



QUALITY

ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Empowering students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving.

ABSTRACT

Students need to develop clear plans to persist and achieve their educational goals. At Isothermal Community College, Comprehensive Educational Planning, which includes mandatory orientation, enhanced student success course, and dynamic advising, will provide students with guidance in academic goal setting and problem solving in order to remove barriers to completion.

Isothermal Community College

October 2015

start
STRONG finish
STRONGER.





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Executive Summary

Isothermal Community College, a member of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), is a comprehensive, two-year, public institution that serves individuals in Rutherford and Polk Counties. Isothermal offers more than sixty certificate, diploma, and degree curricula serving approximately 2,000 students. The core of the College’s mission is to improve lives through learning, creating a higher quality of life in its service region.

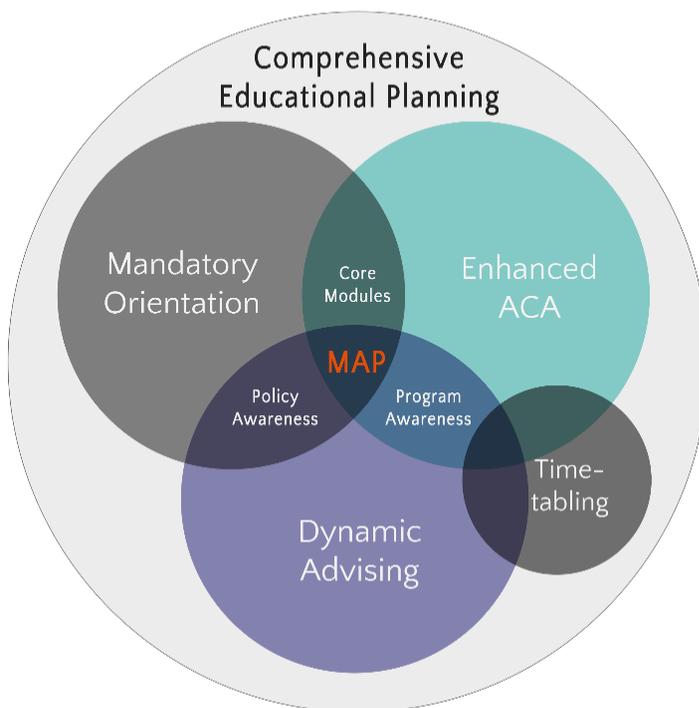
For the past two years, Rutherford County has been designated a “distressed county” by the Appalachian Regional Commission because it faces significant economic challenges (www.arc.gov). In a service area where un- and under-employment are the norm, a student’s educational plan to complete a degree is often interrupted. This, in part, has resulted in retention and completion rates below the state average.

The Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative (SSFS) focuses on increasing students’ abilities to set a realistic, time-bound goal—degree completion. In addition, it emphasizes the ability to solve complex problems, such as identifying the barriers to completion associated with working two jobs or taking care of family members while taking twelve credits.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) focus on the purposeful inquiry used to progress in college and complete a degree. To do so, students must demonstrate the ability to: set a realistic, time-bound goal, anticipate barriers to the stated goal, reevaluate those barriers, and then adjust actions or revise the goal. The SSFS Initiative will teach these basic problem solving skills which students will be able to apply to future goals and successes in their lives.

The SSFS implements what the College refers to as comprehensive educational planning, including mandatory orientation, completion of an academic success course, known as ACA, within the first two semesters, and strategic planning and goal setting with an academic advisor. When needed, a Support Team (comprised of faculty and professional advisors) will work with under-performing students to adjust their educational plans, called Master Academic Plans (MAP). Additional strategies include faculty and staff training on the enhanced ACA course curriculum, an early intervention system, and dynamic advising techniques. The College will also implement a timetabling software program to reduce course schedule conflicts that may pose barriers to students’ progression in their programs.

At its core SSFS determined that teaching goal-setting skills is fundamental to increased student success as evidenced by increased retention—and ultimately overall increased progression and completion rates.



Circles in grey represent supporting actions.

Glossary

ACA— course subject abbreviation for two courses, ACA 115 and ACA 122, that are first-year experience courses students will be required to take within the first two semesters. The courses provide information and strategies necessary to develop clear academic and professional goals beyond the community college. All ACA classes and sections use the common MAP (Master Academic Plan) assignment. All instructors receive specific professional development specifically related to the MAP assignment. Students in high school sections of ACA will complete the MAP assignment focusing on the completion of a pathway but will not be included in the QEP assessment plan.

Academic Advisors—program-specific experts, many of whom are full-time instructors, who are student-driven and committed to the Learning College mission. They work with students to create program-specific educational plans and:

- Initiate and maintain regular contact with all advisees
- Establish relationships that engage, educate, and empower advisees to successfully complete their goals
- Provide accurate, timely, and consistent information about the College and its programs
- Maintain a high degree of professionalism when relating to advisees
- Engage in personal growth and development in support of the College's mission

Action Plan—a document created by at-risk students (those who receive a "no show" for a course, a financial aid warning letter in their first year, or an Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral), in cooperation with their academic advisor or a Support Team member. The Action Plan identifies barriers specific to that student and lists potential actions to be taken to achieve the student's academic goals, as stated in his or her MAP.

Comprehensive Educational Planning—a group of new or newly revised college strategies to improve student learning and success. The strategies include mandatory orientation (online or face-to-face), ACA in a student's first two semesters, dynamic advising that proactively identifies at-risk students, and timetabling to reduce course schedule conflicts. Within this group of strategies, enhanced ACA and dynamic advising are the focus of the QEP. Mandatory orientation and timetabling are supporting actions of the QEP.

Core Modules—common content developed for orientation, ACA, and dynamic advising that developed from learning needs identified by students and faculty. The modules focus on the mechanics of the college experience, including: Campus Safety: Policies & Need to Know Information; Technology Resources; Financial Aid: How to Keep It; and Educational Planning: What's the Goal and Plan?

Department Representative—a faculty member from Academic Development, Applied Sciences and Engineering Technologies, Arts and Sciences, Business Sciences, and Health and Public Services who receives a one course or three credit hour reduction, whichever is greater, to serve on the Support Team.

Dynamic Advising—a faculty-based, proactive advising approach that focuses on students creating and maintaining a MAP, a personalized educational plan, with the goal of improving the quality of the student learning process, enhancing students' knowledge and use of learning support services, and increasing persistence and progression. Dynamic Advising is one of the key components of the comprehensive educational planning model. The two supporting components are mandatory orientation and enhanced ACA.

Early Intervention Form (EIF)—a web-based form used by faculty to refer students to the Support Team for intervention. Risk factors may include: being inattentive or sleeping in class; struggling with course content to the point of failing tests and assignments; attending class without required materials, textbooks, or assignments; and frequently missing class. Faculty members can provide additional details and are asked to indicate whether they informed the student of the referral before submitting it. EIFs are received in a dedicated account that is managed and accessed by the Support Team members.

First-time College Student—credential seeking full or part-time students who have never been to college after receiving high school credentials, or who have not attended a post-secondary institution within the last five years. First-time students who demonstrate at-risk behaviors, including course no shows, financial aid warning letter in the first year, or Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral from an instructor are targeted for additional problem-solving assistance, utilizing an Action Plan, by a Support Team of academic and professional advisors.

First Year Progression—first-time college students completing at least twelve hours in their first year with a grade of “C” or better.

Front Door Focus—the QEP Development team’s focus, based on models such as Valencia Community College’s LifeMap program, that addressed students at the beginning of their college experience in order to have the greatest impact on the largest number of students early in their college career.

Full-time Student—this term refers to a student who is taking at least 12 credit hours. A student who is registered for 11 credit hours or fewer in one semester is a part-time student. Completion of a degree within two years, however, may require more than 12 hours per semester.

Learning Support and Retention (LSR)—a campus center providing informal and formal services such as academic counseling, advising and registration, career counseling, career services, early intervention, disability support, health sciences advising, I.T. Help Desk assistance, mentoring relationships, personal counseling assistance and referrals, and testing services.

