



Is this Required Reading? Summer Reading at Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Daphne L. Rankin

dlrankin@vcu.edu

Associate Vice Provost for Instruction

QEP-2004

Strategic Plan - VCU 2020

“ The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved. ”

Ernest T. Pascarella & Patrick T. Terenzini,
How College Affects Students

Strategic Plan: VCU 2020

- **VCU 2020, Theme II:**
Achieve national recognition as a learning-centered research university that embraces a world-class student experience.
- **Initiative 2:**
Establish a compact with VCU's students and their parents that ensures all graduates have the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for lifelong success.

What is the Compact and what is it Expected to Accomplish?

- Along with an emphasis on a learning-centered approach to teaching and learning, the Compact will:
 - Create a common experience shared by all VCU students regardless of major;
 - Concentrate on a specific set of universally applicable competencies;
 - Emphasize life-long learning; and
 - Relate to the institution's mission.



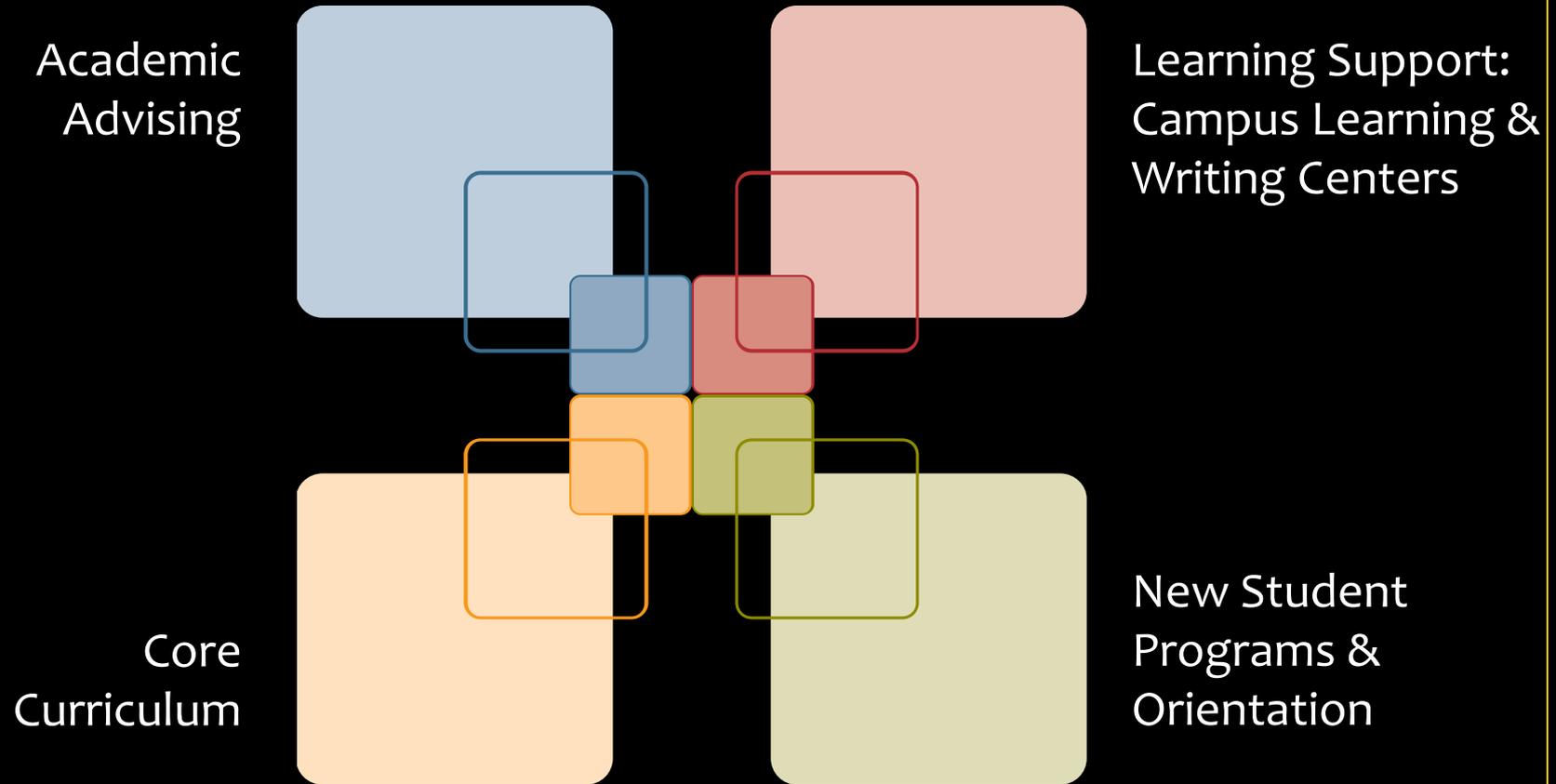
VCU University College

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

Enhancing student success



What Does the UC Offer?



Summer Reading Program

- Introduces incoming students to the academic and intellectual culture of VCU through their shared experience
- This experience begins prior to their arrival on campus and continues throughout their first year
- VCU's Summer Reading Program has campus-wide support
- *This is what we do at VCU*

Summer Reading Program

- Selection Process
 - Thematic
 - Committee Structure
 - faculty, staff, students, administrators, Board of Visitors representative
 - Timeline
 - First meeting – September
