



# QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN PROPOSAL 1

## B E T T E R   T H R O U G H   B E L O N G I N G

*By centering the diverse backgrounds of our students, we can improve their academic performance and empower them to confidently enter careers knowing they belong in their field.*

### Increasing Student Belonging in their **Fields of Study**

Creating a psychological sense of belonging in students has been shown to positively impact students' thoughts about themselves and their academic performance. Belonging uncertainty (feeling that you are not accepted as you are in a group, environment, or role) can create amotivation in students. As a result, small setbacks can be seen as insurmountable obstacles.

Students from historically marginalized or underrepresented groups tend to experience powerful benefits when belonging uncertainty is confronted. By focusing the good work already being done on campus and developing new interventions, the current proposal seeks to foster a sense of belonging in students' fields of study.

### Intentional Curriculum Development to Enhance Belonging

Belongingness needs to be fostered genuinely throughout the curricular and cocurricular experience to maximize reach and benefit to UHD students.

Great work is already starting to happen on campus in this area. This proposal would shine a light on that work, muster institutional resources towards supporting and expanding that work, and help focus new efforts moving forward to institutionalize best practices.

The first-year seminars have been intentionally reworked to add increased elements of belonging, but further resources are needed. Faculty can impact belonging throughout the curriculum by intentionally adding Identity Safety Cues and making small but meaningful changes to course materials.

The expansion of field experience courses into new degree programs could provide students with a strong sense of professional belonging.

Ideally, interventions would be developed by different units to capitalize on their unique experience with students. A variety of units across campus including, but not limited to, the SSSL, The Career Center, Gator Success Institute, and the Impact Learning Office could have significant impacts.



### **Better Through Belonging IMPLEMENTATION:**

**YEAR 1:** Faculty and staff professional development in this area would be offered. Units would then propose initiatives that focus on increasing belonging. Thematically similar ideas could be synergized into larger programs.

**YEAR 2:** Measurement of belongingness at university level would begin. Pilots of programs would start.

**YEAR 3+:** Programs would begin and measurement of key metrics would take place. Cycles of improvement continue through year 5.

## HOW THIS PROPOSAL ALIGNS WITH UHD'S MISSION AND GOALS:

This QEP topic - Better through Belonging - aligns with the institutional mission as well as Strategic Plan Goals A, B, & C.

**Goal A.** Enhance the student experience to increase retention and graduation rates and enable students to learn and grow in all aspects.

4. Inspire students to discover meaningful connections, explore their interests, and participate in experiences while pursuing their degrees in a timely manner.
5. Cultivate an environment of well-being that empowers our campus community to establish and sustain healthy practices.

**Goal B.** Cultivate a diverse portfolio of strategic learning partnerships to promote experiential learning.

2. Develop cross-sector partnerships to address workforce needs by aligning academic programs to increase value to partners and maintain high quality reciprocal relationships.

**Goal C.** Cultivate a dynamic learning environment where we nurture students to their fullest potential so that they may better impact their world.

1. Identify gaps and develop programs and that are relevant to students' and societal needs.