Master Academic Plan (MAP)—individualized course sequence designed by a student that takes into account his or her anticipated enrollment status, work schedule, or other obligations. It is created in conjunction with his or her ACA instructor or academic advisor with the purpose of creating a clear path to degree completion. A MAP is derived from the Program Guide of a student’s chosen educational program. Students in high school sections of ACA will complete the MAP assignment focusing on the completion of a pathway but will not be included in the QEP assessment plan.

Orientation—interactive on-campus or online experience, mandatory (Fall 2016), prior to the second semester’s registration, focusing on the mechanics of the college experience including the following student-identified modules: Campus Safety, Policies & Need to Know Information; Technology Resources; Financial Aid: How to Keep It; and Educational Planning: What’s the Goal and Plan?

Problem Solving—a skill required in academic goal setting that focuses on identifying barriers to completion and determining solutions/actions to achieve the goals despite known obstacles. The steps to academic goal setting and problem solving require students to demonstrate the ability: to set a realistic, time-bound goal, anticipate barriers to the stated goal, reevaluate those barriers, and then adjust actions or revise the goal. In the Comprehensive Educational Planning model, problem solving skills are developed as a part of the student self-assessment of the MAP assignment in ACA and then addressed one-on-one with at-risk students through the completion of an Action Plan with a Support Team member or an academic advisor. In this model, problem solving is used in the context of educational goal setting through academic planning.

Program Guide—designed to assist students in educational planning by identifying program-level educational pathways and correct sequences of courses for completing degrees, diplomas, or certificates in a timely manner. Program Guides are developed by each educational program’s Lead Instructor (or Program Coordinator). Students work with their ACA instructor and/or academic advisor to adapt the Program Guide to a personal MAP in order to complete their programs of study in the most efficient way possible to achieve their educational and career goals.

Support Team-- a team of representatives from each academic department, Financial Aid, and Learning Support and Retention to handle workflows related to first-year students receiving course “no shows,” financial aid warning letters, or EIFs. Each referral is reviewed by a Support Team member. Each student is contacted individually, and the referring faculty member is notified that a referral was received and is being acted upon. Each referral is assessed individually, and each response is customized to address the specific concerns about and needs of the student and will include the creation of an Action Plan. Typical Action Plans may include any combination of the following:

- meeting with an educational advisor for program planning or testing
- identifying an appropriate tutor
- connecting the student with a peer mentor
- arranging for a counseling appointment to address career or personal counseling issues
- meeting with a financial aid advisor for emergency financial assistance or financial planning

Timetabling—a comprehensive course scheduling system used to prevent course conflicts that pose barriers to college progression and completion. The College uses a particular open-source timetabling application called UniTime.

Introduction to Isothermal Community College

Founded in 1964, Isothermal Community College serves Rutherford and Polk counties in the beautiful foothills of western North Carolina. Isothermal, named for the region's steady climate, is a comprehensive, two-year public institution and is a part of the North Carolina Community College System. The Rutherford campus is on 181 acres in Spindale that include an 11-acre lake.

The College mission reads: As an integral community partner, Isothermal Community College exists to improve life through learning by providing innovative, affordable educational programs and offering opportunities for personal, professional, economic, and cultural development.

The College's commitment to its mission contributed to Isothermal's being recently ranked 17th on the list of America's Best Community Colleges by *Washington Monthly* (Carey, 2013). Isothermal offers more than sixty certificate, diploma, and degree curricula serving approximately 2,000 students. The average age of Isothermal students is twenty-five. Seventy-six percent are white, and eighty-seven percent of all students receive financial assistance (unpublished raw data, 2013). The College offers students opportunities to earn credentials, acquire new skills for employment, and transfer to four-year institutions. In addition, the College provides training for area businesses and industries, remedial and developmental courses, and community service activities.

In the 1990s, the College began a transformation in culture from the teaching paradigm to the learning paradigm as a part of the learning college movement. A brief history of this shift is recorded in the Learning College Manual:

The adoption of the learning college concept in 1996 is the most significant strategic direction taken by the College...This shift requires the College to emphasize outcomes based assessment as central to operations throughout the institution...The College is an institution committed to the journey charted by the concept of the Learning-Centered College. The litmus test for every action taken by the college is in the question: Are we doing the best that can be done to help students learn?

College Mission, Vivid Descriptors, and Vision Statement

The College's expression of the learning college philosophy is found in the following 1999 mission: "Isothermal Community College exists to improve life through learning." This mission statement evolved and is stated below with its Vision Statement and Vivid Descriptors.

Vivid Description

- Preparing learners for future success in a career, further education, and personal enrichment
- Providing cutting edge learning and technology
- Providing choices in support services and delivery methods
- Supporting professional development opportunities
- Involving the learner in his or her own learning process(es)
- Encouraging and modeling the effective and sustainable utilization of resources
- Working collaboratively with public education and the community in meeting local educational goals
- Establishing partnerships to advance excellence in learning



- Maintaining a reputation of excellence that ensures the prestige of our graduates
- Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit across all levels of the college

Vision Statement

To be the benchmark for excellence in learning, innovation, service, and economic development

The mission, values, and vision are comprehensive and represent the broad range of services, education, and training that the College provides to address the college transfer, technical training, workforce development, personal enrichment, and cultural needs of the College service area.

Process Used to Develop the QEP

Institutional Planning

The Quality Enhancement Plan aligns with the mission statement, was developed with broad-based constituent input, and is tied to institutional planning. During the 2012-2014 strategic planning cycle and as a part of the College’s 50th Anniversary Celebration, Isothermal conducted a market study that included a series of internal and external surveys. This input was central in the development of the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan, which overlapped with the QEP topic identification process conducted in 2013.

Inputs for the strategic planning process included: public opinion polls of the community at large and Rutherford and Polk County high school students, an Employee Survey, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in 2012. In 2014 and following the installation of the new president, an update to the strategic plan, called The Patriot’s Aim, created a target specifically aligned with the chosen QEP topic.

Tables 2 and 3 below summarize where institutional planning informed and connected to the QEP development. Figure 1 shows the embedded relationship from College mission to QEP focus statement.

Figure 1: Embedding and Alignment of the QEP Focus Statement



Topic Selection

The College enlisted broad-based input on both the selection of the QEP topic and the project's development. In February 2013, during Professional Development Day, an all-employee meeting, the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation conducted a listening activity called the Snowball Activity. In response to the statement, "Our students' greatest learning need is..." each employee and board member in attendance wrote as many statements as they wished on separate pieces of paper without including their name. Employees were then instructed to wad up each response, like a snowball, and literally throw their ideas out for consideration. After the "snowball fight," employees and board members gathered the responses and shared them in table discussions with a note taker.

On March 8th, TALC Leadership Team, the lead team for the College's volunteer task force initiative, reviewed the comments collected during the Snowball Exercise. TALC Leadership identified 23 categories within these statements. Later, three TALC Leadership members worked with the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation to combine the categories into key themes and determine the frequency of individual statements for each theme.

The group crafted the following statements to reflect the responses shared and heard during the Snowball Activity:

- To remove barriers to success, our students need engagement and motivation to think critically and learn.
- To be job or transfer ready, our students need educational planning focused on completion.
- To succeed when entering college, our students need improved computer and technology skills.

In April 2013, the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation surveyed students during Sports Day, a campus-wide social event and picnic. The survey showed that 49% of students agreed with the engagement and motivation statement above; 24% agreed with the educational planning statement; and 27% agreed with the technology statement.

In the same semester, focus groups were conducted with students in the College's ACA course. Although students did not use the term "educational planning," their responses to open-ended questions identified needs such as advising and orientation. Therefore, although the closed response survey on Sports Day seemed to show a greater interest in engagement and motivation, focus group responses confirmed the Snowball finding related to educational planning. However, interaction with faculty inside and outside the classroom was also clearly of importance to focus group participants.

