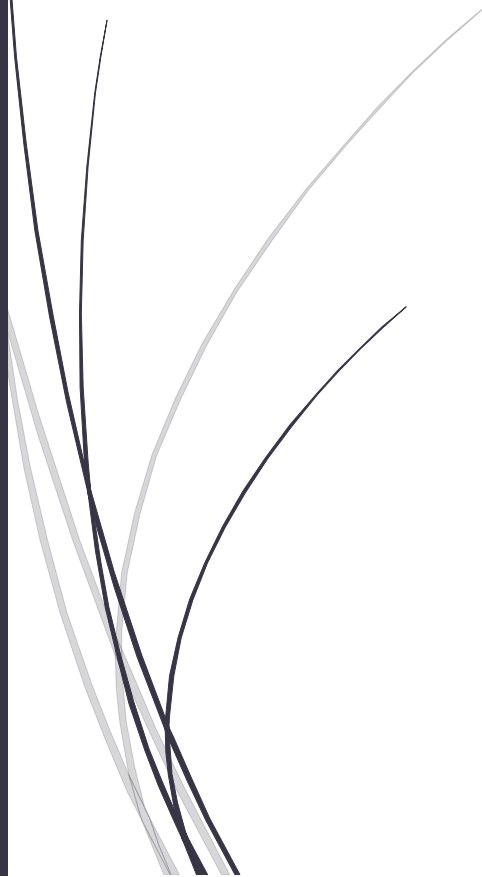




YEAR 3

Quality Enhancement Plan

2014-15 Annual Report
Palm Beach State College



Prepared by:
David Wells, QEP Manager
PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE
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Introduction

The third annual Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) report serves the three-fold purpose of maximizing the potential for continuous improvement of QEP initiatives, allowing for transparent communication to College stakeholders and constituents, and ensuring the availability of required documentation for continued accreditation status.

In order to provide a streamlined reporting process, this and all annual reports follow the same reporting format as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) when submitting the Fifth Year Interim Report in the 2016-17 academic year. Consequently, this report is organized in the following manner:

- SACSCOC Section 1: QEP Goals and Intended Outcomes
- SACSCOC Section 2: Discussion of Changes to the Plan
- SACSCOC Section 3: Description of Impact on Student Learning Plan
- SACSCOC Section 4: Reflection on What the Institution Learned

This annual report, as well as the prior two annual reports, provides the college administration with the necessary data and explanations needed to prepare the “Impact of the QEP” section required in SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim report.

Defining the Quality Enhancement Plan

A QEP is a requirement of SACSCOC for any regional institution applying for reaffirmation of accreditation. Colleges and universities must submit a QEP about six weeks prior to an onsite accreditation visit. During the visit, the plan undergoes a peer review process which culminates with an onsite review by members of the SACSCOC Visiting Committee. In general, a QEP must be:

- determined through faculty input and direction
- deemed acceptable by the SACSCOC committee before implementation
- broad in scope to maximize impact within a clearly defined focus topic
- designed to improve student learning or the student learning environment as demonstrated by the assessment of measureable student learning outcomes

The Palm Beach State College chose to focus its QEP on critical thinking, which is defined as *using the skills needed to explore, evaluate, express, and engage in purposeful reasoning in order to reach sound conclusions, decisions, positions, and/or solutions*. By design, the QEP positioned faculty and staff to help students improve their ability to interpret and analyze, to draw sound and relevant conclusions using a reasoning process, to evaluate and explain information, and to exhibit critical thinking dispositions. The QEP officially launched in the fall of 2012 and continues until the spring of 2017.

