point and became accessible to the vast majority of college students and faculty. As the QEP was developed, it was clear that college campuses across the country wrestled with whether AI was a threat or a welcome disruption.

The key trends in higher education relevant to the development of POWERS are that many schools are choosing to diminish their Core curriculum and liberal arts requirements, instead choosing to offer students the transactional

degrees they seek. This trend is reflected in articles like “The Decline in the Liberal Arts and Humanities” from the *Wall Street Journal* in March, 2023. Here, Thomas Gilmore of Ave Maria University asserts that, “Academia today is dominated by the utilitarian mindset that values an education strictly on its monetary potential” (qtd in Zito). Similarly, the *New Yorker* published a piece that went viral among English educators in 2023 entitled, “The End of the English Major.” In the article, Nathan Heller highlights the sharp decline of English, Literature and Language majors at Arizona State University, whose English and Language departments are among the most productive and awarded in the country among diverse public institutions. Lamenting an even bigger observable trend, Rose Horowitz, in a November 2024 *Atlantic* article entitled, “The Elite College Students who Can’t Read Books,” notes that an alarming number of faculty fear their students no longer read long form work at all. These articles offer a snapshot into a tense trend in higher education.

However, at the same time, in large part because of the crisis manufactured by generative AI, there is a new trend percolating that figures a Liberal Arts education as necessary in order to ethically and successfully use AI. Among many books published in 2023 and 2024 is Bowen and Watson’s *Teaching with AI*, where they persuasively argue that educators must move beyond an approach to AI that views usage as an ethical binary. Instead, they insist that students need the skills best demonstrated in a liberal arts curriculum now more than ever. They argue that critical thinking, ethical deliberating, creative problem solving and collaborating across lines of difference are necessary skills for students entering a workforce where their success will likely be determined by their proficiency in the use of AI and their effectiveness in communicating in diverse and agile environments. The POWERS approach highlights connections across Classical, New and Digital rhetorics. We understand “Digital Rhetoric as the application of rhetorical theory (as analytical method or heuristic for production) to digital texts and performances” (Eyman 13). Indeed, POWERS is built on the notion that “in a technological age, **rhetoric emerges as a conditional method for humanizing the effects of machines and helping humans to direct them**...Rhetoric thinks beyond disciplines and ‘interdisciplinarity’--itself a product of a culture of specialization--by arranging and connecting diverse elements in the pursuit of theoretical questions and practical applications” (italics mine, Davis 103).

**POWERS is on the cusp of this new trend in higher education, which calls us to a more integrative approach to our core course design.** The course approach must balance a foundational grounding in critical thinking and metacognition gained from the study of the liberal arts, while also elevating the development and demonstration of transferable skills in our students as they prepare to enter a workforce with little job stability and vast creative possibilities. Moreover, at Lipscomb University, our Christ-centered mission requires us to help students live purposeful lives, and this is a foundational element of the QEP goals and design. POWERS, as part of the Lipscomb Core, is designed to guide students to develop skills to help them work and engage in community with others to increase equity and belonging. Strong rhetoric skills allow for deep connection and understanding which in turn builds stronger and more thoughtful—even more fulfilling—relationships in both personal and professional settings. Lipscomb's commitment to these values and faith requires faculty to approach the teaching of

communication as a key element in how students build better connections across diverse people groups in order to strengthen communities.

In order to understand the trends of higher education as expressed through QEPs that center the teaching of communication, Working Group members were given links to QEPs that shared a similar topic in their assignment packet in the winter of 2023-2024. [\*Appendix D shares those instructions.\*](#)

Members perused six QEPs that were loosely linked to Lipscomb's QEP (Millsaps, Embry, Grambling State, Texas A&M, Baptist Mission and Saint Leo Universities among them). Members were intrigued to see how rhetoric was described or used as a catch all term, and were encouraged that our thinking and vision was coming together in a distinct and cogent way. This study confirmed the importance of metacognition as a skill students must learn, practice and successfully demonstrate in our POWERS.

The final trend in higher education that shaped our decision is the parallel need we see for students to create post-collegiate lives marked by civic engagement and cultivated thinking. We see a trend in higher education here as calls for such skills and preparation are on the rise. For instance, in July of 2024, Steven Mintz published "How Eloquence Became a Thing of the Past," where he laments our decline in communication skills while offering a passionate plea for their cultivation by using cultural artifacts with which students are already familiar:

At a time when verbal and written eloquence and elegance are declining and when oral and written expression are increasingly dominated by brevity and informality, hip-hop offers a way not only to expose students to diverse cultural narratives but to cultivate their skills in word craft, metaphorical thinking and stylistic innovation and install an appreciation for linguistic creativity, rhetorical flair and the power of words. (Mintz)

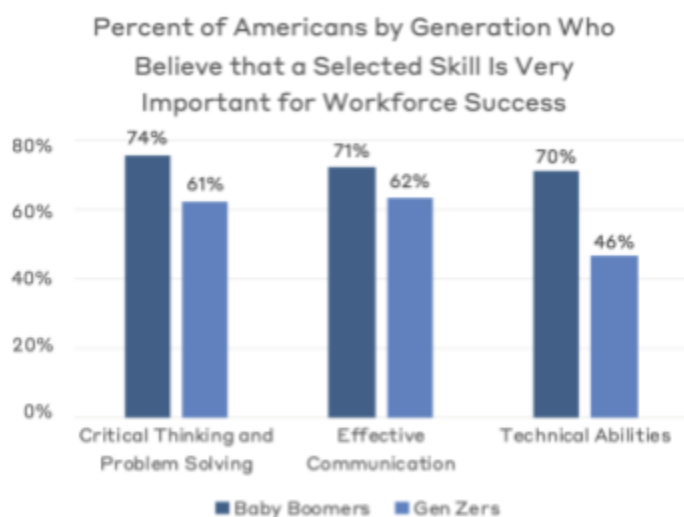
Mintz articulates a trend of welcoming rhetorical exemplars from music, digital and social platforms in order to engage students, helping them observe critically and communicate effectively to distinct audiences using diverse modalities. POWERS will offer students formative assessments in which they rhetorically analyze a wide array of communicative artifacts.

## Workforce Needs

In an era when the Liberal Arts are often touted as out of touch or as remnants of an elite and impractical educational enterprise, employers continue to assert they are most eager to hire students who demonstrate skills learned through exposure to the Liberal Arts.

According to both longitudinal studies since 2006 and a 2023 survey of 1,100 executives or hiring managers conducted by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, employers view the "knowledge and skills"

demonstrated in “outcomes of a liberal education” as “essential for success in entry-level jobs and for advancement in their companies” (“National Survey”).



**Figure 5**

communication are top priorities. The highest percentages of American adults identified critical thinking and problem solving (68%) and effective communication (64%), such as writing and speaking skills. Employers similarly ranked critical thinking (60%), problem-solving (54%), and written communication (54%) as among the most important skills college graduates should be able to demonstrate” (Finely 6). *See Figure 5 for a chart of Finely et al’s findings.*

Lynn Pasquerella, the President of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, asserted that “employers deeply value the skills, competencies, and mindsets of humanities’ majors, particularly when it comes to oral and written communication, working of diverse teams, and the capacity to speak across differences” (Kyaw). In addition to soft or durable skills, the survey also found broad employer support for micro credentialing among job candidates. This finding helped establish a portfolio submission as a culminating assignment for assessment in POWERS. Moreover, POWERS SLOs and assignments are founded on a shared set of practical skills, ensuring our students will demonstrate viable skills needed in the workforce.

POWERS is structured to help students consistently practice durable skills needed to reach across lines of difference as they communicate ethically and with empathy, while also demonstrating the practical skills they need to contribute in a workplace that requires fluency in written, oral, digital and visual communications. Moreover, students face a series of revolutions in information generation and output compilation with the rise of Artificial Intelligence. Indeed, “According to our 2024 State of Business Communication report, 89% of business leaders and 53% of knowledge workers are already actively using gen AI for professional purposes. Moreover, 72% of all professionals using generative AI use it for writing tasks, emphasizing writing’s outside role for professionals in the

Specifically, oral and written communication are consistently named as a vital skill for new hires and advancement. In the 2023 AAC&U survey of employers, “Oral communication, for example, is viewed by most employers (64%) as a very important skill for new hires to possess, yet roughly half as many employers (34%) agree that recent college graduates are very well prepared in this area” (“National Survey”).

When asked what skills are important for success in today’s workforce, employers and the broader public largely agree that critical thinking, problem solving, and effective

workplace” (*Grammarly*). The workplace uses AI regularly, and if Lipscomb hopes to prepare students to thrive after their time at Lipscomb, faculty must teach them to collaborate with AI rather than dismiss it as wholly unethical.

The AI revolution means that writing output can be produced with very little work or input from students. Nevertheless, effective communication requires mastery of human skills such as audience awareness, tone choice and consistency, and the ability to synthesize ideas from various contexts seamlessly for multiple purposes, modalities and people. The current American media landscape is plagued by misinformation and disinformation; pedagogies of rhetoric must engage this reality by teaching students to consider communicative acts within this context. Now more than ever, students must learn to analyze sources and develop transferable communication skills that allow them to collaborate with other people and technology to persuade, inform, and synthesize effective ideas. John Warner, a respected College Composition professor, author and public speaker, concedes that, “We need to preserve the process of writing and the struggle of writing as a valuable learning tool and recognize that written communication is an inherently human process in a lot of scenarios beyond merely trying to convey basic facts or information” (qtd in *Grammarly*). Grammarly goes further to suggest that rhetorical communication skills are more important now because of the AI revolution: “Without being given genuine opportunities to develop their own voice and tone, understand how to develop an argument, write for varied audiences, and practice different types of writing, students will have a much harder time effectively evaluating and digesting a gen AI output or becoming an effective workplace communicator” (*Grammarly*). Instead of avoiding the impact of AI on Composition and Communication pedagogy, Lipscomb’s POWERS addresses the AI revolution’s impact on higher education and the workforce directly, providing students with the rhetorical skill they need to thrive in today’s workforce.

## Process of Development

### Naming the QEP Director

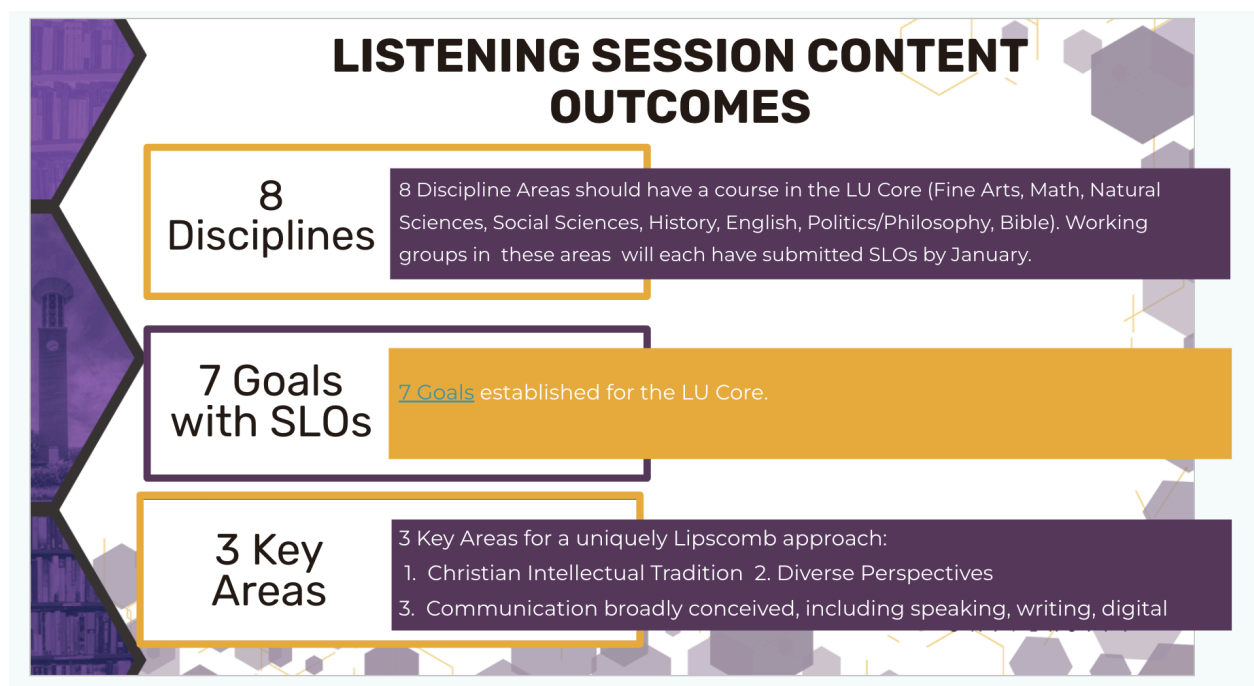
The QEP was developed within a process of developing a new Lipscomb Core Curriculum. In the Spring of 2022, the Provost of Lipscomb University named a small Task Force charged with designing a Liberal Arts Core Curriculum that would supersede the current General Education Program. In the Spring of 2023, Provost Shewmaker asked Brandi Kellett to serve as the Director of the QEP. A faculty member newly promoted to administrative roles, Dr. Kellett was uniquely positioned to understand and represent faculty opinions, while also having spent countless hours in the work of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the sunseting General Education Program. Moreover, as the Chair of the English and Modern Languages Department, Associate Director of General Education and Lead Faculty of the First Year Experience class, Dr. Kellett had a deep understanding of what students needed, how the curriculum could meaningfully respond, and how to design an assessment strategy that would lead to continuous improvement.



## Listening Sessions

In the Winter of 2022-23, the Provost and Liberal Arts Core Task Force hosted **7 Listening Sessions attended by 179 faculty members**. In the sessions, several key investment areas were identified. Common statements arose across each session, and many concerns centered on the need for improved student writing, communication and critical thinking skills. Faculty expressed a sense of disappointment in their students' ability to write effective academic or professional prose. Many faculty doubted the ability of students to engage equitably in a group task or to sustain a meaningful exchange of ideas outside of a texting platform. They raised telling statistics revealing employers who need excellent and agile communicators, while also sharing concern that our students need to demonstrate the ability to consider the accuracy of a source while also reflecting on the bias they might find within themselves and in their communities. Moreover, they shared concerns about student preference for digital communication across digital platforms, unaccompanied by sustained thinking, the vetting of sources, or other human to human contact. Other areas of interest and concern for faculty included expanding the integration of the Christian Intellectual tradition, elevating exposure to diverse perspectives, and strengthening our First Year Experience class (called Lipscomb Experience).

As shown here in *Figure 6*, the Listening Sessions produced consensual opinions that would eventually shape the Lipscomb Core and QEP. With that information, the Liberal Arts Task Force named 8 disciplines that should be represented, along with 3 key areas of integration that needed a higher level of investment. From these, 7 Core Goals were developed and the three key areas shaped the QEP options for a faculty vote in August of 2023.



