

**LMU**  
Lincoln Memorial University  
**QEP Newsletter**

*Transparent Instruction in General Education and Gateway Courses for Student Success*

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## 2022-23 Transparent Instruction Faculty Awards

Our fourth year of our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is now complete. We set a record for the most faculty award nominations with a total of 47 received compared to 10 – 15 nominations in prior years. What was also impressive was the length, details, and time that went into many of these submissions. Some students felt so strongly about nominating their faculty that they wrote essays to express their appreciation for the difference that their instructor made in their lives. We will highlight the top three individuals in the next three newsletters. The awards were announced at the All Faculty Meeting on August 10. The following faculty are recognized for their exemplary transparent instruction pedagogy in the 2022-23 academic year:

Faculty Awards	Faculty	Department
First Place - \$1,000	Dr. Kevin Cooper	Physics
Second Place - \$750	Dr. Thomas Shell	Chemistry
Third Place - \$500	Dr. Savannah Campbell	Psychology
Honorable Mention - \$250	Dr. Stephen Everly Dr. Jason Fowler Dr. Lindsay Horne	Chemistry Biology Biology
Transparency Beyond QEP	Dr. LaRoy Brandt	Biology

We thank the students, faculty, and staff that nominated individuals for these awards. A special “thank you” also to those that served on the award review committee for reading the nomination submissions and materials.

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## Fall 2023 Syllabi & Assignments Review



Transparent Syllabi and Assignments are one of many assessment measures that we have for our QEP. Using a 4-point rubric, a committee reviews the documents to assess if we have integrated transparency into the course syllabi and two assignments for each of our general education and gateway courses. Fall 2023 materials should be forwarded to [Molly.Duggan@LMU.net](mailto:Molly.Duggan@LMU.net) by **Friday, September 1** and they will then be uploaded to the Academic Affairs Bulletin Board. The syllabi and assignments should include clear purpose, tasks, and criteria as well as an annotated example of each assignment.

## Sarah Long Provides Student Voice

The QEP Steering Committee is composed of faculty, staff, and students. Undergraduate students play a key role in helping to provide a voice to how our policies impact students. Sarah Long is our newest member of the QEP Steering Committee – joining us in fall 2023. Long is a junior, majoring in Nursing and is from Ewing, Virginia.



**Sarah Long**

When Long graduates with her BSN degree from LMU, she plans to go to graduate school and become a Nurse Anesthetist. She is already a strong leader on campus with involvement in the Honors Program, Delight Ministries, Student Nursing Association, and is a Lincoln Ambassador. She also works part time for Tractor Supply. In her free time, Long enjoys spending time farming with cows and hiking outdoors. Welcome to our QEP Steering Committee Sarah Long – we look forward to working with you!

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## 2022-23 Course Evaluations

For the eighth consecutive semester, we have exceeded our target goal for course evaluation ratings. One of the outcomes of our QEP is that we want students to feel like they are a member of the LMU learning community. We have a question in the course evaluations asking students if they feel like they are a member of the LMU learning community. Our target goal is 80 percent to “agree” and we have been above that for both fall 2022 and spring 2023. The statement asks if the course “helped them to feel like they are a member of the LMU learning community.” We are thankful the Railsplitter spirit is growing stronger!

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>
Fall 2022	81.9 %
Spring 2023	84.9 %

## Surveys Deployed Through Canvas via Qualtrics

Students are asked at the beginning and end of every semester to answer 10 questions regarding their general education/gateway courses. In the early stages of our QEP, surveys were collected on paper. Once the pandemic hit, we transitioned the surveys electronically through Blackboard and then through Enterprise Surveys interfaced with Blackboard. Fall 2023 starts a new chapter for LMU with the use of Canvas as our Learning Management System (LMS). Surveys will be created in Qualtrics, which is an online survey tool, and then deployed through Canvas.

