

1 — Executive Summary

“Purposeful Reasoning, Inquiry, and Scholarship at Meredith”

The mission of the Meredith College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to equip students with the intellectual skills and traits that encourage critical thinking and active engagement in the learning process. It will integrate critical thinking through a variety of courses and will enable students to excel in life-long learning careers, leadership roles, and service.

Building on its strong tradition and mission of equipping women to excel, Meredith’s Quality Enhancement Plan is named the *PRISM Experience*, an acronym for the type of critical thinking this plan seeks to strengthen—Purposeful Reasoning, Inquiry, and Scholarship at Meredith.

After gathering input from students, faculty, and staff, the QEP Steering Committee sought consensus through written and oral feedback on both the QEP topic and possible initiatives to strengthen critical thinking in our students. Grounded in current research and crafted with the unique strengths and potentials of our student body in mind, we formulated a definition of critical thinking for our campus:

We define critical thinking as a purposeful, self-directed process in which we take charge of knowledge, use reason to propel our scholarship and solve problems, and integrate these essential skills in intellectual endeavors and actions.

To address critical thinking in this vein, we will undertake three campus-wide initiatives:

Initiative 1: To implement a first-year, discipline-based PRISM seminar designed to promote critical thinking by introducing strategies and encouraging practice.

Initiative 2: To infuse the teaching of critical thinking throughout a student’s undergraduate career through Critical Thinking (CT)-designated courses, through co-curricular activities, and through departmental initiatives to promote deeper levels of critical thinking in existing coursework and capstone experiences.

Initiative 3: To scaffold student growth in critical thinking abilities by providing faculty and staff professional development in critical thinking research and best practice.

To support these initiatives, we will work closely with the Office of Research, Planning and Assessment to engage in continuous assessment of PRISM learning outcomes and of the process itself. This assessment will guide professional development and course and program improvements throughout the implementation process and beyond. Through this process, we will seek intentional and effective avenues to create a campus culture committed to improving critical thinking skills in the most transformative of ways.

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