



COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON  
SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY

**TRAIN YOUR BRAIN  
TO SUSTAIN**

## QEP Course Proposal 2017-2018

The College of Charleston's next QEP, "Sustainability Literacy as a Bridge to Addressing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Problems," invites all faculty to propose either a sustainability focused special topics course for 2017-2018 or a proposal to change a currently existing course so that it is sustainability related as per the below definitions, or a proposal for a learning community. Proposals can be for fall 2017, spring 2018, or summer (on campus or study away) 2018. The "CofC Sustains/Solves" theme of the QEP for the 2017-18 academic year is water quantity and quality. We are particularly interested in courses that help teach sustainability literacy where the entryway is through the topic of water: availability and conflict over, management of, cleanliness and quality of, cultural views and values of, artistic expressions related to, sources and availability, water justice, and other ways of thinking about the triple bottom line of sustainability via the lens of water.

Proposals from all Schools for first time upper-level special topics courses that are focused on sustainability literacy and water will be given priority. Those selected to develop and offer new QEP special topics courses **will receive a stipend** of \$500, those selected to change existing courses so that they become sustainability related or focused courses will receive a stipend of \$200, while faculty who propose a sustainability focused learning community around the topic of water will both receive \$350. Faculty whose courses are accepted commit to attending a two-day workshop on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 on teaching and assessing sustainability literacy and commit to assigning a QEP-generated signature learning assignment for assessment of the QEP student learning outcomes. Accepted faculty will become affiliated with the Sustainability Literacy Institute (SLI) and are encouraged to take full advantage of the resources offered by the SLI. Faculty are encouraged to teach this special topics course up to 3 times<sup>1</sup>, sharing their assessment results for each time taught.

The definition of **sustainability** that guides our QEP is the integration of social, economic, and environmental systems in ways that allow for individual, institutional, community, regional, and planetary resilience. To be **sustainability literate** one has the knowledge and skills to advocate for resilient social, economic, and environmental systems. Proposals that specifically relate to the CofC Sustains/Solves 2017-2018 theme of water should reflect how course content will use this theme to provide sustainability literacy to CofC students. When considering course proposals, please keep in mind the definitions of sustainability focused and sustainability related courses provided below. We are seeking submissions for both sustainability focused and

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<sup>1</sup> Special topics can be taught 3 times before they can no longer be taught, or they must become a permanent departmental/program offering.

sustainability related courses for 2017-2018. The designation of “focused” vs “related” comes from the AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) STARS system (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System):

**a) “Sustainability Focused” courses (contain one of the below, or a mix of the three)**

- i) Courses in which the *primary and explicit* focus is on sustainability as an integrated concept having social/cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions (the Triple Bottom Line).
- ii) Courses in which the primary and explicit focus is on the application of sustainability within a field. As sustainability is an interdisciplinary topic, such courses generally incorporate insights from multiple disciplines. Obvious examples include Sustainable Agriculture, Architecture for Sustainability, and Sustainable Business, however courses may also count if their course descriptions indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability within a field.
- iii) Courses in which the primary focus is on providing skills and/or knowledge directly connected to understanding or solving one or more major sustainability challenges [which for 2017-2018 is water]. A course might provide knowledge and understanding of the problem or tools for solving it, for example Climate Change Science, Renewable Energy Policy, Environmental Justice, or Green Chemistry. Such courses do not necessarily cover “sustainability” as a concept, but should address more than one of the three dimensions of sustainability (i.e. social/cultural wellbeing, economic prosperity, and environmental health).

**b) “Sustainability Related” courses (contain one of the below, or a mix of the two)**

- iv) A course that includes sustainability is primarily focused on a topic other than sustainability, but incorporates a unit or module on sustainability or a sustainability challenge, includes one or more sustainability-focused activities, or integrates sustainability issues throughout the course.
- v) As an example: While a foundational course such as chemistry or sociology might provide knowledge that is useful to practitioners of sustainability, it would not be considered to be inclusive of sustainability unless the concept of sustainability or a sustainability challenge is specifically integrated into the course. Likewise, although specific tools or practices such as GIS (Geographical Information Systems) or engineering can be applied towards sustainability, such courses would not count unless they incorporated a unit on sustainability or a sustainability challenge, included a sustainability-focused activity, or incorporated sustainability issues throughout the course.

Please visit [sustain.cofc.edu](http://sustain.cofc.edu) for further relevant information related to the QEP and the call for proposals. Specific questions can be addressed to the QEP Director, Todd LeVasseur, at

[levasseurjtj@cofc.edu](mailto:levasseurjtj@cofc.edu). Official proposals should be scanned and sent to the QEP Director, Todd LeVasseur, no later than October 15th, 2016.

1. Department:
2. Faculty Member:
3. Faculty Member CWID:
4. Is this a \_\_\_\_\_ new sustainability focused (SF) special topics course  
\_\_\_\_\_ change to an existing course so it is sustainability related (SR) or SF  
\_\_\_\_\_ creation of a SF Learning Community (please specify other faculty  
involved)  
\_\_\_\_\_ list here the relevant above criteria from the STARS definition you are  
using to teach either an SF or SR course (please write for SF either i, ii, and/or iii; for SR  
either iv and/or v)
5. QEP Course Title:
6. Semester Offered: Fall '17 \_\_\_\_\_ Spring '18 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Department Chair/Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Course Description (Please limit to 120 words), related to the 2017-18 theme of water quality and quantity, where this description is for review by the QEP Implementation Committee and will be used to advertise the course online (it is possible to turn in a word document file of this description):

8. Would you be willing to have REACH students in your course? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
**Note:** See [reach.cofc.edu](http://reach.cofc.edu) for a description of the program. Special training is provided to faculty who choose to have REACH students in their course

9. Please provide a list of assumed learning sources (books, blogs/websites, peer-reviewed articles, videos) you will use in the course, while explaining how these relate to water, sustainability literacy, and the triple bottom line, where appropriate.

