

How a university in Georgia uses YouScience® to inspire students and meet accreditation requirements.



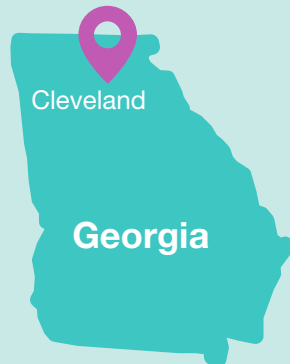
INTRO

As part of its accreditation process, Truett McConnell University must submit a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that outlines its strategy to enhance and improve student learning. Using insights and data from YouScience® Aptitude & Career Discovery helps the university create a stronger, more actionable plan to boost student outcomes.

ORGANIZATION AT A GLANCE

Truett McConnell University
Cleveland, GA

- 2,683 undergraduate students
- 40 undergraduate degree programs
- 10 graduate degree programs



Building an academic focus

Truett McConnell University is a private Christian liberal arts and sciences university in Cleveland, Georgia. Its mission is to prepare students through a Biblically-centered education to fulfill the Great Commission.

Truett McConnell University's accreditation is reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the governing accrediting body for colleges and universities in the southeastern U.S. Schools seeking accreditation must document their compliance with a number of requirements set by the SACSCOC. One of these requirements is developing and implementing a QEP, a school-wide plan designed to improve student learning over a five-year period. QEPs establish learning experiences that reflect an institution's core values and measure how successful it is in implementing those values.

"The whole point of the QEP is to help students find their gifts and fit in. That's a problem more acute now than it's ever been," said Janis Justus, Associate Professor of History and QEP Director, Truett McConnell University. "As part of our QEP, we had to come up with something that would reach the entire student population to the best of our ability."

Truett McConnell University implemented its second QEP in 2020, focusing on three key areas: exploring majors available at the university, offering students centralized academic advisement, and providing learning communities that help enhance mentorship and professional development. Truett McConnell University wanted its QEP to reflect its unique mission and values by helping students discover God's calling for their lives. The QEP also includes a practical component that focuses on academics and education.

“We believe that YouScience provides the QEP with gravitas,” Justus stated.

This new QEP component is built on the foundation of Aptitude & Career Discovery.

SOLUTION

Providing students deeper insights

Dr. Tammy Mize, Assessment Coordinator, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Truett McConnell University, knew about YouScience and the benefits it has to offer and recommended that the university use it as part of its QEP plan. Another addition to the QEP plan to emphasize academics was the creation of Pathfinders TM100, a class Truett McConnell University designed for incoming freshmen, transfer students, and dual enrollment students to help them identify their academic path. It also provides undecided students an opportunity to explore majors



and choose a course of study as soon as possible. The university feels this is an important step to foster student retention.

“[Pathfinders] is a one-credit-bearing class students are required to take as part of their freshmen year. The focus of our QEP and the course is to help students who come here without knowing what they want to major in,” Dr. Mize stated. “We think the data is going to show us that the sooner students lock into a major course of study, the more likely we’re going to be able to retain them.”

The Pathfinders TM100 class features three assessments and several writing activities. Aptitude & Career Discovery is front and center to help freshmen identify aptitudes and best-fit careers. Another is a spiritual gifts inventory, which helps support Truett McConnell University's worldview and mission, and the remaining assessment identifies different personality traits.

“The centerpiece of our course is Aptitude & Career Discovery,” Justus said. “We wanted a solution that has a high degree of respectability as YouScience has in the education community.”

“YouScience offers us something that’s practical and serious, and it works,” Justus offered.



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IMPACT

Helping students meet the demands of college life

Truett McConnell University uses YouScience in its Pathfinders course to help freshmen better understand themselves, discover their gifts, and prepare for what lies ahead in their collegiate experience.

“Some students come in oblivious to what college demands; there’s a long learning curve and it’s getting longer,” Justus observed. “They don’t understand how to really look deep within themselves and think about what their gifts are.

“They can see a reflection of themselves in [YouScience] instead of just some diagnostic tool, which they really don’t relate to. But the way YouScience presents the information from its assessments is just the way they can really relate to it,” Justus said.

Incoming freshmen enroll in the course during their first semester. As a follow-up step, they also meet with academic advisors to review their Aptitude & Career Discovery results and discuss how those results can help guide the student’s academic path forward. Advisors provide details about possible careers that match their aptitudes, how much education is required to work in those careers, and the commitment it takes on part of the students to succeed in university life.

“A lot of students said that their results confirmed what they felt called to do, and they were really thankful for that,” noted Kamille Gauntt, Associate Vice-President for Academic Operations and Registrar, Truett McConnell University. “Others just say how interesting [YouScience] was. They’re really learning things about themselves that are making them consider changing their majors, and it was a factor in helping their decision.”

Dr. Mize concurs, “Interest in the aptitude part of YouScience is very eye-opening to these students. They kind of knew what they were interested in, but the aptitudes are very useful in helping students see what their God-given talents and abilities are.”

“That’s why I’ve always been a proponent of what YouScience can do to spark students into thinking more about their futures.” Dr. Mize stated.

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Finding one’s true calling

The use of Aptitude & Career Discovery offers Truett McConnell University a solid foundation to support the academic and student retention portions of its QEP needed for accreditation. Plus, the assessment results help students better understand themselves, their gifts, and the steps they need to take to thrive in school and beyond. In addition, due to the university success in using YouScience in its QEP, other schools in the region want to follow its lead.

“YouScience is just one of the multiple strategies that’s used in our QEP to help students find their calling in life,” Mize noted “It’s not only about your interests, but also about the God-given talents and abilities you have. It’s a combination of what you’re interested in and what you’re good at that makes for a long and successful career.”



Challenges

- Supporting academic focus of university’s QEP for accreditation
- Helping students discover their aptitudes and best-fit careers
- Preparing incoming freshmen for college life
- Increasing student retention

Solution

YouScience® Aptitude & Career Discovery

Benefits

- Developing a strong academic component to support QEP and accreditation
- Using assessments to determine student aptitudes and gifts
- Advising students about assessment results to help them choose majors
- Guiding students into courses of study, based on assessments, to increase retention

About YouScience®

YouScience® is the leading technology provider in solving the skills-gap crisis for students and employers. YouScience® Brightpath is the first-of-its-kind aptitude-based guidance platform that leverages data and artificial intelligence to help individuals identify their aptitudes, validate their skills, and get matched with educational and career pathways.

To learn how YouScience can help your program, schedule a demo at



youscience.com/demo-request/
or contact our sales team at
sales@youscience.com.