*Figure 6*

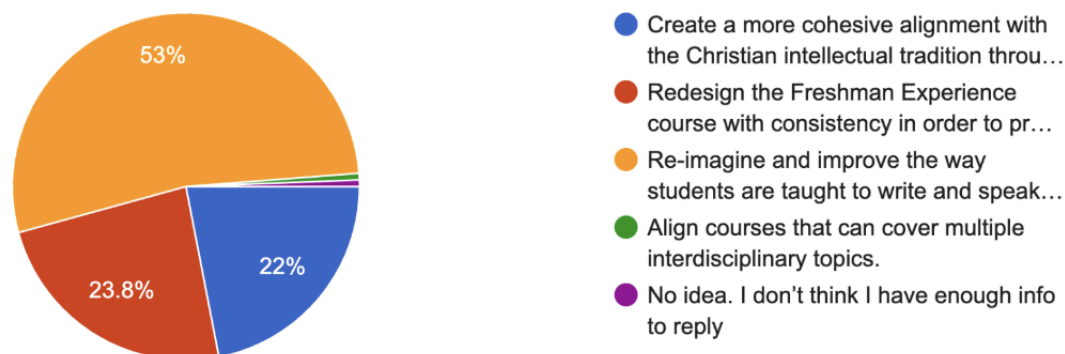
## Vote

On August 11th, 2023 at the Opening Faculty Meeting for the 2023-2024 School Year, the Provost introduced the QEP Process, Director, and timeline. We also named 3 possible areas for the QEP to center. After presenting the 3 possible topics with a small justification for why each area could be fruitful if time and energy were invested, faculty were invited to take a survey where they could share their thoughts. **It is important to note that over seven listening sessions and additional discussions, these three areas were identified by faculty as arenas requiring sustained improvement and supported growth.** Faculty were assured that the Lipscomb Core would advance reform in each of these areas. Here is a summary of what the QEP Director shared at the faculty meeting, along with the feedback received from the 167 faculty who voted. *Figure 7* shows the mechanism used for voting, as well as the outcome.

## August 2023

In your view, what area of the core curriculum needs the most investment and revision to better support our students?

164 responses



*Figure 7*

*At the Opening Faculty meeting on August 11, 2023, the majority of faculty chose Composition and Communications as the QEP topic.*

### Rhetorical Arts Course Sequence Focus:

- Faculty from each distinct college consistently raise their concerns that students need better writing, speaking and critical thinking skills.
- Reading, writing, thinking and speaking persuasively and precisely are foundational skills for an education grounded in the liberal arts and designed to serve diverse people well.
- Rhetorical skills are transferable, key to sharing meaning making, problem solving and building consensus

across lines of difference.

- Our Communications and Writing Programs have no full time faculty dedicated to curricular expertise, design and delivery.
- Our students are exposed to forms of media our current system does not fully engage, and we need to equip them to write and speak in every context with informed and persuasive choices.
- The QEP process can help equip students for the world they will soon enter.
- *Received 53% of the vote as the highest priority area for investment.*

#### **Freshman Experience Course Focus:**

- Subject of frequent debates across faculty lines around purpose, effectiveness and impact of course
- Has been tweaked and reimagined frequently but is not currently staffed only with full-time faculty
- Is it a college orientation class, a get to know new friends class, the gateway to General Education class, an introduction to critical thinking and scholarship, or something else altogether?
- High return in that it is the Gateway course to the Liberal Arts Core and Lipscomb in general.
- These are questions faculty have raised, and the QEP process can help answer them.
- *Received 24% of the vote as the highest priority area for investment.*

#### **Christian Intellectual Tradition Focus:**

- In many listening sessions we heard faculty say they want to freely integrate their faith into their work, and to help students know that their understanding of faith, intellect and tradition need not live only in the college of Bible.
- Many are passionate about graduating students who have a firm foundation of Christian writers and thinkers who inspired ideas and movements that still shape us today.
- We want to tether our understanding of the Liberal Arts in the rich Christian intellectual tradition from which we grew and into which we add our own contributions.
- The QEP could empower us to reconsider how students understand and add to our robust tradition of faith-informed intellect as they learn about and build on this tradition.
- *Received 22% of the vote as the highest priority area for investment.*

#### **Topic Announcement for the Faculty Meeting**

Faculty also voted to Name the QEP. A QR Code was sent through the Provost's Office and projected with an announcement at a Faculty meeting (*See Appendix E*). Dr. Autumn Marshall suggested Power of Words, and the QEP Working Group quickly adopted this language for the sequence. Over the next 12 months, the name was expanded to Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS).

## Naming the Working team and Advisory Board

A topic in hand, the Director quickly decided on the following structure for Faculty input and oversight:

A small group of academics with area expertise would meet and serve as a Working Group (and the QEP Committee). *See Figure 8 for a Faculty list of Working Group members.*

A larger, more diverse Advisory Board (*See Figure 8*) was then named and asked to serve in an advisory capacity. This group had representatives from each college on campus. The Advisory Group had the following charge:

1. Meet twice in the Spring of 2024 to review the QEP decision, reflect on the impact in one’s area, and offer critiques and suggestions.
2. Meet twice in the Fall of 2024 to review final design choices and assessment strategies.
3. Proof read the QEP Draft in the early winter of 2024
4. Answer questions and serve as ambassadors for the program

<b>Rhetoric Area Specialists (QEP Working Group)</b>	<b>Advisory Board/Steering Committee</b>
Sarah Gibson, Professor (21st Century Communication, New Media & Digital Literacy)	David Holmes (Ex Officio)
Jim Thomas, Retired Professor (Classic Communication)	Mark Jobe (Business (Budget help))
Scott Bledsoe, Assistant Professor (Law, Justice & Society, Engaged Citizenship & Civil Discourse)	Susan Hammond (Engineering)
Jan Harris, Professor (Composition and Rhetoric & Creative Writing)*	Roletha Pillow (Health Sciences)
Megan Parker Peters, Professor (Education & Assessments)	John Thompson (CEA)
Brandi Kellett, Associate Professor (Director; Literature)	Jules LeFort (Library)**
<i>*In May 2024, Dr. Harris replaced Dana Carpenter, Professor (Classic Composition and Creative Writing)</i>	Lauren White (Bible)
	Richard Goode (CLAS)
	Candace Williams (Student Life)
	Hope Nordstrom (Administration)
	<i>**Jules LeFort left the University in May 2024</i>

Figure 8

## Meeting Workflow

The QEP Working Group met several times in the late fall of 2023. In Lieu of meeting over the winter holiday season, the Director assigned 3 tasks for each member:

1. Peruse attached academic articles in order to deepen a shared sense of rhetorical studies and the disciplines of Communication and Composition
2. Explore key signature programs to review their course design and pedagogy vis a vis communication and composition. Members were also encouraged to add their own programs to our list of peer institutions.
3. Enter ideas and resonance in a shared google doc.

*See Appendix F for a process update of the QEP Working Group's workflow, sent to Lipscomb University's SACSCOC Liaison.*

From late January to early May of 2024, the QEP Working Group met every 2 to 3 weeks.

They often met in smaller disciplinary teams and then reported their findings and decisions to the Working Group. Here are the deadlines and the decisions they made.





April  
2024

**April 2024:** Both areas drafted a set of skills students in their class should develop, and the Working Group saw possible alignment and discussed orienting the course around a shared set of skills. *See Appendix H for a working document used to produce a common list of skills shared across the sequence.* These skills are shared between POWERS courses; the final list will be shared later in the report.

Key Assignments were named and a shared set of skills, united under 6 headings, was drafted. The Crossover assignment was drafted and chosen to be the central artifact for our assessment of student growth.

May  
2024

**May 2024:** The QEP Director revised the list of diverse skills to fall under 5 Skill Headings. Target demonstrations of these skills were identified and approved at the QEP Working Group meeting before the Working Group Assessment Expert drafted rubrics.

The Director met with every Department Chair to share the POWERS Design and assess the possibility of the preferred sequence delivery method. The QEP Advisory Group convened for a 2 hour meeting where SLOs, Area Assignments, the Crossover assignment, and sequence skills were discussed and critiqued. The Director met with the Registrar's team to complete a feasibility study of offering the POWERS as co-requisite courses in the first 3 semesters of college.

July  
2024

**July 2024:** Assessment Expert submitted a Composition Rubric and a Communication Rubric to the Director, who approved the draft and agreed to share it with the Working Group in August. The Composition Crossover assignment was drafted and shared with the Communication experts, who drafted their Crossover assignment as well. The Director submitted a budget draft to the Provost's office.

Aug.  
2024

**August 2024:** The QEP Working Group revised Rubrics and both sides of the Crossover Assignment.

Sept.  
2024

**September 2024:** The QEP Working Group agreed upon required texts and the use of portfolios, a High Impact Practice for student learning. The scope of assignments, name of POWERS courses, Crossover assignments and rubrics were revised.

The QEP Director presented best practices for teaching rhetoric across the disciplines at the Faculty Research Day, and heard positive feedback from students and faculty alike. The QEP Director and Provost met with the CFO to discuss the QEP Budget. The QEP Director met with University Marketing to discuss the report layout and logo.

Oct.  
2024

**October 2024:** The QEP Budget and hiring plan were confirmed, and the Director met with the Academic Leadership Team, the Undergraduate Academic Committee, and a full faculty meeting in order to share the design and request feedback on perceived strengths and weaknesses. The SLOs, readings and three key elements of the Crossover Assignment and distinct rubrics were revised; the assessment strategy was approved.

The QEP Director met with students currently enrolled in University Writing in order to describe POWERS and solicit student feedback. After meeting with marketing for assistance in formatting the report, the QEP Director revised the report in order to share it with the Working Group and SACSCOC Team for feedback.

Nov.  
2024

**November 2024:** The QEP Director presented POWERS to the Lipscomb University Board of Directors, the Academic Life Board Committee, 4 students classes, and the Board of Trustees. Additionally, all Admissions and Advising staff were trained on the distinctives of POWERS and were given clarity on possible transfer and dual enrollment scenarios. The QEP Advisory and Working Groups read and revised the report.

Dec.  
2024

**December 2024:** The Revised QEP Report was submitted to the Provost and President for final approval, and then finalized.

Jan.  
2024

**January 2025:** The QEP Report was submitted.

# University Wide Collaboration and Broad Based Support

## Student Involvement

Students were consulted informally throughout the process, with their feedback and experience considered in our decisions. In November 2023, The QEP Director was invited to present an update and lead a discussion of student leaders serving on the Presidential Student Advisory Council. The idea of a two course sequence reimagining the teaching and use of rhetoric across diverse modalities was presented and discussed. QEP Course Sequence names were then presented, and students voted and then offered verbal feedback on what they liked or didn't like. *See Figure 9 for slides from that meeting.*



Figure 9

In September of 2024, Dr. Kellett shared the POWERS purpose and design with dozens of students during Faculty Research Day (*See Figure 11*). In November of 2024, Dr. Kellett visited 4 student classes (speaking to 80 students) to share the philosophical and pedagogical approaches of the QEP. Students engaged with the course design, assignments, skills and SLOs, offering their critique and feedback in order to strengthen the course design and relevancy. Students offered enthusiastic responses to the Five Skills that will be centered in both courses, in addition to resonating with the 3 elements of the Crossover Assignment and the intentional development of practical and transferable rhetorical skills. This important step complies with SACSCOC QEP expectations of centering student support while also keeping students informed and engaged in the development process.

## Faculty Guidance

The faculty were involved in every step of the QEP process from its inception. In 2022 and 2023, 179 Faculty members attended 7 Listening Sessions where they shared their concerns about student deficits and ideas for

**QEP**

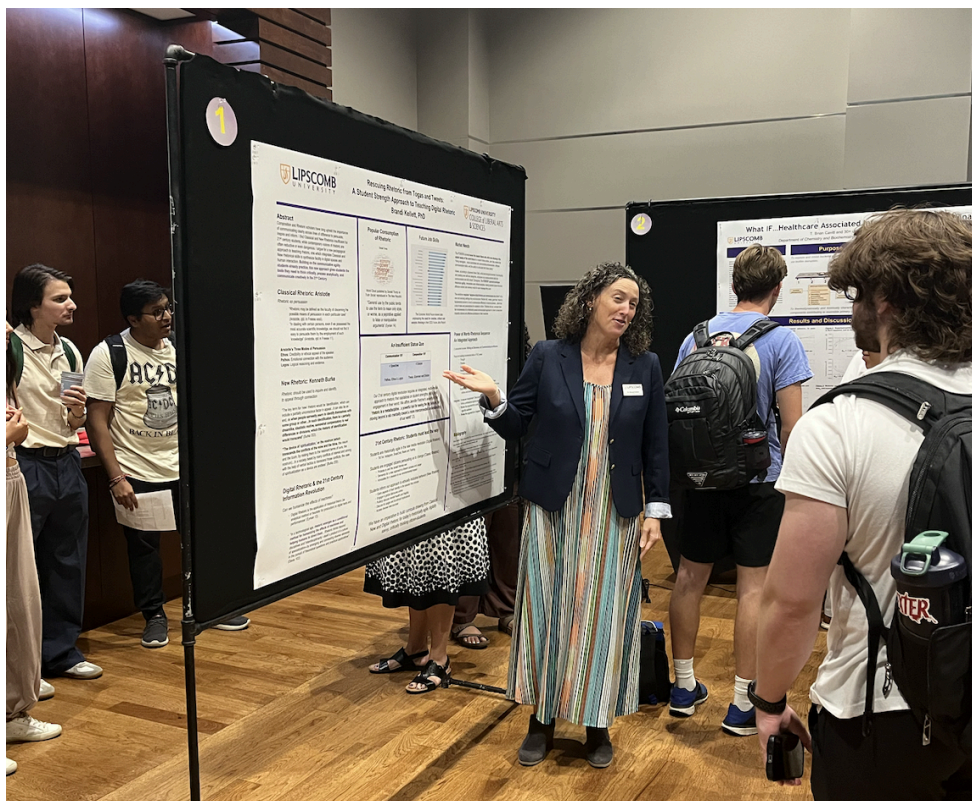
The QEP Working Group is nearly done building its course design and is proud to share that our QEP will be called the **Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence: Writing as Discovery and Communicating to Influence**. These two courses will replace University Writing and Introduction to Communications and will be offered concurrently to students in their first two years at Lipscomb. Dr. Kellett has met with and reviewed degree plans with every department chair. Students will develop skills for writing, speaking, and digital communication in both courses. In doing so, they will learn that every communicative act requires them to think, make structural choices, consider their audience, contextualize solid research, and revise or polish their work. Dr. Kellett presented the theoretical approach at Faculty Research Day and to the Academic Leadership Team and will share this progress at the upcoming faculty meeting.

Figure 10



student growth as Faculty. Faculty were invited to respond to the importance of the three areas identified as candidates for the QEP, and then voted overwhelmingly for the Reimagining Rhetoric option. They were then invited to submit name choices. Since the development of the Lipscomb Core Curriculum occurred simultaneously, faculty were updated on the progress of the QEP while attending workshops and update meetings for the Lipscomb Core. Through 2024, Faculty were regularly updated in Faculty meetings, Provost Newsletters, and through liaisons on the Working or Advisory Groups. Faculty were frequently invited to meet with the Director to share ideas. Dr. Kellett presented QEP updates and requested faculty feedback at one Faculty meeting in 2023, and 4 Faculty meetings in 2024. *See Appendix I for a sample of a Faculty Announcement through which they were updated on the progress of the QEP in April of 2024. See Figure 10 for a sample of a Provost Newsletter QEP Update.*

In September of 2024, Dr. Kellett presented a poster at Faculty Research Day showcasing the research that led to the development of POWERS. Her research justifies the pedagogical approach of the Rhetorical Sequence as utilizing Classical, New and Digital Rhetorics to enhance skills students already possess. Recognizing and centering student strengths, POWERS will provide a firm foundation for students so they begin to demonstrate proficiency in thinking, process, audience, research and revision and polishing skills for every rhetorical act. Dr. Kellett's research was enthusiastically received by students and faculty alike. *See Appendix J for a copy of the poster presentation. See Figure 11 for a picture of Dr. Kellett speaking with students and faculty at Faculty Research Day.*



*Figure 11*

In October of 2024, Dr. Kellett presented the POWERS approach to the Undergraduate Academic Committee, and the Academic Leadership Team. In October, Dr. Kellett presented the sequence design at the full faculty meeting, in addition to updating the University community through monthly Provost newsletters. On November 1 and 2, 2024, at the invitation of the President, Dr. Kellett presented the QEP course design to the Academic Life Committee of the Board of Trustees, and then to the full Board of Trustees at Lipscomb University. In each meeting, the Director shared a brief overview of student need, faculty input, sequence parameters, assessment design and workplace alignment. The constituencies of each body were given time and space to give feedback, ask questions, critique and encourage the process. In both the longer Academic Life Committee and the full Board of Trustees meetings, members articulated support for POWERS based on their precise expertise and sectors of work. They commented that the design addressed the problem of silos in education, building on student communication strengths while helping them to develop transferable skills. Informing these key stakeholders and ensuring their specific support was an important aspect of aligning the QEP with SACSCOC expectations. The feedback from each session was recorded and shared with the QEP Working Group, who revised and improved the design and rollout of POWERS so that it reflected the best ideas from every area of Lipscomb University.

