QEP Recommendation 6
Response Proposal from the Library Subcommittee of CPC

From the Quality Enhancement Plan – Recommendation 6:
Faculty should require library expertise from students by encouraging greater use of the library and its various resources in their classes.

Rationale
In this era of rapid change and job fluidity, it is extremely important to graduate students who are life-long learners. If entering the job market, these students will find it necessary to assimilate new skills and information quickly. If entering a graduate program, they must have solid background knowledge of their field’s literature as well as the resources available to them. And in this time of information plenty, our students must be able to distinguish when the information before them is good and when it is questionable, whether on the job or in graduate school.

How should Transylvania teach this knowledge?
How do we know that the students have learned?

We would like them to know –

- **Appropriate types of resources for the information they seek.** When is it appropriate to use encyclopedias, news articles and sources, scholarly articles, the web? Do they need overview and background information (encyclopedias, news articles, web)? Do they need to understand the differing opinions in a scholarly debate (scholarly articles)? Are they seeking marginal or alternative points of view (web, pamphlets, zines)?
- **Key resources for their field and how to use them.** For instance, MLA for the humanities, Medline and Agricola for biology, ERIC for education, PDR for health and medicine, DSM IV for psychology, etc.
- **Basic database structure.** Given the changeable nature of the information field and that most development is in databases of one form or another, it is necessary for students to have a basic understanding of database structure. The library catalog is a database; the major article indexes are databases; even the internet search engines operate within a basic database structure.
- **Basic library services and functions.** There are services that are common to all libraries. Students should know what they are and how the services help them. They include such things as interlibrary loan, reference, how collections are organized, reserves, special collections, etc.
- **Basic information about publishing in their field.** Where is the scholarly discussion and debate of their field taking place (books, articles, discussion lists)? What is the difference between primary and secondary sources in their field? What is a review article? What is a peer reviewed journal?
- **How to evaluate the information they find.** Is it appropriate for what they seek? What is its authority? Is it reasonable? What is its purpose? Can the intellectual work of the author(s) be traced? Can information be substantiated? What do others say of the information?
**What are we doing?**
Most FLA and University 1111 classes receive some degree of library instruction. Librarians work with other classes as requested which usually consists of a 50 minute session. And of course, students seeking information are taught individually as they walk into the library, email or call.

**Where would we like to go?**
While the 50 minute session works as a general introduction to library services and resources, it should not be the only contact. These skills should be integrated into the syllabus and curriculum. The librarian can help faculty incorporate these skills into their courses where it will mean more to the students.

There is a natural link between the skills taught in the writing intensive course and the information literacy skills we wish to incorporate.

We would like to be sure that integration is happening in senior seminar or final research projects. As seniors about to enter graduate school or the workforce, we should be sure that they know the information outlined above.

We propose a “camp” for faculty. This would allow a physical and temporal space for discussion on ways to incorporate this knowledge. Faculty could share their successes and failures. It can also be used as a refresher on resources. Resources do change and grow. We would like to be sure the faculty are as informed as they can be.

Faculty and librarians would work together to develop appropriate online tutorials, tools, handouts and tests to be used in the classroom. This could also be an online space for faculty to share ideas on what has worked and what has not.

**How do we know they have learned?**
Some ideas –
- Create a survey or test given to students at the beginning of their first year and again at the end of the senior year.
- Incorporate analytic bibliographies (and other materials?) into their portfolios.
- Develop assessments tailored to individual programs and administered to graduating seniors or at the beginning of the senior year so that they can still be taught what they don’t know.
- Evaluate bibliographies for papers. This is sometimes done depending on the faculty member and the class. It should be more wide spread.
- Develop a rubric for use by faculty to aid evaluation of skills.