In the summer of 2013, the SACSCOC Steering Committee met and reviewed the institutional qualitative data. The group decided to create two teams to move the College through finalizing the topic and developing the plan. Both teams included a member from each academic division, staff members, and a student representative.

The Development Team met during the fall 2013 semester and focused on conducting the literature review. In December, the QEP Development Team presented its findings and made recommendations to the SACSCOC Steering Committee. The Implementation Team, as discussed later, finalized the topic and coordinated the remainder of the program development. (Membership of each committee and subcommittee is included in Appendix A.)



The literature review included the following: an examination of the College’s North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) Performance Measure results for First Year Progression and Curriculum Completion; a review of secondary resources related to orientation/student success/advising; as well as a study of programs on the same topics at other community colleges. The QEP Development Team recommended that the College focus on an intervention model that includes mandatory orientation, enhanced ACA, and proactive advising.

The Development Team considered that the College has a high number of first generation college students, low-income students, and academically disadvantaged students. These factors can cause students to lack non-academic skills or “college knowledge” about how the institution works, what is expected of them, and how to begin to navigate the process.

To better inform this observation, in summer of 2013 the Student Services Department conducted focus groups with students and staff to learn what information should be included in an orientation program. Table 1 below shows student and staff input.

Table 1: Student and Staff Input Regarding Mandatory Orientation

| Stakeholder Input Regarding Mandatory Orientation | |
|---|--|
| <p>STUDENTS: What things do you wish you had known at the beginning that would have made your transition to college easier?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing my way around campus • Knowing what books to buy • Understanding the registration process • Creating an academic plan • Signing up for classes earlier • Knowing how internet classes work • Understanding the need to take computer classes earlier • Knowing how it is different here | <p>STAFF: Describe what you would like to see added or changed to better equip students to overcome barriers to student completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring orientation and student success course in first semester • Improving class scheduling • Clarifying information about support services • Offering comprehensive counseling • Establishing a clear map for students • Making advising available all the time • Devoting more time to degree and career planning |

Members of the Development Team who continued on to the Implementation Team worked with the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation to conduct a community-wide survey to determine the necessary components of an intervention model. The survey was distributed to students, faculty, staff, board members, county school employees, and community partners. A total of 580 responses were collected; 256 were from students. Similar to the focus group responses, students ranked faculty advising and orientation as being important to student success; agreement among all groups was high. Students ranked “Connecting with a faculty advisor early in the academic program” and “Attending a mandatory orientation” highest.

As a result of a review of literature as well as campus and community input, it was decided that a mandatory orientation program must be offered online for access by all students and that it should include: information related to educational planning; technology skills related to required campus accounts; financial aid; basic college policies and procedures; and student life opportunities. A mandatory orientation, either face-to-face or

online, is needed to help students begin to navigate the college experience and build college knowledge.

The Development Team then considered that the current curriculum for the ACA course did not align with the student-identified components for mandatory orientation. As a result, the College identified a need to align the ACA curriculum and the components of orientation in order to scaffold student knowledge in each key component. Later a common, core assignment, called a Master Academic Plan (MAP), was developed to teach students how to set academic goals and create a systematic approach to facilitate educational planning. During this process, it was determined that high school sections of ACA would complete the MAP assignment focused on completing a pathway instead of a degree, and the high school section assessment results would not be included in the scope of the QEP assessment plan. Table 2 summarizes the topic identification process.

Table 2: Constituent Involvement in the Topic Identification Process

| Topic Identification Event | Constituents Involved | Lessons Learned |
|--|--|--|
| Snowball Activity , Spring 2013 | Faculty, Board of Trustees, Administration, and Staff | Three topics emerged: student engagement, educational planning, and technology skills. |
| Sports Day Student Survey , Spring 2013 | Students | Students value engagement. |
| ACA Student Focus Groups (2) , Spring and Summer 2013 | Students | Students need help early, including registration, technology, and planning. |
| SACSCOC Steering Review , Summer 2013 | Administration | The focus should be on removing barriers to completion through academic planning. |
| Strategic Planning , Fall 2013 | Faculty, Board of Trustees, Administration, Staff, Students, and Community Members | The 2014-15 Strategic Goals related to Student Motivation, Educational Planning, Community Partnerships, and Innovation align with the evolving QEP topic. |
| QEP Development Team , Fall 2013 | Faculty, Staff, and Student | Literature was reviewed, barriers to student success identified, and student success models were studied that focus on the "Front Door." |
| Community-wide Survey , Early Spring 2014 | Faculty, Board of Trustees, Community Members, Administration, Staff, and Students | Students ranked faculty advising and orientation as highly important to student success; agreement among all groups was high. |

Program Development

In discussion following the QEP Development Team's recommendations, the SACSCOC Steering Committee agreed that the primary focus of the QEP should be on emphasizing professional mentors (later adapted into the Support Team comprised of faculty and staff) connecting students to faculty advisors in their programs. The Steering Committee also gave clarifying comments in regard to early enrollment in ACA, mandatory and online orientation, and first-time student definition.

The Steering Committee decision and the analysis done during the topic identification process determined the three components needed to support a comprehensive educational plan: orientation (starting strong), enhanced ACA (developing goals through the MAP assignment), and dynamic advising with a Support Team (prompting problem-solving through Action Plans). Based on the identification of these concepts, three subcommittees were formed to further develop the model.

After the QEP Development Team presented its plan to SACSCOC Steering Committee in December 2013, members of the Development Team were asked, but not required, to continue on to the QEP Implementation Team. Pat Wall, Instructor in Business Sciences, was selected as the QEP Coordinator.

Ms. Wall began planning a QEP Implementation Team retreat which was held at the Lake Lure Inn. The Implementation Team worked to form the focus statement, define terms, continue to look at community-wide survey results, and further define program components. She recruited more members to serve on subcommittees, which are Orientation, ACA, and Educational Planning.

In the semester that followed, Ms. Wall and members of the QEP Implementation Team presented NCCCS Performance Measure data (defined in Table 5) and the components of the comprehensive educational planning program to each department, standing committee, and active campus council. The effort was both for awareness and to gain input. One lesson learned during this process was that the campus at-large is not aware of our college progression and completion rates from the NCCCS Performance Measures.

In addition, in the spring 2014 semester, Ms. Wall met with the Student Government Association (SGA) and gathered important input. She then invited a SGA member to represent his peers and speak to the QEP Implementation Team. He reported to the Team a student-perceived need for: increasing student-led activities to keep students on campus and interested in staying enrolled; assigning faculty advisors to all students; and improving the ACA course. At this point, it was decided to run a pilot of a face-to-face orientation in Fall 2014 to address and further understand these concerns.

The Orientation Subcommittee moved ahead and conducted an orientation pilot in Fall 2014 and Fall 2015. In addition, they led a Professional Development Day activity with faculty, staff, and board members. As a result of their effort, the Orientation Subcommittee identified key components to the comprehensive educational planning model. The components evolved from the existing focus group discussions, student satisfaction surveys from the orientation pilot, and input from employees. The module components are as follows:

- Welcome from the President
- Campus Safety, Policies & Need to Know Information

- Technology Resources
- Financial Aid: How to Keep It
- Educational Planning: What's the Goal and Plan?

The review of literature emphasized the need for an online component for orientation if it is mandatory. In Spring 2015, the College contracted with Advantage Design Group, a multimedia marketing company, to develop an online orientation that follows the modules identified above. A second orientation was conducted in Fall 2015, and online orientation will be available in Fall 2016.

Because of the clear need and feasibility, the College developed the orientation ahead of schedule for the QEP and is considering it a supporting action. It provides key groundwork for the improvement of the ACA course and dynamic advising components; most importantly, the student-identified modules became the framework used by the faculty developing the enhanced ACA.