On November 8, 2024, the Provost of Lipscomb University invited Dr. Kellett to speak to over 50 retired faculty during Lipscomb's Homecoming, "Bisons Weekend." Dr. Kellett shared key elements of both the new Lipscomb Core Curriculum and of the QEP. Retired Faculty responded enthusiastically to this innovative approach, and confirmed the need to transform the development of rhetorical skills in students.

In November, 2024, Sarah Gibson, the Director of the School of Communications and QEP Working Group member, shared the POWERS key assignments and SLOs with current Communications faculty. In December, 2024, the QEP Director held a Zoom meeting with all current University Writing faculty in order to share an overview of the POWERS. **In both meetings, robust conversations occurred, where faculty shared their endorsements of the Crossover assignment and the teaching of Five Key Rhetorical Skills.** Although apprehensive about any change, faculty were invited to continue to strengthen the course design in the Spring of 2025 and they felt supported by the robust Faculty Trainings scheduled for May.

## Departmental Consultations

In the late Spring of 2024, the QEP Director reached out to every Dean at Lipscomb University to request permission to meet with the Chair of each department in order to share the vision of the QEP and to discuss how the Committee hoped to offer the POWERS. In May and June of 2024, the Director held dozens of meetings, both one on one and at the College level, in order to share details of the pedagogical approach of the sequence and to discuss the practical need to offer the involved courses as corequisites. In doing so, Chairs, representing their faculty, shared areas of resonance, offered critiques, and mostly enthusiastically joined in the process of creating a POWERS that would advance the flourishing, academic, and human successes of our students. **The outcome of these meetings provided universal endorsement of the POWERS approach, with important elements strengthened and named. These**

meetings allowed the Director to ensure that Undergraduate departments on campus were consulted in the process of improving and implementing the QEP. Communicating faculty endorsements, each Chair understood why the courses should be taken together, and were willing to work with the QEP Director to make that a reality. Moreover, every degree plan in each Department was studied so Chairs could name the best semester for their students to take the POWERS. *Figure 12* shows a summary of those conversations and the implications on the feasibility of successfully building schedules that include POWERS.

<b>Power of Words Degree Plan Alignment</b>					
	<b>Mtg Date</b>	<b>Schedule Pref.</b>	<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Ave. annual stud. #</b>	<b>Best Semester</b>
<b>Health Science</b>					
Autumn Marshall (Nutrition)	5/7	F2	Approved	14	2
Matthew Ruiz (Kinesiology)	5/7	F1 or F2	Approved	20	2
Chelsia Harris (Nursing)	5/7	F2	Approved	60	2
<b>CEA</b>					
Jenny Snodgrass (Music)	5/2 and 5/9	F2 or S2	Approved	40	2
Beki Baker (Theater)	5/2	F2	Approved	12	2
Rocky Horton (Art)	5/2	F2	Approved	12	2
Mike Meredith (Animation)	5/2 and 5/7	S1	Approved	25	3
Melissa Forte (Film)	5/2	F2	Approved	20	2
<b>Business</b>					
Jeff Jewel (Finance/Accounting)	5/7	F1	Approved	40	1, 3
Allison Duke (Management)	5/7	F1	Approved	26	1, 3
Rebecca Burcham (marketing/entre)	5/7	F1	Approved	33	1, 3
Jacob Arthur (Data Science/analytics)	5/7	F1	Approved	6	1, 3
<b>CLAS</b>					

Becky Clark (social work)	5/9	F2	Approved	8	2
Marc Schwerdt (Hist/Pol/Philosophy)	5/14	F2	Approved	15	2
Sarah Gibson (PR, Journalism, Media/Adver)	5/15	F1 F2	Approved	20	1
Randy Bybee (Physics)	5/8	F1 F2	Approved	5	1
Gary Hall (Math)	5/8	F2	Approved	12	2
Douglas Ribeiro (Counseling/Psych)	5/14	F2 or S1	Approved	35	1
Jon Lowrance (Biology +)	5/14	F2 or S1	Approved	70	1
Stephen Opoku-Duah (Chemistry +)	5/21	S2 or F2	Approved	7	2, 4
Brandi Kellett (EML)	5/9	F2 and F1	Approved	15	2
<b>Education</b>					
Leslie Cowell (Education+)	6/4	F2	Approved	52	2
<b>Bible</b>					
JP Conway (Bible, Worship +)	5/13	F1 or F2	Approved	25	1,3
<b>Engineering</b>					
Software Engineering/Computer Science	5/20-21	F2	Approved	13	2
Mech, Civil, Computing/Electrical		Eng no sequence, only Writing	Substitution Approved	42	2
<b>Leadership &amp; Public Service</b>					
Kimberly McCall (Law, Justice, Society; Urban)	5/15	F1	Approved	30	1, 3
<b>Fall Semester Seats</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>Writing</b>	16 Total	12 on ground, 2	

			Sect:	sync online, 3 async	
<b>Spring Semester Seats</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>Communication</b>	16 Total Sect:	12 on ground, 2 sync online, 3 async	

Figure 12

## Staff Updates

In January of 2024, The QEP Director began meeting with a newly convened First Year Experience team with representatives from Admissions, Advising and Student Life. These meetings included but were not restricted to curricular discussions that might help advance student flourishing, including the purpose and vision of the QEP. In March of 2024, the QEP Director was invited to speak at a Staff Luncheon in the library where she explained the sunsetting General Education program, the hope for the new Liberal Arts Core Curriculum and the purpose and parameters of the QEP. Staff engaged, asked questions and shared positive feedback at that meeting. Here is an excerpted handout given to Staff. [See Appendix K for the handouts shared at the Staff Luncheon.](#)

In October of 2024, the QEP Director collaborated with teams representing Admissions, transfer students, Duel Enrollment directors, Advising and Academic Success Coaches. The POWERS design was shared with each team, including the approach, SLOs, and key assignments, and skills students would develop. Collaborators were encouraged to share concerns, to ask questions, to give encouragement, and to critique all aspects of the sequence. **Staff members shared support for the innovative elements of POWERS, and suggested prospective students would resonate with these linked courses designed to develop their rhetorical agility.** Gaining this broad based support has been a key component of the QEP development process. Both Admissions and Academic Success requested that the Director train their staff directly in November (Admissions) and April (Academic Success) in order to answer questions and ensure a cohesive launch of the program. [Appendix L shows some of the handouts that were developed for these meetings, including a Lipscomb Core Overview and a Distinctively Lipscomb Sheet.](#)

## Registrar Collaboration

In May of 2024, The QEP Director met with a team from the Registrar's office in order to disclose the findings for the scheduling needs of every department and to share the vision and purpose of the QEP, its outcomes, design and hoped-for-sequence. **Because Chair approval had been granted and each Department had been consulted, this meeting was quite productive.** The Registrar shared the number of majors in every department, and the Director then worked to ensure an equitable offering of POWERS seats in both semesters. In order to maintain a consistent faculty load, the section numbers must be balanced in the fall and spring. This plan was confirmed as feasible.

## Finance Meetings

In September of 2024, the Provost and Director of the QEP met with the Senior Vice President for Finance and Technology of Lipscomb University to share the QEP Budget. A pre-reading packet summarized the justification for and impact of POWERS on the experience of students, in addition to establishing the benefit to students in preparing them for the workforce. A productive dialogue ensued, and it was established that funding the QEP addressed other needs established by our internal Program Review and Faculty load assessments. Documentation was provided to establish the positive universal impact of funding the QEP Budget:

1. QEP and SACSCOC guidelines require dedicated funding for the QEP report to pass and for our accreditation to be secured.
2. Internal audits for SACSCOC and for internal assessments demonstrate that the 2 highest faculty need areas are Composition and Communications. A majority of sections in both areas are currently taught by adjuncts. Hiring in these areas is needed both for accreditation and for the successful launch of the new Lipscomb Core.
3. In independent Program Reviews, the Provost's office and President agreed that Composition and Communication would list 2 new Faculty Hires in the near future. **This decision demonstrates the need addressed by the QEP is a high priority based on our internal metrics and aligned with institutional planning processes.**

## Board of Trustees Engagement

On November 1, 2024, the Provost of Lipscomb University convened the Academic Life Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University. The agenda included a key and extensive discussion with Dr. Kellett and the QEP. Dr. Kellett shared the process through which the faculty chose the QEP topic, sharing an analysis of the needs revealed by the digital revolution of the 21st century and the needs of the market. The Committee learned about the five key skills, the Crossover assignment, the extra-curricular opportunities, and the assessment plan. **During the discussion that ensued, Board members shared great enthusiasm about the relevance of the course design, content and student learning outcomes. Academic administrators and attorneys conveyed their resonance with the transferable skills POWERS will develop in students.**

On November 2, 2024 the President of Lipscomb University invited Dr. Kellett to present distinctive elements of the QEP to the full Board of Trustees of the University. *Figure 13 captures an image of this presentation.* The QEP Director offered a high level overview of the POWERS program, and then requested feedback, critique and questions. Board members inquired about the topics covered in the Crossover assignment and the reception of students. **Company Executives and political leaders offered their deep support and encouragement for POWERS, and shared a desire to support the development of extra-curricular activities.**

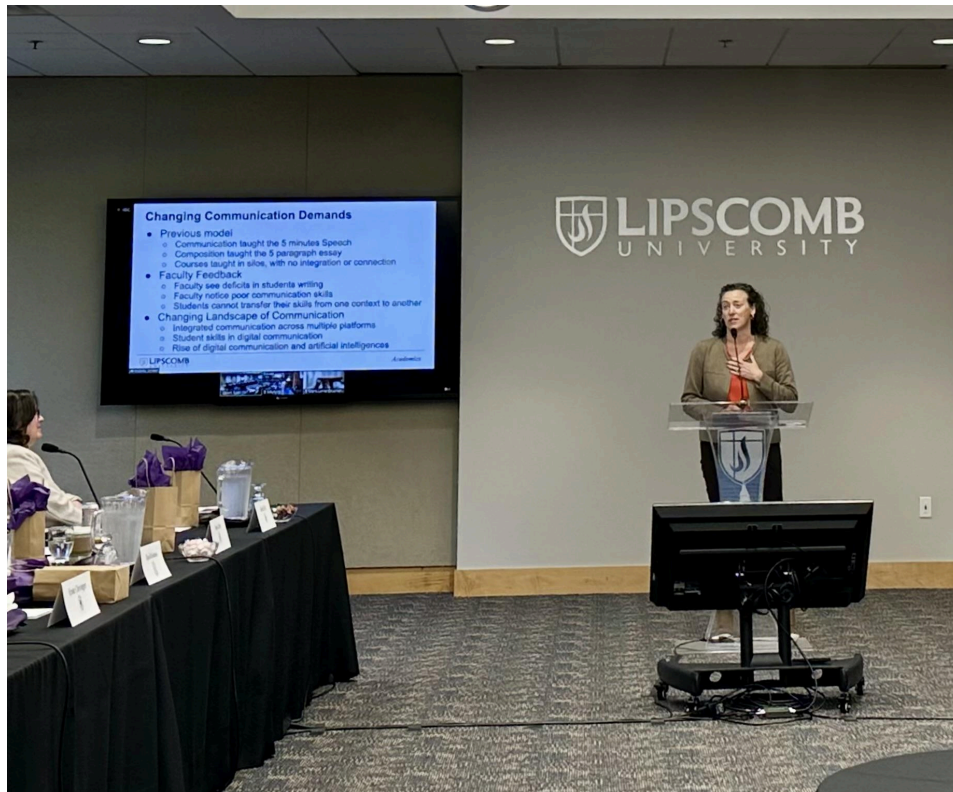


Figure 13

# Proposal Purpose and Objectives

## Course Name

The Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS)

Writing to Discover (LU1013)

Communicating to Influence (LU1023)

## Course Logo



Figure 14

## Sequence Description

In their first two years at Lipscomb, students will take a sequence of connected courses called the Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS). In these two classes, students will be grounded in the classical study of rhetoric and then learn to craft compelling stories and arguments for diverse audiences using a variety of methods while utilizing five communicative skills. Students will consider many perspectives and types of media as they learn to communicate ethically and persuasively using effective strategies to share their ideas with others in unique ways.

## POWERS Student Learning Outcomes

### Writing to Discover SLOs

Learners will be able to:

- Practice writing as an inquiry-driven, audience-centered process of drafting and revising.
- Develop a central claim in an organized structure using effective writing strategies.
- Engage with texts from multiple perspectives, evaluate and contextualize appropriate evidence, and correctly cite reliable sources.

### Communicating to Influence SLOs

Learners will be able to:

- Apply classical rhetorical strategies effectively for a specific audience.
- Create polished, persuasive and informative messages that can be adapted for a variety of mediums.
- Evaluate the ethical application of rhetorical communication techniques, and apply them in a new media platform.

## POWERS Skills to Acquire

**Thinking Skills:** Critical Thinking, Clarity, Context

**Process Skills:** Structure, Style, Voice, Logos

**Audience Skills:** Audience, Pathos, Ethos

**Research Skills:** Research, Diverse Perspectives, Citation, Context

**Revision and Polish Skills:** Grammar, Cohesion, Responsive to Impact

*See Appendix M for a list of targeted proficiencies linked to skills students will demonstrate in a written paper, a speech or a digital platform.*

## POWERS Delivery Cadence

POWERS consists of two courses: Writing to Discover and Communicating to Influence. Each semester, these courses will be co-listed, and students will take them concurrently in their first 4 semesters.



Exceptions will be made for students who enroll at Lipscomb with Dual Enrollment or Transfer credit:

- Students who transfer into Lipscomb with their General Education requirements satisfied will not take POWERS.
- Any student who has taken college level Composition 1 & 2 only will not take POWERS, but will take Communicating: Rhetorical Techniques (CO1223).
- Any student who has taken college level Communication will not take POWERS, but will take Writing: Rhetorical Techniques (EN1223).

These courses will support students to demonstrate learning outcomes in the needed discipline, while also teaching the Crossover Assignment within the course. Because skills are shared across the Sequence, all POWERS skills will be taught and practiced, while the course outcomes the student needs will be privileged. [\*See Appendix N for transfer credit information.\*](#)

## POWERS Scope of Assignments

### Course Readings

All students will examine the written and spoken words of three required rhetorical exemplars.