With this new format, students will have a Canvas Dashboard that will list all of the classes for the surveys. There will be a “status” column that will say “To Do” prior to completing the survey and will change to “Done” after completing the survey. This should be helpful to students that have several general education and gateway classes.

Surveys are expected to be deployed on Wednesday, August 16. With classes starting on Monday, August 14, it allows faculty time to review their syllabi and initial assignments prior to the surveys being deployed.

In the first five prompts of the survey, students respond to statements using a 5-point Likert scale. The response scale statements are: 1 “Strongly Disagree”; 2 “Disagree”; 3 “Neutral”; 4 “Agree”; and 5 “Strongly Agree”. The following are the five statements for the first section of the survey:

1. I know how my work will be evaluated.
2. Instructor gives good directions for each assignment.
3. Assignments are connected to course goals.
4. I know the purpose of each assignment.
5. Thus far, I understand the course content.

In the last five questions of the survey, students use a different 5-point Likert scale. The response scale statements for this section are: 1 “Not at All”; 2 “A little”; 3 “Moderate”; 4 “A lot”; and 5 “A great deal”. The following are the statements for the last half of the survey:

1. This course is providing me with confidence to succeed in school.
2. This class is incorporating my interests.
3. This class will prepare me to work in the global environment.
4. I can see how knowledge of this course material or skills developed in this course will help me outside of the classroom.
5. This course is helping me to apply concepts to problems.

We hope that this new software will assist us in deploying and collecting student surveys with greater ease. The smoother the implementation of the software and distribution of the surveys, the better our pool of data will be. We will continue to email updates to faculty as we navigate through this process over the next month. We will continue to send reminder emails to students and staff as we approach the various survey deadlines. Happy Surveying!

## RESOURCE: Appalachian College Association

LMU faculty and staff can benefit from our membership with the Appalachian College Association (ACA). According to the ACA website, it is described as “a non-profit consortium of 34 private four-year liberal arts institutions located in the central Appalachian Mountains in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.” Part of the ACA mission is to “facilitate peer connections, facilitate cooperation and collaboration among member institutions, develop and fund professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and negotiate cost-saving partnerships on behalf of our member institutions.” For governance, the president of each member institution sits on the Board of Directors. President Clayton Hess represents LMU on the Board of Directors. According to Dr. Larry Hall, ACA Vice President of Academic Affairs, plans are underway to create a formal “infrastructure for Student Affairs and Student Success staff” this fall which they anticipate would increase collaboration for those populations.

LMU faculty can participate in the June Teaching and Leadership Institute (TLI) or the fall Annual Summit. The ACA offers monthly virtual professional development workshops throughout the school year. In addition, they offer a professional development meeting for Chief Academic Offices as well as for Library Professionals for them to meet and discuss issues related to their corresponding positions.



The ACA supports undergraduate research through the Ledford Scholars. In 2023, 43 undergraduate students from 18 different institutions received the scholarship. The following four LMU students received an award this year:

- Joshua Boldon, Chemistry Pre-Med major, Mentor Dr. Thomas Shell, “Synthesis and Physicochemical Properties of a Fluorine Derivative of Acetaminophen”.
- Erika Hale, Conservation Biology major, Mentor Dr. LaRoy Brandt, “Owl Biodiversity Estimates at Fall Creek Falls State Park.”
- Trevor Holt, Conservation Biology major, Mentor Dr. Ryan Overton, “Construction of a biomass gasifier and testing for natural disasters and emergencies.”
- Logan Taylor, Conservation Biology major, Mentor Dr. Whitney Kistler, “Prevalence of the Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*) in freshwater ecosystems throughout Harlan County, Kentucky.”

This financial support helps students to do research that benefits them academically, but also helps our local communities.

Other student opportunities include discounted test prep support for those planning to go to graduate school. The Kaplan tests include the MCAT (Medical School Admission Test), GRE (Graduate Record Exam), LSAT (Law School Admission Test), DAT (Dental Admission Test), OAT (Optometry Admission Test) and PCAT (Pharmacy College Admission Test). These discounts can save students hundreds of dollars!

