

Technical College of the Lowcountry



Quality Enhancement Plan:

Improving Student Learning Outcomes Through Enhanced Assessment

Submitted to the

***SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES***

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FOREWORD

This document is about the journey to date of the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) in the development, implementation, and evaluation of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

The audiences for this document include TCL's faculty, staff, administration, students, and constituent groups. Constituent groups include members of its governing board, the TCL Commission; members of program Advisory Committees; program accrediting agencies; and the Commission on the Colleges Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and its representatives.

Chapter 1 considers pertinent background information on the College and the initial processes of developing the QEP. Chapter 2 carefully reviews best practices related to the QEP. Chapter 3 discusses the goals and objectives of the QEP and the capability of the College to support and sustain the program. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the first year of implementation and evaluation and plans for future years. Chapter 5 provides the evaluation plan and the timeline.

Focus

- TCL identified *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment* as the implementation focus of the QEP. The issue is of critical importance for strengthening the institution and improving the quality of student learning (See Chapter 1).
- The goals of the QEP are relevant, appropriate, and designed to improve student learning. The major goals are to implement a cohesive assessment process utilizing direct assessment of student work to assess the skill level of associate degree graduates in areas outlined by the Institutional Competencies, and to have graduates demonstrate an acceptable skill level in these academic areas. The major objectives of the QEP are to enhance the quality of associate degree graduates, to increase the level of professionalism exhibited by associate degree graduates, to increase retention rates in courses and programs, to develop a culture of assessment within the College that values assessment, and to increase attention paid by programs to the application of skills outlined by the Institutional Competencies with the resulting demonstration of these skills throughout the program of study (See Chapter 3)
- Reflecting the crucial importance of the QEP for improving the learning environment, the institutional context in which the QEP was to be implemented was carefully examined. Elements analyzed included College goals and vision, characteristics of the student body, student success and placement rates, and expectations of employers (See Chapter 3).
- Benefits to be derived from the QEP as it pertains to student learning include improvement in student learning; strengthened teaching practice; improved courses and programs; improved assessment processes; increased campus dialog regarding teaching, learning, and value of assessment; and the implementation of a cohesive assessment program that complements the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) program (See Chapter 1).

Institutional Capability and Initiation/Continuation of the Plan

TCL has sufficient resources to implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.

- The Assessment and Evaluation Committee and QEP Subcommittee have primary responsibility for facilitating the development and subsequent implementation of the QEP. A recursive process was

used to develop ideas, share information, and receive feedback through the committee/ council structure of the College. (See Chapters 1, 3).

- Although the timeline for the first five years of the QEP has been developed, it is a work in progress since the QEP process is a new process at TCL (See Chapters 1, 4, 5).
- Oversight for the QEP rests with the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and the QEP Subcommittee. Dr. Lucille Cook Roth, Dean for Arts and Sciences, is charged with the oversight and progress of the project (See Chapters 1, 4, 5).
- TCL has allocated sufficient financial, physical, fiscal, and academic resources and systems to support and sustain the QEP. Financial and fiscal resources are approved through the budgeting process to support the plan. The use of release time and the committee/council structures support work on the project. Physical and academic resources are available and managed through routine college processes (See Chapters 1, 3, 4).
- To carry out and maintain the progress of its quality improvements on a continuing basis, the College established new and continued existing administrative processes as appropriate. These include the checks and balances established with TCL Procedure 2-1-201.1.14 Assessment and Evaluation Committee, participation in such campus-wide events as the Spring Retreat and State of the College day, budget reviews, standing institutional committees and existing administrative structures and supports (See Chapters 1, 4).

Assessment of the Plan

- The College has means for determining the success of the QEP. Internal measures include the IE and Program Review processes. The QEP complements these quantitative/indirect results with direct/qualitative measures of student work. External measures include the use of CAAP, an ACT product designed to measure skill level on general education skills. Triangulation of the data from these sources provides information about changes in learning outcomes and/or facilitates comparison of the skill level of our graduates with those in similar two year colleges (See Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5).
- To evaluate and monitor the progress of the plan, the College utilizes the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and its subcommittees as well as input/feedback to these bodies through the Committee/Council structures (See Chapters 1, 4, 5).
- Evaluation of the plan is an integral process within the QEP and is both formative and summative. Formative evaluation is structured in the development process through the use of a summer development, fall mini-pilot, spring pilot system. Evaluation occurs at each stage with appropriate changes made for full implementation and subsequent years. Summative evaluation occurs when the triangulation of IE, external measure, and QEP data are compiled and analyzed (See Chapter 4, 5).

Broad-based Involvement of the Community

The College included all aspects of its community in the development of the QEP. Members of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and QEP Subcommittee include personnel from across the campus community. Participation in such campus-wide events as the Spring Retreat and State of the College Day promotes broad-based involvement. The TCL Commission and program Advisory Committees are apprised of the QEP at regular meetings. (See Chapters 1, 4).

Technical College of the Lowcountry
Quality Enhancement Plan
Improving Student Learning Outcomes Through Enhanced Assessment

Reaffirmation Leadership Team
Dr. Anne McNutt, President
Dr. Rose Kearney-Nunnery, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. Clyde Hinchey, Vice President for Finance
Mr. Ron Jackson, Vice President for Student Services
Dr. Lucille Cook Roth, Dean for Arts and Sciences
Mr. Richard Shaw, Dean for Instructional Support Services
Mr. Tim Garner, Director of Research and Planning

Chapter 1. Discussion of the Problem

INTRODUCTION

Historical Perspective

Without a doubt, assessment is an integral part of the Technical College of the Lowcountry's (TCL) routine. Nationally a renewed interest in assessment in community colleges was the result of *A Nation at Risk* (1993). This federal report provided a focus for the use of outcomes based assessment for education. Although the results of this report focused on K-12, the report triggered implications for all educational institutions regarding the unacceptability of mediocrity in education. A second report entitled *Involvement in Learning* (1984) from the National Institute of Education supported an increased awareness of the importance of postsecondary teaching and learning. One conclusion was that "Institutions should be accountable not only for stating their expectations and standards but for assessing the degree to which those ends have been met...They should make a conscientious effort to acquire and use better information about student learning, the effects of courses, and the impact of programs" (p. 21). Two years later, the National Governor's Association issued a statement regarding "the connections between economic development, international competition, school reform, and teacher preparation" and their dependence on preparation available in undergraduate educational institutions. The need to improve assessment practices to evaluate student learning outcomes and overall institutional performance were listed as challenges. Questions regarding student learning and outcomes of learning were the inevitable result of the study.

At TCL, as at most community colleges, because of these reports creating an environment which emphasized student learning and outcomes, assessment received increased attention, and in 1984 efforts were directed at planning, designing, and implementing an Institutional Effectiveness Program. Its purpose would be to capture information from all college divisions to enable the College as a whole and its various units to plan, implement, and use the results of institutional effectiveness activities to continuously improve the College. Over time the Institutional Effectiveness Program has evolved. Federal attention to assessment and the use of its results, the state's performance indicator initiatives, and increased reporting demands of various accreditation entities refocused the College's institutional effectiveness efforts.

In 1996, South Carolina's legislature passed Act 359, the legislation which created the state's Performance Indicators by building upon the existing Act 255. This new legislation required the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) to develop college performance indicators in nine areas: mission focus, quality of faculty, classroom quality, institutional cooperation and collaboration, administrative efficiency, entrance requirements, graduates' achievements, user-friendliness of the institution, and research funding. In response, working with the state's public colleges, CHE initiated 37 indicators, many with sub-indicators. Consideration of an institution's mission and scope of operation determined which indicators an institution was required to address. TCL's institutional efforts have focused on Act 359 since its passage because: 1) state funding for colleges was to be tied to performance on the indicators and 2) no additional resources, human or fiscal, were provided to meet the extensive reporting requirements of the Act. Thus, the legislative emphasis on performance indicators caused the college to refocus its Institutional Effectiveness efforts and personnel on meeting the mammoth reporting requirements of Act 359.

Prior to the implementation of Performance Indicators, experience on campus with program evaluation was somewhat fragmented, with the College adhering to the long-standing annual program evaluation process of the State Technical College System (TCL Policy 3-1-316, TCL Procedure 3-1-3-1.21, SBTCE Policy 3-1-301, SBTCE Procedure 3-1-301.1, Act 255 and Act 359). Annually, the College reports statistics to the System Office for review and takes appropriate actions for continuing or eliminating programs based on state criteria. The College maintains quality programs through faculty and department review, the curriculum review processes of the Curriculum Committee, and the recommendations of Program Advisory Committees. Act 359 provided impetus for a more critical, effective program evaluation process. Due to Act 359 and to Act 255's program accreditation requirement, the Technical College of the Lowcountry focused on attaining accreditation for those programs that had accrediting agencies recognized by CHE or the United States Department of Education (USDOE). Concurrently, the College's commitment to the Performance Indicators and inherent demands of the reporting requirements caused its institutional effectiveness program to become decentralized moving from the Office of Research and Planning to the program level. The Office of Research and Planning

established a reporting form, reporting schedule, and assumed responsibility for final compilation of the Institutional Effectiveness Reports into a single document. However, ultimate responsibility for the content and quality of the Institutional Effectiveness efforts was with the respective academic, student services, continuing education, and finance staffs. The Institutional Effectiveness Program as it evolved required broad-based participation, some of which came at the expense of having a truly cohesive program.

The years from 1984-2004 were also years of considerable change at TCL. The College experienced an increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) students from 616 to 1122, an increase of approximately 83%, with a corresponding 75% increase in headcount. However, growth in staffing of the College has not paralleled the growth in the student body. In 1984 there were 44 full-time faculty and 108 full-time employees, and currently there are 48 full-time faculty and 135 full-time employees, 15 of whom are funded by restricted grants. Today the College provides a diverse blend of certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs to meet the needs of the students and the community, adding new programs as necessary. Since 1984, the College implemented the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science college transfer programs, began its first engineering technology program, and expanded its health sciences offerings. As a result of the annual review of academic programs in accordance with State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) policy, the College has continued, eliminated, or reconfigured programs. For example, the Automotive Technology Program was discontinued due to low enrollment and the trend of automotive manufacturers training mechanics at manufacturer sponsored schools. To meet the demands of local industry, the Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning program was reconfigured from an associate degree program to a series of certificates.

The College struggled with simultaneously responding to the myriad reporting requirements and with implementing and sustaining Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning processes that met the needs of the College. At implementation, responsibility for the institutional effectiveness program and the strategic planning efforts were under the auspices of the Office of Research and Planning. Act 359 and the reporting demands of the performance indicators served to decentralize these programs with the work going to the program level in all

divisions of the College. For a number of years, the College held a retreat early in the spring semester for all employees to reconsider and revise the strategic plan for the subsequent three years. The revised strategic plan was published after the retreat. During the 1990's, the logistical difficulty of holding such a large meeting and an increase in the frequency of smaller planning meetings in the various college divisions enabled the College to conduct a retreat with representatives of the academic, student services, administrative, and student sectors. In 2003, the day-long retreat had two major agenda items—revision of the strategic plan and the introduction of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). A similar agenda was planned for a February 2004 retreat.

One reporting document related to the Strategic Plan is the Expected Educational Outcomes document which identifies each initiative and action detailed in the Strategic Plan for a specific academic year. (Recently the title of this document was changed to Expected Outcomes to reflect its relationship to activities/initiatives for the larger college community.) As that academic year's end approaches, each manager indicates the status of the initiatives. The "report card" type document created is then entitled Outcomes (since it reports the results of the Expected Outcomes) and is reviewed annually by the TCL Commission.

The movement from the broad based model to the more narrow focus on division level work led to the development in 2001 of Team TCL, a loosely organized ad hoc committee whose charge was to regain the broader campus based participation and to identify issues impacting the climate at TCL. Issues identified by Team TCL formed the basis for the initial discussion in the identification process of the College's QEP.

The Assessment and Evaluation Committee.

Designated as one of the College's Institutional Standing Committees, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee was implemented in 2001 to provide a broad umbrella for all the College's assessment and evaluation efforts. One goal of the committee was to facilitate the shifting of the focus of assessing and using results of assessment to strengthen the institution rather than each unit merely implementing assessment in isolation. The purpose of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee is to maintain a comprehensive approach to assessment

of program operations, competencies, and outcomes in all areas of the college, to evaluate data on institutional programs and effectiveness, and to enhance quality outcomes. The committee recommends strategies that increase the effectiveness of the College in meeting the needs of its service area and that promote continuous quality improvement. The committee evaluates institutional effectiveness plans and reports to the Executive Committee.

Chaired by the Director of Research and Planning, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee operates with a subcommittee structure. Subcommittees include program review, performance evaluation, and quality improvement. Members of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee represent all areas of the College and serve on at least one of the subcommittees (See Table 1). The Program Review Subcommittee is responsible for evaluation of results on internal and/or external program evaluations. The Performance Evaluation Subcommittee is responsible for collecting, evaluating, and recommending annual assessment plans and findings to demonstrate institutional effectiveness. The Quality Improvement Subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the assessment findings of the Quality Enhancement Plan for long-term and strategic planning. Across campus, the Quality Improvement Subcommittee is referred to as the QEP Subcommittee.

Table 1: 2003-2004 Assessment and Evaluation Committee Membership

Committee Member	Job Title	Representing College Unit	Subcommittee Assignment
Tim Garner	Director of Research and Planning	Administration	All
Rose Kearney-Nunnery	Vice President for Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs	All
Carolyn Banner	Director of Student Services	Student Services	Performance Evaluation
Les Brediger	Director of Admissions	Student Services	Program Review
Phil Dunning	General Business Instructor	Academic Affairs	Program Review
Everett Feight	Dean for Industrial Technologies	Academic Affairs	Program Review/Quality Improvement
Melanie Gallion	Registrar	Student Services	Program Review
Clyde Hincer	Vice President for Finance	Finance	All
Ron Jackson	Vice President for Student Affairs	Student Services	Performance Evaluation/Quality Improvement
Sue Ellen Johnson	Dean for Health Sciences	Academic Affairs	Performance Evaluation/Quality Improvement
Carol Kruzeloek	Director of Hilton Head College Center	Academic Affairs	Quality Improvement
Frances McCollough	Associate Dean for Student Services	Student Services	Quality Improvement
Leah Parisi	Dean for Business Technologies	Academic Affairs	Quality Improvement
Lynn Owen	CAD Instructor	Academic Affairs	Program Review
Ann Perry	English Instructor	Academic Affairs	Program Review
Lucille Roth	Dean for Arts and Sciences	Academic Affairs	Quality Improvement
Fred Seitz	Associate Dean/Learning Technologies	Academic Affairs	Quality Improvement
Richard Shaw	Dean for Learning Resources	Academic Affairs	Performance Evaluation
Sherri Spicer	Nursing Instructor	Academic Affairs	Performance Evaluation
Nancy Weber	Vice President for Continuing Education and Institutional Advancement	Continuing Education	Quality Improvement
Tamika Eugene	Student	Student	Assessment and Evaluation

In its initial work the Assessment and Evaluation Committee articulated the need to make data driven decisions. Concurrently a change in the reaffirmation process of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) from one of “looking in the rear view mirror to see what has been accomplished to looking through the windshield to plan what can be” had a dramatic impact on how the College “does and uses the results of assessment.” At TCL, this is known as going from little “ie” to capital “IE”!

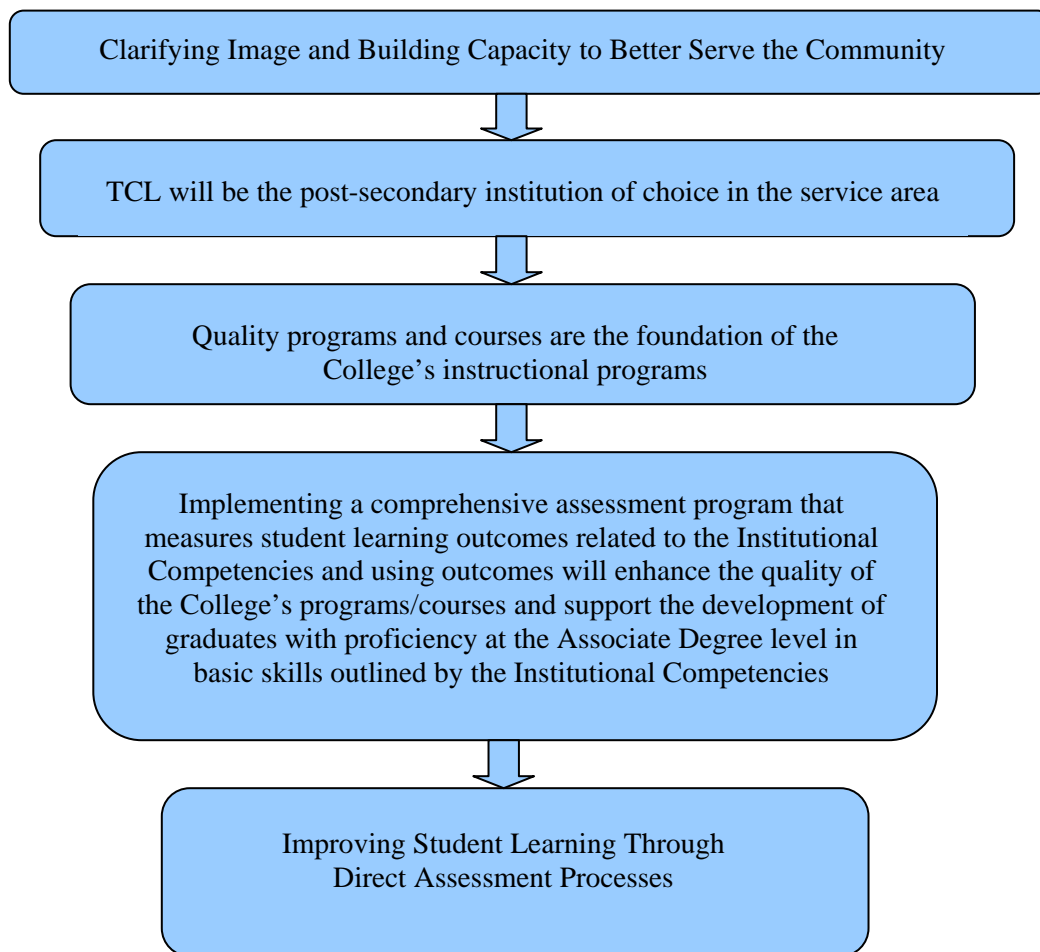
The Nature and Purpose of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

The QEP Issue and Its Refinement.