- Aristotle
- Martin Luther King, Jr
- Malala Yousafzai

Professors will be given a list of other recommended writers, thinkers and speakers from which they may assign further reading, writing or presenting activities

### Assignments for Writing to Discover

1. Formative assignments: Short, rhetorical and critical analyses of professional, popular, artificially generated, and peer reviewed articles
2. A personal narrative or story
3. **Crossover Assignment Part 1:** An argumentative professional essay that responds to a social question/position (utilizing published, observational or people research)
4. A scholarly analysis (using research and intentional, guided usage of AI)

*\*Summative Portfolio and Reflection Essay on civil discourse: Evaluate and analyze the process of discomfort, curiosity, critical rethinking, and learning to influence diverse audiences using distinct modalities.*

[\*See Appendix O for Crossover Assignment Part 1.\*](#)

### Assignments for Communicating to Influence

1. Formative Assignments: Short rhetorical analyses of speeches, advertisements, influencers, and social media campaigns
2. An Informative Speech and Outline
  - o Rewrite key concepts for X, Tiktok, Reels, or Slides for Instagram
3. **Crossover Assignment Part 2:** Transform written essay into a Persuasive Speech (with outline and visual element)
4. **Crossover Assignment Part 3:** Condense your Speech into a persuasive social media post that targets a specific organization's audience

*\*Summative Portfolio of Student Pieces.*

*See Appendix P for Crossover Assignment Parts 2 and 3*

## POWERS Extra-Curricular Events

Although POWERS is designed with a co-curricular academic focus, we know that student learning is expanded through transformative experiences outside the classroom. No matter what semester our students take POWERS, they will be invited to demonstrate the importance of their learning through practicing and appreciating these skills outside the classroom. The following describes POWERS Events for all students:

*Fall Semester:*

Event: Host a speaker/podcast/interview with those who engage in public discourse and civic engagement in a meaningful way.

Student submission: The best piece of professional writing from POWERS is submitted for publication in a major outlet, curated by a professional writer or journalist (from on campus publications to the *Tennessean* or *New York Times*, possibly)

*Spring Semester:*

Event and Student Submission: Power of Words: Rhetorical Sequence Panel in Lipscomb's Student Scholars Symposium where best presentations or papers are showcased.

# Assessment Strategy

## POWERS Faculty Training

All good and productive assessment begins with training. The success of the POWERS will be determined by the quality of faculty and the training they receive, and it will be sustained through a commitment to continuous improvement and meaningful assessment. Before the sequence is launched in August 2025, all POWERS professors will be required to attend a full day and a half training session on May 13 and 14, followed by a half day training in early August, 2025. Each faculty member of the POWERS team will be trained in best practices in skill building,







assignment scaffolding, and equitable assessment. Faculty will be provided with a digital Resource Folder with classroom activities, sample assignments, a shared rhetorical lexicon, and student engagement strategies. *See Figure 16 for areas of professional development for faculty.*

Teaching Practice	POWERS Design	Cohesion around 5 Skill Categories	Crossover Assignment	Assessment Strategy
The Basics of transferable skills	Course curricular maps	Critical thinking	Scope and Parameters of Design	Establish Inter-rater Reliability with rubrics
Centering student rhetorical strengths	Scope of assignments: the why and what	Intentional processing	Understanding 3 iterations	Criterion referenced grading
Portfolio Building	Sequence cohesion and professor autonomy	Centering an audience	Exploring the topics for best guidance	Using rubrics effectively
Formative Assessments	Engaging required course readings	Contextualizing vetted research	Empowering student learning using 5 skills	Reporting student growth with our assessment strategy
How to approach and utilize AI to empower ethical efficiencies	Understanding the POWERS extra-curricular activities	Revising and polishing our work	Encouraging reflection after the fact	Continuous Improvement Plan based on data

Figure 16

## POWERS Crossover Assignment

### POWER-Up: Public Discourse Reimagined

 Part 1: Argumentative Essay	 3 Modalities
 Part 2: Persuasive Speech	 3 Audiences
 Part 3: Social Media Post	 1 Idea

WRITING  COMMUNICATING

Figure 17

The assessment strategy to measure student growth in the QEP centers on the Crossover Assignment. The Crossover Assignment is designed to help students practice each of the skill areas upon which this program focuses. Students will craft an argument utilizing research, and then expand their thinking by incorporating additional sources of research in order to craft and revise an effective digital communication.

### Assignment Topics

Students will begin the Crossover assignment in their Writing to Discover class, while the latter iterations will be crafted in the Communicating to Influence course. Students will choose a topic from among the following options:

1. What type of artistry or creative medium is experiencing a renaissance at the moment?
2. Given increased diagnoses of mental health disorders, how can universities support students' wellbeing and academic success?
3. Should professional sports teams be required to invest in youth sports, expanding access to their sport in the community that supports them?
4. Does our political system serve most Americans or is it failing?
5. What strategies could be most effective in increasing available and affordable housing in a specific city of your choosing?
6. Is travel outside the US necessary to help people become productive citizens?
7. How will Artificial Intelligence enhance or detract from the career path most interesting to you?
8. Under what circumstances could a community be allowed to ban books from a local school or library?
9. Should people have to pay for their own housing beginning at age 23?
10. How should religious diversity be accommodated by a church affiliated university?
11. How should one navigate perceived conflicts or conflicts of interest between your faith and career path?  
(Your approach should reflect your area of study.)
12. What role should forgiveness play in the American criminal justice system?

### Assignment Iterations

- Writing to Discover, 1st 8 weeks: An argumentative, professional essay to an informed citizenry.
- Communicating to Influence, 2nd 8 weeks: Radically revise the argumentative essay into a speech to a specified audience with visual elements (and expanded research).
- Final Iteration: Revise the speech to create a social media campaign targeting a specific agency or institution.

## POWERS Rubrics

The assessment strategy is rooted in three distinct rubrics that are built from the five shared skill sets. **The theoretical approach of POWERS states that every rhetorical act should demonstrate skill in critical thinking, process and structure, awareness of audience, utilization of research, and the revision and polish of the argument.** As previously stated, faculty will be trained in how to use each rubric, and exemplar essays will be graded in training so that equitable norms are established through inter-rator reliability using rubrics.

Aligning each rubric with these five skills helps students understand the transferable nature of these skills, leading them to become rhetorically agile in diverse settings. *See Appendices Q, R, S for the Writing Rubric, the Speech Rubric, and the Digital Media Rubric.*

## Collection and Analysis of Data

POWERS is designed to advance and support student learning in order to demonstrate skills shared across the sequence. These skills will be assessed and demonstrated in the three submissions of the Crossover Assignment. Every professor will be trained in best grading practices at the May POWERS Faculty Workshop in order to use the shared rubrics effectively.

With oversight provided by the QEP Director (Dr. Kellett), in coordination with the QEP assessment expert (Dr. Parker Peters) and the Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (Dr. Morrow), rubrics will be loaded into the Canvas courses of POWERS: Writing to Discover and Communicating to Influence. Having been trained over two days in May, faculty will grade the 3 parts of the Crossover assignment using these embedded rubrics. Upon course completion in December and May of each year, rubric data will be uploaded from Canvas. The QEP Director and Lead Faculty members will collect and analyze rubric data annually to assess the successes and failures in students' ability to demonstrate learning. The POWERS Assessment goal is that 80% of students in each class score 3 (Proficient) or higher on each segment of the Crossover Assignment.

In order to provide student opinions in the ongoing development of faculty training, each semester, students will be surveyed about their experience of the course and the efficacy of key elements of the course design. Students will be asked to share about their learning in the five key skill areas, the accessibility and relevance of the extracurricular elements, and the transferable skills utilized in the Crossover Assignment elements. Annually, participating faculty will be surveyed about the efficacy of the May training, reinforcing workshops, and the Crossover Assignment assessments in order to refine and improve the training workshops. The QEP Director, partnering with Lead Faculty, will set faculty training and student growth goals annually based on the Crossover Assignment assessment data and, in an advisory capacity, the qualitative feedback procured through student and faculty surveys. These key faculty are given 6 hour annual course releases to ensure appropriate support for faculty and time for improvement plans to develop. This decision signals the ongoing support and resources needed to appropriately evaluate student learning embedded in the QEP.

## Baseline Scores and Responsive Design

The POWERS Courses will begin in August of 2025, utilizing new assignments, new rubrics, and a new skills-based approach. Collecting Baseline data is difficult because the courses are not yet integrated into the Lipscomb curriculum. However, the QEP Director worked to collect two types of Baseline Data. First, in Year 0, the Office of Institutional Research assessed the ACT English scores of the Freshman Classes entering in 2021, 2022, 2023 and

2024. These scores contain both what a student submitted for admittance and scores they later submitted for writing course placement. Although not a true baseline score, these scores provide data that reveal the deficits in student writing proficiency. As seen here, a growing number of student scores reveal vast room for growth in their English proficiency. *Figure 18* shows this ACT Score data.

Freshman ACT English Scores	ACT Under 20	ACT Between 21-23	ACT Above 24	No Score Submitted before or after admittance
Entering 2021	61	72	289	240
Entering 2022	69	93	288	236
Entering 2023	104	101	257	243
Entering 2024	91	91	291	243

*Figure 18*

A second type of baseline data will be collected in February of 2025 from current writing and communication courses. In three University Writing and Introduction to Communication courses, student papers (University Writing) and student speeches (Introduction to Communication) will be scored using rubrics from the QEP Crossover Assignment. These scores will provide data on student ability to demonstrate rhetorical skills before the POWERS framework is taught. Although limited in number and in the lack of alignment between the assignment and the rubric, this information will provide a useful degree of baseline data revealing the development of rhetorical skills in students in the current siloed approach to the teaching of writing and communication. The QEP Director (Dr. Kellett) and the Chair of the School of Communication (Professor Gibson) will conduct and record these assessments.

Year 0 data will provide this baseline score, while years 1, 2 and 3 are expected to produce distinct improvements in student performance in each discipline of study. The QEP Director and Faculty Leads will use and analyze this data to shape the training agenda in the POWERS Faculty Workshop each May. Annual changes to the curricula, assignments, readings and assessment design will be made when warranted by data collected from rubric scores, and supplementally informed by internal surveys, and interdisciplinary faculty surveys.

## Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Crossover Assignment data will inform the strategy for continuous improvement. **The strategy will be managed by the POWERS Director, with Lead Faculty collaborating to ensure areas are identified for meaningful improvement and precise tactics are developed to support areas of weakness.** The CIP will be shaped by data collected that measures the rhetorical skills students demonstrate in the Crossover Assignment.

As a small but important part of our intention to continuously assess and improve POWERS so that it serves student success effectively, faculty will be surveyed annually to assess student proficiency in the rhetorical and

communicating arts in their degree programs. Perceptions of deficit areas will inform the POWERS Faculty Trainings in May. This is a valued part of our assessment plan because it honors the origins of the QEP. The topic of the QEP was identified by feedback from faculty in every college which identified persistent deficits in student writing and speaking. In order to assess our program meaningfully, we must seek data from faculty across each college in order to assess the demonstration of transferable skills by students within their courses.

## Implementation and Assessment Timeline





areas. QEP Director will confirm the rubric data is extracted from Canvas. QEP Director will build new training modules for May based on feedback.

**May 2026:** Crossover assessment data and student survey data are presented to POWERS faculty. Adjustments are made to Crossover assignments, teaching approach to five skills, and sequence alignment.

**Each May:** Rubric assessment data and student survey data will be presented to POWERS faculty so that adjustments to key skills, assignments and assessment strategies can be made.

## Benefits to Each Constituent

POWERS has been designed to develop our students in meaningful ways. Students are the university's primary constituents, and their growth and demonstration of transferable skills are most important. Lipscomb believes our students will become confident and effective communicators after taking POWERS. Moreover, in developing foundational skills in research and communicating, students will thrive in future classes that require the usage of such skills. This will benefit their growth while also supporting achievement possibilities for each major in every college. Given the skills developed, students will be better equipped to flourish in internships and in the workplace as well. The POWERS skill areas closely align with the highest needs of businesses and industry in the private and public sectors. Perhaps the greatest benefit will be the development of Soft, or Durable Skills in our students. The skill areas will empower them to communicate effectively in diverse settings across multiple platforms. As students analyze rhetorical actors who shape their societies, they will appreciate the power of rhetoric to demonstrate empathy as they encourage various audiences to care for all members of society. Our students will practice reaching across lines of difference to connect and share ideas with diverse audiences, having gained the ability to evaluate sources, to consider their bias, and to approach public discourse with nuance and precision.

# Administrative Structure and Budgets

## Director

The Director of POWERS will be the Director of the QEP. As the Department Chair of the English and Modern Languages department, she has previously directed the Composition program at Lipscomb University. Moreover, she served on the Liberal Arts Core Task Force and as the Associate Director of General Education from 2022-2024, giving her keen insight into the foundation needed for students to thrive in their diverse subject areas. As the QEP Director, she helped craft every element of the plan, providing her with the intimate knowledge needed to successfully direct the POWERS. She will receive a stipend and a 6 hour course release annually for her work in this role. Her duties will include:

- Recruiting and hiring faculty
- Directing and supporting Lead Faculty, supporting those roles until they are filled



- Designing faculty training workshops in May and August
- Managing the collection of assessment data from the rubrics in Canvas
- Designing and issuing surveys each semester for students and POWERS faculty
- Designing and issuing an annual survey across campus to capture faculty assessment of student competencies in communication and writing
- Observe faculty annually and offer professional guidance and feedback
- Develop the extra-curricular events and student submission process each semester

## Lead Faculty in Writing to Discover and Communicating to Influence

The QEP Budget addresses needs already known to the University. Current University Writing and Communications courses are typically taught by adjunct faculty. While these faculty are qualified in their areas and effective in their course delivery, the University recognizes this reality can make course cohesion, assessment strategy, and mission alignment difficult. Given the foundational importance of student writing and communication skills raised by faculty in our initial Listening sessions, budgeting for these positions was already in process before the QEP topic was agreed upon. A cohort of diverse faculty will interview and hire a Lead Faculty in Writing for AY 2025-2026, and a Lead Faculty in Communication will be hired in AY 2026-2027. With terminal degrees in these areas and training or familiarity in both classical and digital rhetoric and communication, these two Lead faculty will collaborate to ensure the POWERS is successful in delivery and assessment. Each Lead Faculty will be tenure track, 10 month faculty, and will have 6 hours of annual course release as they lead POWERS faculty and serve as instructional coaches for their teams. Additionally, by 2028, lecturers will be hired to serve in Composition and in Communication, allowing over 60% of our POWERS sections to be taught by full time faculty.

## Institutional Commitments To Assess

The Lipscomb Impact 360 plan strengthens our institutional commitment to assessment and continuous improvement. Goal 6 articulates a plan to, “Empower and sustain a culture of effectiveness, efficiency, collaboration” across our University community. Lipscomb faculty embrace a culture of assessment, and are proud of the gains taken to grow in this area. In 2023, the General Education Council designed and implemented surveys across all current General Education courses, using the data to assess and improve our stated goals. At the urging of faculty, the General Education Council designed more precise student learning outcomes for general education courses in order to improve cohesion and effectiveness across all courses. In response to assessments, mandatory faculty training sessions were implemented annually in order to provide professional development on assessment strategy at the class level, in addition to elevating areas for growth needed across the program. In alignment with that effort, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) continues to hold regular sessions on assessment strategy, design, responsiveness,

and impact. [See Appendix U for an overview of CTL sessions in 2024-2025.](#) From institution-wide SMART Goals to universal Program Reviews and Continuous Improvement Plans, Lipscomb University is committed to utilizing assessments for meaningful and equitable growth.

As the new Lipscomb Core Curriculum and QEP are implemented beginning in the fall of 2025, our assessment strategy is the bedrock of the program. The Lipscomb Core is connected through program-wide Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These 22 SLOs were developed by a small and disciplinarily diverse committee, following an iterative process which invited feedback and critique from disciplinary experts. [See Appendix V for a summary of the iterative process used.](#) The SLOs were then reviewed and revised by an advisory board that contained assessment experts. Each SLO now has a connected rubric that will be used to train faculty on how to best utilize these rubrics to assess demonstrated student learning and to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of each course and assignment offered in the Lipscomb Core.

Following a similar process, the QEP Working Group included a faculty member and assessment expert from the College of Education who not only helped guide the development of SLOs, but also designed the rubrics used to measure demonstrated growth and achievement by all students. [See Appendix W for a description of Dr. Parker Peters' role and work.](#)

The QEP developed by Lipscomb University is designed to serve students, recognizing their strengths and helping them develop transferable skills that will be useful in their degree programs and in their chosen fields. The following sections demonstrate how POWERS will serve specific groups on Lipscomb's campus and in Nashville, TN.

