



## **Student Awareness Generates Action (SAGA)**

*Through the use of campus-wide, annual themes*



**Quality Enhancement Plan**

## Executive Summary

### SAGA – Student Awareness Generates Action

Florida Southern College's proposed Quality Enhancement Plan – *Student Awareness Generates Action* (SAGA) – is designed to unite every aspect of college life with biennial themes. The major areas of emphasis are to increase knowledge and awareness of the themes, and to transform heightened levels of awareness about thematic concerns into action and engagement.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Florida Southern College has been designed to be a campus-wide, collaborative initiative emphasizing a series of three thematic areas, students' horizons will expand so that they leave the Florida Southern campus with a broadened understanding of issues that affect communities and a culture of action on those issues.

SAGA is the result of a process that began with strategic planning, was continued through faculty forums and focus groups, and received input from student focus groups and staff groups. The entire campus community has been kept abreast of the plan as it developed and all campus constituencies will be involved in its implementation.

#### Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

SAGA has two key elements, student awareness of thematic issues, and action generated by that increase in awareness, and goals that address each of those elements. The first goal involves awareness:

**Goal 1.** Campus-wide awareness of each theme will be increased through curricular and co-curricular activities. This goal has several student learning outcomes associated with it. These learning outcomes deal with the students' knowledge of the issues, their knowledge of how the broader community responds to the issues, and how they respond themselves to the issues. Student learning outcomes associated with this first goal are:

- Students will demonstrate increased awareness of the theme.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of others' responses to the theme.
- Students will demonstrate personal responses to the theme.
- Students will increase their awareness of the theme through participation in internships, service learning, field experiences, collaborative research, and internships.

The second goal involves the element of action:

**Goal 2:** Students will participate in extra-curricular and volunteer activities involving the theme.

This goal of action is the natural result of the goal of increased awareness. It has but one, all-important student learning outcome:

- Students will demonstrate their action through increased rates of participation in service learning, field experiences, internships, and extra-curricular, volunteer activities.

## **Implementation**

Three themes have been proposed for the initial implementation of SAGA. The themes are:

**2008-2010 – *Hunger and poverty:*** The concepts of hunger and poverty are widespread issues that affect communities from the local to the international. Through a focus on hunger and poverty, Florida Southern will strengthen its institutional commitment to dedicated citizenship in society and develop greater social perspectives on critical issues of universal concern.

**2010-2012 – *Health issues:*** The issue of physical health is directly related to the theme of hunger and poverty, and is a natural transition from that theme. Although physical health issues are common in all communities, inclusion of mental health issues increase the scope of the theme. The intent of SAGA is to examine many types of health issues and how they relate to students' roles in their communities.

**2012-2014 – *Civilization and environment:*** Many current events have reminded us that humanity does not control nature. Civilizations are directly influenced by climate, geology, and geography, from short-term events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or volcanoes to long-term influences on human welfare. At the same time, civilizations make major impacts on the environment, through agricultural practices, industrialization, and utilization of resources. Increased awareness of the interdependent aspects of the environment and civilization will provide many avenues for appropriate action.

Curricular and co-curricular activities will introduce thematic issues to the campus community in a variety of ways. Curricular actions will include the following:

- The theme will be incorporated into courses by the addition of at least one student learning outcome.
- Each division will incorporate the theme into a minimum of two lower division and two upper division courses each semester during the first year and three lower division and three upper division courses each semester during the second year of each thematic cycle.
- The first-year common reading will be selected to incorporate the theme for that year.
- The theme will be incorporated into Examined Life courses as part of the discussion of the first-year common reading.
- The QEP implementation team will conduct faculty seminars and workshops on techniques for incorporating themes into existing courses.

Co-curricular activities for incorporating the themes include (but are not limited to):

- The theme will be the subject of one campus-wide convocation each semester.
- The theme will be the subject of the common-reading convocation during fall semester each year.
- Movies appropriate to the theme will be shown on the campus cable system.

- Updates on thematic activities will be provided during meetings of the Student Government Association.
- A volunteer fair is held each semester to promote action based on the theme.
- Residence life and/or the wellness program will offer one activity based on the theme each semester.

Extra-curricular activities are defined as volunteer and community service activities likely, but not exclusively, located off-campus. Because these activities will consist in large part of those initiated by the students themselves, it is hard to enumerate such activities at this time. However, some of the campus structure for supporting and encouraging these activities are:

- The Life and Cultural Center will coordinate service opportunities associated with the theme.
- Student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, will be encouraged to engage in philanthropy and service linked to the theme.
- Participation in local service groups related to the theme will be encouraged and supported.
- Alternative spring break for volunteerism or service learning will be planned for action on the theme.
- Study abroad, campus ministries, and student development will coordinate service and mission trips to international locations for thematic action.

### **Assessment and reporting**

Florida Southern's success in meeting the goals and outcomes listed above will be assessed in a variety of ways which are detailed in the main body of this report. Assessments will be incorporated within each course with a SAGA component. Professors will reflect upon the success of their efforts in end of course assessments. In-house surveys administered before, during, and after the implementation of each theme will measure longitudinal changes in student awareness of thematic issues. Student development activities will be assessed for their success in meeting SAGA goals. And national surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement will allow Florida Southern to gauge its own progress in increasing awareness and generating compare levels of engagement to those of other institutions throughout the nation.

In order to bring about changes and improvements to SAGA based on assessment results, those assessment results will be evaluated by the SAGA implementation team (and others, as necessary). Assessment results and proposed improvements will be communicated to all campus constituencies, including faculty, students, staff, administration, and the board of trustees.

## **Coordination and Resources**

The institution will provide the necessary resources to promote the SAGA themes throughout campus, be they faculty time and commitment, student development resources, library resources, or just enthusiasm for the project. The college has committed to funding a SAGA coordinator who will be selected from among the faculty and provided with appropriate release time. Space has been set aside for a central SAGA office. Faculty development resources will be allotted for planning, implementing, and improving SAGA offerings in the curriculum. Student development resources are being designated for SAGA activities. Administrative resources, including a large commitment from the office of institutional research have been designated for the SAGA effort.

Florida Southern College is committed to educational excellence through engaging its students in the life of the world and encouraging them to make a positive, consequential impact on society. Florida Southern College is confident that through *Student Awareness Generates Action* the campus community will indeed be strengthened, students will become even more socially aware, and Florida Southern College graduates will be known for their commitment to helping their neighbors through community action.