With the transition from the previous *SACS Criteria* to the newly formulated Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards, TCL faculty and staff held long discussions in campus committee/council meetings focusing on the QEP and the processes associated with developing our own QEP. Early discussions led to the identification of *Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve Our Community* as an issue that both impacted the quality of the institution and had a direct impact on student learning. This multi-faceted topic addresses more than one issue that contributes to institutional quality and focuses on the total learning environment at the TCL. The Quality Enhancement Subcommittee found selecting specific initial tasks within this broad issue identified by the campus community challenging. After many months and numerous discussions, the campus reached agreement that the initial focus for work on the QEP would be related to the quality/level of skills of TCL’s associate degree graduates outlined by the Institutional Competencies.

The issue identified for initial focus of the College’s QEP is *Improving Student Learning Outcomes through Direct Assessment Processes*. This issue is vital to the college’s commitment to long-term improvement of student learning and is the result of months of campus discussions/work related to the initial identification of *Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve the Community* as an issue that impacted the quality of the institution and had a direct impact on student learning (See Table 2).

Table 2: Distillation/Refinement of TCL’s QEP Issue



A brief account of the rationale that the campus used in moving from the very broad “*Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve the Community*” issue to the implementation focus of “*Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*” follows.

Graduates are the product of the College’s comprehensive instructional efforts. That *TCL be the learner-focused post-secondary institution of choice in the service area* necessitates the availability of learner-centered courses and programs to produce graduates who are well prepared to transition to a senior institution or to the workforce. To insure this transition, the

College reaffirmed four Institutional Competencies that associate degree graduates should possess: 1) proficiency in the basic academic skills of reading and writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematics, and the basic use of computers; 2) proficiency in problem solving and critical thinking; 3) the ability to acquire and use information; and 4) the ability to work with a variety of technologies (TCL Catalog, page 17).

Quality programs and courses are the foundation of the College's instructional programs. The College's Institutional Competencies are common to all academic programs and should be addressed regardless of a student's program of study. While the Institutional Competencies are enumerated for associate degree graduates, students seeking certificates or diplomas are often enrolled in the same general education course sections and benefit from courses and a curriculum that supports mastery and consistent application of the skills. As it developed reports for the 2002-2003 Institutional Effectiveness cycle, TCL faculty and staff recognized that the Institutional Competencies were not fully addressed in the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) assessment process. Previously the responsibility for development of the General Education Report had fallen with the Arts and Sciences faculty. For the first time, the college community recognized and articulated that the Institutional Competencies outlined are the responsibility of the College's entire faculty, administration, and staff instead of the sole responsibility of the Arts and Sciences faculty. For graduates to demonstrate the competencies outlined, each person on campus must assume some responsibility in valuing these competencies and helping students gain the skills necessary to attain mastery of these skills/processes.

The implementation of a comprehensive assessment program that measures student learning outcomes related to the Institutional Competencies will enhance the quality of the College's programs/courses and support the development of graduates who possess proficiency at the Associate Degree level in basic skills outlined by the Institutional Competencies. To enhance student learning and improve institutional performance, the College must assess student learning outcomes more effectively. Many of the current (pre-QEP) measures of student learning assumed learning had occurred. A grade of A, B, or C showed that the student had mastered content, and successful transfer to a senior institution or job placement assumed learning had occurred. While such measures are established methods of examining the learning environment,

during the 2002-2003 reporting cycle, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee recognized the need to examine more deliberately the direct measures of student learning and to define more discretely what the learning looked like. Because the majority of the College's assessment tools have been indirect measures of student learning, a need exists to state student learning outcomes and measure the results intentionally, both directly and indirectly. Thus, the QEP subcommittee recommended that the development of a comprehensive assessment program measuring student learning outcomes be the initial focus of the QEP.

The commonality for all associate degree programs is the general education core with the Institutional Competencies serving as a common thread throughout the general education core. Inclusion of learning activities to reinforce these skills throughout the program of study will accomplish two things: they will strengthen individual courses/programs to promote persistence and mastery of the skills and they will add value to the mastery through application in work-like settings.

Using this rationale, the QEP Committee, with the concurrence of the SACS Leadership Team, determined that the focus of initial efforts for the QEP is *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*. The issue focuses the College on implementing assessment processes/measures to critically examine the general education core and the application of the skills, concepts, and processes associated with the general education core in associate degree programs. To date, assessment of the Institutional Competencies has been indirect, examining student learning outcomes using course completion rates, grade distributions, program completions, and job placement rates that assume learning has taken place. Additionally, the annual State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) Instructional Program Evaluation relies on such quantitative data as enrollment trends, number of graduates, and placement rates to determine program effectiveness. While each measure has strength, even collectively they provide an incomplete picture of student learning outcomes. The implementation of a cohesive assessment process that supplements these measures with direct assessment of student work and/or an external source such as a standardized test will enable the college to build a comprehensive, effective assessment process. The results of the QEP efforts will demonstrate improvement in student learning, will strengthen teaching practice, will

improve what is taught and will enable the College to better articulate what it expects students to learn. The College community will benefit from active campus-wide involvement in dialogue about teaching and learning and the advantages of assessments and various methods of assessment. The QEP will provide feedback regarding the College's professional practices, and the process will be both intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding.

While the Institutional Competencies focus on associate degree graduates, they also apply to students who complete certificate and diploma programs as these programs have many common course offerings. The Assessment and Evaluation Committee determined that the College should begin by addressing one part of one competency, build a model for success, and then expand to additional programs/institutional competency components. Thus, proficiency in the academic skills of reading and writing, a component of the first Institutional Competency, became the starting point. Specifically, in the first year the College would develop student learning outcomes, direct and indirect assessment measures, reporting processes, analysis procedures, and a feedback loop for proficiency in the basic skills of reading and writing. In subsequent years, the College would address the remaining components of Institutional Competency 1 and the remaining competencies as reflected in Table 3.

Table 3: TCL’s Assessment of Institutional Competencies and Abbreviated Timeline

The Institutional Competencies

Associate degree graduates should possess:

- 1) proficiency in the basic academic skills of a) reading and writing, b) oral communication, c) fundamental mathematics and d) the basic use of computers;
- 2) proficiency in problem solving and critical thinking;
- 3) the ability to acquire and use information; and
- 4) the ability to work with a variety of technologies.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Competency # & Area</i>	<i>Brief Description of Activities</i>
2002-2003	1a. Reading/Writing:	Spring-Summer: Develop Rubric; Fall Mini-pilot
2004	1c. Mathematics: 1a. Reading/Writing:	Spring/Summer: Develop Rubric; Fall Mini-pilot Spring, Pilot; Fall, full implementation
2005	1d. Basic Computer Use: 1c. Mathematics: 1a. Reading/Writing:	Spring-Summer: Develop Rubric; Fall Mini-pilot Spring, Pilot; Fall, full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation
2006	1b. Oral Communication: 1d. Basic Computer Use: 1c. Mathematics: 1a. Reading/Writing:	Spring-Summer: Develop Rubric, Fall Mini-pilot Spring, Pilot; Fall full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation
2007	1b. Oral Communication: 1d. Basic Computer Use: 1c. Mathematics: 1a. Reading/Writing:	Spring, Pilot; Fall full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation
2008	1b. Oral Communication: 1d. Basic Computer Use: 1c. Mathematics: 1a. Reading/Writing:	Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation Fall-Spring, continued full implementation
2009-2011	Beginning in 2009, emphasis will be on development of direct assessment program for Institutional Competencies 2, 3, 4 with a focus on programmatic needs.	

The Meaning of Student Learning in the Context of the QEP

The campus community found two discussions particularly important in struggling with the refinement/development of this issue for the QEP. With the initial focus being *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*, the first task was developing consensus regarding what the “student learning environment” encompasses at the Technical College of the Lowcountry. The second was identifying, defining, and refining the issue while also identifying strategies to address it within the bounds of the College’s human and fiscal resources.

The issue, *Clarifying Image and Building Capacity To Better Serve the Community*, was identified in Fall 2002 and recommended to the Executive Committee as an issue that affects the student learning environment at TCL. The learning environment has many components that impact student learning, success, and program completion (retention). Every employee at TCL—senior administrative level, professional staff, instructional staff, and support staff—impacts the learning environment. The components of the learning environment include physical campuses/sites, virtual campuses, instructional support services, and human resources (See Appendix 1). In various meetings of the Academic Management Council, Student Services Management Council, Administrative Council, Enrollment Management Committee, Curriculum Committee, faculty meetings, and other groups, participants discussed and examined each category. Issues, problems, and needs were identified in each category (See Appendix 7). As participants struggled to categorize and prioritize issues/problems/processes, components and sub-components were shifted.

Defining Student Learning in Context of the QEP.

As discussions continued, the campus community struggled to clarify the college concept of “student learning.” While everyone had a notion of what student learning was, clearly a diversity of ideas existed. To provide consistent communication, the college needed a more formal statement regarding student learning. The QEP Subcommittee drafted several statements, with the group examining the various components of the definitions proposed and considering the feedback obtained from such diverse groups as the Academic Management Council, Marketing Committee, Arts and Sciences Division, Business Technologies Division, and Student Services Division. Part of the discussion focused on whether such a statement should be specific or general, whether it should reflect the unique nature of TCL, and whether the statement should be static or dynamic. In deciding what the statement should include, the QEP Subcommittee also considered the role of goals of student learning, educational outcomes, and assessment methods. The QEP Subcommittee’s consideration of feedback led to the development of the following philosophy/belief statement about student learning:

Student learning is the acquisition of academic, technical, and interpersonal skills enabling the application of critical thinking to make informed judgments.

At the Spring 2003 Retreat, participants approved this belief statement as one forming the foundation for the development of the education goals of student learning and one that was meaningful to all academic programs. In addition, this belief statement guides the direct and indirect assessment strategies used to evaluate and enhance student learning.

Involvement in the QEP Process.

With the approach the College's SACS Reaffirmation date and the implementation of the SACS Core Requirements, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee began earnest discussion of the newly implemented Quality Enhancement Program and its implications for the College. Early discussions focused on the identification of an issue that directly impacted student learning and the student learning environment. The broad issue *Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve the Community* is impressive and, as the Assessment and Evaluation Committee discovered, is both very broad and ill defined. At the direction of the Executive Committee, the Quality Improvement Subcommittee membership was expanded to include (See Table 4) members of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and additional members of the campus community to involve appropriate campus constituencies. The expanded subcommittee, known across campus as the QEP Subcommittee, began the task of defining the issue, striving to answer the question, "What does it mean to clarify image and build capacity to better serve the community?"

Table 4: Membership of the QEP Subcommittee

*Indicates also member of Assessment and Evaluation Committee

Committee Member	Job Title	Representing College Unit
Ann Marie Adams	Director of Public Relations	Continuing Education
John Aldrich	Student Services Program Manager	Student Services
Joan Brown	TCL, H. Mungin Center, Administrative Assistant	Academic Affairs
Jan Chapman	Accounting/Fiscal Manager	Finance
Jim Daniels	Mathematics Instructor	Academic Affairs
Everett Feight	Dean for Industrial Technologies, Electronics Instructor	Academic Affairs
Patricia Ferguson	Student Support Services Counselor	Student Services
*Tim Garner	Director of Research & Planning	President
*Clyde Hincer	Vice President for Finance	President
David Johnson	Business Instructor	Academic Affairs
*Carol Kruzlock	Director of Hilton Head College Center	Academic Affairs
*Ron Jackson	Vice President for Student Affairs	Administration
*Rose Kearney-Nunnery	Vice President for Academic Affairs	Administration
*Sue Ellen Johnson	Dean for Health Sciences, Nursing Instructor	Academic Affairs
Sidney Ladson	Custodial Supervisor	Finance
Joe Maggi	Business Instructor	Academic Affairs
*Frances McCollough	Associate Dean for Student Development	Student Services
Machonne Morrison	Director of Personnel	Administration
Lynn O'Neal	Continuing Education Coordinator	Continuing Education
*Leah Parisi	Dean for Business Technologies	Academic Affairs
*Lucille Roth	Dean for Arts and Sciences, Mathematics Instructor	Academic Affairs
Fred Seitz	Distance Learning Coordinator, Curriculum Development	Academic Affairs
Martha Sette	Biology Instructor	Academic Affairs
*Richard Shaw	Dean for Instructional Support Services	Academic Affairs
*Nancy Weber	Vice President for Continuing Education and Institutional Advancement	Administration
Doug van Nostran	Grants Administrator	Institutional Advancement

Involvement of Faculty, Staff, and Administration

As one of the College's institutional standing committees, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee as a whole addresses ongoing program assessment and evaluation needs via three subcommittees: Program Review, Performance Evaluation, and Quality Improvement. The Quality Improvement Subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the assessment findings of the Quality Improvement Plan for long term and strategic planning. It is within this context that the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) work is facilitated. The commitment to broad-based participation in the development and implementation of the QEP led to an expansion of the Quality Improvement Subcommittee into the QEP Subcommittee.

Membership of the QEP Subcommittee includes faculty, staff and administration. Some members are also involved in the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and others are additional representatives from divisions across the campus community. The broad-based membership of the QEP Subcommittee provides communication to campus divisions via the College's council and committee structures. Active participation by members of the Executive Committee, Administrative Council, Academic Management Council, Student Services Council, various academic divisions, and Curriculum Committee at their regular meetings provides opportunity to participate in the QEP process. These venues provide a communication structure that intentionally facilitates discussion related to the QEP as well as a feedback loop to the QEP Subcommittee by members of these campus groups. To further involve the campus community in the QEP process, in 2003 the end of the year picnic and the State of the College day activities for the entire campus included a broad overview and status report on the QEP. In Fall 2003, all campus employees received information about the QEP and the opportunity to participate in the Assessment Climate Survey, with the Public Relations office facilitating the distribution, collection, and compilation of the responses.

The Assessment and Evaluation Committee identified four components of the student learning environment—physical campuses/sites, virtual campuses, instructional support services, and human resources—embodied by the issue. The QEP subcommittee used a focus group structure to try to define these four components. Very quickly those working to define these

facets realized that the issue was extremely broad. As the focus groups reported, the QEP Subcommittee made concerted effort to clarify the definitions presented and to determine how each element related to/impacted student learning/success and program completion. At this stage, the QEP Subcommittee considered every idea valid.

The QEP Subcommittee found prioritizing the growing list of components within each of the four focus group topics challenging. With all problems/issues identified, the QEP Subcommittee posted each topic using a nominal group process, then sorted each topic into similar groups without prioritizing them. As a result of this activity, the QEP Subcommittee then renamed the groups: instruction, student support services, facilities, and institutional support and effectiveness. These outcomes were then shared with the leaders of the Spring 2003 Campus Retreat for Strategic Planning.

Participation at the 2003 Campus Retreat for Strategic Planning included administration, mid-level managers, faculty, and staff from all campus divisions. The goal for the day was to address the role of the QEP in the SACS Reaffirmation process, its fit with the College's overall institutional effectiveness efforts, and the impact anticipated for the College and our students. The day's activities included an overview of the new SACS process including a discussion of the QEP, the belief statement for student learning, and the status of the work to date. The overview provided a venue for discussing the mandates of the new SACS Reaffirmation process including the Compliance Audit and the off-site visit. TCL employees learned that findings of the Off-Site Review Team would be reported by conference telephone call, and more than likely, the College would complete a focused report to address each finding of the Off-Site Review Team. The campus community learned that the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan was new to the reaffirmation process and requires the identification of an issue vital to the long-term improvement of student learning, an issue that serves to focus the College on the future rather than the past as in previous reaffirmation visits.

The QEP issue "Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve the Community" was introduced to the retreat participants. After general discussion, small groups further defined the four facets identified by the Assessment and Evaluation Committee—physical

campuses/sites, virtual campuses, instructional support services, and human resources. All ideas/issues/concerns were posted and this larger campus group participated in a nominal group activity to align the issues identified, group the issues into meaningful categories, and prioritize the categories by “voting with their feet.” At day’s end, student support services and instruction were identified as top priorities, with facilities, human resources, and institutional effectiveness and support as other categories mentioned. Each of the five new categories had multiple issues/problems listed as important concerns for that facet of the learning environment.

Throughout the process of formulating the QEP, the President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs informed the TCL Commission at its regular meetings of the status of the Quality Enhancement Plan. In addition, the TCL Commission’s annual retreat provided another opportunity for input regarding the SACS Reaffirmation process and the QEP.

In March 2003, Dr. Jim Rogers visited the TCL campus to discuss the new SACS Reaffirmation process. He emphasized that the QEP must strengthen the quality of the institution to improve student learning and should be issue driven. The QEP must be an issue of vital strategic importance that can/will be supported by the administrative, fiscal, and human resource structures of the College; be related to student learning; be substantive; and be doable. Chapter 3 of the Quality Enhancement Plan addresses these points.

External constituencies were involved in the process of developing the QEP through the advisory committee process. Representing the various academic program areas, advisory committee members provide insight into business and community needs as programs are reviewed at least twice annually.

