

# **A World Class Experience: Improving Cultural Competency at Delta State**

## **Executive Summary**

Through a lengthy institutional-wide effort, Delta State University has identified improving cultural competence as its next QEP topic. While several themes received praise and attention, cultural competence distinguished itself as a timely and relevant topic. Improving cultural competency at Delta State will assist students in discovering and learning about other cultures; understanding cultural biases and differences; improving intercultural communication skills; developing empathic skills; and moving effectively within a globalized society. As the literature suggests, working in an increasingly multicultural society and global economy takes more than just simple interaction. Cultural competence is not innate and cannot be assumed; by taking full advantage of its location, rich history, and bountiful cultural resources, DSU plans to be proactive in improving its students' worldview.

To achieve these goals, DSU's QEP Team created three primary student learning outcomes:

1. Describe various aspects of cultural diversity.
2. Articulate a shared understanding and support of cross-cultural experiences.
3. Evaluate cultural perspectives with openness and respect.

To implement the plan, the QEP Team devised four strategies to infuse cultural competency into the undergraduate academic experience from start to finish. In GST 100, mentors will treat the entire course as an intercultural experience while also adding a new feature – a common reading of “Dead Men’s Path” by Chinua Achebe. Additionally, in twenty-one general education courses and fifty-six major-specific courses, academic departments will incorporate cultural competence by creating specific objectives and then evaluating instruction and assessment methods. Finally, the plan will also delve into extracurricular activities through sponsoring, promoting, and creating culturally rich and instructive events on campus.

The assessment plan's heart lies in the academic departments' achievement of the SLOs and their use of evaluation results to change or improve their courses. Over the course of the plan, these departmental evaluation reports will be augmented by a number of supplemental reports and surveys to determine the overall plan's efficacy. A sampling of these items includes the *Freshmen Cultural Competence Survey*, chairs' *Departmental QEP Reports*, and annual reviews by the QEP Director and the QEP Advisory Group.

In conclusion, DSU has created a five-year plan that is relevant and focused on student learning, action items that are logical and thorough, and assessment procedures that are based on effective and best practices.