Speaking of research, ACA also provides faculty fellowships to support faculty research. In 2022-23, 27 faculty were awarded a fellowship from 17 different institutions. The following two LMU faculty were awarded a faculty fellowship:

- Dr. Thomas Bragg, Associate Professor of English, received a fellowship to “travel to the archives at the British Library in London to examine the correspondence of Victorian historical novelist George Payne Rainsford James.”
- Dr. Ethan Fulwood, Assistant Professor of Anatomy, received a fellowship to “collect ecologically informative morphology from a range of mammal species occurring in Middle Eocene, Late Eocene, and Early Oligocene faunas to understand if/how taxonomic replacement across these transitions produced shifts in ecological diversity.”

Dr. Bragg said “winning this fellowship allows me to revive a research project that ran into a dead end several years ago. It will enable me to explore scholarship areas that are both familiar and new. I’m very grateful and excited about my new opportunities.” Dr. Bragg has attended three prior ACA summits and has presented at one. He finds the summits to be valuable and says “they’re friendly and usually quite helpful.”

Dr. Fulwood said “I was awarded a fellowship to support summer paleontological fieldwork in the Eocene-Oligocene transition in Montana.” He says that the grant also supports “three K-12 educators as a research experience for teachers.” Through the grant he said “I hope to use this work as a basis to apply for further funding to support a larger research program documenting faunal changes across this period of transition in the basins of Southwestern Montana.”

Dr. Larry Hall is the Vice-President of Academic Programs with ACA and has been in this role since 2018. He worked closely with ACA in his prior role as the Provost at Lenoir-Rhyne University. As a first-generation college student himself when he went to school, he understands what it is like for students that have difficulty transitioning to college. He says he has a special passion for the mission of ACA because “what we do in our schools to support our students—many coming from underrepresented groups and often making great sacrifices to attend college—is very, very special to me and my ACA staff colleagues.”

Dr. Jay Stubblefield, Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs at LMU says, “LMU and other member institutions benefit immensely from the valuable support the ACA provides for faculty and student development, library resources, and institutional collaboration. Drs. Hall and Rushing (ACA Vice President and President) consistently take a practical, needs-based approach to every ACA initiative and activity. They take pride in offering opportunities that are affordable and inclusive, and they are always open to new ideas.”

At a small private institution, it can be difficult to collaborate if you are the only one in your office. ACA has created a “new community platform” of 65 groups of specialized areas to faculty and staff to communicate with each other through the ACAconnect. The platform is similar to Facebook groups in that people can join a group for a specific area of work, research or interest. Some examples of current groups include Academic Advising, Accreditation Liaisons, Community Engagement, Educational Technology, First Year Student Experience, General Education, and Undergraduate Research. There are also groups for specific academic programs of study such as Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English, and Political Science. This is a wonderful way for

faculty to not feel like they are in a silo and to be able to reach out to other faculty at other institutions that may be facing some of the same challenges and issues. This form of collaboration helps all of us!

For more information about the benefits, opportunities, and support of the Appalachian College Association, you can go to the ACA website at: [www.acaweb.org](http://www.acaweb.org).

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## Important 2023 Dates

August 9	QEP Steering Committee Meeting
August 14	Fall 2023 Classes Begin
August 16-Sept. 2	QEP Student Surveys Available for General Education & Gateway Courses
September 1	Due Date for Fall 2023 Syllabi & Assignment Submission

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## LinkedIn Learning Professional Development - Anywhere & Anytime

Sometimes funds are tight and we have limited money in our budgets to attend conferences. Sometimes schedules are filled and we can't "afford" to be out of our offices for multiple days or be away from our home responsibilities. What might be a healthy and affordable solution? LinkedIn Learning!