In Spring 2015, the ACA Subcommittee surveyed faculty to gain a better understanding of the type of enhancements they would like to see as the curriculum was developed from the base outline of the four instructional components. The survey revealed that faculty felt that the current ACA courses lacked consistency in content and, therefore, did not provide needed basic information to all students.

A sample course schedule was developed for the transfer success course (ACA 122), and the co-chairs of the subcommittee met one-on-one with an instructor from each academic department who teaches ACA to review the course outline. A pilot of the new curriculum that emphasizes the creation of a Master Academic Plan (MAP) will be conducted in Fall 2015 with three instructors in three classes. (There are a total of fifteen non-high school sections of ACA in Fall 2015.)

Master Academic Plan (MAP) (definition) – An individualized course sequence designed by a student that takes into account his or her anticipated enrollment status, work schedule, or other obligations. It is created in conjunction with his or her ACA instructor or academic advisor with the purpose of creating a clear path to degree completion. A MAP is derived from the Program Guide of a student's chosen educational program.

Instructors will be trained in educational planning so they can equip students with the necessary, accurate information to create an educational plan that includes the timeframe and the course sequence for completing the desired credential.

The QEP Development Team also determined that the College must develop a system to ensure students have ample opportunities to take ACA at various times during the day. In 2014, a class schedule analysis of ACA offerings showed that a cluster of sections was offered at eleven o'clock, minimal sessions were available to accommodate less traditional schedules, and ACA course offerings had multiple conflicts with general education courses.

The Implementation Team sought proactive ways to identify students who are most at risk of being unsuccessful in achieving their academic goals. In the spring and summer of 2015, the Educational Planning Subcommittee worked on a project with the College's grant writer and identified several at-risk student indicators: no show

(NS) listings; Early Intervention Forms (EIF) submitted by faculty; financial aid warning letters in the student’s first year; Academic Alert (AA) notifications; and reasons for semester withdrawals, as cited by students on an exit survey.

This analysis of institutional data, combined with the review of literature, led the Educational Planning Subcommittee to recommend expanding the early intervention process as a tool to extend the effectiveness of the MAP assignment in the ACA course, since all of the above indicators cause a reexamination and revision of the MAP.

On May 1, 2015, the QEP Implementation Team hosted a mock review to get outside feedback on the program model. Four peers from western North Carolina came and participated in a four-hour session. The mock review provided needed in-process evaluation to further focus and define what the College wants students to learn. As a result of the mock review, the QEP Implementation Team decided to narrow the assessment of the enhanced ACA course to the MAP assignment.

Table 3 summarizes the program development process.

Table 3: Constituent Involvement in the Program Development Process

| Program Development Event | Constituents Involved | Lessons Learned |
|--|--|---|
| SACSCOC Steering Committee Direction , Spring 2014 | Administration | The Committee affirmed the direction of the recommendations in the literature review. |
| QEP Implementation Team Retreat , Spring 2014 | Faculty, Administration, and Staff | A focus statement was established, and three components of comprehensive educational planning at the College were defined: Mandatory Orientation, Enhanced ACA Curriculum, and Advising. |
| Student Government Association Input , Spring 2014 | Students | Students need more ways to be involved. Assigned faculty advising for AA/AS students is needed. ACA is a good way to give a strong base of knowledge to students. |
| The Patriot’s Aim Strategic Plan Update , Summer and Fall 2014 | Faculty, Board of Trustees, Administration, Staff, and Community Members | A refined strategic target was established to align with the QEP effort. The Patriot’s Aim target reads, “Removing barriers to academic completion through educational planning to ensure that our students are job or transfer ready.” |
| Department, Standing Committees, and Active Campus Councils Presentations , Fall 2014 | Faculty and Staff | Many people were not aware of the North Carolina Community College System Performance Measures for Student Progression and Curriculum Completion. |
| Professional Development Day , Spring 2015 | Faculty, Staff, and Board of Trustees | The Orientation Subcommittee gained confirmation of the content developed. |
| Faculty Survey regarding ACA , Spring 2015 | Faculty | A revision of the current ACA course outline needs to be implemented. |
| Mock Review , May 2015 | Peer Review | The scope of the QEP at this point is too broad and designating Orientation as a supporting action would be wise. |



Conclusion

When deciding to focus on student learning in relationship to the goal-setting and problem-solving skills needed to progress and complete a degree, the College solicited ideas from a wide range of constituents, as seen in Tables 2 and 3. The perceived need for a focus on basic student knowledge early and the need to increase student motivation was confirmed through information-gathering activities, such as the literature review, stakeholder input, and institutional data. (For data reviewed, see Tables 5-7.)

The process was representative, and the decision to focus on comprehensive educational planning toward degree completion was deemed an institutional need by the SACSCOC Steering Committee.

Campus Awareness

Throughout the QEP process, the Marketing Committee ensured that the community was aware of the QEP efforts and purpose. Creative efforts included a 5K run/walk to raise funds for marketing, a logo contest, a pinewood derby using the winning logo's race theme, and a balloon drop during an all-employee meeting. Table 4 provides an overview of the campus awareness efforts. For the complete Marketing Timeline, see Appendix B.

Table 4: Campus Awareness Efforts During the Topic Identification and Program Development Phases

| Program Development Event | Audience(s) |
|---|--|
| Professional Development Day Presentation , Spring 2014 | Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees, Students, and Community Members |
| Grub Day 5K Patriot Run , Fall 2014 | Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees, Students, and Community Members |
| Logo Contest , Fall 2014 | Students |
| QEP Website , Fall 2014 | Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees, Students, and Community Members |
| Start Strong. Finish Stronger. themed Sports Day , Spring 2015 | Faculty, Staff, and Students |
| Educational Planning Day Student Broadcast , Spring 2015 | Students, Faculty, and Staff |
| Two articles published in Digital Courier , Spring 2015 | Community Members |
| Article in Career Focus mailed to 23,000 households | Community Members |



Summary of Quantitative Data Review

Qualitative analysis revealed institutional needs related to students' ability to set academic goals and employ effective problem-solving skills to progress and complete a credential. In addition, quantitative measures were used to make informed decisions. The following items provide a summary of key findings related to gaps in Isothermal's students' ability to progress and complete academic goals:

-  Placed below the state average for both First Year Progression and Curriculum Completion performance measures in 2013 and 2014
-  Third of SSI respondents stated they rarely or never used academic advising services
-  The top reason for women to withdraw from a term is taking on too much
-  Part time students at ICC are more than twice as likely to not complete a degree than full time students
-  The Early Intervention Form (EIF) process is underutilized.
-  For the past two years, an average of 19% of students were ineligible to return due to Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Initially, benchmarked data, including the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) Performance Measures, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), was examined. For details, see Table 5.

In regard to the NCCCS Performance Measures, the Implementation Team expressed a desire not only to exceed the system average for these measures but also to reach the excellence level in both measures by 2020. This aligns with Isothermal's vision statement to be a benchmark for learning and innovation.