Although students are involved through membership on standing college committees, their active participation on committees is only marginally successful, largely because of the conflicting demands on the time of the older, non-traditional student. However, faculty engaged in the administration of the fall mini-pilot for reading/writing actively involved their students through discussion of the rubric and its role in a new assessment initiative at the College.

Summary

TCL identified *Improving Student Learning Outcomes Through Enhanced Assessment* as an issue related to enhancing student learning. The issue is critically important to the College as it seeks to meet the needs of students in the service area, is complementary to the College's ongoing Institutional Effectiveness Program providing valuable data, and can be accomplished within the constraints of its resources. Consensus on the issue was obtained by the QEP Subcommittee through participation by faculty, staff, administration, and other constituents through the College's committee/council structure, campus wide events such as the Strategic Planning Retreat and State of the College Day, and Program Advisory Committees. The philosophical statement adopted regarding student learning provides a foundation for development of student learning outcomes appropriate to the wide array of academic courses and programs. Initial efforts of the QEP will focus on the development of an assessment structure to ascertain the skill level of associate degree graduates on the skills identified by the Institutional Competencies. Successful implementation and evaluation of the results of the assessment measures will result in stronger academic courses and programs that produce associate degree graduates better prepared to enter the workforce or to continue their education.

Chapter 2. Review of Best Practices

Assessment of programs and services at the post-secondary level intensified in the 1980s as the result of work at the federal, regional, and local levels. To address the goal of *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment* of TCL associate degree graduates on the Institutional Competencies, the committee studied literature pertaining to the assessment of general education skills using multiple methodologies including qualitative and quantitative methodologies, direct and indirect methods, traditional and authentic assessments, and triangulation of results.

General Education has historically provided students with exposure to an array of skills and attitudes that impact a student's ability to function in society as opposed to the knowledge attained in the major field of study where a student gains the content knowledge needed to develop expertise in a particular field. The general education coursework may provide the opportunity to learn skills in reading, thinking, communicating, writing, problem solving, information literacy, ethical and scientific reasoning, and/or values and attitudes. At TCL the essence of the general education core is outlined in the Institutional Competencies. Because the knowledge in the general education curricula is often less concrete than that in the major courses, assessment of these skills has been more difficult. Nevertheless, students should apply skills learned in the general education component of the curriculum in the content-specific courses in their major.

Active participation in the assessment process benefits faculty, staff, administration, students and other constituent groups. Assessments may be formative, giving information that may be used to change or improve the performance of programs and services, or summative, giving information about the quality of the programs and services. Techniques used to gather data may involve direct and indirect strategies and use qualitative and quantitative measures. Quantitative measures rely on numerical data while qualitative measures are descriptive. Direct measures have students provide evidence of learning via an assessment instrument while indirect measures have students reflect on learning experiences.

Because post-secondary education plays a crucial role in providing for our nation's future, professional educators can expect that the emphasis on assessment will continue. In addition, assessment and evidence that institutions are using results to build and sustain quality programs meeting the needs of constituents are key in building and maintaining public support. In today's environment, post-secondary educational institutions must seek and obtain the trust of the publics they serve.

The Institutional Importance of Assessment

Increased emphasis on assessment in post-secondary institutions came from legislative mandates for inclusion as an institutional process for accountability and for accreditation (U.S. Department of Education, 1988; Palomba and Banta, 1999). Currently, the economic environment encourages institutions to engage in meaningful assessment. Declining funding for publicly supported post-secondary institutions is resulting in a need for colleges to structure programs and services in a manner to enable the institution to demonstrate accountability to its constituents. The colleges use information gained from assessment activities as a part of planning for academic program structures and the design and implementation of teaching/learning activities. College also use results of assessment to help articulate clear goals and facilitate development of appropriately designed programs, provide for connectivity between discrete learning experiences and program goals, and validate student mastery of content knowledge (Ewell, 1997).

Palomba and Banta (1999) state that assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development (p. 4). The foundation for formulating assessment measures lies in the statement of clear goals and objectives and an understanding of the role of assessment in improving the institution's academic programs and services (Marchese, 1997; Hutchings and Marchese,, 1990).

Internally, colleges use assessment and the results of assessment to assist in setting priorities in strategic planning, in making appropriate changes in academic programs and services, and in appropriating resources to support them. Institutions use benchmark data and trend data in

institutional decision-making processes to adequately support programs that are productive and support the institution's mission while restructuring or phasing out those that are not productive and no longer support the mission (Ewell, 1997). Colleges may use assessment results externally to insure constituent groups and accrediting agencies that the institution is accountable in use of funds and preparation of students for the work force or continuation of their education (Ewell, 1997; Moore, 1998).

Assessment Methodologies

The development of an assessment program to examine student learning and produce a valid picture should include the use of multiple indicators. Data triangulation includes the use of multiple data sources to garner varying views regarding the same question. Triangulation of data yields a more complete picture with each data source adding to the completeness of that picture. The use of multiple sources addresses some concerns that may surface pertaining to validity, bias, or weakness of a particular method since alternative approaches are complementary and serve to counteract opposing explanations (Hilton, 2003; Zulkardi, 2003).

Qualitative and quantitative research methods provide methodologies for framing and investigating research questions. Many practitioners believe that qualitative and quantitative research methods produce conflicting evidence while others believe that data derived from the two methods provides a complementary and more complete study of the question (Silverman, 2000; www.isncc.org, 2003). Qualitative research results in descriptive data that is the result of the researcher's participation in the process, while quantitative research results in numerical data that is the result of the researcher's observations or results of the process (Fitzgerald, 2000; www.writing.colostate.edu, 2003). Qualitative methods are inductive, require a small sample size, are intense, utilize open-ended questions, facilitate depth in exploring a topic, and are subjective. In contrast, quantitative methods are deductive, require a large sample size, are extensive, utilize specified questions, promote breadth in exploring a topic, and are objective. Results of quantitative research may not be used to make predictions about larger populations due to sample size and the nature of the research, while results of qualitative research may be generalized to larger populations. Both methods can be used to seek answers for a research

topic, employ data, identify potential answers, and to analyze and interpret information (Liao, 2001; www.ling.lancs.ac.uk, 2003).

General Education and Outcomes

General education typically addresses the development of generic skills that are of concern to faculty in all content areas. These include skills in reading, writing, listening, oral communication, computation, acquiring and using information, critical thinking/reasoning, problem solving, and may include knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, and the social and natural sciences (Banta and Associates, 1993; Banta, Lund, Black, and Oblander, 1996, Schmidt, 1998; Palomba and Banta, 1999; Morante, 2003). General education programs should not be a static core of courses but a dynamic set of articulated skills that are introduced in basic courses and incorporated in subsequent major courses. It is essential that the faculty articulate student learning outcomes and design valid curricula to promote mastery of the general education learning outcomes (Palomba and Banta, 1999).

To determine the general education outcomes, the faculty must ask and answer the question “What is the point...” (Association of American Colleges, 1994, p. 3). The answer to this question provides the foundation for the daunting task of designing a general education program and stating the learning outcomes. Accomplishment of this may involve cooperation of faculty from across disciplines as they seek to outline what students should be able to do upon program completion rather than simply describing course content or learning activities. Assessment of student learning outcomes should measure the level of student mastery of the competencies required by the program (Banta and Associates, 1993). Content and skills should be assessed. Content addresses what is to be mastered in program courses while skills assessment focuses on the application of such general intellectual abilities as the ability to solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively orally and in writing, acquire and use information, and think quantitatively and analytically (Palomba and Banta, 1999; Morante, 2003). Morante (2003) further suggests that to be effective, general education assessment programs should be developed and phased in cyclically over time.

Outcomes assessment for general education skills may be accomplished by indirect or direct means. Indirect measures examine evidence that assumes learning has occurred (Kinnick and Walleri, 1995). Course completion rates, grade point averages, success rates in subsequent courses, persistence or retention in courses, transfer rates, job placement rates, employer satisfaction, and graduation rates are examples of indirect measures of learning outcomes. Direct assessment measures examine samples of actual student learning. Direct measures include portfolios, performance on locally made or standardized exams, performance in a capstone course or experience, course embedded items, and external review of projects, exhibitions, or performances (Morante, 2003).

Writing Skills

The ability to communicate effectively in writing has been identified by the National Education Goals Panel (1994) as an important skill for effective citizenship in the local and global arena and is highly valued by the education and business communities as a necessary skill. While the business community emphasizes specific uses of writing based on its particular needs, the education community tends to emphasize the writing process (Banta and Associates, 1993). Two major approaches to the teaching of writing include individual composition courses and the use of writing-intensive courses via general education and/or major coursework. Regardless of the approach the expectation is that students understand and write effectively for their audience, produce cohesive, coherent narratives, and prepare an effective written document (Palomba and Banta, 1999).

Writing is a complex task that encompasses the mechanics of writing—spelling, punctuation, grammar—and content and style. In the early 1970s, James Britton coined the phrase “writing across the curriculum” with the idea that all teachers should include learning activities that would maximize content learned through writing (Harris and Schaible, 1997). While a formal Writing Across the Curriculum Program (WAC) intends to facilitate writing as a means to learn, it is complementary to a writing curriculum that has as its goal writing to communicate (McLeod and Miraglia, 2001). The underlying pedagogy has students “think on paper, to objectify their knowledge, and therefore to help them discover both what they know and what they need to learn” (McLeod and Miraglia, 2001, 5.) Proponents of implementing

WAC believe that writing shapes thinking and that learning is facilitated by writing, that students need sufficient opportunities to write in appropriate circumstances, that different kinds of learning and thinking require different kinds of writing, that value is added to good writing when it is given recognition as being valuable, and that learning to write well is a lifetime process (Moxley, 2003).

For many years, the assumption held that students successfully completing a particular composition course or course sequence like ENG 101 and ENG 102 (Freshman Composition I and II) possessed the skills needed to successfully negotiate upper-level courses with rigorous writing requirements. The assumption has not proven true (Sheridan, 1992; Banta, Lund, Black, and Oblander, 1996). Colleges and universities have taken various approaches to addressing the development of adequate writing skills in their students. These include implementing a campus-wide writing initiative such as Writing Across the Curriculum, inclusion of writing-intensive courses across an academic program or paired courses in which a writing teacher is paired with a teacher from another discipline such as history or sociology. Such a pairing encourages students to use writing as a learning tool, clarifying their own learning as they write about their learning (Sheridan, 1992).

Students and faculty believe writing ability and content knowledge improve when students are actively engaged in writing frequently in meaningful contexts. Opportunities to revise writing in response to instructor critique of their work also increase student growth in writing skills. Simply increasing the number of writing assignments does not positively impact the development of writing skills (Harris and Schaible, 1997). The University of Minnesota website (www.cla.umn.edu, 2003) regarding the university's Writing Across the Curriculum program states:

Learning is a life-long task, one that begins in childhood, is enhanced by formal education, and is further refined through an individual's personal, social, and professional experiences...writing is the principal means by which all scholars—from faculty researchers to undergraduate students—conduct inquiries and communicate their learning. Writing and learning are inseparable; learning to write effectively can be one of the most intellectually empowering components of a university education. The University regards the teaching of writing as a responsibility shared by all departments....several

complementary objectives: good writers write a great deal; they practice on a continuing basis...good writers are able to write for a variety of audiences; they understand that effective writing depends on context...good writers are also able to produce a range of different kinds of writing....no one course can meet all these goals, the collective goal of all these writing intensive courses is to prepare students to communicate effectively in a variety of situation at the University, in their future employment, and in their roles as citizens.

Indirect/Traditional vs. Direct/Authentic Assessment

Traditional assessment is an indirect method of measuring student learning. Such traditional methods as short answer, multiple choice, completion items, or discussion exams are used by instructors at the classroom level to assess student learning. Program assessments may use grade point ratios, course completion rates, and graduation rates as indirect measures of student learning outcomes. In a traditional setting, the curriculum is developed, teaching and learning occur, and subsequent assessments are based on the prescribed curriculum. Traditional assessment methods make the assumption that if students can correctly answer questions related to how a task is accomplished, then they are able to perform the task at an acceptable level (Wiggins, 1990; www.jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu, 2003)

Authentic assessment is a direct method of measuring student learning. It requires demonstration of competency at pre-determined levels for a specific task through an oral presentation, exhibition, written project, demonstration, or portfolio of work. Authentic assessments seek to provide assessment of a skill in a setting that replicates the real world (Valencia, 1997; www.ncrel.org, 2003). Competency levels and descriptions of expectations are available to students in advance of the assessment in the form of a rubric. In a curriculum driven by authentic assessment, practitioners first examine what a student must know and be able to perform to be successful and then the curriculum is designed to insure mastery of the student learning outcomes (Wiggins, 1990; www.jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu, 2003; Valencia, 2003).

Authentic assessments are most frequently criterion referenced with criteria and proficiency levels being outlined in advance of the assessment. A rubric is used to inform students about the

assessment criteria and may include descriptions of the criteria and/or proficiency levels. The rubric is designed to correlate to learning outcomes and serves as a tool for the student in preparing to perform the task and for the evaluator in assigning a score to the student's work. (Moskal, 2000; Mertler, 2001; www.jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu, 2003).

Analytic and holistic rubrics are used for different student tasks. Analytic rubrics outline the criteria for the task, and each criterion has its own proficiency levels. This enables the teacher to provide detailed feedback to the student on multiple components of a single task. In contrast, holistic rubrics examine student work on multiple criteria, but the assessment of the student task results in a single proficiency level. Analytic rubrics are used when the teacher and student need an in-depth look at each aspect of the student's performance, while holistic rubrics are best when the feedback needed is an overall perspective of student performance on the task (Moskal, 2000; Mertler, 2001; www.jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu, 2003)

Summary

Post-secondary institutions are involved in the assessment of student learning outcomes as an avenue to continuously monitor and improve the quality of academic programs and services. General education outcomes articulate the general intellectual skills commonly taught in a core of courses but whose skills are applied in all academic majors. The institution's entire faculty has responsibility for facilitating student learning and applying such skills as reading, writing, communicating orally and in writing, computation, problem solving, critical thinking, and acquiring and using information. Agreement must be reached on a set of general education student learning outcomes and an assessment program designed that will enable the institution and its faculty to know the level of its graduates for these skills. A variety of methods—qualitative, quantitative, direct, indirect—may be used to assess the skills. Information derived from the analysis of the data can be used to guide appropriate strategic planning actions regarding the institution's academic programs and services.

Chapter 3. Quality Enhancement Plans and Goals

Background

TCL's implementation issue for the QEP is *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*. This issue, identified for the Quality Enhancement Plan at the Technical College of the Lowcountry, is an outgrowth of the IE process. Under the umbrella of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee, the QEP is managed as a part of the College's defined IE process.

The goal of the College's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process is to enable the college as a whole and its various programs and units to plan, implement, and use the results of institutional effectiveness activities to continuously improve the College (see TCL Procedure 7-1-701.2). The process takes approximately 18 months to move from planning through implementation, evaluation, and then recycling through the process based on information gained through the feedback loop. Documentation of the planning, implementation, and results of each IE cycle is provided in such documents as Institutional Effectiveness Reports, Program Reviews, and the *TCL Fact Book*. The Director for Research and Planning, the Assessment and Evaluation Committee, and the Executive administration coordinate and review assessment and evaluation activities. The Director for Research and Planning provides day-to-day support, consultative services, and statistical support. The Assessment and Evaluation Committee reviews these various reports and recommends changes based on results of audits, evaluation findings, program reviews, program accreditation evaluations, and broader institutional studies like the QEP. In all cases, the College's Executive Committee has final authority.

Specific QEP Goals

The major goals of the QEP are as follows:

- To implement a cohesive assessment process utilizing direct assessment of student work to assess the skill level of associate degree graduates in academic areas outlined by the Institutional Competencies, and
- To have associate degree graduates demonstrate an acceptable skill level in academic areas outlined by the Institutional Competencies.

These goals will be realized in two phases. The first phase addresses skills in reading/writing, fundamental mathematics, basic use of computers, and oral communication, elements of the first Institutional Competency. The second phase will address proficiency in problem solving and critical thinking, acquisition and use of information, and working with a variety of technologies, the second, third, and fourth Institutional Competencies respectively.

The planning, design, implementation and evaluation of TCL's QEP, *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*, will have positive outcomes for the College's students, faculty, staff, administration and other constituents. These outcomes include support of the College's mission, an increased focus on sustaining the College's total learning environment, increased/improved outreach to the College's entire service area, and increased retention in courses and programs. Implementation will foster development of a culture of assessment and one that values the appropriate, accurate use and application of general education skills. The objectives of the QEP are as follows:

- To enhance the quality of associate degree graduates
- To increase the level of professionalism exhibited by associate degree graduates
- To increase retention rates in courses and programs
- To increase graduation rates
- To increase attention paid by programs to the application of the skills outlined by the Institutional Competencies with the resulting demonstration of these skills throughout the program of study
- To develop a culture within the College that values assessment

Since the College is in the early stage of development and implementation of the QEP, specific levels of achievement for goals and objectives are not yet formally stated. It is anticipated that such goals will be set each Spring as the results are analyzed and plans for the subsequent year are formulated.

The goals and objectives for the QEP are supported by the College's Philosophy, Vision, and Goals. The Philosophy statement reads: "A learning centered college, the Technical College of the Lowcountry encourages creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, and responsibility. In all of its endeavors, the College creates a positive, student-centered environment emphasizing

learning...Through its technical and college transfer programs, the College serves as an effective partner in economic and human resource development in the Lowcountry” (TCL Vision and Goals document).