SACSCOC Section 1: QEP Goals and Intended Outcomes

Determining the success of the QEP occurs by developing a clearly defined goal and measurable learning outcomes. Towards this end, the Palm Beach State College QEP has developed and implemented the following goal and learning outcomes:

- QEP Goal: *Students will develop and apply critical thinking skills*
- QEP student learning outcomes:
 1. *Students will analyze and interpret relevant information*
 2. *Students will reach sound conclusions based on a demonstrated reasoning process*
 3. *Students will evaluate and explain relevant information*
 4. *Students will exhibit affective dispositions known to characterize critical thinkers*

To maximize the stated learning outcomes, the College annually dedicates funding to support QEP initiatives. As in preceding years, the 2014-2015 budget allocations covered the cost of resources and staffing necessary to implement the plan as required by SACSCOC.

From a staffing perspective, it is important to note that while the QEP has been diligently led by a QEP Manager for two and one half years, the manager transferred to a different position at the college in January of 2015. As a result of this transition, during a four month period the QEP position remained vacant. The current QEP Manager began the position in May 2015 and, during the interim period from January to May 2015, a faculty chair provided support to maintain faculty involvement in QEP initiatives. However, because of the scope of the faculty chair position, only limited implementation of the assessment plans occurred.

SACSCOC Section 2: Discussion of QEP Plan Changes in Year 3

Table 1 lists the 2014-2015 initiatives and describes the completion status for each initiative. As indicated below, most actions were completed as planned. However, some minor adjustments are noted and one modification to the plan is described in a more detailed narrative.

Table 1: 2014-2015 QEP Initiatives

Initiatives for 2014-2015	Status
Delivery of opportunities for professional development on each campus (level 1 training)	Completed as planned; however, staff changes did not allow outreach to non-instructional staff as in prior years
Develop online access for professional development that is specific to critical thinking (Level 1 and 2 training)	Completed as planned
Establish additional collaborative professional learning cohorts (Level 2 Training: Collaboration Cohorts)	Completed as planned; part of Year 2 revision, but not in original plan
Continue to build inventory of critical thinking resources for online access and for lending on all campuses	Completed as planned
Continue to monitor outcomes assessment and reporting in programs and educational support areas	Completed as planned
Send four faculty to conference that includes a critical thinking focus	Partially completed; two faculty members participated

Assessment	Completed as planned except for five samples in General education
Student contest to promote critical thinking	Completed as a supporting initiative; not included in original plan

Adjustments to Assessment in Year 3

1. The original plan stated (page 49) that the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) would be administered annually to randomly selected students during the general education assessment process. Instead, a more accurate description reads, "students are sampled from among those taught by faculty who have been involved with QEP implementation and not the general population of students."
2. Administration of *The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* was again postponed, but funding has been tentatively approved for the spring 2016 semester.
3. While the intent was to offer classroom assessment as a direct measure, it has not been feasible for implementation due to staff changes. These changes were explained in the 2013-2014 annual report. A new program, the Title V Summer Institute, has been implemented that will set the groundwork for classroom assessment in the final two years of the QEP (see "Revision to QEP for Years 3-5").

Revision to QEP for Years 3-5

Professional Learning Groups

As explained and justified in detail in the Year 2 report, collaboration cohorts transitioned to Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) during the 2014-15 academic year. Eight existing cohort members completed formal PLG facilitation training just prior to the fall 2014 semester and then six of the eight leaders launched and facilitated six PLGs on their campuses throughout the year (Year 3). Most PLGs membership comprised faculty and instructional staff, but some groups also included academic support and student services staff. PLG membership ranged between five and seven members, but one campus-based group comprised 10 faculty and staff members. Groups met for two hours each month throughout the fall and spring semesters.

While the collaboration cohort form has changed, the purpose has not. PLG members both practice their critical thinking skills and plan instructional strategies and assessment to build student critical thinking development. To this end, participants support each other in developing and implementing professional improvement plans and documenting results. To support these efforts, the QEP manager provides resources for learning, teaching, and assessing. In particular, the QEP offered participating instructors the QEP rubric for measuring critical thinking and then asked them to consider adapting the rubric to measurement of their students who achieved the QEP critical thinking outcomes in the classroom. Several facilitators voluntarily presented workshops at the fall 2014 Development Day breakout sessions on such topics as developing assessment rubrics, using question formulation to develop critical thinking, and discussing plagiarism with students. The PLGs plan to continue to meet in Year 4, and four new facilitators have been recruited and trained with a goal of establishing one new group per campus in the last two years of the QEP (2015-2016 and 2016-2017).