Table 5: Benchmarked Measures

| |
|--|
| <p>NCCCS Performance Measures for Student Success, 2013-2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Year Progression, System Excellence Level 74.6% Definition: Percentage of first-time fall credential-seeking students attempting at least twelve hours within their first academic year who successfully complete (“P”, “C” or better) at least twelve of those hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2013, Isothermal CC: 68.5% ○ 2014, Isothermal CC: 67.8% ○ 2015, Isothermal CC: 70.7% • Curriculum Completion, System Excellence Level 45.6% Definition: Percentage of first-time fall credential-seeking students who graduate, transfer, or are still enrolled with 36 hours after six years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2013, Isothermal CC: 39.3% ○ 2014, Isothermal CC: 38.6% ○ 2015, Isothermal CC: 43.6% |
| <p>CCSSE. The College was a CCSSE 2012 Top Performing College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Insights Gained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over a quarter (29%) have talked about their career plans with an instructor or advisor often or very often, but 28% have never done so. ○ Over half (56%) have discussed an idea from their readings or classes with an instructor outside of class at least sometimes, but 45% have never done so. ○ Over two-thirds (69%) have never worked with instructors on activities other than coursework. • Support Area Insights Gain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nearly three-quarters (74%) of students say that their college puts quite a bit or very much emphasis on providing the support they need to help them succeed. ○ Two-fifths (39%) say that their college puts very little emphasis on helping them cope with non-academic responsibilities. ○ Over one-quarter (27%) say that their college puts very little emphasis on providing the support they need to thrive socially. ○ Half (54%) say that their college puts quite a bit or very much emphasis on providing the financial support they need to afford their education, but nearly one-quarter (22%) say their college puts very little emphasis on this service. ○ Over half (60%) of students use academic advising services sometimes or often, and one-third (34%) rarely or never use them. ○ Just over half (51%) of students say they rarely or never use career counseling services. |
| <p>Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Invention (SSI). The College scored above the 2014 Cohort on all benchmarks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The campus is safe and secure for all students. ○ Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. ○ Students are made to feel welcome here. ○ This campus provides online access to services I need. ○ Financial aid counseling is available if I need it. ○ Campus item: Facilities are well-maintained and support learning. ○ Campus item: Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me. • Challenges (Note: The College scored above the comparison group even in these challenge items.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts. ○ Faculty provide timely feedback about my academic progress. ○ There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term. ○ My academic advisor is knowledgeable about transfer requirements of other schools. ○ I receive ongoing feedback about progress toward my academic goals. ○ I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus. |

Later, as the QEP program model developed, institutional measures such as the in-house surveys listed in Table 6 and the institutional data from the Records, Financial Aid, and Learning Support and Retention Offices, listed in Table 7, were considered. The ACA Survey in particular led the Implementation Team to consider the need for a systematic analysis of the course schedule.

Table 6: Campus Student Surveys

| |
|---|
| <p>ACA Survey, 2013-2015 (n=258)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% reported taking ACA in their first semester • The top two reasons for not taking ACA in their first semester were related to scheduling |
| <p>Graduate Survey, 2013-14 (n=182)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% of respondents report remaining in or returning to the workforce • 35% of respondents report transferring to another college • Open comments showed a theme of a need to reduce book costs and have more faculty interactions |
| <p>Withdraw from Term Report, Fall 2014-Spring 2015 (n=894)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, employment is the largest barrier, especially for young men • Taking on too much of a load was a primary reason for women, especially younger • Of students withdrawing for the term, 88% report an intention to return |

The following institutional data was collected and analyzed, while all measures provided a clearer understanding of the types of data available regarding progression and completion. Ultimately, this process led the Educational Planning Subcommittee to develop proactive measures to identify at-risk students: course no shows, Early Intervention Form reports, and first year students receiving financial aid warning letters. In addition, it informed the Implementation Team’s desire to develop SMART goals as a part of the MAP assignment in the student success course.

Table 7: Internal Statistics

| |
|--|
| <p>Academic Alert (Letter to students with a 2.0 or below GPA), Fall 2010-Fall 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average percent of students receiving Academic Alert-14% • Average number of students receiving an Academic Alert letter-337 students |
| <p>Financial Aid Warning Letter (known as Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), Fall 2013-14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average percent SAP ineligible-19% • Average number of ineligible students-252 |
| <p>Enrollment Intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four-semester average shows 60% part time enrollment, Fall 2013-Spring 2015 • National Student Clearinghouse data specifically for Isothermal Community College reports that students with exclusively part time enrollment are significantly less likely to complete a credential. (17.38% PT compared to 45.3% FT). 2008 Cohort. |
| <p>Analysis of Course No Shows, Fall 2012-Spring 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of seats lost due to no-shows was 1,291. • 25% of all the no-shows were in gateway courses, such as English and math. |

Use of Early Intervention Form (EIF)

- EIF was implemented in 2012 and allows instructors to report students who are frequently absent, not turning in work, or failing tests and quizzes in the first six weeks.
- Between 2012 and 2014, the Dean of Learning Support and Retention (LSR) reported the number of EIFs increased from 18 in Fall 2012 to 58 in Fall 2014.

While ICC has successfully implemented a limited early intervention procedure, the current system is manual and has been utilized by only about 13% of instructors (n=40 unique faculty members) in the past three years.

As a result of the work of the QEP Development and Implementation Teams, the College determined that it must develop a systematic process for teaching students how to create and maintain a personal plan for completing their educational goals (MAP). The SSFS implements a systematic process using course no show reports, financial aid warning letters in the first year, and EIFs to identify for intervention those students who stray from their MAP. These efforts are designed to increase learning related to goal-setting and problem-solving.

Desired Student Learning Outcomes

The goals, outcomes, and implementation strategy for the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. (SSFS) Initiative are comprehensive. The SSFS Initiative was developed to address an identified institutional need: for students to use comprehensive educational planning as a means to college completion.

The strategy was formed using broad-based input and decision-making and is grounded in current research. In addition, the SSFS Initiative considers the breadth of a student's experience from orientation to completion: orientation, ACA course, early intervention forms, and a Support Team approach. Last, the implementation strategy involves administration, faculty, staff, and students working together to accomplish the goals.

The SSFS Initiative includes both Desired Student Learning Outcomes (associated with Goal 1) and Desired Learning Environment Outcomes (associated with Goal 2).

Problem Solving (definition) – a skill required in academic goal setting that focuses on identifying barriers to completion and determining solutions/actions to achieve the goals despite known obstacles. The steps to academic goal setting and problem solving require students to demonstrate the ability to: set a realistic, time-bound goal, anticipate barriers to the stated goal, reevaluate those barriers, and then adjust actions or revise the goal. In the Comprehensive Educational Planning model, problem solving skills are developed as a part of the student self-assessment of the MAP assignment in ACA and then addressed one-on-one with at-risk students through the completion of an Action Plan with a Support Team member or an academic advisor. In this model, problem solving is used in the context of educational goal setting through academic planning.

Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning.

The Desired Student Learning Outcomes are as follows:

Goal 1. Empower students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving.

Student Learning Outcome 1. Students enrolled in the enhanced ACA, specifically those pursuing an associate’s degree, will develop a “Master Academic Plan” for completing community college academic goals.

Student Learning Outcome 2. First-time students who receive a no show for a course, a financial aid warning letter in the first year, or an Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral will develop an Action Plan for improving academic progress.

The Desired Learning Environment Outcomes are as follows:

Goal 2. Develop faculty participation in comprehensive educational planning practices

Learning Environment Outcome 1. Increase data collection of students completing the MAP assignment to 98% by Fall 2016.

Learning Environment Outcome 2. Increase to 75% by 2020 the number of instructors who provide complete and timely Early Intervention Forms (EIF) to the Support Team.

Table 8 provides the context for the program outcomes. They are measurable and are directly related to identified institutional challenges and the 2014-16 Strategic Plan. Figure 2 shows the program activities that will accomplish the outcomes.