Routinely, the Technical College of the Lowcountry identifies goals and objectives to improve student learning. The goals and objectives for the QEP support TCL’s mission. The College’s Mission Statement asserts that the college “provides quality, affordable academic and technical programs leading to Associate Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates in an environment fostering excellence in teaching and learning. The College prepares graduates with knowledge and skills for transfer to senior colleges and universities and for careers in computer technology, industrial technology, engineering technology, occupational technology, business, health sciences and public service.” The College’s four Strategic Goals, support the critical importance of teaching and learning as primary foci (See Table 5). The Strategic Goals and priority initiatives position the College to serve as a catalyst in the economic development activities of the community; provide affordable, accessible, quality education to the citizens of our region; provide local businesses with consultation and workforce training; and serve as a vehicle for the betterment of a community that is diverse, growing, and ever-changing (See Vision and Goals Document).

The College’s 2003 annual report, *Innovation and Impact*, reflects how TCL impacts the community by delivering education, developing a competent workforce, meeting diverse needs, serving the community, and growing to meet future demands. The Strategic Plan further defines the College’s goals, enumerates action plans for three years for each goal and sub-goal, and is updated annually as a result of the Annual Campus Retreat. To assess progress on each goal and sub-goal, the College completes the annual Outcomes Document which outlines the goal and status of accomplishment.

Table 5: Strategic Goals and Priority Initiatives

Goal	Priority Initiatives
To ensure excellence and value by providing high-quality, relevant programs and services to the SC Lowcountry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver exemplary credit instruction • offer outstanding non-credit instruction • provide exemplary services
To assist in the development of a qualified workforce to fulfill the demands of the Lowcountry's expanding and diversifying economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address the needs of the area's constantly changing workplace • work to facilitate the transition from high school to college • serve as a key partner in the Workforce Investment Act • enhance the College's links with employers
To acquire the necessary resources to accomplish the mission of the Technical College of the Lowcountry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • garner financial resources and use them effectively • devise strategies to recruit and retain quality faculty and staff • develop strategies for increasing faculty and staff salaries to a competitive level • enhance the physical plant through renovations, acquisitions and new construction • strengthen the capability of the College's management information systems • refine institutional research capacity; expand the application of emerging technology • educate the public about the college's value to the community
To expand educational access and attainment in the College's service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance awareness among business and industry of the college's capability • promote additional access for underserved populations • increase outreach in the local high schools; expand the college's marketing program • provide increased opportunities for military and military family members • raise awareness among families of the value of education

Each academic division has a mission statement specific to the division which supports the College's mission, philosophy, and goals. Academic programs and courses are developed to provide an orderly progression for student learning from entry to program completion that systematically enables students to master skills, concepts, and processes necessary for their programs of study. Student learning outcomes are enumerated in each course syllabus (2003-2004 *TCL Catalog*, pages 20-74; Course syllabi on TCL Website).

The implementation of the QEP will facilitate systematic review of student learning outcomes in courses and programs. While the QEP focuses on the assessment of the Institutional Competencies of general education skills of associate degree graduates, in reality students in any general education course may be seeking to earn associate degrees, diplomas and/or certificates. Thus, as data is gathered, analyzed, and appropriate changes made, all students at the College will benefit. Among the anticipated changes is the inclusion of learning outcomes/activities in courses and programs in each of the College's academic divisions. As a result students will be able to transfer the learning from the basic course and apply/master the basic skills through application in higher level general education and/or academic major courses. The campus community including faculty and students will add value to these skills. For example, by inclusion of writing in learning activities directly related to a student's academic major, the College will assist a culture that values good writing to begin to take root. Each subsequent year of implementation, similar appreciation for the value of computational skills, oral communication, basic computer skills, or appropriate competency. in the academic programs will have a positive impact on the learning environment and student learning at TCL.

The Institutional Context for Goal Implementation

TCL, one of sixteen comprehensive two-year technical colleges in South Carolina, impacts the communities in its area having served nearly 9,000 students in the last year through credit and non-credit continuing education programs. Through its various programs and services, the College seeks to serve the citizens of the Lowcountry by delivering education, developing a competent workforce, meeting diverse needs, serving the community, and growing to meet future demands. TCL offers 14 associate degree programs, four diploma programs, and 41 certificate programs in some of the Lowcountry's and the nation's fastest growing career fields. The variety of programs, small class sizes, and up-to-date technology give students the competitive edge in getting the job they want. The local business people serving on the College's Advisory Committees ensure that TCL's programs provide students with the skills that employers want. TCL's comprehensive financial assistance program puts college within the reach of any student seeking a post-secondary education. Responding to the requests of Lowcountry employers about workforce requirements and other needs assessments, the College recently implemented associate degree programs in Civil Engineering Technology, Early Care

and Education, and Radiologic Technology. New certificate programs include 3-D Design, Advanced Microcomputer Programming, Network Administrator, Network Engineer, and Relational Database Administrator.

In addition to credit courses offered by the College, the Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division (CEWD) offers a diverse selection of non-credit courses. CEWD provides open enrollment courses for fast track career changes, pre-licensing courses to prepare the student for professional designations, short courses to upgrade work skills, and personal interest courses. Many of these noncredit courses meet content/classroom-hour requirement to qualify for state exams and licensing. From July 1, 2002 to July 1, 2003, CEWD increased its enrollment by 73% due in large part to the demand from area businesses for quality training.

Diversity in Student Body

The diversity in the student body at the Technical College of the Lowcountry reflects the diversity of the region. Three counties in South Carolina's Lowcountry, Hampton, Jasper, and Colleton, are rural, economically disadvantaged, geographically distant from the main college campus, and educationally challenged. Beaufort County, which also has areas which are rural and disadvantaged, on the other hand has the main college campus, a rapidly growing population of approximately 125,000, a small business and service-related economy, some areas of exceptional wealth, two major military bases, and a well-funded and supported educational system.

Both in terms of headcount and full-time equivalent students (FTE), the College's student body grew incrementally in the past ten years. In Fall 2003, for example, headcount enrollment was 1809, FTE enrollment of 1122, increases of 18 and 33 percent respectively. The number of males enrolled at TCL has remained constant at approximately 30 to 35 percent of the same ten year period. However, the percentage of African Americans has grown from 37 percent to 46, the percentage of whites has decreased from approximately 55 percent in the middle 1990's to about 46 percent recently. The number of other minorities (especially those of Hispanic background) has grown from about 5 percent to between 7 and 10 percent.

For the majority of the past decade the average credit hour load for students during Fall and Spring terms has ranged from 6 to 7.5 credits per student. For Fall and Spring terms typically about 30 to 38 percent of TCL's students carry a "full time" load of 12 or more credit hours indicating that the "typical" TCL student has such other responsibilities as work and family in addition to the demands of their educational activities.

The average age of the TCL student over the past ten years has ranged from approximately 28 to 31, term by term. In Spring 2004, for example, 40 percent of the student body are 30 or older. Ten percent of the student body is above 45 years of age. Only forty three percent of the student body is in the "traditional" college going age bracket of age 15-24.

Importantly, in any given term about 12 to 15 percent of TCL's student body is made up of active duty military or their dependents. These students typically come to TCL with specific and well-defined career and educational goals.

Unfortunately the college has a low persistence rate. For each of the past five years TCL's graduation rate for first time, full time cohorts within 150 % of program time has ranged from 10 to 16 percent per year. TCL recently completed a special study of the Fall 2002 first time student cohort (full time and part time) for federal reporting purposes. Forty four percent of the full time students were graduated by or were still attending the College in Fall 2003. During the same semesters, 35 percent of the part time students in the cohort graduated or were still attending the College. Many of these students not attending, however, are stop outs, taking time to earn additional money for college before coming back, responding to temporary but important needs at home or at work, or perhaps involved in a military deployment which affects both the active duty student and military dependent students.

Many in TCL's student body require financial aid. Fifty five percent (903) of the College's Spring 2004 enrollment received Pell Grants to defray tuition, fees, books, and supply costs. The need for financial aid is particularly strong for African American women. Of the 557 students in that race/gender category, TCL's largest, 80 percent (449) are receiving Pell assistance during the

Spring term. Of these 449 African American women receiving Pell support, 318 have an expected family contribution (EFC) of zero dollars for the year toward their educational expenses. (By contrast, only 48 percent of white women in the student body are receiving Pell support and only 55 percent of African American men are receiving Pell support.)

Because of the diverse needs of its student body and the transportation difficulties students face in this beautiful rural area punctuated by breathtaking waterways which complicate transportation, TCL has developed an extensive distance learning program. In Fall, 2002, for example, there were 4091 student enrollments in traditional-type classes, 1063 in broadcast type classes, 741 in internet courses, and 41 in "other" type classes such as independent studies. By Fall 2003 the number of enrollments in internet courses jumped to 918 and the number of enrollments in broadcast-type courses increased to 848. In summary, in Fall, 2003 nearly 29 percent of all course enrollments were in classes delivered via non-traditional means.

As it considered issues of critical importance and began to focus on the topic for the QEP, the College both examined its existing student population and considered potential student populations. Often students who enter TCL are under prepared for collegiate work and when admitted to rigorous academic programs are unsuccessful. If unsuccessful in their academic pursuits, it is often not possible for students to obtain employment in their career field of choice. Thus ensuring that students acquire the competencies needed is critically important to their success in college and in the workforce.

Because students enrolling at the Technical College of the Lowcountry are often unprepared for collegiate work, TCL provides a developmental education program for students who need to strengthen or refresh basic skills in mathematics, reading and/or writing/English. The purpose of developmental education courses is to help students obtain the skills needed to successfully enter and complete academic programs. If placement scores on ASSET or COMPASS (the assessment instruments the college uses for placing students) fall below the required levels, students register for Developmental Education (zero level courses) courses or 100 level courses. Credits earned in developmental or other courses numbered less than 100 are not be creditable towards a diploma or degree and will not generate points for use in calculation of the grade point ratio.

Content in courses numbered less than 101 is at the secondary level, while courses numbered 101 or greater are at the collegiate level. Developmental and transitional courses include MAT 032/012 Developmental Mathematics and Workshop, RDG 032/012 Reading and Reading Workshop, and ENG 032/012 Developmental English and Workshop. In addition, MAT 100 Introduction to College Mathematics, ENG 100 Introduction to Composition, and RDG 100 Critical Reading are available to students who need to strengthen basic skills. Of the 344 students new to the College in Fall 2003, 26% placed into at least one developmental course in English, reading, and/or mathematics, while 49% placed into at least one 100 level course. Thus, a large number of the entering students were unprepared for collegiate work.

Participating in remedial coursework helps students prepare for subsequent courses. In Fall 2002, the percentage of students successfully completing developmental (zero level) courses in the fall semester in English, mathematics, and reading respectively was 46%, 54% and 68%. In Fall of 2002, 56%, 50%, 70% of students enrolled successfully completed the English 100, MAT 101-102 (now MAT 100), and RDG 100. That such large percentages of students must enroll and complete these courses suggests that students in academic programs may be unsuccessful due inadequate skills in reading, writing, and/or mathematics or the failure to anticipate the useful value of these skills in future coursework. In Fall 2003, 803 of 1809 students (44%) indicated a goal of entering the health sciences programs. Of these students, approximately 60% tested into developmental English and mathematics classes and indicate that they had little science preparation at the high school level. Lack of adequate academic preparation may be a reason that approximately 40% of students entering a health sciences program at the College are unsuccessful. Other divisions reported similar experiences with student success. Business Technologies, Industrial Technologies, Arts and Sciences, and Health Sciences divisions examined courses and as appropriate identified prerequisite courses based on the prerequisite skills needed to successfully complete coursework. In Electronics Technology, a reading prerequisite was established for courses in the A+ Computer Servicing, Computer Networking Technology, Network Administrator, and Network Engineer Certificates due to the need to read and comprehend technical materials. Likewise, degrees in Building Construction Technology, Civil Engineering Technology, Early Care in Education, and Industrial Electronics have prerequisites relating to mathematics and English.

At the state level the Developmental Education (DE) Peer Group was convened in 2001 by the Chief Academic Officers to study the student learning outcomes for mathematics, reading, and English courses. Work began with mathematics since it was identified as the academic area in which students needed the most remediation. The charge to the Peer Group was to identify the learning outcomes from the “0” level to the “curriculum ready” level. Prerequisite learning outcomes necessary to enter in MAT 110 College Algebra, frequently considered the first college level mathematics course, were identified. In aligning the developmental mathematics curriculum with these secondary level competencies, the Peer Group considered the South Carolina Department of Education Mathematics Standards. Developmental courses were defined, course descriptions written, state-wide training offered as the state’s technical colleges prepared an implementation plan for Fall 2003 to match the local needs. At TCL the recommended format of a three semester hour traditional developmental education lecture course is paired with a required one semester hour workshop. The workshop emphasizes application and includes computer aided instruction activities. In Spring 2004 the statewide DE Peer Group will begin a similar process to align the English outcomes from the “0” level to ENG 101 Composition I.

In addition to the inadequate preparation of TCL’s current students, the College’s potential student pool is under-prepared for college-level work. Status of SC Student Performance: Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) is the test administered annually to South Carolina public school students in grades 3 through 8. The tests are based on the South Carolina Curriculum Standards and four performance levels have been established: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Students scoring Below Basic have not met the minimal standard for the content area and students scoring Basic have met the minimal standard. For the Spring 2003 administration in 8th grade English/Language Arts, 33.8% scored Below Basic and 46.3% scored Basic. This means that approximately 80% of eighth grade students either failed to meet or barely met the state standards in English and Language Arts. Similarly, 33.6% and 47.1% scored Below Basic and Basic respectively in mathematics, meaning approximately 80% of eighth graders either failed to meet or barely met the state standards in mathematics. The High School Exit Examination which is PACT-like and based on the state’s curriculum standards has similar results. Of all tenth grade students participating in the Spring 2003 administration, approximately

33% failed to meet the standard on all tests (High School Exit Examination Results of the Spring 2003 Administration, July 2003). While results on the exit exam are fairly stable over time, they indicate that potential students for the Technical College System are performing only minimally when exiting high school. In addition to high school students who graduate with a diploma, there are approximately 15,000 students who drop-out of high school each year creating another pool of potential students who are probably under-prepared for college-level work. The deficit in skills needed to be successful in college-level work is further evidenced by examination of the student performance on the SAT. Average SAT scores for the state's participating students in 2003 were 989 compared to the national average of 1026. Of the states that use SAT predominantly, South Carolina average SAT scores exceed only those of Georgia and the District of Columbia (www.myschools.org).

Nevertheless, the College seeks to meet the diverse needs of its students. Developmental "0" level courses and 100 level courses provide the opportunity to master the prerequisite skills at the secondary level in reading, English, and mathematics. For students who juggle such multiple responsibilities as working full-time and/or supporting a family, have transportation difficulties and/or desire flexible scheduling and study options, TCL offers classes via distance learning using a variety of technologies including home-based courses via SCETV, ISDN, T-1, Internet, Web-enhanced courses, and cable television. In 2002-2003, TCL offered over 140 courses having duplicated enrollments of over 3,300. These various options provide a means to meet the educational needs of the students as they prepare to continue their education or enter the workforce.

According to the Governor's *Pathways to Prosperity* report issued in 2001, 61% of South Carolina businesses were unable to find the kind of skilled employees they needed. Additionally, employers participating in the 2001 Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce Skills Assessment Study identified areas as lacking in many applicants yet vital to job performance. They are the soft skills of listening/comprehension and oral communication and the hard skills of hands-on experience, computer literacy, and calculation/math skills. Employers view these as necessary basic skills and assign responsibility for closing the gap between the status of the current-level

applicant skills and the level needed to the education system, parents, and successful participation by applicants in appropriate courses and/or training.

Given the diversity of the student body, the number of students who attend TCL part time, the number of students receiving financial aid, the number of students who take classes delivered through non-traditional means, the number of students who need developmental education, and the number of military and military dependents enrolled, one would predict that the College's graduation rate would be relatively low. In fact, it is. The College's overall graduation rate (150 % of program time for first time, full time Fall term cohorts) has been between 10 and 16 percent in each of the past five years.

The College Supports and Sustains the QEP

The purpose of the College's QEP is to strengthen the quality of the institution to improve student learning. The QEP is issue driven. Because implementing the QEP, *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment*, is of vital strategic importance to the College, the QEP will be supported by the College's administrative, fiscal, and human resource structures; is related to student learning; is substantive; and is doable. The planning process for the QEP included frank discussions of the capability of the College to support and sustain the plan.