2015 Title V Summer Institute

In May 2015, the QEP in partnership with the Title V Pathways to Success Federal Grant at the college, launched the Title V Summer Institute as an enhancement to the collaboration cohort transition. As written into Faculty Professional Development section of the Title V Grant, the Summer Institute aimed to bring together a select group faculty and staff committed to formulating, planning and implementing a critically thinking focused instructional project. Among the 30 chosen faculty and staff selected to enroll, 25 participants developed new or revised current critically thinking focused instructional strategies, assignments or assessments. In addition, four participants prepared to lead a PLG during the 2015-16 academic year by devoting their Summer Institute efforts to facilitation training.

Based on project interest and type, participants organized into work groups which met for 12 hours over a four week period. Each work group offered its members support through feedback and discussion of projects during the process of development. Through both online document sharing and discussion boards, and regular in person group meetings, participants built course-ready projects in a diverse array of subject areas. Annual Title V Summer Institutes will continue to address critical thinking instructional and learning practices over a five year period with the aim of recruiting 40 participants per year, most of whom will be new participants in the program. Among this year's participants, it is significant to note that 20 of the 30 participants actively participated in the 6 different PLGs.

SACSCOC Section 3: Description of Impact on Student Learning

Overview

During the 2014-15 academic year, student learning assessment occurred through the implementation of three direct measures and one indirect measure. The instruments directly measuring student learning included: the *California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)*, the *California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI)* and Scenarios. Unlike previous years, the institution discontinued the *ETS Proficiency Profile (ETS)* direct measure. The *Graduating Student Survey* was the sole instrument used for indirect measurement of student learning. Both the direct and indirect instruments and data collection are described in Table 4 below.

During the General Education Assessment Cycle, a sample of students was drawn from course sections in which the median number of credits completed by students was thirty five or greater. Students were also sampled from among classes taught by faculty and instructors involved in QEP implementation and the collaborative cohort. The 2014-2015 results represent the third full cycle of implementation. Results were compared to the baseline data and target or to previous year results as appropriate per the QEP assessment plan. A summary of results and conclusion follows the data and results presented in Tables 5-9 below.

To reach the "indicator of success" for participation in cohorts, 95 faculty and staff need to participate in a critical thinking PLGs by 2017. Towards this goal, a total of 47 faculty and staff regularly committed to PLG participation during the inaugural year. This number of participants includes the eight leaders who established the PLGs by completing the initial fall 2014 PLG training and also four additional participants who trained in facilitation during 2015 Summer Institute. Combined, these efforts increase the likelihood to achieve this level of cohort participation than the original QEP plan. To add, PLG participation led to the cultivation of a critical thinking consciousness among a group of faculty and staff most of whom continued to pursue their professional growth in critical thinking instruction through involvement in the 2015 Title V Summer Institute.

