



UTSA adopts 'Culture of Quantitative Scholarship'

By [Christi Fish](#)
Public Affairs Specialist

(Jan 27, 2009)--As The University of Texas at San Antonio strives to become a Top-100 research institution, students soon will see data in a whole new way. A plan to modify current curricula in core classes to include quantitative learning has been selected for the

university's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is one of two components required for the university's reaffirmation of accreditation by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACS COC\)](#).

Of the 14 QEP proposals submitted in 2008, three were chosen as finalists and presented to focus groups within the university. The final proposal, "Quantitative Scholarship: From Literacy to Mastery," was selected in late fall to be adopted by the university for the Quality Enhancement Plan. The QEP Committee, headed by **Sandra Welch**, vice provost for accountability and institutional effectiveness, gave the plan high marks with nearly all members selecting it as their first choice.

The Quantitative QEP includes two components: (1) quantitative literacy encompassing basic analytical skills such as data interpretation and (2) quantitative mastery, which addresses ways to gather data, identify sources of error and conduct other advanced analyses. These critical thinking and problem solving skills are the same skills used by successful researchers. They also are tested on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).

College of Sciences professor **Kay Robbins**, a member of the winning proposal's committee, believes UTSA's students must possess strong quantitative skills to draw accurate conclusions from data if UTSA is to become a top research university.

Committee chair and biology professor **David Senseman** added, "It is about using arithmetic to solve everyday life problems and about being able to make informed decisions based on data."

UTSA will spend time in Spring 2009 to finalize the new QEP plan before presenting it to the SACS COC accreditation reaffirmation committee at a site visit in 2010. If approved by the accreditation team, formal implementation of the plan will last five years, beginning in 2011.

Ultimately, UTSA's goal is to catalyze long-term instructional change. Undergraduates will complete their degrees possessing stronger quantitative skills while graduate teaching and research assistants will reinforce their quantitative skills as they facilitate undergraduates' mastery of those same skills.

"Quantitative Scholarship: From Literacy to Mastery" was submitted by an interdisciplinary team that included **David Senseman**, associate professor, College of Sciences (committee chair); **Nandini Kannan**, professor, College of Business; **Nancy Martin**, associate professor, College of Education and Human Development; **Kay Robbins**, professor, College of Sciences; and **Joleen Reynolds**, director of testing, UTSA Testing Center.

>> [Download the proposal for "Quantitative Scholarship: From Literacy to Mastery" \(PDF format\)](#).

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