Administrative Infrastructure

The College's administrative infrastructure will more than adequately support the QEP. The College's Management Information System (MIS) office underwent several changes in leadership as the College moved from the VAX software system for storage of college and student records through the challenges and implementation of a new administrative information retrieval system, Datatel. While access to information and reports necessary for detailed program review were limited with the VAX, increased knowledge of the reporting capabilities of Datatel now enables access to more detailed data available. Although numerous challenges in implementing the Datatel system required frequent interactions with the parent company by the College and the System Office as well as innumerable hours of training in every aspect of the system, the MIS staff has created a stable environment to support better and more accessible reporting and research capabilities. The College's Research and Planning Office also provides

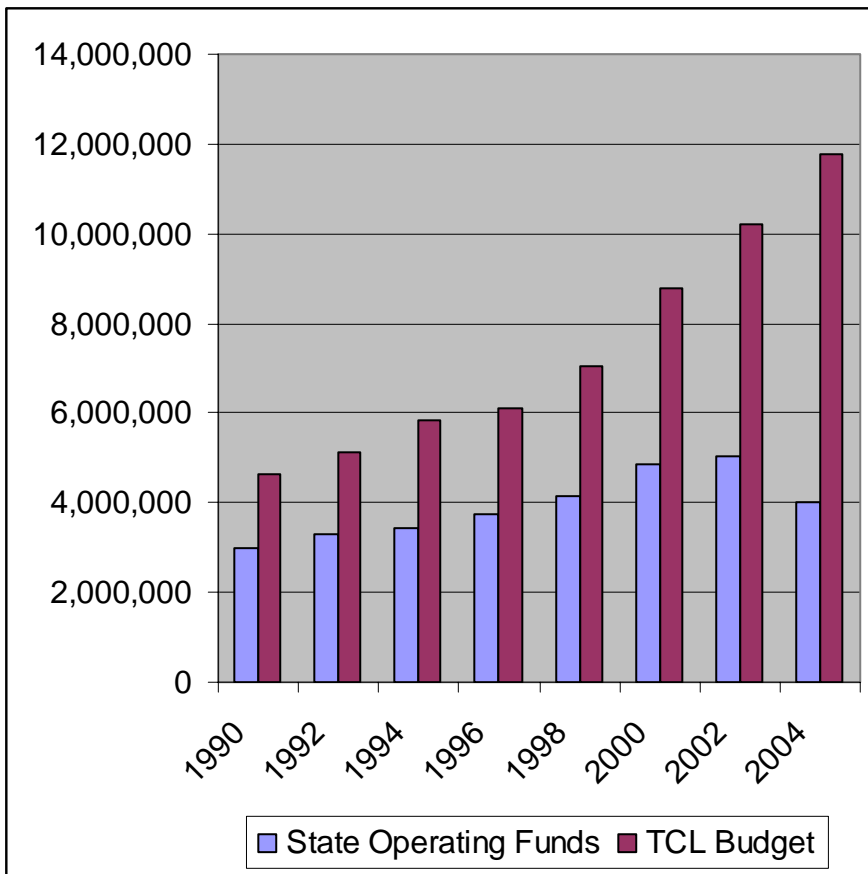
services for the support of the QEP. With the assistance of the Research and Planning Office, faculty and staff are learning to effectively apply these tools available from MIS to current Institutional Effectiveness research efforts including the QEP.

The College's physical plant includes adequate space for the daily operations including implementation of the QEP. Recently, the TCL campus blossomed with the renovation of Buildings 14 and 10 on the main campus in Beaufort. In Building 14, an old rusted, run-down building was transformed into a sparkling, state-of-the-art Information Technology Center housing electronics and computer labs, classrooms, and faculty offices. The Information Technology Center allows for hands-on skills development in a highly mediated environment and contains four fully networked computer labs capable of supporting up to four different courses per lab. Basic electronics, digital circuits, microprocessors, electronic communications, and computer hardware repair are available in two dedicated state-of-the-art electronics laboratories. Renovations in Building 10 provide both modern classrooms and modern laboratory spaces for mathematics, biology, and chemistry. In addition to these newly renovated buildings, other adequate classroom and office space in various buildings on campus provide appropriate space for the implementation of the QEP.

Fiscal and Economic Issues

As a public two year college, funding for the Technical College of the Lowcountry has historically come from four primary sources--the State of South Carolina, appropriations from the four counties the college serves, federal funds for specific programs, and student fees. In recent years, the state resources for TCL have shrunk dramatically as they have for most public colleges. Since 2001 State operating funds for the College have plunged from a high of \$5.2 million in 2001 to an expected \$3.99 million in 2004, a drop of \$1.2 million. State appropriated operating dollars now constitute only approximately 33.9% of the college's annual budget, down from 53.6% just four years ago (See Table 6).

Table 6: Comparison of State Allocations to Total Budget From All Sources



The College has taken major steps to deal with this devastating decrease in state allocations. First, the College has dramatically strengthened its partnerships with the four counties. Second, to the extent reasonable and feasible, the College's Commission has authorized increases in student fees. For example, the college has raised in steps the per semester tuition from \$850 for a full time student in 2001 to \$1225 in 2004, understanding that the additional burden to students would partially be offset by increases in Pell grants and grants to students from the State's new Lottery Tuition Assistance program. Third, the College is maintaining an aggressive grant-seeking program, both individually and in collaboration with community groups.

Just as noteworthy have been college efforts to partner with community groups to meet specific college/community needs. Beaufort Memorial Hospital is funding an additional nursing faculty member for three years. The College was able to implement the new Radiologic

Technology program through funding from Beaufort Memorial Hospital of \$300,000 over a three-year period and an equipment donation from Hilton Head Regional Medical Center. A private donor and other grants are providing funding to implement the newly approved Surgical Technology diploma program so the college can meet an important community need. Thus, even in a very tough economic climate the College has creatively obtained the necessary funding for its operations demonstrating the College has the necessary financial resources to implement the QEP.

Human Resources

To lead the QEP efforts, an extremely capable individual, Dr. Lucille “Cookie” Roth, Dean of Arts and Sciences, was identified. Dr. Roth has extensive teaching experience, is well respected on campus, and is regarded as a superb teacher. In fact, in 2003 she was named the Association of Community College Trustees faculty of the year for the Southern Region. In addition to her collegiate teaching experience, she possesses extensive teaching experience in secondary education.

The student population at TCL has increased as noted on page 8, while the number of full-time faculty and staff has remained relatively constant. As the needs of the community evolve, the college changes the associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to meet those needs. An increase in the number of Health Sciences programs to meet the needs of the local health care industry is an excellent example of the College delivering education, developing a competent workforce, and growing to meet future demands. As the blend of programs changes, appropriate adjustments are made to the faculty staffing using available local resources and the strength of the College’s community partnerships. Two Radiologic Technology positions and a Surgical Technology position have been added to the faculty. A partnership with Beaufort Memorial Hospital funded an additional nursing faculty position. Thus, through creative means the College has the human resources it needs. Clearly the College has and will devote adequate resources to the QEP.

The QEP is managed through the Assessment and Evaluation Committee. Committee members’ participation is included as a function of College Service through the

Employee/Faculty Performance Management Systems. Time is allocated in the work day for performance of duties required by the QEP as is participation in college-wide functions to promote broad-based participation in the QEP.

In specific support of the QEP, a College work study position was identified for the Arts and Sciences Division. Responsibilities of the position include meeting the clerical demands of the QEP. With the increased demand for data and data analysis as the QEP is implemented, appropriate clerical support will be provided. Although the College budget is tight, through judicious management the College has adequate resources to successfully implement the QEP (See also Table 10 on page 59).

Summary

The goals of the College's QEP, *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*, are supported by the College's Vision, Philosophy, and Goals. In addition the goals of the QEP support the College's mission that focuses on delivering education, developing a competent workforce, meeting diverse needs, serving the community, and growing to meet future demands. The QEP goals complement the College's on-going Institutional Effectiveness process. The student population that attends the College is often under-prepared for college level work and must participate in some level of remediation. Upon completion of remedial work and entrance into the academic programs, students are successful in meeting their academic goal and subsequent entry into the workforce or further education. Although the College deals with critical fiscal issues, through partnerships, careful budget management, and judicious use of available resources, it has been able to meet the current needs of its students, faculty, staff, and administration. The College possesses the necessary and appropriate administrative, fiscal, and human resources to implement the QEP.

Chapter 4. Implementation and Evaluation

Implementation and evaluation are integral, complementary facets of the design of TCL's cohesive assessment programs. As such, these two elements are inseparable processes and are both addressed in this chapter of the QEP.

IMPLEMENTATION

Overview of Timeline

The implementation and evaluation plans for the College's QEP are built on the Deming (1986) principles: Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA). The best plans, clearly articulated goals and objectives, clearly outlined assessment activities, and stacks of data are meaningless until the data is analyzed, sense made of the outcomes, strengths and weaknesses enumerated, changes recommended and a revised implementation plan activated. This cyclical approach to assessment, analysis, and change moves TCL's QEP from words to meaningful activity as those responsible seek to strengthen the College and improve student learning outcomes through direct assessment. Triangulating the results of the direct assessments with findings from institutional effectiveness and program review measures and a standardized measure will enable the College to formulate actions to insure the quality and validity of the academic programs.

The QEP plan to improve student learning outcomes through enhanced assessment will be accomplished by addressing the Institutional Competencies one at a time (See Table 3 on page 17). The QEP Subcommittee reached consensus that the application of skills outlined in the first institutional competency that addresses the basic skills of reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematics, and the basic use of computers could be fairly assessed across all associate degree programs. The assessment of the first institutional competency will drive the work of the first five years of the College's QEP. The skills outlined in the remaining competencies--problem solving and critical thinking, acquiring and using information, and working with a variety of technologies--could better be assessed within the individual programs and are proposed to be the emphasis of the second phase of the QEP. The campus community also agreed that a model should be designed, pilot tested, and changes made for one component

of the first competency in the first year. In each subsequent year, an additional component would be added following the PDCA model (See Table 7).

Table 7: Basic Timeline for Development for Use with Each Competency

Summer Semester:	PLAN:	Design rubric based on student learning outcomes for Institutional Competency Area
Fall Semester:	DO: CHECK:	Conduct Fall mini-pilot to test rubric/process Analyze mini-pilot results/processes, recommend changes
Spring Semester:	ACT:	Conduct Pilot Test, gather and analyze data on model/process and student learning outcomes
Summer Semester:	PLAN:	Plan for full implementation of “last year’s” area; begin cycle of work on next area

The mini-pilot, pilot, full implementation model developed includes an evaluation of the model and the administrative process as well as the evaluation of student learning outcomes for the particular institutional competency component.

Leadership

Ultimate leadership for the Quality Enhancement Plan rests with Dr. Anne McNutt, President. Her leadership and commitment to continuous quality improvement establishes the foundation for an environment conducive to creating and accomplishing a plan as extensive as the QEP. The Assessment and Evaluation Committee serves as the collective body established to oversee the framework for all assessment at the College. The Director of Research and Planning, Tim Garner, chairs this committee with Dr. Rose Kearney-Nunnery, Vice President for Academic Affairs, providing guidance and oversight as the College’s SACS leadership liaison. The QEP Subcommittee provides leadership for the broader campus community on the status of the work on the QEP. Direct responsibility for facilitating and daily management of the QEP process rests with Dr. Lucille Cook Roth, Dean for Arts and Sciences and chair of the QIP and QEP subcommittees.

The President's Executive Committee membership includes Dr. Kearney-Nunnery and Mr. Garner who keep the College's administration up-to-date on the progress of the QEP. The President insures that the members of TCL Commission, the College's governing board, are kept apprised of the status of the work. These groups provide leadership so that the work is aligned with the College's mission, vision, and goals and that there are sufficient human and fiscal resources to facilitate institutionalization of the QEP's components.

Implementation in Year 1

Year 1 activities focused on understanding the new SACS Reaffirmation process, understanding the components of the process, and identifying the issue to be addressed in the QEP. Early 2002 meetings of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee and QEP Subcommittee provided a forum for stating what was meant by student learning environment as the College engaged in the struggle to facilitate identification of the issue. As these committees identified the components of the student learning environment, four major categories emerged—physical campuses/sites, virtual campuses, instructional support services, and human resources. Committee members were assigned to a focus group to identify what was meant by and/or included in each of the four focus areas. Feedback from committees and councils helped define each area. The committee recognized the overpowering breadth of the issue *Clarifying our Image to Increase Capacity and Better Serve the Community* as campus discussions continued. At the 2003 Campus Retreat the broader campus community revised and expanded the list of components, reclassified the focus areas, and “voted with their feet” to identify the most critical focus area. As a result, the four focus areas expanded to five: Instruction, Student Support Services, Facilities, Human Resources, and Institutional Effectiveness and Support. Instruction and Student Support Services were recognized as the top priorities.

Facing the task of distilling the issue from one with such breadth to a manageable topic, the QEP Subcommittee struggled with developing a statement to articulate what student learning is at TCL. This proved to be as daunting a task as stating the issue. While all participants had notions of what student learning was, writing a statement that was meaningful for each academic program and each college department that could guide the work of the QEP proved rather difficult. The QEP Subcommittee discussions and feedback from campus committees, councils,

and the 2003 Campus Retreat resulted in a belief statement for student learning: *Student learning is the acquisition of academic, technical, and interpersonal skills enabling the application of critical thinking to make informed judgments.*

Months of discussions at QEP Subcommittee meetings were required to distill the issue from *Clarifying our Image to Increase Capacity and Better Serve the Community* to the implementation issue *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes* (See Table 2 on page 13). Each successive step in the distillation process was related to the belief statement on student learning and the commitment that implementing the QEP would indeed result in significant improvements in the quality of student learning.

Examination of current assessment measures in place resulted in the recognition that the majority of institution level assessments are indirect measures and internally driven. Concurrently, the committee recognized that while students were successful in basic general education courses like ENG 101-102, RDG 100, and/or MAT 101-102, they often failed to transfer the learning when application of the same skills was required in subsequent courses. For example, students who successfully completed the required algebra prerequisite may not be able to use knowledge about exponents when required to apply the knowledge to scientific notation in an electronics course, or students who successfully completed the required English composition course may fail to apply writing skills in a nursing, literature, business management, or paralegal course.

Program faculty began examining and revising course prerequisites in attempts to insure students had the skills necessary to be successful. Similarly, an increase in the number of academic programs with accrediting bodies requiring both internal and external measures of student learning caused program faculty to evaluate the scope of assessment measures being used to measure student learning outcomes. In the 2002-2003 Institutional Effectiveness General Education Report, the Arts and Sciences faculty stated that the responsibility for student performance on the Institutional Competencies was not solely their responsibility. Current institutional effectiveness processes were not fully measuring the Institutional Competencies, there was a need to measure student learning outcomes more intentionally and directly, and the

responsibility for inclusion of the competencies rested with the entire faculty and campus community. Each of these circumstances or events led to the formulation of the statement of the QEP issue for implementation as *Improving Student Learning Through Direct Assessment Processes*. A major rationale for this QEP issue was the recognition of the general education core and the skills embodied in the Institutional Competencies as common to all associate degree programs. As a result, each academic division reviewed the Institutional Competencies which were revised. The Curriculum Committee, the Executive Committee, and the TCL Commission then approved the revised competencies.

The focus shifted to building a cohesive assessment process that complemented the Institutional Effectiveness processes. The College needed to ascertain what skills/processes students will have mastered and what they will look like at graduation compared to what they looked like at the beginning of a program. The College needs to be able to answer these questions:

- What do students need when they start a program of study?
- What should students have when the program of study is complete?
- How are these things measured?
- What does it look like if it is accomplished?
- How do these skills and competencies develop and persist through a program?
- How do these skills appear in various careers?

The QEP Subcommittee analyzed the current assessment measures and classified the majority as indirect and quantitative. The committee decided to supplement the current assessments to develop a cohesive program and qualitative methods. Many questions resulted from these early discussions. Answers to the question regarding what is to be gained through the development and implementation of TCL's QEP included top notch curricula and programs and graduates prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education. Answers to the question regarding what indications of success were envisioned included decreases in withdrawals and time to program completion and an increase in the number of program graduates. Answers to the question regarding the starting point included credit instruction at the associate degree level, identification of commonalities among the programs, and focus on reading/writing since they are the most fundamental skills. Answers to the question regarding the challenges of implementing such a program included costs in time and dollars, defining the standard, managing the size of

the program, and handling sub-issues that arise. Steps along the way would include strategic planning, orderly implementation, and feedback and dissemination of results. The hypothesis for the work of the QEP is that all completers will be able to meet the rubrics for the standards set for each component of the Institutional Competencies.

Rubric Development, the Fall 2003 Mini-Pilot, and First Evaluation Efforts

With the decision made to begin with the direct assessment of reading/writing skills, the work on the development of the rubric began. The QEP Subcommittee examined the WorkKeys™ skills lists for reading and writing; rubrics from community colleges like Johnson County Community College, Sinclair Community College, and Isothermal Community College; materials from assessment conferences; and literature on assessment practices. The Committee based its decision to assess reading and writing concurrently on the belief that the two are very closely interrelated. The inclusion of a written prompt for the writing assessment would serve as an indicator that reading skills existed at an appropriate level. The Committee also agreed that as practicing professionals each committee member recognized good writing. The challenge was identifying a finite number of characteristics of good writing that could be used by faculty in diverse programs to promote the development and persistence of writing skills at an appropriate level. Table 8 lists the writing characteristics from the original rubric and the revised rubric. The revisions were the result of the evaluation of the rubric and process following the Fall 2003 mini-pilot.

Table 8: Elements of Original and Revised Reading/Writing Rubric

Original Rubric	Revised Rubric
1. Responds fully to the assignment	1. Responds fully to the assignment
2. Expresses its purpose clearly and effectively	2. Communicates clearly and effectively
3. Is directed toward and meets the needs of a defined audience	
4. Begins and ends effectively	3. Begins and ends effectively
5. Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details	4. Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details
6. Is well-organized and unified	5. Is well-organized and unified
7. Uses appropriate, direct language	6. Uses language appropriate to the assignment
8. Correctly acknowledges sources	7. Correctly acknowledges sources
9. Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word usage, spelling, and format	8. Correctly applies grammar, punctuation, word usage, spelling, and format

The approach to scoring is holistic using four scoring categories--accomplished, adequate, marginal and poor (See Appendices 2, 3, and 4). Writing samples scored as Accomplished or Adequate have met the standard, while those writing at marginal or poor fail to do so. The committee's rationale for using four categories were 1) to avoid a direct correspondence with the College's A, B, C, D, F grading system, and 2) to provide some differentiation within the success and non-success ranges should the need arise to use the results for further study.

The Committee assigned values to the categories and created a check system to facilitate development of a numerical scoring scheme (See Table 9). Evaluation of the process following the Fall 2003 Mini-pilot showed that one check could change the category and yield a 'false' reading. For example, if a sample received eight (8) checks in the poor category and one (1) in the marginal category, the overall scoring guide yielded a rating of marginal. The committee considered various weighting schemes and bands and revised the ranges. Table 9 lists the original and revised ranges.