## To Students

Lipscomb University is committed to student flourishing. The Mission statement, published in the Lipscomb Impact 360 plan, suggests a foundational centering of students: "Mission: We are a Christ-centered community preparing learners for purposeful lives through rigorous academics and transformative experiences." As you can see here, faculty see students as learners preparing for purposeful lives. A review of the last few years reveals several major initiatives designed to improve student wellbeing and occupational mobility:

1. In order to help new students find their place in the community, the university created a weekly Freshman Assembly designed and led by the Center for Vocational Discovery team.
2. Centralized advising was recently implemented in order to assure effective and efficient discernment as students begin their academic journeys.
3. In conjunction with centralized advising, faculty mentor students, helping them learn to advocate for themselves as they discern their needs.
4. Lipscomb used a comprehensive approach to retaining and supporting freshmen through a partnership among Student Life, the Academic Success Center and the Academic Program, ensuring that each element of a student's well-being is considered as they progress through their Lipscomb degree. The process here

was largely guided and assessed by the work of Laurie Schreiner, an expert in promoting thriving among college students. Schreiner’s work describes thriving as being “fully engaged intellectually, socially and emotionally in the college experience”, and she argues student success is tied to “what [an]institution is doing to help students engaged in the learning process and really be able to come alive to all their potential” (Schreiner, qtd in Faherty).

5. In 2024, the Provost launched the LU Learning Commons, housed in Beaman Library and designed to create collaborative networks of staff and faculty serving students. The Learning Commons include the Library, the Coggin Family Academic Success Center, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Career Development Center, and the Office of Accessibility and Learning Support.

Across all academic disciplines, one of the ways Lipscomb demonstrates a commitment to students is through utilizing high impact practices named by AAC&U. Both across the Lipscomb Core and within POWERS, students regularly engage in “collaborative assignments and projects,” sharing “common intellectual experiences” in a variety of classes (“High Impact Practices”). In the QEP specifically, students will engage other high impact practices when they “produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences” while they focus on “oral communication, information literacy, and ethical inquiry” (“High Impact Practices”).

## **To Communities**

Lipscomb is committed to mentoring students as they journey toward purposeful lives of service and fulfillment. Committed to our Christian heritage, Lipscomb faculty see students as thoughtful citizens, uniquely created to elevate the common good through equitable collaboration with diverse others. In divisive societies, Lipscomb commits to support our communities through developing student learning in a way that allows them to discern truth through digital and information literacy skills. Moreover, students will contribute to their communities by sharing collaboratively across lines of difference through effective reading and communication skills. As Joseph Fasano claims in a recent edition of *Liberal Education*, “we must generate synthetic learners.” By this he means producing students who can “put together disparate realms of knowledge to create something new—a new idea, a new theory, even a new sentence” (Fasano). He goes on to explain how the building of critical thinking skills in the liberal arts leads to engaged communities: “We must simply teach students informative literacy, showing them how to think critically about what they’re experiencing, rather than passively consuming various media. We must help students to become active and passionate participants in the local and global webs of communication” (Fasano). POWERS supports student growth and practice in discerning trustworthy research while they contextualize their arguments using available data for a specific audience. Having developed such skills, students will be more likely to engage meaningfully as citizens committed to the spaces they share with others.

## To Innovate and Develop Workplace Readiness

Lipscomb University is committed to developing students with the transferable skills they need to thrive in their chosen professions. Some institutions have recently expanded their professional degrees and certificate programs, stripping investment from the humanities and the study of the liberal arts. Others have stubbornly committed to staying the pedagogical course, dismissing the stated needs of the economy or employers while ignoring the need for transformative skills. Lipscomb rejects the binary between professional and academic programs, and instead follows a design and investment process that builds a broad foundation in the liberal arts that will support the development of a diverse array of communication skills.

Lipscomb believes we are in the early stages of a digital revolution, where innovation is driven by the integration of artificial intelligence into nearly every sector. While some believe the rise of AI reduces the need for collaboration, research skills, or generating inquiry, Lipscomb faculty know these skills are most needed to effectively harness the power of AI for most industries. Indeed, according to Business News Daily, while technological advances “are disrupting and creating new skill set categories, employers say people-oriented skills like communication are still critical” (Donaghue). Lipscomb has decided to simultaneously invest in new or improved degree options in AI, Data Analytics, and digital communication, while also expanding resources in Teaching and Learning innovation, classical and new media studies, the creative arts, the integration of faith and work, and the skills of composition and rhetoric.

POWERS courses honor the learning in the classic liberal arts while also attuning to the stated needs of the workforce. In a recent Forbes article, Jack Kelly asserts that “hiring managers...want communication skills, a growth mindset and the ability to be a team player...valuing candidates who demonstrate professionalism, effective communication skills, and the ability to articulate their ideas clearly.” This privileging of strong communication skills is reinforced by our QEP, which is designed to help students discern the most effective content and delivery mode for each message they might send. This very decision, to privilege rhetorical agility in demonstrated student outcomes, reveals our commitment to innovation and workplace readiness. According to LinkedIn’s 2024 Workplace Learning Report’s analysis, “communication proficiency is the most sought-after softskill for employers” (Donaghue).

The QEP focuses on rhetoric in part because the workforce requires them to be “adaptive critical thinkers and communicators who thrive across the diverse contexts” they might encounter (Fletcher xiii). Indeed, given that “rhetoric’s fundamental concern is how to communicate effectively in diverse contexts...rather than a list of rules and prescriptions for students to follow” (Fletcher xviii-xix), faculty teach them the fundamentals of a rhetorically aware communication approach in order to help them navigate any rhetorical situation. This approach affirms Jennifer Fletcher’s findings when she asserts that “rhetoric is a metadiscipline...a powerful tool for seeing the big picture, for moving beyond a silo mentality toward a more interconnected understanding of our world” (3).

Lipscomb students are taught how to think critically and metacognitively as they read widely in the liberal arts, while also learning to demonstrate the practical skills of effective communication across lines of difference and through multiple modalities. With a foundation in classical thought, our courses build student skill sets that are reinforced with transformative experiences. Whether in the First Year Seminar, POWERS, or within their major, students will be intentionally exposed to academic rigor, meaningful collaboration, and extra-curricular experiences that reinforce and add to the learning. ***For First Year extra-curricular cultural experiences, see Appendix X.*** The focus on rhetorical agility reflects our commitment to innovate, knowing that “rhetorical knowledge help[s] students communicate effectively in a variety of situations...help[ing] students repurpose their learning for new tasks and settings,” essentially promoting the “transfer of learning” to students who will soon become innovative leaders in the field of their choosing (Fletcher xiii).

This commitment to innovation is protected by a commitment to assessment and continuous improvement. Since 2022, every College, Program and Department at Lipscomb has undergone an intensive Program Review process to improve efficiency, effectiveness and mission alignment, while also eliminating waste and sunsetting programs which are no longer viable. ***For an example of a Program Review Cover Letter, see Appendix Y.*** The commitment to meaningful assessment empowers and protects an ability to focus academic investments in areas that will help students flourish as they meet the evolving needs of employers in every sector.

## **Letter of Support from the Board of Trustees**

After the QEP Director met with the Academic Life Committee and the full Board of Trustees at Lipscomb University in November of 2024, the Board Chair was pleased to signal their full support for the QEP with a letter of support.

***Figure 20 shows a letter of support from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Lipscomb University.***



November 22, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

On November 2, 2024, Dr. Kellett presented the 2025 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to the full Board of Trustees at Lipscomb University after also presenting to the Academic Life Committee of the Board on November 1st. In both of these meetings, the Provost and President of Lipscomb shared their enthusiasm for this program, making special note of the fact that it was chosen based on the assessment of faculty as they served students. The Board of Trustees is fully supportive of Lipscomb's decision to invest in innovating the teaching of Composition and Communication courses and appreciate the faculty's desire to focus on this area.

Representing a diverse array of industry, education and professional experience, I should note that the Board fully endorsed the QEP proposal and offered its enthusiastic support. The Board appreciated the intentional development of transferable skills, and believed our students will thrive in their chosen fields as they communicate effectively in many settings and with a variety of collaborators. The Board expressed that the Crossover assignment, in particular, sets this sequence of courses apart as distinctly Lipscomb.

The Board offers its collective support as Lipscomb University launches the Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence (POWERS) in the Fall of 2025. The Board is also committed to supporting our administration as we resource POWERS and to supporting internal assessments to ensure the continuous improvement of this sequence of courses at Lipscomb University.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard G. Cowart".

Richard G. Cowart  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Lipscomb University

Office of the President • One University Park Drive • Nashville, TN 37204 • 615 966.1787

*Figure 20*

# Summary Statement

The development of the QEP has been marked by collaboration, strategic planning, and a shared vision for student success. Through sustained faculty engagement, administrative support, and innovative course design, the POWERS sequence demonstrates Lipscomb University's commitment to fostering transferable communication skills that meet the needs of both our students and the evolving workforce. With robust assessment strategies in place, a focus on ongoing faculty development, and a clear alignment with institutional goals, the QEP is well-positioned to make a transformative impact on our students' academic journeys and professional futures. By centering our students' voices and ensuring continuous improvement, the implementation of POWERS will embody the mission of Lipscomb University and uphold the expectations set forth by SACSCOC.

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# QEP Appendices

## Lipscomb University, 2025

### Appendix A

#### Institutional Context and Alignment

*The Lipscomb Liberal Arts Core: The Origin of the QEP*

M E M O R A N D U M

Liberal Arts Core Curriculum Task Force Update  
January 17th, 2023

In light of Goal 1.a of Lipscomb's *Impact 360 Strategic Plan*, the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum Task Force was appointed and convened by Provost Jennifer Shewmaker during the Fall 2022 semester. The overarching objective of the Task Force, as specified in the language of the strategic plan, is as follows:

Inaugurate a new 'Lipscomb Core,' a rigorous Christian liberal arts curriculum (to supersede the current general education curriculum) that provides Lipscomb undergraduates with a well-rounded basis for living well and for pursuing further study in their chosen majors.

[Back to Report](#)

### Appendix B

#### Institutional Context and Alignment

*The Lipscomb Liberal Arts Core: The Origin of the QEP*

##### Core Goals and SLOs

**This remains a draft of the SLOs under our LU Core Goals**

Each course must adopt an SLO from the Disciplinary Goals,  
and at least 1 SLO from a Comprehensive Goal (\*).

*Upon successful completion of the Lipscomb University Liberal Arts Core, students will be:*

#### 1. Grounded by the study of Christian Scripture and theology

Learners will be able to:

- a. Demonstrate understanding of the story of the Bible by analyzing its distinct witness about God, humanity or communal flourishing.
- b. Articulate Christian notions of human flourishing and virtue, and assess how they are distinct from other accounts of orienting oneself in society.

#### 2. Deepened by a systematic engagement with the Christian intellectual tradition across the disciplines\*

Learners will be able to:

- a. Describe or evaluate the contribution of thinkers, texts, movements, or ideas from within the Christian tradition that have significantly shaped the academic disciplines.
- b. Apply strategies for human flourishing through healthy behaviors and Christian practices which emerge from an understanding of their role as divine image bearers.

#### 3. Conversant with core texts, great ideas, and seminal figures in history, literature, philosophy, and politics

Learners will be able to:

- a. Comprehend and contextualize primary texts, historical eras, figures, movements, and schools of thought.
- b. Analyze ideas and identify connections among a diverse range of cultures, texts, genre conventions, literary periods, and historical eras.
- c. Create and craft writing that synthesizes and contributes to the academic conversation with a distinctive voice.

**4. Engaged with the methods of inquiry and problem-solving, and informed by the discoveries of mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences**

Learners will be able to:

- a. Apply methods of inquiry and problem-solving as informed by the discoveries of mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
- b. Analyze and interpret data using numerical literacy and quantitative reasoning to solve problems.
- c. Describe and analyze key concepts relating to human behavior, collective action, or organizational structures.
- d. Apply scientific principles to a productive and testable question to make claims and evaluate evidence.

**5. Enriched by the creative expressions and cultural contributions of the arts**

Learners will be able to:

- a. Explain how historical developments, cultural contexts, and global changes shape aesthetics and artistic creation.
- b. Identify diverse creative processes through which works of art are produced.
- c. Describe the artistic perspective as distinct from other ways of knowing.
- d. Create, perform, or analyze artistic works.

**6. Broadened by diverse perspectives\***

Learners will be able to:

- a. Evaluate the contributions of an array of academic sources, cultural perspectives or experiential knowledge.
- b. Assess the origin and impact of one's beliefs or behaviors as evidence of an increased awareness of self.
- c. Recognize and analyze a variety of cultural beliefs and practices through engaging with a broad range of texts, thinkers, experiences or cultures.

**7. Equipped to think critically, reason ethically, communicate effectively, and deliberate responsibly\***

Learners will be able to:

- a. Construct informed and adaptive arguments by considering diverse perspectives, varied contexts and relevant evidence.
- b. Examine the impact of value-systems and perspectives when making decisions about how to be ethical and just.
- c. Utilize multiple delivery methods to present information, promote understanding, or foster discourse for a diverse audience.
- d. Evaluate the moral, social, political, economic, and environmental implications of one's beliefs and actions.

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## Appendix C

### Methodology of Research

*Peer Programs*

### Aspirational Programs to Consider

Working Group Members: I have tried to compile English and Communication courses from peer and aspirational programs for us to study. From my view it does appear that Writing courses tend to mention reading, writing and communicating across disciplines in a way that Communication courses do not (they often mention evaluating rhetorical strategies, but primarily stick to speech). If you have others, feel free to add a School Name and link or simply paste the sentence or idea that you find helpful. Please familiarize yourself with these and capture ideas, courses, descriptions or phrases you want to elevate by January 16th.

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## Appendix D

### Methodology of Research

#### Higher Education Trends

#### Communication-Oriented QEPs

These are the summaries of other QEPs that center the communicative arts as taught to students. Please familiarize yourself with these by January 16th in case anything here helps you identify questions for our scope and process.

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## Appendix E

### Process of Development

#### Vote

## Name the QEP!

*Rhetoric Sequence of  
Composition and Communication*

Click to add title

Winner will  
receive a  
Gift Card  
to Green Hills Grille  
or Baja Burrito

Votes close Monday!



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## Appendix F

### Process of Development

#### Meeting Workflow

QEP Process Update for Catherine Terry  
October 2023

#### Timeline

**Fall 2023**

- Issue Survey ✓
- Review Data. ✓
- Choose Focus Area. ✓
- Communicate Topic to Faculty ✓
- Build committee with area experts. ✓
- Find meeting cadence ✓
- Build Advisory Board ✓
- Begin Meeting (Planned Nov 1 and 15) ✓
- Determine specialty areas/subcommittees
- Dr. Kellett begins drafting
- Mission Alignment
- Grassroots Story of Discernment Process

**Back to Report****Appendix G****Process of Development***Meeting Workflow***QEP Meeting #3****January 30, 2024****Agenda and Minutes**

- 1) Set Goals for Winter
  - See below for overview
- 2) Feedback from Homework
  - Nuggets from other QEPs & Articles
  - “metacognition” MPP Specifically name the process of reflecting, reflecting on the process of reflecting; observing actively and observing oneself as observes)
  - “Multiple Intelligence Theory” JT Help students integrate and notice the connections among a variety of intelligences and their uses
  - Civic Rhetoric SB Focus on well rounded human beings rather than 1 to 1 professional goals/skills (Grounding purpose beyond marketable skills)
  - Centering the idea that our learners will produce and consume rhetoric (in classrooms, in the world) and that there are ethical implications to that DC
  - We need to message to other faculty that these are both distinct skills and ways of learning and communicating and thinking DC & JT
  - Design Thinking Principles: Ways of knowing, doing and writing SG
- 3) View revised SLOs
- 4) Name Options

**Back to Report****Appendix H****Process of Development***Meeting Workflow*

**Skills Draft**

Writing in Green; Comm in Blue

Key Question: Can we make it work to have 4-6 Skills Categories with precise skills for both disciplines under them? Should we rearrange? Eliminate or add a category?