Table 2: Description of Measures and Data Collection

Measurement Type	Instrument	Description of instrument	Data collection process
Direct Measures	California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)	Multiple-choice test with reporting scales that directly measure the three skills-based outcomes: analysis and interpretation; inference; evaluation and explanation	(1) 110 students in five classes randomly selected during the General Education Outcomes Assessment cycle. In each class, the median number of credits completed by the students enrolled was 35 or greater. Tests were administered during the first half of the fall semester 2014 (2) 38 students in two sections selected from among sections taught by faculty who have integrated critical thinking strategies. (Two sections taught by one dental program faculty member were never assessed due to scheduling changes that occurred because of an accreditation site visit)
	Scenarios	Faculty-developed situation to which students are asked to provide a written response. Scores directly measure the three skills-based outcomes: analysis and interpretation; inference; evaluation and explanation	90 students in sections randomly selected during the General Education Outcomes Assessment cycle. Students in each section averaged at least 35 completed credits, and tests were administered during the first half of the fall semester 2014. An additional 112 students were selected from 5 sections taught by QEP faculty (3 writing courses, and 2 math courses). Responses were scored with an analytic rubric developed to measure the QEP student learning outcomes
	California Critical Thinking Disposition Skills Inventory (CCTDI)	Survey of which students respond to statements designed to measure willingness to think critically; directly measures QEP Outcome 4	124 students were assessed in nine sections taught by faculty known to integrate critical thinking into instruction (two developmental writing, two developmental math, three education classes, and two dental classes). 126 students assessed, but only 124 results were returned
	ETS Proficiency Profile	Multiple-choice test that includes total score for student proficiency in critical thinking ; global measure of outcomes	Institution discontinued use of this instrument profile after Fall 2013 assessment.
Indirect Measure	Graduating Student Survey	Palm Beach State College internal survey; indirect measure of outcomes	569 students responded to a question regarding how well the College prepared them to think critically; collected June 2014 through May 2015.

Table 3: Results of Direct Measures of QEP Student Learning Outcomes 1-3

QEP Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3					
Measure	Baseline Spring 2012	Year 3 2014-2015 QEP Sample CCTST (N=38) Scenario (N=112)	Year 3 2014-2015 Gen Ed Sample CCTST (N=110) Scenario (N=90)	Year 3 Total Sample for PBSC CCTST (N=148) Scenario (N=202)	Target
Students will demonstrate a 10% increase over baseline scores on outcomes 1-3					
LO1: Students will analyze and interpret relevant information					
CCTST (max: 7)	2.89	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.2 target met
Scenario (5-pt scale)	3.03	2.7	2.9	2.8	3.33 target not met
LO2: Students will reach sound conclusions based on a demonstrated reasoning process					
CCTST (max: 16)	6.25	8.0	7.5	7.6	7.6 target met
Scenario (5-pt scale)	3.08	2.7	2.9	2.8	3.39 target not met
LO3: Students will evaluate and explain relevant information					
CCTST (max: 11)	3.19	4.0	3.7	3.8	3.5 target met
Scenario (5-pt scale)	3.00	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.30; target not met
Total Scores					
CCTST (max: 34)	12.33 (28 th -36 th percentile)	15.6 (56 th percentile) Induction: 9.2 Deduction: 6.4	14.3 (49.5 percentile) Induction: 8.5 Deduction: 5.8	14.6 (51 st percentile) Induction: 8.7 Deduction: 6.0	13.6 target met
Scenario (5-pt scale)	3.04	2.7	2.9	2.8	3.34 target not met
Notes					
CCTST - publisher change from two decimal to one decimal reporting after baseline test results received. Scenario - original instrument was revised after multiple inter-rater reliability sessions during pilot semester.					

Table 4: Result of Direct Measure of QEP Student Learning Outcome 4

QEP Student Learning Outcome 4					
CCTDI Measure	Baseline Spring 2012	Year 1 2012-2013	Year 2 2013-2014	Year 3 2014-15	
				Total PBSC Sample (N=124, Sections = 9)	Target Met
Truth-seeking	36.041	36.735	34.3	35.8 - ambivalent	Yes
Open-mindedness	41.029	42.706	40.8	40.4 - positive	No
Analyticity	44.836	45.853	44.1	47.1 - positive	Yes
Systematicity	43.205	42.757	41.1	43.4 - positive	Yes
Confidence in reasoning	45.216	46.118	44.2	41.8 - positive	No
Inquisitive	48.860	47.537	47.6	44.2 - positive	No
Maturity in judgment	43.111	43.478	41.3	43.2 - positive	Yes
TOTAL SCORE	302.3	304.9	300.9	295.9	No

* Score ranges from 10-19 range = Strong Negative; 20-29 = Negative; 30-39 = Inconsistent/Ambivalent; 40-49 = Positive; 50-60 = Strong Positive ¹

Source: CCTDI Instrument User's Manual, Insight Assessment /The California Academic Press 2015.