Table 9: Scoring Elements for Original and Revised Reading/Writing Rubric

Category	Original		Revised	
	Value per Check	Range	Value per Check	Range
Accomplished	4	25-32	8	51-64
Adequate	3	17-24	6	35-50
Marginal	2	9-16	4	14-34
Poor	1	1-8	1	0-13

For the Fall 2003 Mini-pilot, each division identified one course on the schedule for participation.

- The course is one taken late in the program of study by students enrolled in associate degree programs.
- Only samples by students who had completed at least 50% of the program requirements were eligible.

For the Spring 2004 Pilot, faculty for each associate degree identified one course on the schedule for participation.

- The course is one taken late in the program of study by students enrolled in associate degree programs.

- Only samples by students who had completed at least 50% of the program requirements were eligible.
- In both the Fall Mini-pilot and the Spring Pilot:
- The writing sample should be a meaningful assignment rather than an extra one.
- The rationale for use of an embedded writing assignment was motivation to do well in the course.

The results from the evaluation of the writing sample for QEP purposes would not impact the student's grades in the course since the purpose of the QEP assessment is to ascertain the overall skill level of associate degree graduates as a group.

For the Fall 2003, Mini-pilot instructors shared the rubric and scoring guide in a manner they thought appropriate, developed the prompt, gathered the samples and forwarded copies to Dr. Roth. By reviewing data from students' transcripts, Dr. Roth discarded any samples that did not meet the criteria outlined--samples from students enrolled in certificates or from students who had completed fewer than 50% of the major program of study. Dr. Roth selected one writing sample at random from each course and saw that packets were assembled and distributed for members of the QEP Subcommittee to score individually, without consulting with other members of the QEP Subcommittee. Packets were returned and results compiled. At the subsequent meeting, the QEP Subcommittee analyzed the results, the process, and made recommendations for revisions to the process and the rubric. During the meeting the QEP Subcommittee scored a second set of writing samples. Then the subcommittee discussed the changes and their implications for the Spring 2004 Pilot.

With the mini-pilot completed, the subcommittee focused its attention on the needs of the Spring 2004 Pilot Test. Training has been planned to include the Reading/Writing Assessment Rubric, Holistic Scoring Guide, process points and guided learning activities with scorers in the use of these materials using the samples gathered for the Fall Mini-pilot. The first year will conclude with an on-campus Institutional Competency Assessment Day Conference. Analysis of the results will occur during the Summer 2004 semester with dissemination of results during the Fall 2004 semester.

Also, in Spring 2004 the QEP Subcommittee considered the implementation of an external measure of general education skills. After review of print materials, information available on the

internet, and vendor presentations, the Subcommittee selected the CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency). Triangulation of results of CAAP with the direct assessment data and IE results will provide different views of student skill levels. The Business Technology Division will conduct the mini-pilot in Spring 2004 using the CAAP reading and writing tests with a sample of students in the General Business Curriculum. Goals are to evaluate processes for administration of an external measure, to determine what the reporting capabilities are when CAAP scores are matched with results of the COMPASS placement instrument, and to evaluate initial data. Results from the mini-pilot will guide the development of the model for pilot implementation in the 2004-2005 academic year.

Overview of Years 2, 3, 4 And 5

The QEP is planned as an iterative process with the model developed for Reading/Writing serving as a guide for the second year's activities. There are two major activities for the Summer 2004 semester. The first will be identifying changes needed in the Reading/Writing assessment process and the reports of baseline data based on the analysis of the data gathered. Implementation of the changes will be made during the 2004-2005 academic year. The second is the development of the Fundamental Mathematics Rubric with plans for the Fall 2004 Mini-pilot. In years three and four, a similar schedule will be followed to develop and implement the assessment activities for computer use and oral communication. In the fourth year, the development of the assessment program for the first Institutional Competency will be completed. The College will move from development and implementation to management and maintenance of the cohesive assessment program.

In the fifth year, with the individual components for reading/writing, fundamental mathematics, basic use of computers, and oral communication in place, the focus will turn to the management of the complete program. For the QEP to be successful, the College must be capable of implementing a program that

- produces data that can be analyzed and used for responsible decision making regarding student learning,
- complements on-going institutional effectiveness efforts,
- can be accomplished within the human and fiscal resources of the College
- is sustainable within the available resources of the College.

To realize these goals, a management system is needed to coordinate the administration of the assessment measures; provide venue to gather, analyze, and disseminate results; and discern the overall impact of the assessment program on student learning at TCL. Insuring such a structure is in place is the goal of the fifth year of the QEP.

Vision of Years 6, 7, and 8

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth years, the direct assessment of student learning on the basic general education skills with respect to the first Institutional Competency will continue. Data will be gathered and analyzed for college-wide samples. The second phase will concentrate on the general intellectual skills of problem solving and critical thinking, acquiring and using information, and working with a variety of technologies. Currently, the plan is to develop direct assessment measures for these competencies within the various programs. For example, while all associate degree programs require problem solving skills, those skills and their application have program specific elements. For example, the problem solving skills required by a building construction student may be similar to those of an accounting student or a nursing student; however, the use and evaluation of those skills will vary with respect to the discipline.

Resource Allocation

The College has already begun to include the development and implementation of the QEP in the annual budgeting cycle (See Table 10). Initially, personnel have been provided through the use of release time and committee assignments. Dr. Roth was granted 20% release time from August 2002 through May 2004 to chair the QEP Subcommittee and facilitate its work. In the Spring 2004 semester, clerical support is possible through the assignment of a College Work Study student to the Arts and Sciences Division. Throughout the QEP, appropriate clerical and administrative support will be provided. In addition, the gathering and analysis of direct data and triangulation of those results with Institutional Effectiveness information and the approved external measure and subsequent dissemination of results will require support from the Office of Research and Planning. Testing costs for the administration and scoring of the external measure for the initial cycle were made available with the Spring 2004 budget revision.

**Table 10: Technical College of the Lowcountry
Quality Enhancement Plan
Proposed Budget**

Personnel	
Dr. Lucille Cook Roth, Dean for Arts and Sciences, QEP Subcommittee Chair 20% Release Time (without fringe)	\$13,600
Mr. Tim Garner, Director of Research and Planning 15% Time Allocated to QEP	8,250
Clerical Support	11,625
Committee Members time 3-6 hours per month x 25 members	
Supplies	
Office Supplies	300
Testing Supplies (ETS/ACT)	3,000
Total Annual Budget	\$36,775

The only new costs associated with this budget are those necessitated by additional clerical assistance and supplies, totaling \$14,925. The majority of the costs of the resources for the QEP are made available through the reallocation of existing funds.

Assessment Schedule

The QEP includes a cyclical approach to assessment based on the implementation schedule (See Table 11). Each summer will be used to draft plans for the new component to be added to the direct assessment component of the cohesive assessment plan. In the fall semester a mini-pilot is conducted with the QEP Subcommittee completing an assessment of the rubric, holistic scoring guide, and process. The results of the assessment allow the rubric for the Spring Semester Pilot Test to be revised. In turn, analysis of the assessment of the spring's pilot results in revisions for the subsequent academic year's implementation of that component. Student performance data is gathered from the assessment and is used to identify strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for changes in courses/programs.

The overall assessment of the QEP is conducted annually during the spring and summer semesters. The QEP Subcommittee will review and analyze the data of student work, the external measure and the Institutional Effectiveness Program data for that year to prepare recommendations for the subsequent year. Concurrently, the QEP Subcommittee will review

Table 11: Basic Timeline for Assessment (See Chapter 5 for Detailed Timeline)

Summer Semester:	PLAN:	Design/refine rubric based on student learning outcomes for Institutional Competency Area(s)
Fall Semester:	DO: CHECK:	Assess Fall mini-pilot with respect to rubric/process Analyze mini-pilot results/processes, recommend changes
Spring Semester:	ACT:	Analyze Pilot Test, gather and analyze data on model/process and student learning outcomes
Summer Semester:	PLAN:	Begin cycle again implementing changes recommended and based on results of assessment

and analyze the overall QEP administrative process to make recommendations for the subsequent year. A longitudinal study to analyze trends will take shape as the QEP progresses through its implementation.

Elements for the cohesive assessment plan that includes the triangulation of data from the QEP, IE, and the external measure are outlined in the Evaluation Plan (See Chapter 5). The QEP Evaluation plan assumes multiple uses of data and recognizes that the various groups or agencies requiring analysis of data each set their own calendar. The master calendar for internal reports is the Institutional Effectiveness cycle.

Summary

The QEP through the PDAC Model and its comprehensive evaluation plan complement and extend the ongoing assessment work accomplished through the Institutional Effectiveness Program. The plan is designed to provide the latitude and flexibility necessary to make recommended changes in an efficient and effective manner. The checks and balances system incumbent in the management structure through the Assessment and Evaluation Committee with broad-based representation from the campus community insure that the QEP stays focused and mindful of the impact the QEP has on student learning outcomes at the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

The development and implementation of a meaningful QEP impacts the human and financial resources of the College at a time when all resources are limited and the College must find creative ways to extend all resources. To support the development, implementation, and sustaining of its QEP, and to maximize human resources, the College has provided the chair of the QEP Subcommittee release time for this project. For other faculty and staff service on the Assessment and Evaluation and/or QEP Subcommittee are considered in the College Service component of the Faculty/Employee Professional Management System. Clerical support has been made available to support the project. Initially, funds to support the use of an external measure of general education skills were made available in the Spring 2004 budget revision and enable the College to maximize financial resources as results from CAAP support the QEP, IE, and accrediting needs. Assessment of the processes and the data resulting from the administration of direct assessments are built into the cycle of the College's QEP.

Chapter 5. Evaluation Plan and Detailed Time Line

The evaluation plan for the QEP is two-fold:

- ✓ evaluate the level of student mastery on the skills enumerated in the Institutional Competencies, and
- ✓ evaluate the processes involved in the administration of the QEP.

The evaluation of the level of student mastery is accomplished through direct assessment of student work. These results are triangulated with the results of the ongoing Institutional Effectiveness Program results and the results from an external measure of general knowledge. The evaluation of the processes used to administer the QEP are accomplished through the work of the QEP Subcommittee in the implementation of the Fall mini-pilot and the Spring Pilot. The Evaluation Plan appears on pages 64-65 immediately following this page.

The time line included is a work in progress which tracks the QEP implementation and the status of the various components. The Detailed time line, following the Evaluation Plan, appears on pages 66-72.

Evaluation Plan for the QEP

**Technical College of the Lowcountry
Quality Enhancement Plan
Evaluation Plan**

The QEP Evaluation Plan uses multiple evaluation tools to assess the skill level of associate degree graduates on the Institutional Competencies. The College’s Institutional Effectiveness process utilizes additional measures that will facilitate triangulation of QEP and IE data to provide a more complete assessment of student learning outcomes.

Associate degree graduates should possess:

- 1) proficiency in the basic academic skills of reading and writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematics and the basic use of computers;
- 2) proficiency in problem solving and critical thinking;
- 3) the ability to acquire and use information; and
- 4) the ability to work with a variety of technologies.

Evaluations	Methods	When/Where	Rationale	Responsibility
Reading/writing	Direct/ qualitative of student work using writing samples and Rubric for Reading/writing	Mid-term Spring semester beginning Spring 2004, 1 course per associate degree	The use of data derived from direct samples of student work triangulated with IE/Program provide more complete picture of strengths/ weaknesses.	QEP Subcommittee with Division Deans, program faculty
Fundamental mathematics	Direct/ qualitative of student work and Rubric for Fundamental Mathematics	Mid-term Spring semester beginning Spring 2005, 1 course per associate degree	Same as above with adjustments for program changes and reviews.	QEP Subcommittee with Division Deans, program faculty
Basic Computer Use	Direct/ qualitative of student work using Rubric for Basic Computer skills	Mid-term Spring semester beginning Spring 2006, 1 course per associate degree	Same as above with adjustments for program changes and reviews.	QEP Subcommittee with Division Deans, program faculty
Oral Communication	Direct/ qualitative of student work using Rubric for Oral Communication	Mid-term Spring semester beginning Spring 2007, 1 course per associate degree	Same as above with adjustments for program changes and reviews.	QEP Subcommittee with Division Deans, program faculty

General Education Skills	Direct/quantitative Standardized Test ACT's CAAP	Pilot Test Spring 2004, each subsequent spring semester, 1 course per associate degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a means to assess the skill level of students and compare groups from one year with previous years Areas of concern in the curriculum can be identified. 	Spring 2004 Business Technologies Division; QEP Subcommittee with Division Deans, program faculty
Course Review	Indirect/quantitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SUMMA Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student feedback in narrative form Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor evaluation of course, objectives, methods, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each course, each Fall & Spring semester, summer on demand Done in conjunction with SUMMA Done in conjunction with SUMMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed by students to evaluate course/instructor; outcomes may indicate areas of course/curriculum for revision or development to maintain currency and relevance Overall ratings of instructors will remain satisfactory; below satisfactory ratings will require review and appropriate action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dean, Instructional Support, Course Instructor, Division Deans, and curriculum committee
Program Review	Indirect/quantitative Course, program completion rates; graduation rate; retention; employment rates; grade distribution	3 year cycle	Overall review of program will remain satisfactory; below satisfactory ratings will require review and appropriate action.	Division Dean with program faculty, A&E Committee
Institutional Effectiveness Reports	Indirect/quantitative Course, program completion rates; graduation rate; retention; employment rates; grade distribution	Annually in May	Overall review of program will remain satisfactory; below satisfactory ratings will require review and appropriate action.	Division Dean with program faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, A & E Committee
Accreditation Reviews	Per direction of accrediting body	Per directive from accrediting body	Overall review of program will remain satisfactory; below satisfactory ratings will require review and appropriate action.	Division Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs, A & E Committee

Time Line for QEP Implementation

Time Line For QEP Implementation
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR INSTITUTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Fall Semester
Spring Semester
Summer Semester

✓: Completed CF: Carried Forward IP: In Process

Time Frame	Task	Responsibility	Started	Finished
June 2003	1. Develop educational outcomes, rubric for Institutional Competency (IC) 1a reading/writing (R/W)	1,2,3. Rubric subcommittee, QEP Subcommittee (QEP-SC)	✓	✓
	2. Refine assessment questions		✓	✓
	3. Develop 'scoring' mechanism		✓	✓
	4. Identify courses for Fall 2003 Mini-Pilot (MP)	4. Academic Divisions	✓	✓
July 2003	1. Discuss rubric with cross-campus community for feedback, adjustment	1. QEP-SC members	✓	✓
	2. Identify courses for Fall MP	2. Academic Divisions	✓	✓
	3. Define time-line for Fall MP	3. QEP-SC, Academic Divisions	✓	✓
	4. Develop prompts for Fall MP	4. Academic Divisions	✓	✓
Implementation Focus: Pilot: Reading/Writing				
August 2003	1. Implement Fall MP.	1. QEP-SC members	✓	✓
	2. Identify one course in division	2. Division Deans, Division Faculty	✓	✓
	3. Refine questions	3. Tim, QEP-SC	✓	✓
September 2003	1. Print rosters after 21st day to determine sample	1. Cookie, Tim	✓	✓
	2. Refine prompts	2. Division Deans, Program Faculty	✓	✓
October 2003	1. Administer Fall MP at mid-term exam time	1. Faculty in identified courses	✓	✓
	2. Briefing for prompts	2. Faculty in identified courses, QEP-SC	✓	✓
	3. Discuss expected results/what information would be useful	3. QEP-SC	✓	✓

November 2003	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forward copies of samples, hold Fall 2003 mini-ICDC (Institutional Competency Day Conference) 2. November 1st, Samples due to Cookie 3. Develop procedure for scoring: a) how many per evaluator; b) breaks between evaluations, ie timing for the day 4. Hold Fall ICDC 5. Identify potential assessors for spring mini-ICDC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division faculty in identified courses, Cookie, Division Deans 2. Division faculty in identified courses, Cookie, Division Deans 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC 5. QEP-SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
December 2003	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify classes for Spring 2004 Pilot of IC-1 reading/writing. 2. Plan orientation for using rubric for assessor team 3. Develop internal marketing plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division Deans, Division faculty 2. QEP-SC, Division Deans 3. QEP-SC, PR Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CF CF CF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CF CF CF
January 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the process: a) handwritten vs word processor; b) how is data collected and transferred 2. Identify classes for Spring 2004 Pilot of IC-1 R/W 3. Plan orientation for using rubric for assessor team 4. Select external measure of gen. ed. knowledge 5. Formalize QEP Evaluation Plan 6. Develop internal marketing plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, Program faculty 3. Orientation Planning Group, QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC 5. Evaluation Planning Group, QEP- SC 6. QEP-SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP IP IP ✓ ✓ CF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - ✓ ✓ -
February 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize plans for Assessor Training & ICDC 2. Refine prompts 3. Submit QEP Document for SACS 4. Formalize/implement internal marketing plan 5. Plan for Spring MP external measure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ICDC subgroup, QEP-SC. 2. Division Deans, Program Faculty 3. Cookie, VPs, President, QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC, PR Director 5. QEP-SC, Business Division Dean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP IP ✓ IP IP IP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - ✓ - - -
March 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer Spring 2004 Pilot at mid-term R/W 2. Implement internal marketing plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division Deans, Program faculty 2. QEP-SC, PR Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - -
April 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop dissemination plan 2. Participate in SACS On-site Visit 3. Hold ICDC 4. Administer external measure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. ICDC Subgroup, QEP-SC 4. Business Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - -
May 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess/analyze data from Spring 04 ICDC 2. Establish a baseline 3. Plan dissemination 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - -
June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop educational outcomes for IC 1b mathematical 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -

2004	skills (MAT), develop rubric. 2. Develop rubric for MAT 3. Disseminate results of QEP R/W pilot 4. Plan 2004-05 R/W Assessment Activities	2. QEP-SC 3. Cookie, Tim, QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC	- - -	- - -
July 2004	1. Discuss MAT rubric with cross-campus community for feedback, adjustment 2. Identify courses for Fall MP-MAT 3. Define time-line for Fall MP-MAT 4. Develop prompts for Fall MP-MAT	1. QEP-SC members 2. Academic Divisions 3. QEP-SC, Academic Divisions 4. Academic Divisions	- - - -	- - - -
Implementation Focus: Full=Reading/Writing; Pilot = Mathematics				
August 2004	1. Full implementation of assessment of R/W begins 2. Fall MP for fundamental MAT skills 3. Refine MAT prompts	1. Division Deans, program faculty, SEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. Division Deans, program faculty, SEP-SC	- - -	- - -
September 2004	1. Print 21 day rosters to determine sample MAT 2. Finalize prompts MAT	1. Cookie, Tim 2. Division Deans, program faculty	- -	- -
October 2004	1. Administer Fall-MP MAT 2. Briefing for prompts 3. Discuss expected results, what info would be useful.	1. Program faculty 2. Program faculty, QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC	- - -	- - -
November 2004	1. Finalize plans for Spring administration R/W direct assessment 2. Finalize plans for Spring administration external assessment 3. Forward copies of MAT samples to Cookie 4. Develop procedures for mini-ICDC MAT 5. Hold mini-ICDC MAT 6. Evaluate mini-ICDC MAT results, process	1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. Program faculty, Division Deans 4. QEP-SC 5. QEP-SC 6. QEP-SC	- - - - - -	- - - - - -
December 2004	1. Formalize plans for Spring activities for R/W & MAT	1. QEP-SC	-	-
January 2005	1. Begin implementation of Spring activities 2. Select classes for R/W and MAT direct assess and external measure 3. Finalize plans for MAT assessor orientation training 4. Plan orientation for Spring ICDC	1. Division Deans, program faculty, QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC	- - - -	- - - -

	5. Evaluate internal communication plan	5. QEP-SC, Director PR	-	-
February 2005	1. Orientation for MAT assessors 2. Plan Spring ICDC	1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC	- -	- -
March 2005	1. Administer Spring R/W direct assessment 2. Administer Spring Pilot MAT direct assessment	1. Division Deans, program faculty 2. Division Deans, program faculty	- -	- -
April 2005	1. Hold Spring 2005 ICDC 2. Administer external measure	1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty	- -	- -
May 2005	1. Assess/analyze data from Spring 05 ICDC 2. Establish baseline MAT 3. Evaluate R/W against 2004 data baseline 4. Plan dissemination	1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC	- - - -	- - - -
June 2005	1. Develop educational outcomes for IC 1c – Basic Use of the Computer (CS), develop rubric 2. Disseminate results of QEP:R/W Yr. 1, MAT Pilot 3. Plan 2005-06 R/W and MAT Assessment Activities	1. QEP-SC 2. Tim, Cookie, QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC	- - -	- - -
July 2005	1. Discuss CS rubric with cross-campus community for feedback, adjustment 2. Identify courses for Fall MP-CS 3. Identify courses for Fall MP-CS 4. Define time-line for Fall MP-CS 5. Develop prompts for Fall MP-CS	1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. Division Deans, program faculty 4. QEP-SC 5. Division Deans, program faculty	- - - - -	- - - - -
Implementation Focus: Full=Reading/Writing; Mathematics; Pilot = Basic Use of Computers				
August 2005	1. Full implementation of MAT begins, R/W continues 2. Fall MP for CS begins 3. Refine CS prompts 4. Plan Fall Mini-ICDC	1. QEP-SC, Division Deans, program faculty 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC, Division Deans, program faculty 4. QEP-SC	- - - -	- - - -
September 2005	1. Print 21 day rosters to determine sample CS 2. Finalize prompts CS 3. Develop schedule of assessment activities for direct assess of R/W, MAT, external measure	1. Cookie, Tim 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. QEP-SC	- - -	- - -

October 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer Fall-MP CS 2. Briefing for prompts 3. Discuss expected results, what info would be useful 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program faculty 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
November 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forward copies of samples, hold Fall 2005 mini-ICDC 2. Direct assessment samples due to Cookie 3. Develop procedures for Spring ICDC 4. Identify potential Spring assessors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program faculty, QEP-SC 2. Program faculty 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
December 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formalize plans for R/W, MAT and CS pilot 		<p>–</p>	<p>–</p>
January 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin implementation of Spring activities 2. Select classes for R/W, MAT, CS direct assess and external measure 3. Finalize plans for CS assessor orientation training 4. Plan orientation for Spring ICDC 5. Evaluate internal communication plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division Deans, program faculty, QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. QEP-SC 4. QEO-SC 5. QEP-SC, Director PR 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
February 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Orientation for CS assessors 2. Plan Spring ICDC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>
March 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer Spring R/W, MAT direct assessment 2. Administer Spring Pilot CS direct assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division Deans, program faculty 2. Division Deans, program faculty 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>
April 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold Spring 2005 ICDC 2. Administer external measure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>
May 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess/analyze data from Spring 05 ICDC 2. Establish baseline CS 3. Evaluate R/W, MAT against data baseline/previous years 4. Plan dissemination 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
June 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop educational outcomes for IC1D – Oral Communication (SPC), develop rubric 2. Disseminate results of QEP:R/W Yr. 2, MAT Yr. 1, CS Pilot 3. Plan 2006-07 R/W, MAT, CS Assessment Activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. Tim, Cookie, QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>

July 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss SPC rubric with cross-campus community for feedback, adjustment 2. Identify courses for Fall MP-SPC 3. Identify courses for Fall MP-SPC 4. Define time-line for Fall MP-SPC 5. Develop prompts for Fall MP-SPC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. Division Deans, program faculty 4. QEP-SC 5. Division Deans, program faculty 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
Implementation Focus: Full=Reading/Writing; Mathematics; Basic Use of Computers Pilot = Oral Communication				
August 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full implementation of CS begins, R/W, MAT continue 2. Fall MP for SPC begins 3. Refine SPC prompts 4. Plan Fall Mini-ICDC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC, Division Deans, program faculty 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC, Division Deans, program faculty 4. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
September 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print 21 day rosters to determine sample SPC 2. Finalize prompts SPC 3. Develop schedule of assessment activities for direct assess of R/W, MAT, CS, external measure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cookie, Tim 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
October 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer Fall-MP SPC 2. Briefing for prompts 3. Discuss expected results, what info would be useful 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program faculty 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
November 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forward copies of samples, hold Fall 2005 mini-ICDC 2. Direct assessment samples due to Cookie 3. Develop procedures for Spring ICDC 4. Identify potential Spring assessors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program faculty, QEP-SC 2. Program faculty 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
December 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formalize plans for R/W, MAT CS and SPC pilot 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p>	<p>–</p>
January 2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin implementation of Spring activities 2. Select classes for R/W, MAT, CS, SPC direct assess and external measure 3. Finalize plans for SPC assessor orientation training 4. Plan orientation for Spring ICDC 5. Evaluate internal communication plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division Deans, program faculty, QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty 3. QEP-SC 4. QEO-SC 5. QEP-SC, Director PR 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p> <p>–</p>
February 2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Orientation for SPC assessors 2. Plan Spring ICDC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>	<p>–</p> <p>–</p>

March 2007	1. Administer Spring R/W, MAT, CS direct assessment 2. Administer Spring Pilot SPC direct assessment	1. Division Deans, program faculty 2. Division Deans, program faculty	- -	- -
April 2007	1. Hold Spring 2005 ICDC 2. Administer external measure	1. QEP-SC 2. Division Deans, program faculty	- -	- -
May 2007	1. Assess/analyze data from Spring 05 ICDC 2. Establish baseline SPC 3. Evaluate R/W, MAT, CS against data baseline/previous years 4. Plan dissemination	1. QEP-SC 2. QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC 4. QEP-SC	- - - -	- - - -
June 2007	1. Refine educational outcomes for 2. Disseminate results of QEP:R/W, MAT, CS, SPC 3. Plan 2006-07 Direct Assessment Activities	1. QEP-SC 2. Tim, Cookie, QEP-SC 3. QEP-SC	- - -	- - -
July 2007				
Implementation Focus: Full=Reading/Writing, Mathematics, Basic Use of Computer, Oral Communication				
2007-2008	Full implementation of all assessments for the 1 st IC			
And Beyond!				

Summary

The evaluation plan for the QEP includes the components for the implementation issue as well as other measures to be used in the triangulation of data. These include results from the external measure of general education skills and indirect data from the Institutional Effectiveness Program. The detailed timeline provides focus for the implementation of the QEP. It is a work in progress and reflects the learning that occurs when a new process such as the QEP is designed and implemented.

APPENDICES

1. Outcomes from the Campus Retreat, 2/28/2003
2. Reading/Writing Rubric
3. Holistic Scoring Guide
4. Reading/Writing Outcomes
5. References for the Study of Best Practices
6. Assessment and Evaluation Committee Procedure
7. Selected QEP Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
8. Important Links

Appendix 1: Outcomes From The Campus Retreat February 2003.

Student Support Services (29)				
Increase/extend hours	Early Alert Systems	Information/counseling center	Welcome Center (comprehensive information central point, multi-campus, computer kiosk)	Efficient one-stop
Comprehensive/extended testing hours	Staff Development	On-line support-orientation	Virtual services (Comprehensive)	Counseling
Adult Education (aid for those who fail ASSET/COMPASS)	Student Activities	Financial aid/life skills	Testing Center	Advisements
Extended hours/services: student services/job placement, financial aid	On-line COMPASS Testing	Tutoring/mentoring	Consumer focus	Financial aid access
Welcome center	Day care	Increase student organization involvement and support	Knowledgeable and adequate staff	Library services
Student ID/Debit Card	Information Desk	Student e-mail accounts	Student Center	
Instruction (27)				
Student achievement: capstone courses standardized tests	Faculty recruitment with diversity	Web components, online offerings & components	Six day week/instruction	Open labs especially on weekends, 6-day vs 4.5 days instruction
Curriculum	Proper advising, continuous	Learning centered (vs. transmission model) critical thinking focus	Technology (up-to-date)	Recruitment/retention strategies
	Distance learning	Increase pool of adjunct/qualified faculty	Off campus instruction (high schools)	Faculty development

	Technology support	Flexible scheduling; weekend offerings	Quality instructors	Advising
	Training/development	Community outreach/involvement		Tutoring/Help desk
	Additional programs/weekend classes			
Facilities (25)				
Signage	Security/Lighting	Signs/maps/directions	Facelifts of building: public image	Update physical appearance
Student center and food	Signage	Lighting	Phone system improvements	Maintenance of buildings/grounds
Lighting	ADA issues	Parking	Improve comfort: adults, maintenance, lighting	Signage
Clean, comfortable, well-maintained	Dedicated student center	Enhance beautification	Signage	Facilities: location in needed areas
Parking	Better facility access	Construction/renovation	Use of facilities: evaluate and design	
	Parking, fix pot holes in parking lots	Student Services building	New campus as model and retrofit others	
Human Resources (15)				
Appropriately trained or credentialed	Faculty/staff/administration training/cross training	Professional development	Review job descriptions and productivity	
Professional development	Utilize qualified military personnel as adjuncts	“Real” orientation	Training	
Problem solving	Retention: employees and students	Evaluation/reallocation of resources	Increase staff	
Multi-cross training	Study staffing	Community/business/ industry partnerships	Increase salary	
	Recruitment of qualified, diversified staff			
	Resource allocation			

Institutional Effectiveness and Support (10)				
Funding	Professional development and training	Customer service	Commitment to budget	Problem solving approach
Telephone services	Operational hours: weekend, evening, after hours, virtual	Community involvement	Long range planning 1-3-5	Datatel processes
On-line support	Measure outcomes and make know to community	Image enhancement	Alumni association	Accuracy of student records
Staff Development	Community centers-partnering	Marketing/PR	Military (partner with for recruitment)	Planning/Research Office
Improved public relations	Make changes based on data & outcomes assessment (close the loop)	Alumni development and support	Continuing Ed access	
Food services	Resources, resources, resources (Foundation)	e-mail for students	Marketing	

Appendix 2: Reading/Writing Rubric

Reading/Writing Assessment Rubric
Writing Assessment Form

Major _____

Date _____

		ACCOMPLISHED	ADEQUATE	MARGINAL	POOR
(1)	Responds fully to the assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2)	Communicates clearly and effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3)	Begins and ends effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4)	Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5)	Is well-organized and unified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6)	Uses language appropriate to the assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7)	Correctly acknowledges sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8)	Correctly applies grammar, punctuation, word usage, spelling, and format	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Evaluation					
Comments:					

Appendix 3: Holistic Scoring Guide

Score: Accomplished

A paper at this highest level has well-developed ideas elaborated with relevant supporting examples and specific details. The writing shows insight. The organization is smooth and maintains clear and consistent focus from beginning to end. Transitions are varied and effective, creating a seamless flow of ideas. Sentences are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is precise and varied. The style and tone are appropriate. Minor and/or infrequent errors in grammar and/or mechanics, if present, do not interfere with communication.

Score: Adequate

A paper at this level has most of the ideas well developed with relevant supporting examples and details. The writing is organized and maintains consistent focus. Transitions are effective, if not especially varied. Sentences are generally varied in length and complexity. Word choice shows some precision and variety. The style and tone are consistent with standard English. Relatively minor and/or infrequent errors in grammar and/or mechanics do not interfere with communication.

Score: Marginal

A paper at this level has adequate development of ideas but is limited in depth and thoroughness. Supporting examples tend to be general and details are relevant, but they may be repetitive. The writing is generally organized but may have minor lapses in focus. Transitions are simple. Sentences are usually correct, with some variety and complexity attempted. Word choice is generally clear and correct but may be repetitive and/or informal. The style and tone are consistent with standard English but may be overly casual. Some errors in grammar and mechanics are apparent but do not interfere with communication. Basic spelling is correct.

Score: Poor

A paper at this level has thinly developed ideas that are not expanded and may be presented as a list. Sentences lack variety, and construction errors seriously impede understanding. Although some organization is evident, the focus is unclear and/or inconsistent. Few or no transitions are used. Sentences are often simple or repetitive, with some noticeable errors in construction. Word choice is poor and often repetitive. The style and tone are inconsistent with standard English. Significant errors in grammar and/or mechanics interfere with communication.

Score 0

Off-topic, offensive or strongly inappropriate language (may include profanity and/or threats), or written in a language other than English.

Appendix 4: Reading/Writing Outcomes

At the “ACCOMPLISHED” level, individuals write responses that are clear, precise, free of error, and communicate in a professional manner. When individuals have “ACCOMPLISHED” writing skills, they produce writing:

- That uses correct, complete sentences that are varied in length and complexity.
- With few or no errors in grammar, spelling, and mechanics. Any errors present do not interfere with communication. Word usage shows precision and variety.
- With style, tone, and language that are consistent with standard English (the writing contains no slang or overly casual language).
- That is smoothly organized and that maintains clear and consistent focus from beginning to end. Transitions are varied and effective, creating a seamless flow of ideas.
- That has well-developed ideas elaborated on with relevant supporting evidence and specific details. The writing shows insight, perception, and depth.

At the “ADEQUATE” level, individuals write responses that are clear, with almost no errors. When individuals have “ADEQUATE” writing skills, they produce writing:

- With all sentences complete and generally varied in length and complexity.
- With very few mechanical, grammatical, spelling, and/or word usage errors. These do not interfere with communication. Word usage is precise and varied.
- With style, tone, and language that are consistent with standard English (the writing contains no slang or overly casual language).
- That is organized, clean, and maintains focus.
- That has most of the ideas well developed with relevant supporting examples and details.

At the “MARGINAL” level, individuals write responses that are clear. The writing may include structure, some errors in grammar and punctuation, and adequate development of the ideas may be limited. When individuals have “MARGINAL” writing skills, they produce writing:

- With most of the sentences complete and with some sentence variety.
- With few mechanical, grammatical, spelling, and word usage errors. Errors may interfere with communication.
- With style and tone that are generally consistent with standard English. Writing may have somewhat casual language but does not contain slang.
- That exhibits some organization but that may lose focus at some points.
- That has some development of ideas, but which may be limited in details and thoroughness. Supporting examples tend to be general, sketchy, and may be repetitive.

At the “POOR” level, individuals write responses that lack clarity. However, a large number of errors make the response difficult to understand. When individuals have “POOR” writing skills, they produce writing:

- That has some correct sentence structures.
- That includes a large number of major grammatical, mechanical, spelling, and word usage errors that interfere with communication.
- That has overly casual language, tone, and style that may be inconsistent with standard English.
- With little or no organization, and an unclear focus.
- That attempts to communicate their ideas but provides little or no development or support.

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Appendix 6: Assessment and Evaluation Committee Procedure

PROCEDURE TITLE: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE
BASED ON POLICY: 2-1-211
REVISION NUMBER: 1
OFFICE OF: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
RESPONSIBILITY

PRESIDENT

June 17, 2003
DATE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the responsibilities and membership of the Assessment and Evaluation (A & E) Committee as a standing committee of the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

PROCEDURE

1. The purpose of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee is to maintain a comprehensive approach to assessment of program operations, competencies and outcomes in all areas of the college, to evaluate data on institutional programs and effectiveness, and to enhance quality outcomes. The responsibility of the A & E Committee is to recommend strategies that increase the effectiveness of the College in meeting the needs of the four county service area and that promote continuous quality improvement. The committee will recommend Institutional Effectiveness (IE) plans and reports to Executive Committee.
2. The committee of a whole will address ongoing program assessment and evaluation needs via three subcommittees: (1) program review, (2) performance evaluation, and (3) quality improvement.

At least four (4) individuals will serve on each sub-committee.

