Experiential Inquiry - Definition
Experiential Inquiry is a creative and reflective process where students learn a hands-on approach to examining and investigating open-ended, authentic questions through discovery-based methods. Students are taught to explore content knowledge in unfamiliar areas. They learn the processes, skills and tools necessary to rigorously and objectively inquire about challenges in their topic of interest. With these experience-based skills and knowledge, they can address questions or challenges as defined by their academic discipline. Ultimately, students will actively pursue solutions to these open-ended, authentic challenges and will produce a tangible work product such as a report, journal article, composition, performance, or prototype.

Overview
The goal of the QEP is to expand and enhance experiential inquiry and research opportunities for Rice undergraduates and to provide training opportunities for graduate students. The QEP strengthens the undergraduate experience through clearly communicating the steps necessary for undergraduates to participate in research, providing introductory, hands-on, real-world experiences, enhancing current experiential research opportunities for undergraduates and, in select cases, creating new opportunities.

Experiential inquiry courses will provide students the opportunities to become skilled in using the methods and tools necessary to meaningfully participate in hands-on experiential research and to discern when and how these methods and tools are appropriate to be used in various situations. Students will be provided a clear set of expectations and actions to be taken that will allow them to participate in research within their disciplines.

QEP Goals
Institutional
1. Develop a culture of undergraduates actively examining and investigating open-ended, authentic questions through discovery-based methods.

Student Learning Outcomes
1. Undergraduate students will acquire rigorous, discipline-specific inquiry skills.
2. Undergraduate students will be able to apply theories or construct models to

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1 Research is broadly defined to include research, design, and other forms of creative work as appropriate with the discipline.
explore, address, and/or solve open ended, authentic questions or problems.

3. Undergraduate students will acquire enhanced communication skills to present their work effectively to diverse audiences.

4. Students will identify a course plan that prepares them for and leads to experiential research opportunities.

5. Graduate students will acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills concerning experiential inquiry and research that benefit undergraduate research and assessment.

Experiential Inquiry - Components

1. Student Research
The staff responsible for the QEP will work with academic departments to clearly articulate and communicate the steps necessary for undergraduates to participate in research.

2. Experiential Courses

Experiential inquiry courses - These courses provide students with an opportunity to learn about methods of inquiry employed by different disciplines, or interdisciplinary approaches, as applied to a contemporary problem. These courses will establish a foundation for students to participate in upper-level experiential research and design courses. All students will be encouraged to participate in these courses.

The plan provides four paths for incorporating hands-on projects into both new and existing courses:

School or department freshmen/sophomore courses: A current or new project-based course within a school that teaches the skills of the discipline through open-ended, hands-on experiences. Models for this kind of course are ENGI 120 and NSCI 120, although the specifics of the course would be designed to meet the needs of each school.

Series of courses: Two or more courses within a single department, school, or topic area. One current example is the series of courses in global health technologies that include experiential components that cross the disciplines within social sciences, science and engineering. Courses will include items 1-6.

Single course: A current or new course that includes items 1-5 for a minimum of 7 weeks of the semester.

Module in current course: A section of a course that includes items 1-5 (see table below) for a minimum total time of two weeks of the semester. The two weeks can occur in a block of time or over multiple class periods during the semester.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (Path)</th>
<th>School or Department Courses</th>
<th>Series of Courses</th>
<th>Single Course</th>
<th>Module in Current Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hands-on approach to examining or investigating open-ended, authentic questions or problems that students are addressing for first time.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Methods of inquiry associated with the question or problem (process, skills, and tools necessary to rigorously and objectively inquire about challenges on topic of interest)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No prerequisites for course - freshmen/sophomore level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rigorously and objectively examine diverse ideas and concepts to address questions or problems.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Written, oral, or visual presentation of the product of the examination.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Team-based</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Experiential research programs and courses** – These are for students wanting more in-depth learning experiences that include substantial research, design, or other creative work. They are intermediate to advanced and could take place in courses, with center projects, in research labs, in music, or in visual and performing arts activities. Experiential research courses and programs allow students to take the skills and knowledge they have acquired from previous course work, including experiential inquiry courses, and participate in an independent or team based research program. This research project can be curricular or co-curricular and centered in a department or at one of the University’s research centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Single Course</th>
<th>Series of Courses</th>
<th>Research Lab</th>
<th>Co-Curricular Programs (Center programs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hands-on approach to examining or investigating open ended, authentic, question or problem.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Methods of inquiry associated with the question or problem including the process, skills, and tools necessary to rigorously and objectively inquire about challenges on topic of interest.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rigorously and objectively examine diverse ideas and concepts to address and if possible solve real-world problems.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Written, oral, or visual presentation of the product of the examination.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Team-based</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Funding
- Support for experiential inquiry and research courses with funding targeted at areas of most critical need
- Support for co-curricular programs
- Support for key offices such as the Center for Civic Leadership and Center for Teaching Excellence and the Program for Writing and Communication to support the efforts of the QEP

Project Space
- Identify, coordinate, and publicize space for collaborative work
- Space should include access to internet, software, and projection capabilities
- Some space should include ongoing, secure physical storage (e.g. lockers) for the collaborative work. Some collaborative work only requires virtual secure storage

UG Research Support
- Communication training
- Areas and opportunities to present research (i.e., expand Rice Undergraduate Research Symposium)
- Funds for students to attend conferences
- Consider becoming an NSF REU Site

Graduate Fellows
- Establish Graduate Fellows in Experiential Inquiry/Engaged Pedagogy - train graduate students across the disciplines interested in engaged pedagogy. The fellows program would enhance the theoretical and practical tools for engaged pedagogy; support the implementation of experiential inquiry into the Rice undergraduate curriculum; foster a community of peers and faculty; and create opportunities for graduate student teaching.