As LMU faculty, staff, and students, we have access to LinkedIn Learning workshops at **no additional cost!** You can squeeze in a 45-minute workshop between classes. You can learn about ways to use technology or engage students, from the comfort of your office or your home recliner. Professional development can help you become a better teacher, leader, or student. Workshops can help you to build on your skillset and advance your career. There are categories to search such as Business, Creative, Technology, and Certifications. You can also search for topics through the search bar at the top of the LinkedIn Learning Home Page.

Access is available through MyLMU, Quick Links, and LinkedIn Learning. If you are trying to embrace and learn about **technology**, here are some topics that may interest you:

- Anticipate Tech Mishaps
- Learning Excel 2019
- Learning to Teach Online
- PowerPoint for Teachers: Creating Interactive Lessons
- SPSS Statistics Essential Training
- Stepping Up Your Webcam Video Presence
- Teaching with Technology

If you are trying to improve your **teaching** to be more engaging, these sessions may be best:

- Assessing Student Presentations
- Facilitating Active Learning in the Classroom
- Facilitating Student Self-Assessments
- Gamification of Learning
- Learning How to Increase Learner Engagement
- Measuring Learning Effectiveness
- The Value of Engaged Students
- Using Questions to Foster Critical Thinking and Curiosity

Maybe you want to incorporate lessons for **students** – these sessions are tailored for students:

- Building Self-Confidence
- Communication Foundations
- Data Analytics for Students
- Grammar Foundations
- How to Speak so People Want to Listen
- Job Hunting for College Grads
- Learning LinkedIn for Students
- LinkedIn vs. Resume
- Social Selling with LinkedIn
- Writing to Be Heard on LinkedIn

Maybe you just want to learn about how you can be a better YOU and would find these sessions toward **personal development** helpful:

- Budgeting in Real Life
- Building Resilience as a Leader
- Communicating with Confidence
- Communicating with Emotional Intelligence
- Create Healthy Self-Esteem: Know Your Worth
- Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Effective Listening
- Having Difficult Conversations
- How to Have a Happier Workweek
- How to Work Smarter, Not Harder: Save Time and Money and Increase Productivity
- Improving Your Focus
- Managing Stress for Positive Change
- Negotiation Skills
- Practice Mindfulness for 12 Minutes a Day
- Rock Your LinkedIn Profile
- Time Management for Greater Meaning and Happiness



Learning can be fun! As you complete LinkedIn Learning workshops, you are making an investment in yourself. This knowledge can help you personally and professionally. While we should all be working on continuous improvement in our areas of employment, we can also strive to be our best versions of ourselves. Complete a workshop and let me know which one(s) you think are share-worthy (Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu)! We are interested and want to know what might be “Railsplitter Approved”!

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## What’s next? Seeking input!

Where do we go from here? Are there aspects of this QEP on Transparent Instruction that you like and want to continue? One of the main aspects of QEP is continuous improvement. Send suggestions of what we should continue doing from this QEP. Also, do you have an idea/topic of what we could do for our next QEP in 2029? We are generating lists now and seeking your input. The QEP must focus on student outcomes and/or student success. Suggestions can be sent to [Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu](mailto:Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu).

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## PURPOSE ~ TASKS ~ CRITERIA

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### By The Numbers . . .

959	Number of student surveys returned at the end of the spring 2023 semester. This is an increase from only 648 in the beginning of spring 2023.
4.037	Average score for the end-of-the-semester QEP student surveys in spring 2023 on a 5-point scale. A drop from the beginning of the semester score of 4.120.
74	Percentage of spring 2023 transparent syllabi that scored all 3’s and 4’s on a 4-point scale. Target goal is to reach 80 percent – did not meet our goal. This is a drop from 91% in the Fall 2022 semester.
90	Percentage of spring 2023 transparent instructional assignments that scored all 3’s and 4’s on a 4-point scale. Target goal is to reach 85% and we exceeded our goal again!
2	Number of transparent assignments that should be included in each general education and gateway course to reflect transparent instruction.

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*Thank you for reading our newsletter. The QEP Office is located in 118 Grant Lee. If there is something you would like to add to future newsletters, please email [Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu](mailto:Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu).*