- (1) The Program Review Subcommittee is responsible for evaluation of results on external and/or internal program evaluations.
 - (2) The Performance Evaluation Subcommittee is responsible for the collection, evaluation, and recommendation of annual assessment plans and findings to demonstrate institutional effectiveness.
 - (3) The Quality Improvement Subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the assessment findings of the Quality Improvement Plan for long term and strategic planning.
3. Ad Hoc Committees may be formed periodically to address additional initiatives identified by the committee as a whole.
 4. The membership of the committee will consist of
 - a. Director of Planning and Research
 - b. Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - c. Dean of Students
 - d. Associate Dean of Student Development
 - e. Director of Distance Learning
 - f. Director of Admissions
 - g. Director of Student Services
 - h. Vice President for Finance
 - i. Director of Hilton Head College Center
 - j. Each academic division dean
 - k. One faculty member from each academic division
 - l. Registrar
 - m. A Student representative
 - n. Vice President for Continuing Education and Institutional Advancement
 5. The term of the membership will be for 2 years.
 6. The chairperson will be the Director for Planning and Research.

Appendix 7: Important QEP Minutes

QEP Subcommittee Minutes
February 7, 2003 Meeting
9:00 am Building 23

Attending: J. Aldrich, J. Brown, J. Chapman, J. Daniels, E. Feight, P. Ferguson, T. Garner, C. Hincer, R. Jackson, R. Kearney-Nunnery, C. Kruzeloek, S. Ladson, J. Maggi, F. McCollough, K. McDaniel, L. O'Neal, L. Parisi, L. Roth, D. van Nostran

Absent: D. Johnson, M. Morrison, F. Seitz, M. Sette, R. Shaw

- I. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.
- II. Minutes of the January 24, 2003 meeting were approved as printed.
- III. The definition of student learning was thoroughly discussed with the group examining the various components of the definitions proposed at the last meeting and the feedback obtained from the Academic Management Council, Marketing Committee, Arts and Sciences Division Meeting, Business Technologies Division Meeting, and Student Services Council Meetings. Part of the discussion focused on the need for the definition to be specific or general, should it reflect the unique nature of TCL, and should it be static or show action. The role of goals of student learning, educational outcomes, and assessment methods were also considered in the discussion of what our statement should be. The outcome of the day's discussion is a philosophy/belief statement about student learning. The philosophy/belief statement will be the foundation for the development of education goals of student learning and appropriate educational/student learning outcomes with appropriate assessment measures.

Student learning is the acquisition of academic, technical, and interpersonal skills enabling the application of critical thinking to make informed judgments.

- IV. To clarify the priorities based on the four focus groups (physical campuses, virtual campuses, human resources, student support services) that are part of the initial QEP document outlining the issue *Clarifying Image and Building Capacity to Better Serve the Community*, the group participated in a nominal group activity. The goal of the activity was to align the sub-issues/priorities developed in earlier meetings into groups that "fit" with each other. These new groupings were then classified as: Instruction, Student Support Services, Facilities, Institutional Support and Effectiveness. There was strong support that the items included in Institutional Support and Effectiveness served as the essential foundation to the other identified areas. The sub-topics for each of the four areas to follow are not listed in any priority order.
 - A. Instruction
 - i. Central send sites
 - ii. Computer labs (software, maintenance, support)

- iii. Current distant space/equipment
- iv. Digital send sites
- v. Forms of instruction
- vi. Location of instruction
- vii. On-line Help Desk
- viii. Web enhanced courses
 - (Also mentioned were faculty development, attendance policy, consistence, and allocated time in workload for web-enhanced courses, cable companies)

B. Student Support Services

- i. Academic tutoring
- ii. Advisement
- iii. Counseling
- iv. Financial aid (including on-line)
- v. Information desk
- vi. Library
- vii. Mentoring
- viii. On-line payment
- ix. Registration (including on-line)
- x. Orientation
- xi. Retention
- xii. Services provided for ALC (Academic Learning Center)
- xiii. Support personnel
- xiv. Testing

C. Facilities

- i. Campuses
 - 1. Attractive
 - 2. Comfortable
 - 3. Safe
- ii. Enhance identity
- iii. Phone System

D. Institutional Support and Effectiveness

- i. Commitment to budget
- ii. Develop specific objectives
- iii. Enhance identity (Marketing viewpoint)
- iv. Explore/follow-up Noel Levitz recommendations
- v. Evaluate
- vi. Need baseline data
- vii. Plan
- viii. Plan distant sites
- ix. Plan 1-3-5 year
- x. Quality initiative
- xi. Staffing
 - 1. Organization chart (identify current staffing)

2. Study staffing
 3. Examine academic/continuing education staff numbers (who, where, what training do they need?)
 4. Reallocation possibilities (deployment)
- xii. Training/professional development (faculty, staff, administration)

These items were discussed as some of the “tools” that would support student learning and the outcomes of student learning.

- V. The subcommittee agreed that the outcomes of today’s meeting should be shared with Dr. van Nostran and Mr. Garner for use by the broader based group of TCL employees involved in the 2/28/03 Retreat.
- VI. Based on the day’s discussion of student learning and the regrouping of the focus group areas, the subcommittee tabled the remainder of the agenda. All agreed to discuss the philosophy/belief statement of student learning in meetings and with peers. The goal of the next meeting will be to clarify the student learning philosophy/belief statement and the realignment of the focus groups based on feedback from the 2/28/03 retreat and to begin the process of developing education development of education goals of student learning and appropriate educational/student learning outcomes with appropriate assessment measures.
- VII. The next meeting is scheduled for 3/7/03, 9-11 am.
- VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucille Cook Roth

Minutes

QEP Subcommittee

6/13/03

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Bldg 24/111

Attendees:

J. Aldrich, J. Brown, J. Chapman, J. Daniels, E. Feight, P. Ferguson, T. Garner, C. Hincer, R. Jackson, R. Kearney-Nunnery, S. Ladson, F. McCollough, K. McDaniel, L. O'Neal, L. Parisi, L. Roth, F. Seitz, , D. van Nostran

Absent: J. Maggi, C. Kruzlock, D. Johnson, M. Morrison, M. Sette, R. Shaw, N. Weber

Topics

1. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May 16, 2003 meeting were approved as printed.
2. WorkKeys® Information: A table (attached) providing information about median WorkKeys® reading, writing, and mathematics skill levels for jobs that may result from completing an associate degree at TCL were distributed and discussed. Also included in the table was a brief table showing the median scores for career clusters.
3. Local Data Information: Tim Garner developed a chart in response to our question about what data is currently gathered, where it is stored, who does the analysis, etc. The chart was discussed at Enrollment Management Committee and at A&E Committee. It is a work in progress.
4. Planning for Our Plan: Cookie shared a PowerPoint presentation (attached) summarizing where we are at this point in time that included the following:
 - * Our definition of assessment
 - * Our questions to be answered by our plan
 - * QEP fit into TCL overall assessment process: Discussion on this focused on how the QEP fits into the College's overall institutional effectiveness process/plan/program. Currently, there are many activities that feed the IE process but that are 'stand alone' assessments (like hub sketch). There was discussion that the vision is for an IE process that incorporates all the assessments (like Venn diagram) and shares the information with the larger College community so that sound, informed decisions utilizing all available information can be made.
 - * Ideas/beliefs guiding our plan:
 - Our goal is to develop an assessment for the institutional competencies that assesses how associate degree graduates perform in each of the sub areas, beginning with reading/writing. The assessment instrument/process should provide maximum information, be as non-intrusive in courses as possible, consume a reasonable amount of time to administer, score, and analyze data.
 - For writing skills to persist beyond the English classroom, value needs to be added to these skills within the curriculum courses. The rubric will need to be shared with students up-front so the can 'see' the expectations.
 - One instrument/assessment is limited in what it can accomplish/data it can provide. Whatever we do needs to be viewed as one way of looking at information that can be triangulated with other measures to provide sound data for decision making.

* Uses for our findings

- There was discussion about how writing is currently handled in courses, the role of the English composition classes, what the outcomes might look like initially, and possible curriculum implications.

* Methods of assessment

- Discussion about format: a) use a common interest article, common prompt for all students participating or b) imbed an item in existing course test/project that requires students to read/understand prompt and respond with short (2-3 paragraph) essay. The group decided on the imbedded item approach.
- Should involve associate degree students near the end of the program, meaning identifying courses within programs in which students are most likely to be nearing graduation.
- There was discussion about baseline data, the correlation of COMPASS to writing outcomes, or other existing measures.

* Basic implementation plans

- Good writing is good writing regardless of the discipline. The group discussed good writing at length as a prelude to developing a rubric based on the characteristics of good writing. Orientation will be a necessary part of the process 1) to begin writing appropriate questions and 2) to develop a team of assessors who can use the rubric to assess writing of near graduates. To begin building a culture of assessment, a Fall 2003 pilot run using 3-4 courses will give us real student work to use as the process of administering the assessment, using the rubric, and collecting/analyzing data begins. Spring 2004 a larger pilot run will be conducted, scorer training conducted in anticipation of a “Institutional Competency Day” to score the spring samples.
- Development of the rubric and associated materials is a primary concern. To insure broad-based ownership of the process, a small sub-sub-committee (Fred Seitz, Lynn O’Neal, John Aldrich, Cookie Roth, Everett Feight, Leah Parisi) will meet to develop the first draft of the rubric. It will come back to the QEP Subcommittee 33 and then go out to the larger campus community for input and refinement.

* Dissemination plans

- Data will be used in the IE process and will be shared with the larger campus community through existing reporting mechanisms, to augment Divisional reporting, and with Advisory Committees.

5. Miscellaneous: The on-site visit by the SACS team has been changed to April 6, 7, 8, 2004 to avoid the Good Friday and Easter holidays.
6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.
- 5 Next Meetings: June 27, 9-11, Building 22

Respectfully Submitted,
Lucille Cook Roth, EdD

Minutes

QEP Subcommittee

11/21/2003
3 Hours, 55 Minutes
TCL Campus
Bldg 23

Type of meeting: QEP Subcommittee
Note taker: Leah Parisi, Sue Ellen Johnson

Present: J. Aldrich, J. Brown, J. Chapman, J. Daniels, E. Feight, P. Ferguson, D. Johnson, C. Kruzlock, R. Kearney-Nunnery, S.E. Johnson, J. Maggi, F. McCollough, L. O'Neal, L. Parisi, L. Roth,

Absent: A.M. Adams, T Garner, C. Hincer, R. Jackson, S. Ladson, M. Morrison, F. Seitz, M. Sette, R. Shaw, N. Weber, D. van Nostran

Please bring: Copy of minutes and agenda, materials from previous meetings.

Agenda topics

Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the October 17 meeting were approved as printed.

2. Updates:

- General Knowledge Testing: Contacts have been made with ACT and with ETS. Representatives from the ACT and ETS will be on campus to demonstrate their respective products on January 23, 2004 and January 30, 2004. David Johnson shared information from three community college similar in size to TCL who had used ETS's product for general knowledge testing.
- Recent articles in *Innovation Abstracts* entitled *Improve Student Learning the Old Fashioned Way: Have Them Read the Text book and Writing is A Key To Learning* were shared as a source of informative reading.
- Feedback from the Divisions: Discussions continue related to the rubric and assessment of the institutional competencies.
- Assessment Climate Survey: Ann Marie Adams collected and tallied responses from the campus wide assessment climate survey. With 55 responses the return rate was approximately 50%. Results show that the campus community views program review assessment as providing feedback to learners and instructors, as required and necessary to continuous improvement efforts, as providing useful information for program improvement, and that we have the power to use the results to improve programs and courses.

Many kinds of assessment tools are used. Those most frequently used include: archival records, behavioral observations, classroom assessment techniques, performance appraisals, presentations, self assessments, surveys, written assignments and exams.

Overall, the results of the first Assessment Climate Survey show that there is assessment activity on the campus and that results are being used for improving the college's programs and services. The attitude toward assessment is fairly positive.

- The Draft Report of the QEP is being drafted. Cookie reports that it is difficult to write since the guidelines are vague. The SACS Conference in December may provide additional information and guidance. The report is due to SACS in early January 2004. We hope to have it in nearly final form prior to the winter holiday break.

- VP Kearney-Nunnery reports that the Focused Report that is the response to feedback from the off-site review of the Compliance Audit is nearing completion.

3. Discussion Mini-Trial Process:

- From the writing samples submitted for the Fall Mini-Pilot, samples of students who were not enrolled in an associate degree or who had completed fewer than half the hours needed to complete their program were discarded as ineligible. The reason is that we will look at the reading/writing skill level of associate degree graduates. For the spring semester samples participants will be those who have completed at least three-fourths of the required number of hours for their program.
 - Eligible samples were placed in a file in no particular order, a number drawn from a “hat” by a non-committee member, and that sample selected from the file. For example, if the number “5” was drawn, the fifth paper in the stack was the sample used.
 - Packets were prepared for distribution to each committee members as follows:
 - Lavender sheets with general process instructions for the first run through with the rubric. Each scorer working independently and returning score sheets and any comments to Cookie.
 - Writing sample packets for English 208 and English 102, Electronics, Paralegal, and Nursing were prepared as follows:
 - Pink sheet with Reading/Writing Assessment Rubric were placed as top sheet.
 - White sheet(s) with the PROMPT received by the student.
 - Lavender sheet(s) were copies of the student writing.
 - White sheet(s) were any extra materials needed. For example, the electronics prompt required reading of articles related to wireless communication. These articles were included on the white sheets.
 - The order of the samples in the packets was varied to promote variation in the order in which the samples were scored. For example, in one packet the order was ENG, ENG, EEM, LEG, NUR while in the next it might be LEG, EEM, ENG, NUR, ENG.
 - Pink scoring sheets were forwarded to Cookie via inter-office mail, results tallied, comments typed.
 - Discussion points regarding the process were:
 - The rubric worked well.
 - Are we including reading?
 - Should we train for prompts?
 - Is understanding of the content area, for example paralegal or electronics, required to score the writing?
 - Should we consider equalizing courses?
 - Prompts are important to understand the purpose of the assignment.
 - We received 20 scoring responses from the 25 committee members, 2 after the deadline.
 - Average score and range of scores were discussed.
 - The similarity between #2 and #7 on the rubric were discussed.
 - Based on individual experiences, an attempt was made to discern exactly what separated a paper at the accomplished level from a paper at the adequate level, etc. since it was felt that we must be able to do so to clearly articulate this to future assessors.
 - Sue Ellen Johnson shared some tenets of qualitative research. Much of the assessment we do is quantitative.
 - When qualitative research/analysis is undertaken, scorers are trained by a fairly rigid standard with limited variables.
 - All scorers should use the guide sheet/rubric and refer to it during scoring of each sample.
 - There should be no collaboration between scorers. Collaboration after training leads to bias.
 - No collaboration should occur pre or post-“scoring.”
 - The order of scoring should vary if variables exist in the samples.
- ### 4. Next Group of Writing Samples:
- Implications for Training.
 - Train readers/assessors to address each item on the rubric so that the sample can be rated/scored.
 - Prompts need to address the defined audience.
 - Computer should be used for samples to avoid bias related to scorers opinions of handwriting.
 - Rubric
 - If the rubric category is N/A, default to a score of 3 “Adequate.” Specific discussion related to item 8 addressing

- documentation. If there is no documentation required, the score would default to “3”.
- Regarding items 2 and 7 on the current rubric:
 - Discussion focused on ‘clear,’ ‘defined,’ ‘appropriate.’ It was agreed to remove “direct” from #7.
 - Prompts need to address each item-what is the ‘defined’ audience? It could be the instructor.
 - Reaffirmation was made that the prompt be designed to include reading at an appropriate level and that the student response would assume that the student comprehended the assignment.
- Assessors/scorers should make frequent reference to the rubric and the Holistic Scoring Guide.
- With the proposed changes to items 2, 7, 8, it was agreed that the documentation (Rubric and Holistic Scoring Guide) were adequate for use with the Spring 2004 Pilot.
- On the rubric the following changes will be made:
 - #3 will be deleted.
 - #7 will be changed to read: Uses language appropriate to the assignment.

•Scores:

- Scores as originally proposed with 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the Accomplished to Poor ratings are inadequate to provide separation between categories. For example, if 8 of the 9 scores were poor and one was marginal, the overall rating was marginal. Similar results were occurring between adjoining rankings. Suggestions were made to try 8, 6, 4, 1. Ratings occurred such that the ranges needed adjustments to insure that similar situations did not occur only with larger numbers.

OLD	Category	NEW	REVISED
32-25	Accomplished	64-47	64-51
24-17	Adequate	48-33	50-35
16-9	Marginal	32-9	34-14
1-8	Poor	8-0	13-0

- The scores in the REVISED column will be used to score the samples in the training sessions and in the Spring Pilot.
- After the Exercise of scoring a second set of five samples:
 - There is consistency among the group, especially related to category scoring.
 - The numerical categories brought the constant into consideration.
 - The numerical category ranges allowed a reflection of the “average” score.
 - Process issues will be examined.
 - An extra hour each month will allow for broader, deeper discussions.

5. Next Meetings:

December 12, 2003
 January 23, 2004
 January 30, 2004
 February 20, 2004
 March 19, 2004
 April 2, 2004
 April 6-8, 2004 = On-site SACS Visit.

6. Adjourned at 1:10 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucille Cook Roth

Appendix 8: Important Links

Technical College of the Lowcountry Catalog 2003-2004, www.tcl.edu

QEP Agenda and Minutes, www.tcl.edu

TCL Policies, www.tcl.edu

TCL Procedures, www.tcl.edu

Innovation & Impact, Technical College of the Lowcountry Annual Report, www.tcl.edu

Vision and Goals Document, www.tcl.edu

TCL Course Syllabi, www.tcl.edu

www.myschools.org

SBTCE Policies, South Carolina Technical College System Intranet

SBTCE Procedures, South Carolina Technical College System Intranet