 - Blackboard discussion groups
 - Discuss book reviews
 - Vote on top 10-12 choices and order copies of those texts
 - Meet regularly to discuss selections and eliminate texts
 - Selection goal – end of February

Summer Reading Program

- Books are distributed during orientation
 - Students and their parents receive information on SRP and how the text will be used throughout their first year
 - Expectations of students are clearly stated
- Facebook Group
- Welcome Week – group discussions
 - Residential Advisors are key
 - Discussion Leader meetings ensure that all students have a similar, shared experience
- Discussions of the text continue during Focused Inquiry

3 Tier Core Curriculum

Tier 3

Culminating
experience
in the major

Tier 2

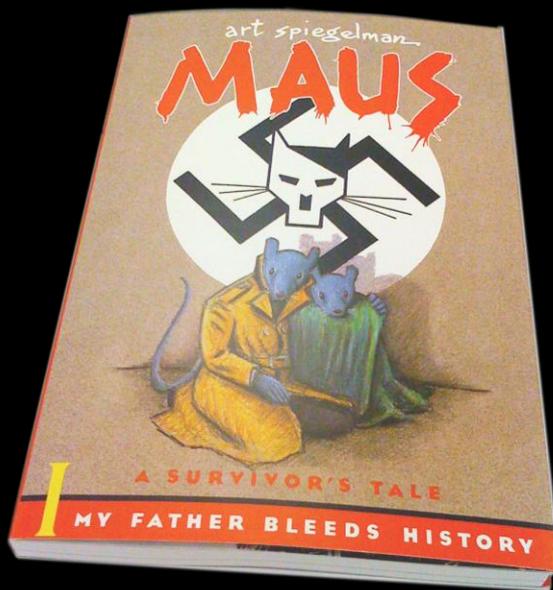
Academic and Research writing (3 credits)
Quantitative literacy (3 credits)
Science (3 credits)
Humanities and Fine Arts (3 credits)
Social Science (3 credits)

Tier 1

UNIV 111 Focused Inquiry I (3 credits)
UNIV 112 Focused Inquiry II (3 credits)

Summer Reading 2009

Thanks to the efforts of both
Academic Affairs and Student Affairs:



- 90 discussion groups were held during Welcome Week
- Over 2,100 students attended Welcome Week discussions
- 100 faculty, staff and students volunteered to lead group discussions

What is Unique about VCU's Summer Reading Program?

- Institutionalization – as a result of QEP and VCU 2020
- More than just a Summer Reading Program – this is the beginning of your University experience
- Summer Reading is not an “add-on”
 - Thematic – follows the theme for Focused Inquiry
 - Integrated experience at both the first and second tiers of Core Curriculum
- Trainings ensure a consistent experience
 - Orientation Assistants (OAs)
 - Residential Advisors (RAs)
 - Discussion Leaders