Table 5: Results of Indirect Measures of QEP Success

Indirect Measures of QEP Success					
Measure	Baseline	Year 1 2012 -2013	Year 2 2013-2014	Year 3 2014-15	Target
Student ratings on the selected question from the Palm Beach State Graduating Student Survey will meet or exceed the baseline and improve annually					
Please rate how you feel Palm Beach State has helped you increase your achievement on the "critical thinking" outcome -"Engage in purposeful reasoning to reach sound conclusions."	2009-2010: (5 pt. scale) 4.1	(5 pt. scale) 4.2	(5 pt. scale) 4.3	(5 pt. scale) 4.4	Greater than 4.14 with repeated annual improvement target met
Student ratings on selected questions from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) will meet or exceed baseline and exceed national benchmark. Average on questions related to integration of critical thinking in courses at Palm Beach State. CCSSE items included in average score					
Average on questions related to integration of critical thinking in courses at Palm Beach State CCSSE items included in average score: 4. In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following: d: Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources n: Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class r: Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class 5. During this current school year, how much has your coursework at this college emphasized the following mental activities? b: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experiences, or theory c: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways f: Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill 12. How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? e: Thinking critically and analytically	2011 (4-pt scale) 2.68	Not administered	Not administered	Not administered	Greater than both 2.68 and national benchmark
Notes					
CCSSE was originally planned for second administration in 2013-2014 (Y2) but is now postponed until 2015-2016 (Y4)					

Table 6: Results of Level 1 Professional Development Initiatives

Measuring the Effectiveness of Professional Development Initiatives			
Desired outcome	Year 1 2012-2013	Year 2 2013-2014	Year 3 2014-2015
At least 80% of participants will agree that participation has increased their knowledge and understanding of critical thinking.	Not assessed	75.61% - Strongly agree 24.39% - Agree (N=41; 100% agree)	Not assessed (see notes)
At least 80% of participants will agree that participation has increased their desire to learn more about teaching and assessing critical thinking.	Not assessed	85.00% -Strongly agree 15.00% - Agree (N=41; 100% agree)	Not assessed (see notes)
By fall 2013, 100% of incoming new faculty and adjuncts will participate in L1PD.	Not applicable	Implemented; L1PD integrated into new adjunct training and new faculty orientation so that 100% of incoming faculty and adjuncts will participate	
By 2017, at least 50% of all instructional staff will have participated in L1PD. <i>(percentage calculation: total unduplicated count total instructional staff by end of academic year)</i>	18.9% to date 224 of 1,188 instructional staff participated in L1PD <i>224 total in Year 1 and the pilot semester</i> <i>141 faculty or instructors; 83 adjuncts (unduplicated count)</i>	44.1% to date 545 of 1,235 instructional staff have participated in L1PD <i>321 total new participants in Year 2</i> <i>89 new faculty/instructors 232 new adjuncts (unduplicated count)</i>	62.2% to date 751 of 1207 instructional staff have participated in L1PD <i>206 total new participants in Year 3</i> <i>71 new faculty/instructors 135 new adjuncts (unduplicated)</i>
By 2017, the number of non-instructional staff participating in L1PD will have increased annually.	154	295	11
Notes			
Because of changes in Year 3 (2014-15), QEP team members weren't required to offer CT Workshops (Level 1 PD).			