- 1) *Establishing our lexicon and foundation of knowledge*
  - *Defining our terms*
  - Establishing our foundation—Rhetoric and Liberal Arts
  - Critical Thinking
  - Pathos, ethos and logos
  - Base navigation and distinctions among digital media
  
- 2) *Thinking Process Skills:*
  - Stages of thinking on paper:
    - Brainstorming (Asking questions, sharing ideas)
    - Outlining (Developing structure, asking about order)
    - Drafting/Practicing (low stakes, small components, real time argument sharing)
    - Revising/Polishing
  - Knowledge of how to use ethos, pathos, and logos correctly
  
- 3) *Independent and Collaborative Skills:*
  - Personal work
  - Group work (leading and following in a group setting; learning the skills of working in a group; interpersonal communication)
  - Workshop (Working along and in a group)
  - Feedback and workshoping
  - Understand how to work in groups to make effective group presentations (this is a product; might need to be an “assignment”)
  
- 4) *Audience Skills:* developing a central claim/throughline, framing a thought, contextualizing, communicating well with an audience (Professional vs academic writing (skills, frame and audience))
  - Understand Audience and Craft Message based on audience and medium
    - Ability to Frame an Argument
    - Ability to create and present appropriate informative and persuasive presentations
    - Think critically about use of words, message, and strategically evaluate how they communicate for a successful outcome.
  - Understanding the difference in writing and speaking in terms of real time audience interaction
  - Discerning which medium best suits the message/audience?
  
- 5) *Research Skills:* Using/documenting peer reviewed databases, public discourse and human sources (low stakes access to a variety of data)
  - Recognize fake news (Understand basic Logical Fallacies)
  - Assess the reliability of a source (and crediting them)
  - How to listen for bias, how to manage your own bias
  - Listen and read for appropriate reasons and evidence (match your sources to your audience and voice)
  - Understanding importance of human creativity in terms of digital world
  
- 6) *Crafting Skills:* Concise and precise writing, cohesive and focused paragraphs, effective transitions, polishing for a reader
  - Effective Speaking (Articulation, Pronunciation, Accents, Rate, Rhythm, Projection, Eye contact, Posture, Facial Expression)
  - Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate use of verbal and nonverbal skills

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## Appendix I

### University Wide Collaboration

#### Faculty Guidance

#### Faculty Meeting Notes

Delivered 4/4/24 to full faculty Meeting

Hi. I'm Brandi Kellett, Chair of the English and Modern Languages Department and Director of the QEP. The QEP is our Quality Enhancement Plan, and it will be submitted to SACSCOC for approval in January. Our charge is to create a program, curricular change or initiative that will do a few things:

- 1) It should address a need perceived by the Faculty, and should be developed, created and supported by faculty who work with students and want their continued success.
- 2) It should have a high impact on student learning, engagement and experience, so that all student growth is enhanced by the program.
- 3) It should align with our University goals and vision, and we need to demonstrate a commitment to fund, support and provide resources for the successful launch and sustained improvement of the program.
- 4) We must demonstrate a comprehensive assessment strategy that will measure our alignment with our plan, as well as student growth to our stated learning outcomes. In this process we will also work to demonstrate our agile commitment to reform and improvement as we serve students.

The good news is that you already voted to reimagine the way we invite students into the process of connecting and sharpening basic human communication skills. You voted after you noticed and shared big deficits in student writing abilities, and perhaps even larger gaps in the way they communicate. You saw a need that hindered student flourishing.

The great news is that we all know every student needs help here, and now they will get it.

*Full transcript will be provided at the onsite visit.*

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## Appendix J

### University Wide Collaboration

#### Faculty Guidance





**Rescuing Rhetoric from Togas and Tweets:  
A Student Strength Approach to Teaching Digital Rhetoric**  
Brandi Kellett, PhD



**Abstract**

Composition and Rhetoric scholars have long upheld the importance of communicating clearly across lines of difference to persuade, inspire and inform. I find Classical and New Rhetorics insufficient for 21<sup>st</sup> century students, while contemporary notions of rhetoric are often reductive or even dangerous. I argue for a new pedagogical approach to teaching rhetoric, one which integrates Classical and New rhetorical skills to synthesize facility in digital spaces and human interaction. Building on the communicative agility students already practice, this new approach gives students the tools they need to think critically, process analytically, and communicate creatively in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Classical Rhetoric: Aristotle**

*Rhetoric as persuasion*

- "Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of discerning the possible means of persuasion in each particular case" (Aristotle, qtd. in Freese xxxii).
- "In dealing with certain persons, even if we possessed the most accurate scientific knowledge, we should not find it easy to persuade them by the employment of such knowledge" (Aristotle, qtd. in Freese 11).

**Aristotle's Three Modes of Persuasion**  
**Ethos:** Credibility or ethical appeal of the speaker.  
**Pathos:** Emotional connection with the audience.  
**Logos:** Logical reasoning and evidence.

**New Rhetoric: Kenneth Burke**

*Rhetoric should be used to inquire and identify, to appeal through connection*

"The key term for 'new' rhetoric would be 'identification,' which can include a partially unconscious factor in appeal...it can also be an end, as when people earnestly yearn to identify themselves with some group or other...in such identification, there is a partially dreamlike, idealistic motive, somewhat compensatory to real differences or divisions, which the rhetoric of identification would transcend" (Burke 203).

"The device of *apitropism*, or the *nostrum* (which transcends the conflicts of the mine and the thine, the *meum* and the *tuum*, by raising them to the resonant terms of ours, the *nostrum*)...[i]n a society beset by many conflicts of interest and aiming with the help of verbal tactics to transcend those conflicts, the uses of spiritualization as a device are endless" (Burke 209).

**Digital Rhetoric & the 21st Century Information Revolution**

- Can we humanize the effects of machines?*
- Digital Rhetoric is the application of rhetorical theory (as analytical method or heuristic for production) to digital texts and performances" (Eymann 13).
  - "In a technological age, rhetoric emerges as a conditional method for humanizing the effects of machines and helping humans to direct them...Rhetoric thinks beyond disciplines and 'interdisciplinarity'—itself a product of a culture of specialization—by arranging and connecting diverse elements in the pursuit of theoretical questions and practical applications" (Davis 103).

**Popular Consumption of Rhetoric**



Word Cloud published by Donald Trump on Truth Social reproduced in *The New Republic*  
 "General use by the public tends to use the term to mean only style, or worse, as a pejorative applied to false or manipulative arguments" (Eymann 14).

**Future Job Skills**



The Economic World Forum shared data emphasizing the need for creative, critical and analytic thinking in their 2023 Future Jobs Report.

**Market Needs**

The POWERS courses honor the classic liberal arts while also attuning to the stated needs of the work force. In a recent *Forbes* article, Jack Kelly asserts that "hiring managers...value candidates who demonstrate professionalism, effective communication skills, and the ability to articulate their ideas clearly."  
 Indeed, according to *Business News Daily*, while technological advances "are disrupting and creating new skill set categories, employers say people-oriented skills like communication are still critical" (Donaghue). The POWERS' approach privileges rhetorical agility, innovation and critical analysis, helping students discern the most effective content and delivery mode for each message they send.

The workforce requires "adaptive critical thinkers and communicators who thrive" in the new and evolving settings they will encounter (Fletcher xlii). Indeed, given that "rhetoric's fundamental concern is how to communicate effectively in diverse contexts...rather than a list of rules and prescriptions for students to follow" (Fletcher xviii-ix), we teach them the fundamentals of a rhetorically aware communication approach in order to make them impactful citizens and effective contributors in their vocations. ★★★★★

**Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence: An Integrated Approach**

2 concurrent courses: *Writing as Discovery and Communicating to Influence*

Focus on building transferable skills in FIVE areas:

- Thought
- Process
- Audience
- Research
- Revision and Delivery

Multi-modal Expression

- Students write analytical, personal and professional opinion pieces
- Students give speeches, craft social media campaigns, and evaluate news, culture and advertisements

Integrated, Crossover Assignment: One project, Three audiences, Three mediums

- Write a professional opinion piece contextualized with relevant research
- Revise the argument for a public speech with expanded research to a specific audience
- Revise the argument for a targeted social media campaign to a known entity

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**An Insufficient Status Quo**

Communication 101	Composition 101
4 Speeches	4 Essays
Pathos, Ethos & Logos	Thesis, Grammar and Diction

Our 21st century digital revolution requires an integrated, multi-modal approach to rhetoric that capitalizes on student strengths, skills, and engagement in their world. We affirm Jennifer Fletcher's assertion that **"rhetoric is a meta-discipline...a powerful tool for seeing the big picture, for moving beyond a silo mentality toward a more interconnected understanding of our world"** (3).

**21st Century Rhetoric: Students must lead the way**

Students are rhetorically agile in the new media revolution (Digital Rhetoric)

- TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Reels and Texting

Students are engaged citizens persuading us to change (Classic Rhetoric)

- Protests to end the Israeli Hamas war
- Demands for a new approach to firearm access and usage
- Advocates for a revision to our environmental impact

Students inform our approach to ethically inclusive behavior (New Rhetoric)

- Claim aspects of their identity in the spaces they occupy
- Engage in global discourse online
- Publicly discuss mental health and fragility
- Discuss AI usage and its ethical implications
- Access diverse new sources

We have an imperative to build curricula drawing from Classical, New and Digital rhetoric for today's rhetorically agile, digitally savvy, critically thinking citizen-students.

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**Appendix K**  
**University Wide Collaboration**  
*Staff Updates*

**Library Luncheon**

3/19/24

Brandi Kellett: General Education at Lipscomb

**Quality Enhancement Plan**

Part of SACSCOC; Due January 2025; Impacts every student; Envisioned by Faculty; Assessed for continuous improvement

*QEP Sequence overview:* In their first year at Lipscomb, students will take a sequence of connected courses called the Power of Words. In these two classes, students will be grounded in the classical study of rhetoric and then learn to craft compelling stories and arguments for diverse audiences using a variety of methods. Students will consider many perspectives and types of media as they learn to communicate ethically and persuasively using effective strategies to share their ideas with others.

*Sequence Names* (POW suggested by Autumn Marshall)



The Power of Words: Writing and Rhetoric  
The Power of Words: Communicating and Rhetoric

***Additional Elements***

Delivery Method and Order  
Speech Lab in ASC

Annual Speech Contest; SSS Panel  
Annual Writing Contest to be published  
Annual Event on Public Rhetoric

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**Appendix L**

**University Wide Collaboration**

***Staff Updates***

**The Lipscomb Core: Distinctively Lipscomb**


The Lipscomb Core invites students into a journey where they discover their strengths, develop skills to serve others well, and contribute meaningfully through scholarship and creative excellence. We value the Christian intellectual tradition, we honor diverse perspectives and we develop key discernment skills in every student.

**Distinctively Lipscomb**

- We integrate the study of the Bible into practicing the Liberal Arts.
  - Students will take 5 classes focused on the Bible or on Biblical teaching
  - We believe the Liberal Arts matter in an increasingly digital world.
  - Other schools are erasing the liberal arts
  - We link critical thinking and practical skills
- POWERS gives students transferable skills so they can communicate and connect.
  - Student strengths and rhetorical agility
  - Classical rhetoric is the foundation of digital rhetoric
- Cornerstone and Capstone courses
  - Begin with Compass
  - End with Virtue, Vocation and Flourishing
- 2 Integrated Courses
  - Artistic Inquiry and the Human Experience
  - Scientific Inquiry and Practice
- Discernment Skills develop Solid Citizens
  - Think critically
  - Reason ethically
  - Communicate effectively
  - Deliberate responsibly

# ★ Lipscomb Core Framework

**46  
Credit  
Hours**

**SEEK** 

**21 CREDIT HOURS**

**THROUGH SCRIPTURE**  
12 CREDIT HOURS

**BI 1093** Story of Israel (3 hrs.)  
**BI 1073** Story of Jesus (3 hrs.)  
**BI 1083** Story of Church (3 hrs.)  
**BI XXXX** Christianity and Society (3 hrs.)

- BI4213 Christian Ethics
- BI3213 Faith & Culture
- BI3223 Worldviews


**THROUGH CORE TEXTS & GREAT IDEAS**  
9 CREDIT HOURS

**HI 1013** Great Ideas in History (3 hrs.)

**Literary Inquiry:** Any EN 2103 (3 hrs.)

**Great Ideas** (3 hrs.)

- **PL 1013** Great Ideas in Philosophy or
- **PO 1013** Great Ideas in Politics

**DISCOVER** 

**13 CREDIT HOURS**

**SCIENTIFICALLY**  
10 CREDIT HOURS

**Quantitative Reasoning**  
(Any MA course) (3 hrs.)

**Scientific Inquiry**  
For non-science majors  
**LU 1014** (Scientific Inquiry) (4 hrs.)


OR 2 foundational science courses as required by major.

**Social Inquiry** (3 hrs.)  
Choose from a menu of psychology, sociology, social work, economics, family science, LJS, urban studies

**ARTISTICALLY**  
3 CREDIT HOURS

**XXXX Artistic Inquiry & the Human Experience**  
for non-CEA majors (3 hrs.)

OR 3 semesters of ensembles  
OR Career Creativity as required by major.

