



**Request for NEW 5-Year (2026-2031)
QEP TOPIC Mini Proposals**

This request seeks mini proposals that clearly describe and justify a topic for Tennessee Tech's new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which will begin in Fall 2026. Tech's QEP Topic Selection committee will review all proposals and select three for possible further development as our new QEP. The authors of these proposals will receive monetary honoraria, as stipulated below.

Rationale

Tennessee Tech is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ([SACSCOC](#)). Without such accreditation, Tech students would not be eligible for federal loans or grants to help pay for their education.

In order to have its accreditation reaffirmed in 2026, Tech is required to develop and implement a Quality Enhancement Plan. The QEP must focus directly on improving some aspect of student learning or student success. The focus of the QEP must be derived from our institution's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes with input from faculty, staff, students, and the community. Tennessee Tech has previously implemented two successful QEP projects. The first in 2006 called [Improving Critical Thinking and Real-World Problem Solving Skills](#) and the second in 2016 called [EDGE: Enhanced Discovery Through Guided Exploration](#).

Background

Tech began its QEP process in August, 2023, when the plan to develop our new QEP was discussed with and approved by Tech's Leadership Team. The process was also presented for review to the Student Government Association (SGA) and to the Faculty Senate in October. Soon after, the QEP Topic Selection Committee carefully considered [SACSCOC QEP guidelines](#) and reviewed Tech's [vision, mission](#), and [strategic plan](#); as well as [institutional data](#) to narrow a list of 25 possible QEP topics. Institutional data included a survey of employers attending the Fall 2023 Employer Expo evaluating the skills that they valued and the degree to which Tech graduates met those expectations along with alumni survey results and additional metrics. From the original list of 25 possible topic, the committee identified the 12 most promising. As the first part of a two-part process to broadly involve the greater Tech community, a survey of faculty, staff, and students was conducted to assess the support for each of these 12 topics.

This request for mini proposals is the second part of the process to broadly involve the greater Tech community in the selection of our new QEP topic. It is expected that all responses to this call for mini proposals will:

- Respond to the University's [vision, mission](#), and current strategic plan, [Tech Tomorrow](#), a multi-year strategic plan to prepare and strengthen Tennessee Tech for the future.
- Respond to current [institutional assessment data](#);
- Respond to the results of the QEP topic survey referenced above;
- Be grounded in theory that encourages student success in an environment that is challenging and engaging; and
- Provide a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to addressing emerging issues at Tennessee Tech.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include Tennessee Tech faculty, staff and students. Collaborative teams are highly recommended. One team leader should be identified.

Evaluation Criteria and Honoraria

The QEP Topic Selection Committee will review mini proposals based on the criteria outlined below. The authors of the three highest-rated proposals will receive honoraria, with each team member entitled to \$500, subject to a team maximum of \$1,500. Members of the QEP Topic Selection Committee who author or co-author proposals will not be eligible to receive honoraria. For teams exceeding three individuals, minus any Committee members, the \$1,500 honorarium will be evenly distributed among the qualified members. Furthermore, Committee members are prohibited from evaluating proposals they have contributed to.

After the Committee's review, the authors of the three top-rated mini proposals will be asked to develop extended proposals of 20-25 pages, to be submitted later in the Spring semester.

Submission Guidelines

- 10 page limitation, including bibliography but not including a cover page or appendices.
- Use 1 inch margins, 12 point type, Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing.
- Submit a PDF copy of the proposal to lweathers@tntech.edu by 4:30pm Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.
- The name(s), email address(es), and primary telephone number(s) of the submitter(s), along with the title of the mini proposal, should be indicated on a separate cover page.

Appendices

Include:

1. Documents of Support such as letters, petitions, etc., from key stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, students, alumni or employers). These documents are suggested but not required.
2. Examples of measurement tools. These documents are suggested but not required.

Rubric for Evaluating QEP Mini Proposals

Criteria	Unacceptable (0)	Weak (2)	Acceptable (4)	Exceptional (6)
1. Clarity of topic and goal of program	The topic is vague, and the goal of the program is unclear or unspecified	The topic is somewhat defined, but the goal of the program lacks precision or full development.	The topic is clearly identified, and the goal of the program is well-defined with a clear purpose.	The topic is not only clear but also compelling; the goal of the program is articulated with depth and precision, providing a vivid sense of purpose.
2. Alignment with Tennessee Tech's mission/ vision/ strategic plan	No evidence or mention of alignment with Tennessee Tech's mission, vision, or strategic plan.	Minimal alignment with Tennessee Tech's foundational documents, with superficial connections.	Clear alignment with a priority in Tennessee Tech's mission, vision, and strategic plan with specified connections.	Clear alignment with two or more priorities in Tennessee Tech's mission, vision, and strategic plan with specified connections.
3. Evidence in support (institutional data in support of the topic)	No data or evidence provided	Limited data provided with minimal relevance or clarity	Relevant institutional data provided with clear connections to the topic	Comprehensive, pertinent data provided, clearly and convincingly supporting the topic.
4. Student-centered objectives (focus on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success)	No clear focus on student outcomes or benefits	Some objectives mentioned, but with limited clarity or direct benefit to students.	Clear objectives provided that focus on specific student outcomes or benefits.	In-depth, well-articulated objectives that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing student outcomes and experiences
5. Likelihood of broad-based support of institutional constituencies	No consideration of institutional constituencies or their potential support	Limited recognition of institutional constituencies; unclear if support would be likely.	Demonstrates an understanding of institutional constituencies with a reasonable likelihood of gaining support	Clearly outlines broad-based institutional support with evidence or strong rationale.
6. Implementation ideas (classes, programs, activities, strategies, etc.)	No concrete ideas for implementation	Offers some general ideas, but lacks detail or feasibility	Provides clear ideas for classes, programs, activities, and strategies required	Offers a comprehensive, innovative plan for implementation, considering all essential facets.

7. Potential impact of the program (average of A and B below)				
A. Potential breadth of impact	No consideration of the breadth of impact	Limited scope of potential impact; benefits a small group	Demonstrates a reasonable breadth of impact across various constituencies	Shows extensive, institution-wide impact, benefiting a large portion of the community.
B. Potential depth of impact	No consideration of the depth of impact	Superficial or marginal potential benefits	Demonstrates significant depth of impact, with tangible benefits.	Outlines transformative benefits, deeply affecting the intended beneficiaries.
8. Feasibility analysis (feasibility with likely available resources)	No analysis of feasibility or consideration of resources	Limited feasibility analysis with minimal consideration of resources.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the resources needed and provides a practical feasibility analysis.	Provides an in-depth feasibility analysis, clearly outlining all resources and potential challenges, with solutions proposed
9. Potential for assessment	No indication or plan for how the program can be assessed. Lacks measurable outcomes or benchmarks.	Some mention of assessment, but lacks clarity or detail. Outcomes may be vaguely measurable but are not well-defined	A clear plan for assessment is provided, with defined measurable outcomes and a reasonable approach to gathering and analyzing data	A comprehensive assessment plan is outlined, detailing specific methodologies, tools, and benchmarks. Demonstrates a deep understanding of assessment strategies and their importance in ensuring the success and continuous improvement of the program.