Table 8: SSFS Outcomes in Relation to Institutional Challenges and Planning

| Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning. | | |
|--|--|--|
| Goal 1. Empower students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving | | |
| Student Learning Outcome | Institutional Challenges | Ties to Institutional Planning |
| 1. Students enrolled in the enhanced ACA, specifically those pursuing an associate’s degree, will develop a Master Academic Plan for completing community college academic goals. | There is not a required assignment in all sections of the ACA related to creating an individualized educational plan. | 2014-16 Strategic Plan Goal One: For our students to be job or transfer ready, the College will focus on educational planning toward degree completion. Goal Two: To remove barriers to college and career success, the College will engage in more active learning strategies. |
| 2. Students who receive a no show for a course, a financial aid warning letter in the first year, or an Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral will develop an Action Plan for improving academic progress. | The 3-year average of no-shows is too high. There were 1,291 lost seats Fall 2012-2015. In Fall 2014, 19% of the previous fall enrollment was ineligible for financial aid due to lack of "Satisfactory Academic Progress." In Fall 2014, only 4.5% of instructors utilized the Early Intervention Form (EIF). | |

| Goal 2. Develop faculty participation in comprehensive educational planning practices. | | |
|--|--|---|
| Learning Environment Outcome | Institutional Challenges | Ties to Institutional Planning |
| 1. Increase data collection of students completing the MAP assignment to 98% by Fall 2016. | <p>The ACA courses did not have consistency in content and, therefore, did not provide needed basic information to students.</p> <p>The ACA curriculum did not align with the components students identified as necessary for orientation.</p> | <p>2014-16 Strategic Plan</p> <p>Goal One: For our students to be job or transfer ready, the College will focus on educational planning toward degree completion.</p> <p>Goal Two: To remove barriers to college and career success, the College will engage in more active learning strategies.</p> <p>Goal Four: To prepare for future opportunities, the College leadership will foster innovation and efficiency.</p> |
| 2. Increase to 75% by 2020 the number of instructors who provide complete and timely Early Intervention Forms (EIF) to the Support Team. | While ICC has successfully implemented a limited early intervention procedure, the current system is manual and has been utilized by only about 13% of instructors (n=40 unique faculty members) in the past three years. | |

As a core element of the QEP, the MAP assignment is embedded into the ACA course curriculum. The aim of this assignment is to teach goal setting and problem solving skills. The SLOs are achieved through this assignment but are also reinforced for at-risk students in the creation of an Action Plan during one-on-one interactions with a Support Team member or academic advisor.

Description of the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Program Model

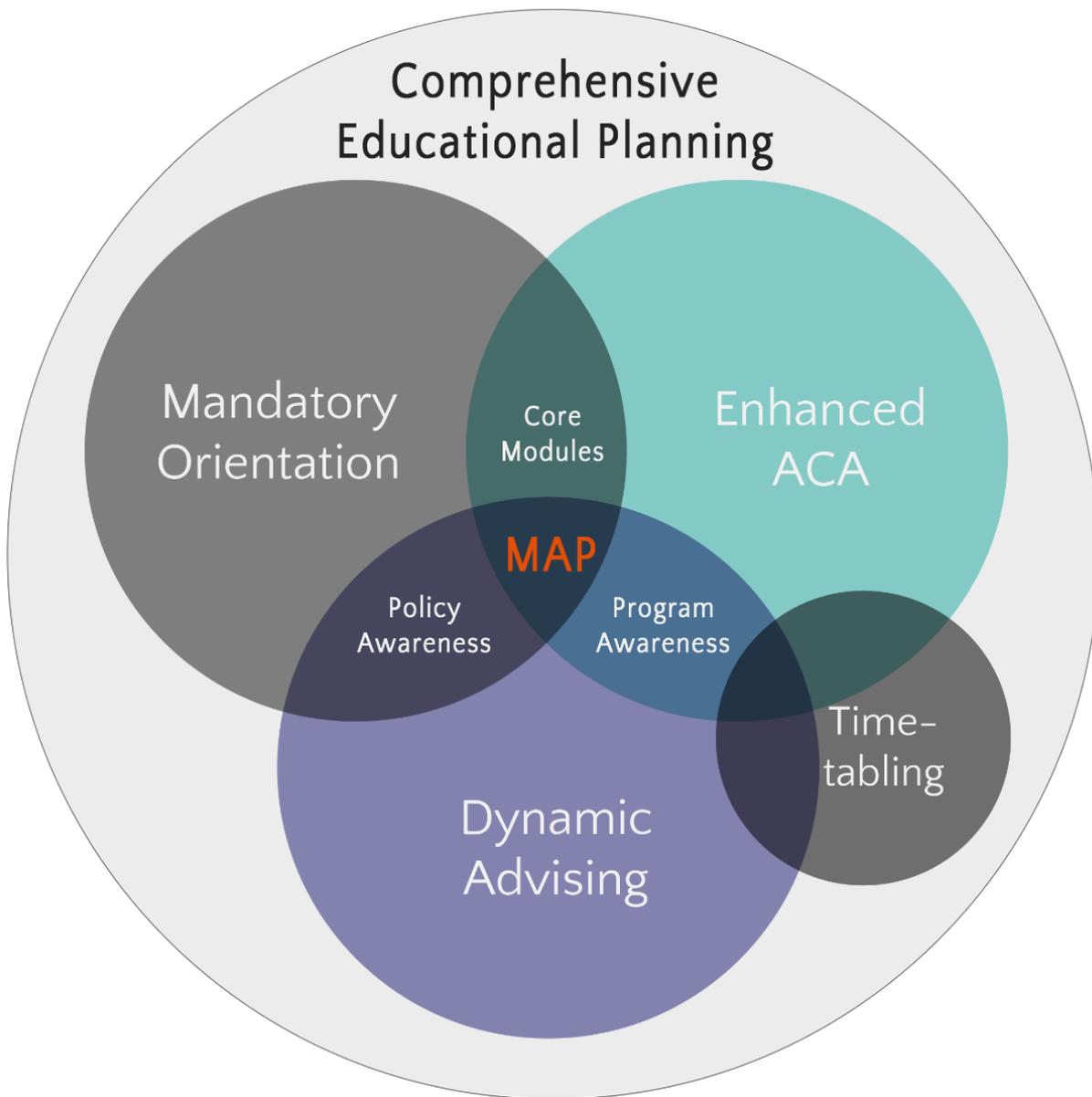
The SSFS initiative implementation strategy focuses on empowering students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving. To accomplish this, the College outlined a comprehensive educational planning model that includes the following components:

- Mandatory orientation, both face-to-face and online delivery
- Enhanced ACA course taken within the first two semesters
- Dynamic advising in which a Support Team of faculty and staff will work with instructors to increase the use of the Early Intervention Form (EIF), and Support Team members will also work with academic advisors to assist students who fall behind to make adjustments to their educational plans
- Timetabling, a programmed analysis of the course schedule to identify course conflicts

The core aspect of the model is a student's MAP, Master Academic Plan. Students will complete the MAP assignment as part of ACA. This common assignment asks students to (1) identify academic goals, (2) understand program course requirements, (3) assess how long it will take to reach the goal, and (4) self-assess their MAPs. (See Appendix C: MAP assignment.) Many students can maintain such a plan. However, for students who are at risk of being diverted from their MAPs by no shows, first-year financial aid warning letters, or EIFs, dynamic advising will provide support to adjust their academic goals and support problem solving. Figure 2 provides a Venn diagram showing the components and relationship of the components of the SSFS Initiative. Each component is further described in this section.



Figure 2: Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Program Model



Circles in grey represent supporting actions.