Table 7: Results of Level 2 Professional Development Initiatives

Measuring the Effectiveness of Professional Development Initiatives			
Desired outcome	Year 1 2012-2013	Year 2 2013-2014	Year 3 2014-2015
Average student scores on CCTST (max: 34) will exceed general education sample	Gen Ed: 15.1 QEP: 15.8	Gen Ed: 14.0 QEP: 13.2	Gen Ed: 14.3 QEP: 15.6
Average student scores on critical thinking scenario will exceed general education sample*	QEP sections assessed in CCTST only		Gen Ed: 2.9 QEP: 2.7
At least 80% of participants will agree that participation has increased their knowledge and understanding of QEP outcomes	Not assessed	Not assessed	65.52% - Strongly Agree 27.59% - Agree (N=29, 93% agree)
At least 80% of participants will agree that participation has increased their knowledge and understanding of critical thinking	81.80% - Strongly agree 18.20% - Agree (N=11; 100% agree)	80.00% - Strongly agree 10.00% - Agree (N=10; 90% agree)	58.62% - Strongly Agree 34.48% - Agree (N=20, 93% agree)
At least 80% of participants will agree that participation has increased their desire to learn more about teaching or assessing critical thinking	81.80% - Strongly agree 18.20% - Agree (N=11; 100% agree)	80.00% - Strongly agree 10.0% - Agree (N=10; 90% agree)	72.41% - Strongly Agree 20.69% - Agree (N=29, 93% agree)
By 2017, at least 95 faculty or staff will participate in a QEP cohort to improve instruction and professional practice.	15: 1 discontinued, 3 new, 26 total to date	10: 2 new, 28 total to date	43: 34 new, 62 total to date (43 = regular PLG participant, attended 2 PLG meetings, or attend Summer Institute and 3 or more PLG meetings)
Note			
*While this is a direct measure of student learning, the intent was to see if there is a difference when taught by QEP Faculty			

Table 8: Additional Process Measures

Measuring the Effectiveness of Supporting Strategies			
Critical Thinking Outcomes in Career Programs			
Desired outcomes	Year 1 2012-2013	Year 2 2013-2014	Year 3 2014-2015
By fall 2012, critical thinking outcomes in programs will be identified, aligned to QEP, and assessed in regular program cycle.	235 outcomes in 100% of programs; 182 assessed when QEP annual report completed ¹	342 outcomes in 100% of programs; 294 assessed when QEP annual report completed ¹	353 outcomes in 100% of programs; 349 assessed when QEP report completed ¹
By 2013-2014, critical thinking outcomes will be reported annually.	143 out of 182 assessed (78.57%) met benchmark	237 out of 294 assessed (80.61%) met benchmark	275 out of 349 assessed (78.79%) met benchmark
Critical Thinking Outcomes in Selected Educational Support Areas (Admissions/Registration, Advising, Honors College, Libraries, Student Learning Centers, Student Life, TRIO/Outreach, and Wellness Center)			
By fall 2013, critical thinking outcomes will be identified in selected educational support areas and assessed in the regular assessment cycle in each area.	10 outcomes; 2 assessed ¹	12 outcomes identified; 100% assessed	17 outcomes identified; 100% assessed
By 2013-2014, critical thinking outcomes will be reported annually.	2/2 met benchmark	100% met benchmark	63.64% met benchmark
Resources			
Inventory will increase annually on campus or online.	3 resources available for check-out on each campus 1 resource (<i>A Guide for Educators to Critical Thinking Competency Standards</i> , Paul & Elder, 2007) distributed to all faculty, instructors, and adjuncts, some staff 37 resources added to online repository (POLO ²)	23 additional resources added to each campus inventory 3 additional resources added to online repository (POLO ²)	2500 Quick Guides created to distribute to faculty and staff
Survey respondents will agree that resources are useful.	Not assessed	11 of 16 users returned feedback. All agreed or strongly agreed that resources are useful for improving practice.	No surveys conducted
Notes			
1 - Due to curricular and staff changes, some outcomes are not assessed before the QEP Report is written. 2 - Panther Online Learning Objects			