**KNOW** 

**6 CREDIT HOURS & DP**

**SELF AND OTHERS**

**LU 1013 POWERS:** Writing to Discover (3 hrs.)  
**LU 1023 POWERS:** Communicating to Influence (3 hrs.)

**Diverse Perspectives –**  
Designated Course  
Courses within or outside of the LU Core may receive designation

**FLOURISH** 

**6 CREDIT HOURS**

**THROUGH ETHICS, WELLBEING, & VOCATION**

**LU 1303** Compass: First Year Seminar (3 hrs.)

**BI XXXX** Christianity and My Life or  
**XXXX** Virtue, Flourishing & Vocation (3 hrs.)



\*This framework will be broadly applicable but may be tailored for particular programs

## Appendix M

### Proposal Purpose and Objectives

#### *POWERS Skills to Acquire*

#### **POWERS: Writing to Discover**

##### *Thinking Skills*

Demonstrates critical thinking in how an argument is formed, uses classical rhetorical arts, and contextualizes a clear claim. [Critical Thinking, Clarity, Context]

##### *Process Skills*

Argument is structured effectively with a central claim named and pursued throughout the essay. Style choices further the impact of the argument. [Structure, Style, Voice]

##### *Audience Skills*

The claim is framed with a specific audience in mind and effectively presents evidence to persuade them. [Audience, Pathos, Logos]

##### *Research Skills*

Argument acknowledges existing data on the topic and creates a conversation that draws on appropriate expertise. Sources are introduced and utilized appropriately with an authoritative voice. There is evidence that a variety of stakeholders, sources and perspectives are considered. [Research, Diverse Perspectives, Ethos, Citation]

##### *Revision and Delivery Skills*

The writing is concise, precise and polished with effective grammatical choices. Appropriate signposts enhance the cohesion of the argument. [Grammar, Cohesion]

#### **POWERS: Communicating to Influence (Speech)**

##### *Thinking Skills*

Argument demonstrates the use of critical thinking in how an argument is formed, expanded and changed. Classical rhetorical arts are utilized in presenting the claim. [Critical Thinking, Context, Agility]

##### *Process Skills*

Argument is structured effectively with a central claim named and pursued throughout the presentation. The modality, format, and aesthetic choices further the impact of the argument. [Clarity, Structure, Modal Proficiency]

##### *Audience Skills*

The presentation clearly centers an audience and is built to effectively inform or persuade that group. There is alignment in content, tone, and visual media. [Audience, Pathos, Logos, Ethos]

##### *Research Skills*

Argument acknowledges existing data and creates a conversation that draws on appropriate expertise. Sources are introduced and utilized appropriately using an authoritative voice. There is evidence that a variety of stakeholders, sources and perspectives was considered. [Research, Diverse Perspectives, Ethos]

##### *Revision and Delivery Skills*

There is evidence, aesthetically or tonally, of verbal and nonverbal skill usage. There is consistency in tone, branding, and content. Appropriate signposts enhance the cohesion of the argument. [Cohesion, Clarity, Responsive to impact]

#### **POWERS: Communicating to Influence (Digital Platform)**

##### *Thinking Skills*

The pose reflects a social media strategy that aligns well with the organization's messaging. [Critical Thinking, Context, Agility]

*Process Skills*

The post organizes information effectively for impact using an interesting hook and captures the information in a way that attracts attention and clearly delivers the message. [Clarity, Structure, Modal Proficiency]

*Audience Skills*

The post speaks to the selected organization's specific audience and uses an appropriate style. The post aligns with the selected organization's brand. [Audience, Pathos, Logos, Ethos]

*Research Skills*

The post condenses speech effectively and maintains key points. Minor details may be sacrificed, but the argument remains coherent.[Research, Diverse Perspectives, Ethos]

*Revision and Delivery Skills*

The post uses color and typography appropriately to enhance the message. The post has a visual hierarchy, and aesthetics contribute to the overall message. Image quality is acceptable, and visuals do not detract from the message. [Cohesion, Clarity, Responsive to impact]

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**Appendix N**

**Communicating to Influence SLOs**

*POWERS Delivery Cadence*

AP, Dual Enrollment, Transfer Courses	Lipscomb Equivalent	Notes
<b>AP Literature, Language, Seminar and Research</b>	EN1113	3+; These do not measure writing skill; should not count for Composition
<b>DE/T Communication</b>	POWERS credit	
<b>DE/T Composition 1</b>	EN1113	Would still take POWERS
<b>DE/T Composition 2</b>	POWERS credit	

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**Appendix O**

**Proposal Purpose and Objectives**

*POWERS Scope of Assignments*

**Power of Words Rhetorical Sequence: Writing to Discover  
Participating in Public Discourse**

We have been discussing the power of words when used as creative expressions of self, as invitations to collectively share ideas, and as acts of persuasion that invite others to align with your thinking on various topics. We learned from Aristotle that audience analysis enables us to connect effectively with a specific group, and that we must express cogent thoughts and demonstrate expertise on a subject in order to be successful. From Martin Luther King, Jr., we learned of the importance of crafting and presenting a coherent message using logic and emotion to compel listeners or readers to agree and potentially be motivated to act.

Utilizing what we have learned from class discussions and other readings, craft an essay that demonstrates critical and analytical thinking through the integration of your experience and credible research.

Essay Directions:

- **Write an essay that incorporates relevant research to explore a central claim.**
- **Your essay should identify and contextualize how your historical and cultural position informs and shapes your claim.**
- **As you construct your essay, your target audience should be a professional publication for a generalized, informed audience.**

Here are the steps you should complete as you begin:

1. Choose the topic you will consider and the position you will hold. [Thinking Skills]
2. Decide what type of audience you most want to persuade, and name your central claim and explain how, and in what context, your argument matters to the specific audience. [Audience Skills]
3. Engage in research in two areas as you craft your argument: Peer Reviewed Articles and Observational or Experiential research. [Research Skills]
4. Using quotes and data from your research, craft a cohesive argument that demonstrates critical thinking and contextualizes your research to compel your audience to agree. [Process Skills]
5. Revise your essay in order to maximize the cohesion of your argument and the impact of your thinking. [Revision and Delivery Skills]

Topic Choices:

1. **What type of artistry or creative medium is experiencing a renaissance at the moment?**
2. **Given increased diagnoses of mental health disorders, how can universities support students' wellbeing and academic success?**
3. **Should professional sports teams be required to invest in youth sports, expanding access to their sport in the community that supports them?**
4. **Does our political system serve most Americans or is it failing?**
5. **What strategies could be most effective in increasing available and affordable housing in a specific city of your choosing?**
6. **Is travel outside the US necessary to help people become productive citizens?**
7. **How will Artificial Intelligence enhance or detract from the career path most interesting to you?**
8. **Under what circumstances could a community be allowed to ban books from a local school or library?**
9. **Should people have to pay for their own housing beginning at age 23?**
10. **How should religious diversity be accommodated by a church affiliated university?**
11. **How should one navigate perceived conflicts or conflicts of interest between your faith and career path?  
(Your approach should reflect your area of study)**
12. **What role should forgiveness play in the American criminal justice system?**

Details:

- 3-5 pages, double spaced, 12pt font
- 3 outside sources, 1 peer reviewed, MLA sourcing, include Works Cited
- Due on Canvas: Date by Time

[Back to Report](#)**Appendix P****Proposal Purpose and Objectives***POWERS Scope of Assignments***POWERS: Communicating to Influence  
Assignment: Rhetorical Flexibility: Persuading in Different Mediums****Why This Assignment Matters:**

In a world where words can shift the course of history, your ability to adapt your message across mediums is your greatest strength. Aristotle taught us that the art of persuasion is rooted in ethos, pathos, and logos—appealing to credibility, emotion, and logic. These principles still hold true, but the platforms have changed.

We live in a society of constant noise. Knowing how to use your voice matters. Whether you're delivering a keynote on a global stage or sending out a tweet, the power to persuade lies in your ability to adapt. Martin Luther King Jr. galvanized a movement with speeches that still echo through time, while modern icons like Taylor Swift shape culture across multiple platforms, using her storytelling and connection to influence and inspire millions. Both show the enduring power of words to move people and create lasting impact.

The medium is the message, as Marshall McLuhan once said, and in today's world, the mediums are endless. You live in a time when ideas move at lightning speed. From TED Talks to TikToks, from academic journals to Instagram stories, the ability to shift your argument between mediums and audiences is an essential skill. Whether you're persuading a boardroom, rallying for change in a community, or building your brand online, your adaptability will determine your impact.

This assignment pushes you to be a modern-day rhetorician. You'll learn to adjust your message like Taylor Swift pivots her image, or how Lin-Manuel Miranda fuses history and hip-hop.

You'll move from a well-crafted essay—like a New York Times op-ed—to a live speech, harnessing the kind of energy that fueled the likes of Steve Jobs or Malala. And finally, you'll distill your message into a social media post, as effective as a viral campaign or a well-placed hashtag. This process is about learning to be clear, compelling, and concise, regardless of the platform.

Remember: every audience is different, every platform has its own rhythm. How you speak to one group may not resonate with another. Your task is to navigate these nuances, bringing with you the force of your ideas, your creativity, and your ability to persuade. In doing so, you'll become not just a communicator but a cultural force.

**Purpose:**

This assignment is designed to develop your ability to adapt arguments across different mediums and for various audiences. This exercise mirrors the real-world necessity of presenting complex ideas to a range of audiences in an accessible and engaging manner.

**Part 1: Persuasive Speech**

- **Objective:** The first phase of this assignment requires you to adapt your argumentative essay into a 6-7 minute persuasive speech that is suited to a college-aged audience.
- **Rationale:** Oral communication differs significantly from written discourse. Persuasive speeches require you to engage the audience through vocal delivery, physical presence, and supporting visual aids, while distilling your argument into a clear and impactful message. This task will develop your ability to adjust your argument for an oral presentation and practice using rhetorical strategies in a live setting.

*Requirements:*

- **Time Limit:** The speech should be 6-7 minutes in length, with strict adherence to the time limit. You will be asked to conclude at 8 minutes.
- **Visual Aids:** Required. These aids should enhance your argument and not detract from it. Videos may be included but should not exceed 90 seconds in total.
- **Outline Submission:** A detailed outline, based on the provided rubric template, must be submitted prior to your presentation. The outline should include:
  - Specific purpose and thesis statement
  - Main points, transitions, and supporting materials
  - At least five facts, two quotations, two examples, and one story
  - Six sources formatted according to MLA guidelines

Your outline will form the basis for your speech structure, ensuring a coherent and logical progression of ideas.

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**Part 2: Social Media Adaptation**

- **Objective:** After presenting your speech, you will further condense your argument into a persuasive social media post. You may choose between a Twitter post (limited to 140 characters) or an Instagram carousel (limited to 4-6 slides). Your post should target a specific organization's audience, using the list of organizations listed.
- **Rationale:** In today's media landscape, being able to convey complex arguments in concise, engaging formats is a critical skill. Social media platforms demand brevity, clarity, and creativity, while still requiring that arguments remain persuasive. This task will challenge you to identify the essential elements of your argument and adapt them to a new form of communication.

*Guidelines:*

- **Platform Options:**
    - **X:** Limited to 140 characters.
    - **Instagram Carousel:** Limited to 4-6 slides. Each slide should contribute to a coherent, visually engaging argument that follows the logic of your speech.
  - **Adaptation Task:** You are required to adapt your speech for the chosen platform, maintaining the integrity of your argument while tailoring it for a social media audience. The post should reflect the tone, style, and expectations of the specific organization you choose.
  - **Choosing an Organization:** You will select an organization from a provided list or propose one that aligns with your topic. The adaptation should demonstrate an understanding of the organization's communication style and audience preferences.
  - **Short Reflection:** You will provide a short 1-paragraph reflection on the social media strategy you used based on the organization you selected.
- 

**Evaluation Criteria:****Persuasive Outline (50 points); Persuasive Speech (100 points):**

- **Content and Structure (30 points):** Clarity of thesis, logical organization, and effective use of transitions.
- **Delivery (50 points):** Engaging vocal and physical presence, with minimal reliance on notes. Speeches should not be read.
- **Supporting Materials (10 points):** Adequate integration of facts, quotations, examples, and stories that substantiate your argument.
- **Visual Aids (10 points):** Effective use of visuals that support and enhance the argument without overshadowing the verbal content.

**Social Media Adaptation (50 points):**

- **Conciseness (10 points):** Ability to condense complex ideas into a concise, coherent social media post.
- **Creativity (10 points):** Innovative use of language and visuals to engage the audience on the chosen platform.
- **Persuasive Effectiveness (20 points):** The post should clearly and persuasively convey the core argument of the speech in a way that suits the chosen medium.



- **Audience Alignment (10 points):** The post must demonstrate a clear understanding of the target organization’s audience and align with the organization’s communication style.

**Submission Requirements:**

1. **Speech Outline:** A typed, detailed outline must be submitted based on the provided rubric. This outline will include your specific purpose, thesis, main points, supporting materials, and transitions.
2. **Social Media Post:** You will submit your final social media post alongside a brief explanation of why you chose the organization and how you tailored your message to fit the audience.

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**Appendix Q, R, S**

**Assessment Strategy**

*POWERS Rubrics*

**Appendix Q: COMPOSITION RUBRIC**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Course \_\_\_\_\_ Assessed by \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle the statements that best describe the components of the student’s assignment. Please add any explanation that will inform your rating; you may use the back of this form for additional comments.*

	<b>Exemplary (4)</b>	<b>Proficient (3)</b>	<b>Emerging (2)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (1)</b>
<b>Thinking Skills</b>  [Critical Thinking, Clarity, Context, Logos]	The writing is inquiry-driven and clearly demonstrates acute critical thinking and strategy to form a defined argument. The writing seamlessly employs classical rhetorical arts and contextualizes a clear and relevant claim.	The writing is inquiry-driven and demonstrates critical thinking in the formation of arguments. Classical rhetorical arts are used to contextualize a clear claim.	The writing includes an argument. Pieces of classical rhetorical arts are evidenced.	The writing may not include evidence of a clear argument. Pieces of classical rhetorical arts are limited.
<b>Process Skills</b>  [Structure, Style, Voice]	The argument is masterfully synthesized and structured with a central claim specifically named and pursued seamlessly throughout the essay. Style choices and clear, and intentional organization advances the strength of the argument.	The argument is structured effectively with a central claim pursued throughout the essay. Style choices and organization support the strength of the argument.	The argument has a central claim. Style choices do not distract or add to the argument.	The argument does not have a central claim. Style choices obscure the argument.

<p><b>Audience Skills</b></p> <p>[Audience, Pathos, Logos]</p>	<p>The writer intentionally frames a claim and structures the argument with a specific audience in mind. The essay presents multiple pieces of evidence to persuade effectively.</p>	<p>The claim is clearly framed with a specific audience in mind and effectively presents one or more pieces of persuasive evidence.</p>	<p>The claim is loosely framed with an audience in mind. The writing attempts to persuade.</p>	<p>The claim is not framed with an audience in mind. The writing is not persuasive.</p>
<p><b>Research Skills</b></p> <p>[Research, Diverse Perspectives, Logos, Citation]</p>	<p>Argument is synthesized with existing data and creates a conversation that effectively draws on appropriate data and expertise. Three sources (one peer-reviewed) are introduced and utilized effectively with an authoritative voice. Multiple stakeholders, sources, and perspectives are evidenced in the writing and cited sources.</p>	<p>Argument acknowledges existing data on the topic and draws on appropriate expertise. Three sources (one peer-reviewed) are utilized appropriately. There is evidence that a variety of stakeholders, sources and perspectives are considered.</p>	<p>Argument alludes to existing data on the topic. At least two stakeholders, sources or perspectives are considered.</p>	<p>Argument does not include data on the topic. Few if any sources are introduced. Limited perspectives are provided.</p>
<p><b>Revision and Delivery Skills</b></p> <p>[Cohesion, Clarity, Transitions for Impact]</p>	<p>The writing is concise, precise, and polished with effective grammatical choices using MLA style consistently. Subtle signposts enhance the cohesion of the argument and provide a clear path for readers. Punctuation and spelling are correct, and sentence structure is varied.</p>	<p>The writing is mostly concise, precise and polished with effective grammatical choices using MLA style consistently. Appropriate signposts enhance the cohesion of the argument. Spelling is correct.</p>	<p>The writing needs to be edited, or revised, to improve clarity and concision. MLA may not be used consistently. Signposts or transitions are needed for the reader. The written product has several errors in punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, or grammar.</p>	<p>The writing is not clear, and sentence structure is not effective. MLA style is not implemented. The written product has several errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar. Errors inhibit a reader's ability to engage with the text and its key ideas.</p>

**Appendix R: COMMUNICATION RUBRIC**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course \_\_\_\_\_ Assessed by \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle the statements that best describe the components of the student's assignment. Please add any explanation that will inform your rating; you may use the back of this form for additional comments.*