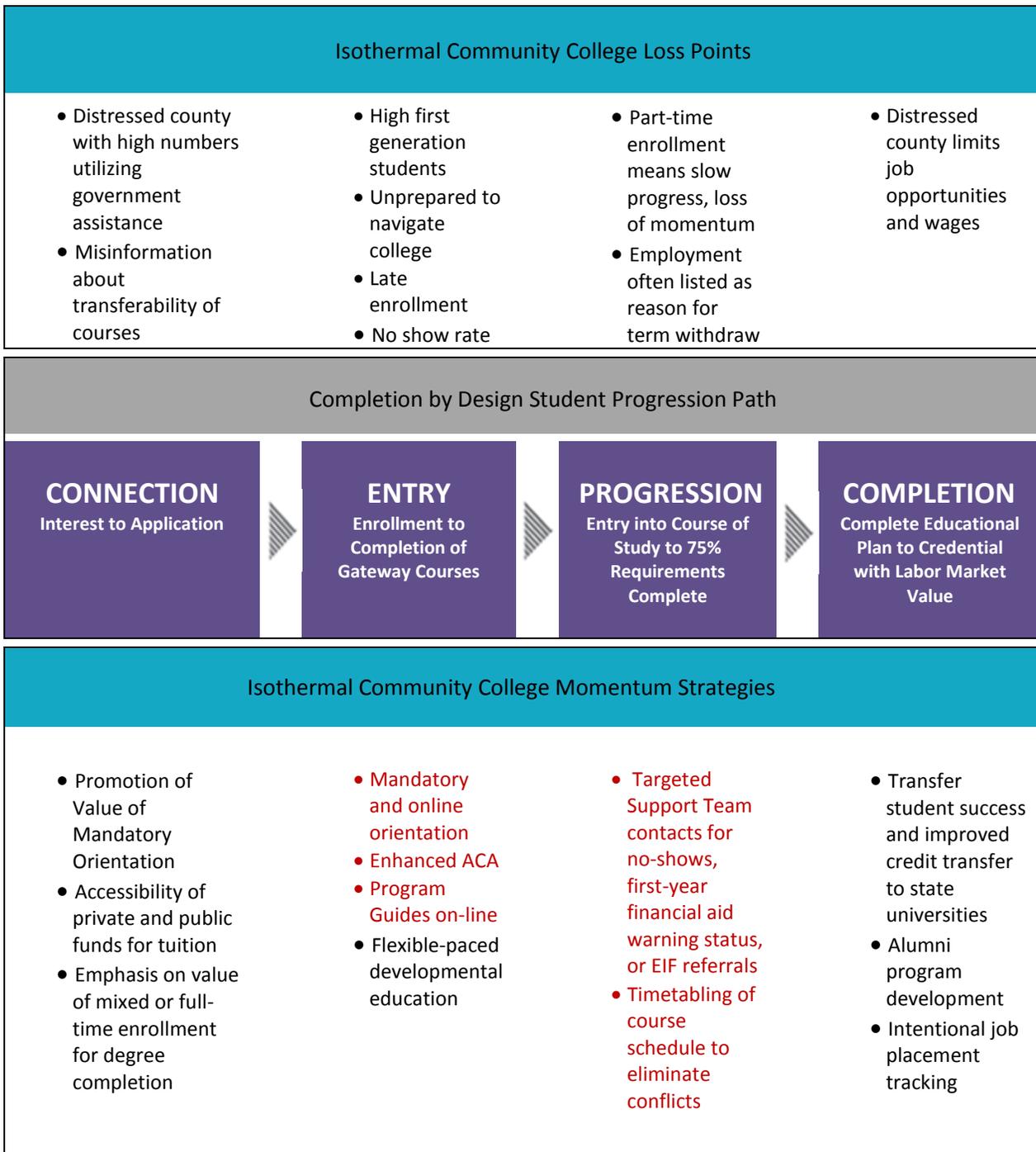
The program will target (1) all students enrolled in the enhanced ACA course, which will be required in the first two semesters, and (2) first-time college students entering the College in the fall semester who exhibit at-risk behaviors for additional problem-solving skill support. A first-time college student is defined as a credential-seeking full or part-time student who has never been to college after receiving high school credentials, or who has not attended a post-secondary institution within the last five years.

With this front door emphasis, these students will receive critical information related to student success during the orientation process at the beginning of their academic career. This will be reinforced throughout a semester-long ACA course, and at each meeting with their academic advisor.

The SSFS comprehensive educational planning model is based upon well-known national initiatives including the “Completion by Design” initiative sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Center for Community College Student Engagement’s (CCSSE) “A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways” (2013 and 2014).

Completion by Design has been adopted by many states and is reflected in North Carolina’s SuccessNC initiative (www.successnc.org). Following the model, there are four major steps through a completion pathway for students. They are (1) connection, (2) entry, (3) progress, and (4) completion. A visual of Isothermal’s context using the Completion by Design framework can be seen in Figure 3 below; the SSFS initiative components to be implemented are shown in red.

Figure 3: Isothermal Community College Context and QEP in the Completion by Design Model



**Items in red are included in the SSFS Initiative

In addition to Completion by Design, CCSSE’s “A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways” (2014) highlights several high-impact practices designed to increase student engagement from which the College initiatives secure much of their supporting data. Practices that would most impact students at the entry point of college

are academic goal setting and planning, including orientation, student success course enrollment, and success-oriented advising. These high-impact practices are a part of the SSFS program model. They have been documented to be successful at similar institutions in increasing persistence as well as course completion.

The SSFS Program Model's central element, an aspect included in each component, is the MAP assignment. The MAP assignment is introduced during orientation to emphasize its importance and point out that it is a part of the ACA course. The ACA course has been enhanced overall, but particularly focuses on teaching students goal-setting and problem solving skills related to academic success. Dynamic advising then focuses on helping students who are at-risk for low student success to develop an Action Plan to overcome barriers, which may include revising the student's MAP. The MAP becomes a thread of discussion between the student and college personnel in all aspects of the program model.

Mandatory Orientation. The College will make orientation mandatory. This is the initial step in the comprehensive educational planning system and supports the overall SSFS Initiative Goals. The College is currently providing a face-to-face orientation, and an online format will begin in Fall 2016.

The flexibility of delivery method will allow all students to gain vital college knowledge prior to the beginning of their first semester. All students will have access to the online component so that it can be used as a refresher during advising sessions or on-demand by a student after completing orientation. Topics included in orientation will be advising and academic planning; maintaining financial aid eligibility; navigating campus resources; utilizing technology tools; and student activities and campus engagement.

The MAP assignment will be introduced during orientation as a part of the advising and academic planning module.

Early Registration in a Student Success Course. Requiring students to be enrolled in a student success/first-year experience course within the first two semesters is another strategy the College will implement. Students' advisors will be required to register students for this course in the first semester, if there are no schedule conflicts.

This course will serve as a continuation of the orientation and initial advising content, and extend the learning for students through the first semester to build a solid foundation of college knowledge that will carry them through the remainder of their time at the College. A student success course, referred to as ACA at the College, will give students regular contact with an instructor and other students to connect with and rely on for support.

Early registration in ACA ensures that students will complete the MAP assignment early in their college experience and begin setting specific, time-bound academic goals that are achievable.

Master Academic Planning (MAP). The College's ACA survey and SSI data show that students desire greater faculty interaction with advising and more time spent on making academic and career goals and plans. (See Tables 5 and 6.) The SSFS model embeds academic goal setting in the ACA curriculum and allows professional or academic advisors to revisit the MAP if a student shows indications of diverting from his or her MAP.

In Fall 2015, the Educational Planning Subcommittee determined key elements of a student educational plan, including time-bound, measurable goal setting (SMART) and a way to document goals for the student. The Subcommittee also identified a need for general time-bound, program-level plans, later called Program Guides.

The MAP assignment was developed in the spring and summer of 2015. It will be implemented in the pilot this fall and spring. The final version of the MAP assignment will be created after receiving feedback from ACA pilot students and instructors and will be implemented in all ACA courses in Fall 2016.

For the pilot, the assignment will be given in the first quarter of the semester. During the second half of the semester, students will be asked to review their MAPs and identify potential barriers to completing their stated goal. The parts of the MAP assignment are as follows: (1) identify academic goals, (2) understand program course requirements, (3) assess how long it will take to reach the goal, and (4) self-assess the MAP. (See Appendix C: MAP assignment.)

In order to prepare the learning environment for the ACA pilot, in the spring of 2015, all Lead Instructors created, or formalized, Program Guides for publication in the 2015-16 College Catalog. They are described in the Catalog as follows:

The following Program Guides are designed to assist students in educational planning by identifying pathways and enrolling in the correct sequence of courses for completing degrees, diplomas, or certificates in a timely manner. Students may “Start Strong. Finish Stronger” by establishing a Master Academic Plan (MAP), working with their advisors to stay on track, completing their programs of study in the most efficient way possible, and situating themselves for the achievement of their future educational and career goals. A Master Academic Plan (MAP) will be completed as a part of the college student success course (ACA 115 or 122) or by working with an advisor. (p. 148)

Each aspect of the SSFS model contributes to creating and maintaining a MAP. This evidence of student goal setting and problem solving is the key component of the model. To fully implement the MAP assignment in all ACA sections, the ACA Coordinator will work with the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee to train all ACA instructors in the use of this core assignment.