Summary of the 2014-2015 Assessment Results

- For the third year, students sampled during the general education assessment cycle performed better than the baseline and exceeded the five year target on the *California Critical Thinking Skills Test*.
- Student scores on *Scenarios* still have not yet reached the expected 10% increase over the baseline results, and student scores on the *California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory* did not meet the targeted annual improvement in all categories.
- As of spring 2015, 62.2% of all instructional staff have been engaged in a level one professional development event, surpassing the 50% goal in three years and not five.
- For the third straight year, at least 90% of participants agree that the QEP is making an impact on their critical thinking. Also, based on a first time assessment of participants, over 90% agree that their knowledge and understanding of critical thinking has increased
- A steady increase from 342 to 353 outcomes have been identified among the career program outcomes that align with the QEP critical thinking outcomes and an increase from 12 to 17 outcomes that support critical thinking have been identified among the educational support areas. Of the outcomes identified, the 77.90% of career program assessed met their targeted benchmark while there was a significant decrease to 64% of those educational support outcomes that met their targeted benchmark.

Conclusions about the impact of the QEP

With regard to assessment of direct measures, the QEP continues to explore different strategies that have led to mixed results. In one regard, result from CCTST continues to meet targeted goals, but the results from Scenarios do not. Even though the results are stronger with the CCTST, the QEP will discontinue its use for the Scenarios because the Scenarios offer a more targeted opportunity to provide meaningful data on how and to what extent critical thinking knowledge and skill is increasing or where the short falls are among the student population.

Process measures indicate that faculty and staff remain motivated to help students develop and apply critical thinking skills by participating in the Level 1 training opportunities such as workshops and the faculty development course. Specifically, the faculty development course continues to train and guide newly hired adjunct faculty in utilizing critical thinking instructional practices in their courses. Due to steady progress over past three years, the QEP has met its level 1 professional development goal two years early.

The consistent involvement of faculty and staff in monthly PLG groups dedicated to collegial support and feedback of member critical thinking teaching practices offers encouraging results. As an unanticipated outgrowth of PLG participation, the first Annual Title V Summer Institute offered PLG faculty and staff members and new QEP participants further professional opportunities to develop critical thinking instruction or assessment projects to implement in fall 2015. Furthermore, Summer Institute participation will further bolster PLG participation because PLGs will offer a platform for sharing the results and possible revisions to Summer Institute projects.

Lastly, for QEP supporting strategies, the goals for career programs and educational support service continue to make important progress. Both career programs and the educational support areas show a steady increase in identified outcomes. While the career programs have hovered close to the 80% benchmark target, in contrast, the educational support areas showed a significant dip in meeting targeting benchmarks.

SACSCOC Section 4: Reflection on What the Institution Learned

Professional development

Equipping faculty and staff to help students develop critical thinking skills continues as the primary focus of professional development. During Year 3, the QEP team further offered opportunities to expose and educate the college community about critical thinking as evidenced by: robust participation in several one-time learning opportunities, the new faculty development course, campus-based PLGs, and the first annual Title V Summer Institute.

QEP leaders who engaged in PLGs shared their critical thinking skills and knowledge by offering various workshops and presentation at all four college campuses and beyond the college. Faculty Workshops and presentations on all campuses throughout the academic year included: topic specific workshops at the fall semester professional development day, presentations to various academic and student service departments. Also, one faculty member presented at the St. Leo University Conference on Decision Making through Values-based Critical Thinking on *Practical Methods for Teaching Intellectual Standards*.

Because of the staffing transition from the previous QEP Manager to the current QEP Manager, the critical thinking module of the Faculty Development Course has not been given adequate attention. Subsequently, the critical thinking module will be evaluated to learn if the content and delivery effectively provides a forum for new adjunct faculty to develop a foundational understanding of critical thinking instructional practices.