	<b>Exemplary (4)</b>	<b>Proficient (3)</b>	<b>Emerging (2)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (1)</b>
<b>Thinking Skills</b>  [Critical Thinking, Context, Agility, Logos]	The argument clearly demonstrates the use of critical thinking in how a logical, persuasive argument is formed, expanded, and changed. Multiple examples of classical rhetorical arts are utilized in presenting the claim.	The argument demonstrates the use of critical thinking in how an argument is formed, expanded, and changed. Classical rhetorical arts are utilized in presenting the claim.	The argument loosely demonstrates how an argument is formed, expanded, or changed. Classical rhetorical arts are under-utilized in presenting the claim.	The argument does not demonstrate how an argument is formed, expanded, or changed. Classical rhetorical arts are not utilized in presenting the claim.
<b>Process Skills</b>  [Clarity, Structure, Modal Proficiency]	The argument is structured effectively with a central claim named that is clearly and consistently pursued throughout the presentation. The modality, format, and aesthetic choices further the impact of the argument.	The argument is structured with a central claim named and pursued throughout the presentation. Pieces of the modality, format, or aesthetic choices further the impact of the argument.	The argument has a central claim named but may not be carried through the presentation. Pieces of the modality, format, or aesthetic choices may tangentially further the argument.	The argument does not exhibit a central claim. Pieces of the modality, format, or aesthetic choices may tangentially support the argument.
<b>Audience Skills</b>  [Audience, Pathos, Ethos]	The presentation clearly centers on an audience and is built effectively to inform or persuade that group. There is clear and consistent alignment in content, tone, and visual media.	The presentation centers on an audience and is built to inform that group. There is some alignment in content, tone, and visual media.	The presentation loosely centers on an audience and is built to inform a group. There is limited alignment in content, tone, or visual media.	The presentation does not center on an audience. There is no alignment in content, tone, or visual media.
<b>Research Skills</b>  [Research, Diverse Perspectives, Logos]	The argument specifically acknowledges and connects to relevant data, creating a logical conversation that draws on appropriate professional expertise. Reliable, professional sources are introduced, connected to, and utilized appropriately using an authoritative	The argument acknowledges existing data and creates a conversation that draws on appropriate expertise. Sources are introduced and utilized appropriately using an authoritative voice. There is evidence that a variety of stakeholders, sources	The argument acknowledges some data, and some sources are introduced. There is evidence that multiple perspectives were considered.	The argument does not evidence existing data. Outside sources are not introduced. There is limited or no evidence that multiple perspectives were considered.

	voice. There is evidence that multiple stakeholders, professional sources, and perspectives were employed.	and perspectives were considered.		
<b>Revision and Delivery Skills</b> [Cohesion, Clarity, Responsive to impact]	There is clear evidence, aesthetically and tonally, of proficient verbal and nonverbal skill usage. Throughout the presentation, there is consistency in tone, branding, and content. Appropriate signposts enhance the cohesion of the argument.	There is evidence, aesthetically or tonally, of verbal and nonverbal skill usage. There is consistency in tone, branding, and content. Some signposts direct the argument.	There is limited evidence, aesthetically or tonally, of verbal or nonverbal skill usage. There is limited evidence of consistency in tone, branding, and content.	There is limited or no evidence of verbal or nonverbal skill usage. There is limited evidence of consistency or cohesion of the argument.

**Appendix S: DIGITAL MEDIA RUBRIC**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course \_\_\_\_\_ Assessed by \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle the statements that best describe the components of the student's assignment. Please add any explanation that will inform your rating; you may use the back of this form for additional comments.*

	Exemplary (4)	Proficient (3)	Emerging (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
<b>Thinking Skills</b> [Critical Thinking, Context, Agility, Logos]	The post thoroughly considers the organization's specific audience and demonstrates a deep understanding of their needs and preferences. The strategy clearly elevates the message.	The post reflects a social media strategy that aligns well with the selected organization's messaging.	The post includes elements of social media strategy, but it is not clear the strategy is used to align with selected organization's messaging.	It is unclear from the post if or what social media strategy is used or how it aligns with an organization's messaging.
<b>Process Skills</b> [Clarity, Structure, Modal Proficiency]	The post organizes information exceptionally well for maximum impact and engagement. The post grabs attention with a creative hook and expertly arranges content for an optimal	The post organizes information effectively for impact using an interesting hook and captures the information in a way that attracts attention and clearly delivers the message.	The post may lack organization or a compelling hook. The organization does not allow for full clarity of the message to be delivered.	The post lacks organization and a hook. The message to be delivered is not clear and cannot be conclusively understood from the post's content.

	and lasting impression.			
<p><b>Audience Skills</b></p> <p>[Audience, Pathos, Ethos]</p>	<p>The post fully captures the tone and style of the selected organization, addressing its audience with authenticity. The post seamlessly aligns with the selected organization’s brand, showcasing a deep understanding of its voice, style and mission.</p>	<p>The post speaks to the selected organization’s specific audience and uses an appropriate style. The post aligns with the selected organization's brand.</p>	<p>The post alludes to the selected organization’s audience and may show some elements of related style or branding.</p>	<p>The post does not capture the tone and style of the selected organization. The post does not align with the selected organization’s brand.</p>
<p><b>Research Skills</b></p> <p>[Research, Diverse Perspectives, Logos]</p>	<p>The post demonstrates strong critical thinking, adapting to the platform while enhancing the argument. Key facts and perspectives are condensed thoughtfully, with no loss of coherence.</p>	<p>The post condenses the speech effectively and maintains key points. Minor details may be sacrificed, but the argument remains coherent.</p>	<p>The post contains some key points of the argument but they are not concise and the argument lacks clarity.</p>	<p>The post does not clearly include key points of the argument or may include irrelevant elements that reduce clarity.</p>
<p><b>Revision and Delivery Skills</b></p> <p>[Cohesion, Clarity, Responsive to Impact]</p>	<p>The post’s use of color, typography, and visuals greatly enhance the message. The post has a clear, well-structured visual hierarchy. Aesthetics significantly enhance the message, and images are of high quality and contribute to the overall impact.</p>	<p>The post uses color and typography appropriately to enhance the message. The post has a visual hierarchy, and aesthetics contribute to the overall message. Image quality is acceptable, and visuals do not detract from the message.</p>	<p>The post’s visual aesthetics (color, image, typography) may distract from the message. The post’s hierarchy may be unclear, which clouds the overall message. Image quality may include elements that are not high quality and detract from the message.</p>	<p>The post’s visual aesthetics (color, image, typography) distract from the message. Hierarchy is unclear or non-existent. Images are not high quality and distract from the message.</p>

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**Appendix T**  
**Administrative Structure and Budgets**

*Budget*

**QEP Financing Meeting**

9/6/24

Jeff Baughn

Jennifer Shewmaker  
Brandi Kellett

### Agenda

- Brief overview of QEP Requirements and Vision
- Review of Faculty needs
- Budget Proposal Discussion with possible funding sources
  - Past QEP Comparisons

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## Appendix U

### Institutional Commitments

#### *To Assess*

#### Updated CTL Mission & Services

The mission of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is to promote and sustain excellence by building capacity in faculty to become intentional, reflective, and evidence-based educators in order to provide rigorous academics and transformative experiences.

The CTL facilitates professional development and curates educational resources that support a premier, learner-focused Christian education via the following services and programming:

- Classroom observations
- Coaching and Mentorship
- Department- and program-specific training (upon request)
- Initiatives supporting teaching as an expression of faith
- Mid-semester assessment processes
- New Faculty, Adjunct, Department Chair and Program Leader supports
- One-on-one consultations
- Professional development sessions on academic technologies, academic integrity, accessibility, course design, pedagogy, high-impact learning practices, student success and engagement, and more
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and educational research

#### 2024-25 CTL Programming Updates

You will notice movement towards collaborative learning communities:

- **Open Times/Space**
  - Coffee & Conversation - Fridays - 8:30 - 10:30 am
  - Quiet Research Hours - Fridays - 1:00 - 3:00 pm
  - Faculty Collaboratory (100C) Reservations through Acuity
- **Collaborative Approach** with:
  - Calls for Workshops
  - Fellows Program
- **College-level Partnerships**
  - Curated Workshop/Session
  - 10-15 min College or Department “Pop-Ins”

**Fall 2024 Series Offerings**

**Badge Series Offerings:**

- Back to Basics
- Academic Integrity & AI
- Lipscomb Difference Makers
- CTL/CVD Values: Love God (Fall) & Serve Others (Spring)

**Groups with Monthly Meetings**

- Accessibility Work Group
- Catalyst Coaching (*Year 1 & Year 2, Community coming in 25-26*)
- Chairs & Directors (*Provost's Office & CTL*)
- CTL Advisory Council
- Faith Research Group
- New Faculty & New Faculty Mentors

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**Appendix V**

**Institutional Commitments**

*To Assess*



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**Appendix W**

**Institutional Commitments**

*To Assess*

## Biography

Dr. Megan Parker Peters is the Associate Dean, an Associate Professor, and the Director of Accreditation, Assessment, and Research at Lipscomb University. She is a licensed psychologist and licensed school psychologist who has earned the designation as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Dr. Parker Peters specializes in researching and assessing gifted and twice-exceptional learners. She is the co-recipient of the 2016 Hollingworth award for excellence in research publications in gifted education and the 2017 recipient of the Jo Patterson Award for her contribution to gifted education in the state of Tennessee. She is the co-author of *Teaching Tenacity, Resilience, and a Drive for Excellence*, which was awarded the 2019 TAGT Legacy award. She is also the immediate past-president of the Tennessee Association for Independent Liberal Arts Colleges of Teacher Education. Dr. Parker Peters has published articles related to the social emotional needs of gifted learners. She also serves on the board of the Tennessee Association for the Gifted and has served the editorial boards of the National Association for Gifted Children's publications, *Teaching for High Potential* and *Parenting for High Potential*.

## Academic Degrees

Ph.D., School Psychology, University of Tennessee; M.S., Applied Educational Psychology, University of Tennessee; B.S., Psychology, Middle Tennessee State University

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## Appendix X

### Institutional Commitments

*To innovate and develop workplace readiness*

#### Cultural Options 2024

Choose an event from 3 different categories in the list below. At least ONE Activity requires active engagement (different from watching or listening alone through a device). Consult your professor if you require accommodations. Updated regularly.

**Pick an event from 3 different categories below. See LU1203 Assignment Sheet for details about how to record your attendance and process.**

- **Performance Arts, Public Discourse and Lectures:** Attend an event at the Belcourt Theater (film, concert, or other performance), Ascend Amphitheater, Shakespeare in the Park, Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Downtown Library, Parnassus Books (search past talks on their facebook page under Videos), public lecture, etc. Notice the type of voices centered, the new perspectives raised, the work that is elevated.

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **Civic Engagement:** Attend a rally, march, public school board meeting, community concerns gathering, metro council meeting, state legislature or committee meeting, or federal official speech. Notice how differing opinions are received, whose interests are being elevated, what assumptions are made by those in power, and what areas of injustice are being addressed.

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*



- **Agriculture and Homegrown Arts:** Visit the Nashville Farmers' Market, a working farm or orchard, community garden, or sustainable growth collective. Notice the perspectives on food, sustainability, waste, consumption, farming, and craftsmanship offered by the organization and participants.

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **History, Museums and Parks:** Visit and read about a designated historical site, museum, cemetery or natural area or park in Middle Tennessee. Notice why and how the land is valued, and for whom. Whose history is honored, and whose story is told? Choose one you haven't visited —stay 1.5 hrs+.

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **Expressions of Faith:** Attend a service in a local church, synagogue, temple, or mosque (NOT your home congregation or church you've previously visited). Please be mindful and respectful of the worship traditions of others (you are not a spectator, but a humble participant).

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **Attend a Cultural Festival:** Learn about a different culture or a region of the world unfamiliar to you by attending an activity or festival that centers them

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **Watch a Documentary:** Learn about a different culture, a historically significant moment approached from a non-white or non-American perspective, or a region of the world unfamiliar to you.

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

- **Watch a Talk, listen to a podcast or watch a series** Watch at least two TED Talks, series or podcasts about engaging cultural, linguistic, economic, religious, or political differences

*Options were removed due to space constraints.*

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## Appendix Y

### Institutional Commitments

*To innovate and develop workplace readiness*

Provost Shewmaker and team,

November 2023

I am proud to present the English and Modern Language Department Program Review\* for your consideration. While the 50+ answers below are surely comprehensive, I've taken the initiative to write a summation that highlights some of our strengths, opportunities for growth, and our assessment of what we need. This has been a labor of love shared among us, representing over 100 hours of work. I hope you will read and resonate with much of what we captured.

*At our best, the English and Modern Language Department is intentionally collaborative, offering students a distinctly Lipscomb experience.*

### EML Faculty Commitments

**We are intentionally collaborative across our department**

Our faculty share a primary commitment to fostering a strong sense of community among students and faculty. We work intentionally to demonstrate our commitment to whole-student flourishing by providing dependable access to faculty through social and scholastic gatherings, curated experiences on and off campus, and dependable office hours for any area of student concern. We go above and beyond for students despite, as you will see, typically prepping four distinct classes per semester with sustained commitments to publish and present our research and creative work. We work together to spur on excellence in our research and in our growth as scholars and thinkers. We also work together to provide rigorous academics and transformative experiences for our students. Small class sizes and personalized attention enable students to form close relationships with professors, facilitating mentorship and guidance that goes beyond the classroom. Our alumni know they are valued and cherished, a truth demonstrated by our robust social media following, campus visits, and healthy Day of Giving outcomes.

### **We are intentionally collaborative in our classrooms**

In the classroom, this intentional collaboration is seen through multiple points as well. The vast majority of faculty SMART Goals contained commitments to honor and request greater student voice this year. Some of us are meeting regularly with small groups of students outside of class, asking for anonymous student feedback during week seven, or allowing student-generated questions to determine the learning of the day or to populate questions on exams. When Associate Provost Mhlanga announced our intention to establish CUREs courses, EML quickly volunteered to craft courses that will support and advance student research. These commitments not only demonstrate our desire to collaborate, but also to continuously improve as we center student investment and growth.

### **We are intentionally collaborative toward the University**

Across campus, we have intentionally built partnerships with a diverse array of colleagues and programs. We share the following to highlight our sustained practice of collaboration and to reveal the many ways in which English and Modern Languages is critical to Lipscomb's mission.

EML is vital to the flourishing of our students across the University, and we are committed to partnering with others to serve student needs. Although we are small, we are agile and generous in our commitment to intentional collaboration for the flourishing of our students.

### **The Student EML Experience: Distinctly Lipscomb**

Our programs have developed key strengths that now set us apart as distinctly Lipscomb. The program's emphasis on *experiential learning* is chief among these distinctives, a focus that is exceedingly rare for a department as small as ours. The majority of our Modern Languages degree seekers study abroad, most in language immersion programs. While we work hand in hand with Global Studies to equip and prepare our students to thrive in Lipscomb programs in Austria, England, Italy and Costa Rica, we are distinct in the language immersion programs we have curated with international universities.

For our English students, the Lipscomb distinction comes in two primary areas: *First*, through departmentally nurtured and selected internships. Our internship program, curated by Dr. Dana Chamblee Carpenter and generating over 100 credit hours for over 70 students in the last 8 years, provides a gold standard for our University. In English, we provide a foundation and a pathway for our students to collaborate with their global neighbors, participate in local community initiatives, and share practical experience that complements their academic studies. *Second*, we are distinctly Lipscomb in our robust effort to cultivate student professional growth through presenting and publishing. It is *incredibly* rare for an undergraduate student to present and publish their work at national or regional conferences or publications. Despite these odds, with the support of our faculty, many of our students achieve this milestone.

Finally, we are distinctly Lipscomb in our strong focus on incorporating faith and ethics into literary analysis and creative writing, catering to a niche audience seeking a values-based education. Our Modern Language program is

designed to empower students to more fully see, appreciate and participate in the diverse communities and cultures that bear God's image. These distinctive approaches set us apart from many of our peers.

Lipscomb University's English and Modern Language programs distinctively differ from competitors because of our close-knit community, experiential learning opportunities, faith-based perspectives, and our vibrant cultural setting in Nashville.

**Growth and Additional Support**

As a department, English and Modern Languages recognize the following opportunities for growth and request specific resources in our commitment to continuously improve. In an effort to be transparent and forthright, I chose to simply list these items in this cover letter.

We are eager to meet to discuss our review, and hope you will read and appreciate the stellar faculty and programs that comprise the Department of English and Modern Languages.

Respectfully,

Brandi Kellett, PhD

Chair, EML

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