The institution has observed a continuous improvement in faculty and staff professional development that focuses on the integration of best practices for teaching and assessing critical thinking. To ensure professional development remains a priority, an emphasis on expanding PLG and Summer Institute participation will continue into Year 4. Also, the institution has learned that to make assessment useful to faculty and students, it needs to offer a classroom assessment process integrated into class specific assignments that measure student gains in learning consistent with the QEP critical thinking outcomes. To add, it is evident that while faculty are still engaged in their pursuit of teaching critical thinking, there is a need for a robust conversation regarding why student learning of critical thinking does not seem to be improving. As a result of this finding, the institution will explore why learning gains are not coming to fruition and what change in approach will improve student learning.

Career programs and Educational Support Areas

The QEP has further promulgated a focus on critical thinking by ensuring that all career programs and selected educational support areas include critical thinking outcomes. Career program assessment has advanced through a process that includes: the measurement of critical thinking outcomes and improvement as needed, and the achievement of a relatively steady percentage of critical thinking outcome benchmarks.

Critical Thinking Resources

Although resources are now available on three campuses for immediate lending, and faculty and staff on the fourth campus can borrow resource by using inter-office mail, very few actually request or use the resources. To counteract the limited reach and impact of the current resources available, the QEP has developed a newly published QEP Critical Thinking Quick Guide for distribution to the entire faculty and staff who work in an academic or academic support role. The institution has learned that a better job must be done to promote the availability of resources and as a result, the new Quick Guide will be promoted and distributed during various fall 2015 semester meetings and events.

Student Contest

While 2015 saw a drop in student critical thinking contest submissions, an increased focus on critical thinking outcomes in educational support areas influenced staff in guiding students to write critical thinking contest essays. Promoted college-wide, this contest reached 20 students who submitted individual entries. Also, in partnership with the college Speech Cluster, the QEP targeted key Speech courses taught by QEP committed faculty. However, the class-wide contest entry option that had been piloted in the first year, discontinued and will be evaluated by the QEP Support Committee to decide next steps. As planned, the growing visibility of the QEP critical thinking outcomes has led to a college-wide focus on critical thinking both in and out of the classroom.

Overall Impression at the End of Year 3

The focus on helping students develop and apply critical thinking skills shows increasing promise due to the popular participation by faculty and some staff in the PLGs and Summer Institute. Participants in each initiative seem actively engaged in pursuing critical thinking instruction and assessment projects that offer them the autonomy to improve critical thinking shaped to their particular teaching interests and the anticipated needs of their students. By drawing on faculty passion for their academic discipline and their particular classroom experience, the QEP leadership can build a stronger assessment process based on the classroom specific critical thinking assessments steadily occurring with more frequency in the classrooms of PLG and Summer Institute participants. This more subject oriented approach to assessment coupled with involvement in the supportive learning communities of the PLG and Summer Institute will organically develop both an interest for and willingness to share assessment results.

2014-15 Recommendations for Improvement in 2015-16

QEP initiatives should continue into the fourth full year of implementation in 2015-2016 with revisions described in this report on page 4. The following recommendations for improvement are suggested based upon evaluation and review of the first, second, and third year results by the QEP manager, QEP teams, and staff from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

Work directly with faculty from the PLGs and the Summer PLG and QEP Support Committee members to develop classroom activities or assignments that can be assessed with the QEP rubric, an adapted version, or another instrument offered by faculty that will measure the QEP outcomes. Because this plan will be a modification to the original QEP, we will use Year 4 to collect new baseline data and Year 5 to compare result.

The QEP will continue to expand the community of active faculty and staff committed to advancing student critical thinking development by distributing newly created QEP Critical Thinking Quick Guides to all full and part faculty and instructors and also to staff allied to the academic mission of the college.

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2012-2017
Explore, Evaluate, Express, and Engage
A Quality Enhancement Plan to improve student learning through critical thinking

2014-2015 Annual Report