Dynamic Advising. Some students will stray from the Master Academic Plan (MAP). The College plans to intervene with these students through the use of a Support Team.

Through the review of institutional data, the College has identified three indicators that will flag a student for proactive advising strategies, such as action planning sessions focused on achieving academic goals and problem solving. The three indicators are as follows:

- Receiving a “no show” (NS) course status, indicating a failure to attend the first 10 percent of class and loss of the seat
- Receiving a financial aid warning letter in the first year
- Being referred for early intervention by an instructor, using an Early Intervention Form (EIF)

A Support Team will be formed to handle workflows related to students receiving course no shows, first-year financial aid warning letters, or EIFs. It will include a representative from the following areas: each academic department, Financial Aid, and Learning Support and Retention.

Each referral is reviewed by a Support Team member. Each student is contacted individually, and the referring faculty member is notified that a referral was received and is being acted upon. Each referral is assessed individually, and each response is customized to address the specific concerns about and needs of the student and will include the creation of an Action Plan. Typical Action Plans may include any combination of the following:

- Meeting with an educational advisor for program planning or testing
- Identifying an appropriate tutor
- Connecting the student with a peer mentor
- Arranging for a counseling appointment to address career or personal counseling issues
- Meeting with a financial aid advisor for emergency financial assistance or financial planning

It is critical to address barriers that prevent students from completing their goals at the beginning of their college experience, before being diverted from their MAP goal. Therefore, academic and professional advisors will intervene with students and engaging in a problem-solving strategy involving the completion of an Action Plan and potentially a revision of the student's MAP.

As a result, the College will implement regular face-to-face and online training for full and part time faculty to increase the number of accurate and timely EIF referrals and knowledge of educational planning.

Timetabling. The topic discovery process revealed that Isothermal students reported the top reason for not taking ACA in the first semester was schedule conflicts. When a review of the student success course offerings for the Fall 2014 semester was done it showed that multiple sections were offered at the same time. This raised larger questions about the potential of course conflicts presenting a barrier to students following their MAP. As a result, a faculty member used an open source schedule timetabling application called UniTime to analyze the Fall 2015 schedule. This process has just begun and is being viewed as a supporting action to the QEP outcomes.

As Program Guides are being widely distributed and MAPs begin to be adopted, it is an institutional priority to ensure that the course schedule does not pose a significant barrier to the accomplishment of a student's MAP.

Early Intervention Form (EIF) (*definition*) - A web-based form used by faculty to refer students to the Support Team for intervention. Risk factors may include: being inattentive or sleeping in class; struggling with course content to the point of failing tests and assignments; attending class without required materials, textbooks, or assignments; and frequently missing class.

Faculty members can provide additional details and are asked to indicate whether they informed the student of the referral before submitting it.

EIFs are received in a dedicated account that is managed and accessed by the Support Team members.



To implement the SSFS model, the College also has set goals to develop and support faculty, advisors, and staff in order to employ comprehensive educational planning practices, including training for ACA instructors and both faculty and staff for the early intervention system and overall educational planning processes. The goal is that this employee training will create improved instructional methods (in ACA surrounding the MAP assignment) and improved behavioral supports (through Dynamic Advising which includes Action Plans and the EIF system).

To ensure program effectiveness, the SSFS model involves all constituents. See Table 9 below.

Table 9: Constituent Involvement in Program Implementation

| Program Component | Constituent Group |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Mandatory Orientation | Faculty, Staff, and Students |
| Early Registration in a Student Success Course | Faculty, Staff, and Administration |
| Master Academic Planning (MAP) | Faculty and Students |
| Dynamic Advising, including Early Intervention Forms (EIF) | Faculty, Staff, and Students |
| Timetabling | Faculty and Administration |

Conclusion

The College has embedded the MAP process in each component of the SSFS model to help its students “start strong” and “finish stronger,” ensuring that they are able to achieve their goals and that the College is successful at creating a learning environment that promotes student progression and completion.

Literature Review and Best Practices

Introduction

State and National programs such as Completion by Design, Achieving the Dream, and SuccessNC are leading to an increased emphasis on student completion driven in part by President Obama’s 2020 goal to increase degree attainment from 40% to 60% (Department of Education, 2011). As a result, community colleges must adopt policies that continue to foster student success and promote retention while ensuring both quality education and availability of services.

Completion: The National Picture

Community colleges educate 36% of the undergraduate students in the United States (Shapiro, Dundar, Ziskin, Yuan, & Harrell; 2013). While enrollment has increased nationwide over the past 15 years, completion rates have decreased. In 1999, 23% of community college students earned a credential within three years. In 2005, only 21% earned a credential within three years (Nodine, Venezia, and Bracco, 2011). More recently, a National Student Clearinghouse report indicated that within six years of enrolling in community college only 26.5% of students completed a degree, diploma, or certificate from the initial institution.

Altogether only 39.9% of students who began at a community college completed any credential from either another two-year institution or a four-year institution after six years from initial enrollment (Shapiro et al.,

2013). In 2009, President Barack Obama issued a national challenge to increase student completion rates to 60% by 2020 (Department of Education, 2011). Achieving the Dream and Completion by Design programs have emerged as the leading theoretical frameworks to help community colleges design and implement improvement efforts to increase student success and completion.

Many studies have been conducted to identify barriers to student success at community colleges. Rath, Rock, and Laferriere (2013) have written about five primary categories related to the SSFS Initiative: inadequate academic preparation, remedial education, student financial aid, lack of non-academic skills, and competing obligations.

Inadequate Academic Preparation

According to Venezia and Kirst (2005), 70% of high school graduates attend some form of post-secondary institution within two years of graduating from high school. Unfortunately, their study found that only about a quarter of students are in a college preparatory curriculum while in high school, leading to significant gaps in academic preparation for college courses. Parker (2012) also notes that secondary school leaders and college leaders rarely meet to discuss ways to align curricula.

Additionally, many community college students are adults coming to school for the first time in many years due to economic factors. Delaying enrollment has been shown to have a negative correlation with student persistence as gaps in enrollment further magnify issues of academic preparation (McKinney & Novak, 2012).

Lack of Non-academic Skills

Community colleges typically enroll high numbers of first generation college students, low-income students, and academically disadvantaged students. All of these factors lead to many community college students lacking non-academic skills or college knowledge about how the institution works, what is expected of them, and how to begin to navigate the process (Rath et al., 2013; Karp, 2011; Cho & Karp, 2013; McKinney & Novak, 2012; Venezia & Kirst, 2005; CCSSE, 2012). Often, students who attend community college decide late that they will enroll and have little information about how to proceed. They are often unprepared for the academic expectations and do not know how to study for classes or how to manage their time. (Gandara, Alvarado, Driscoll, & Orfield, 2012).

Orientation programs and student success courses can help students begin to navigate the college experience and build college knowledge. Yet, CCSSE found that while 97% of colleges offer some form of orientation, only about 60% of students participate (2013). Rath et al. (2013) found that only 38% of colleges had instituted mandatory orientation. Another critical component to building non-academic skills lies in the area of advising and academic planning.

Many community college students do not know how to sequence their classes to move through a program and need support of advisors to build those skills and stay on course. Studies have found that students do not take adequate advantage of these resources. CCSSE (2013) found that faculty members referred students to advising and planning services 75% of the time; yet students were using advising and planning services only 54% of the time. Associate of Arts and Science students need even more support to clarify career goals and academic goals (Tinto, 2012).

Competing Obligations

For students in a traditional university setting, their role as student is generally their primary role. For community college students, however, that is rarely the case. Community college students have many other

obligations. Fifty-nine percent of them are attending college part time; 19% of full time students and 42% of part time students are working 30 or more hours per week while going to school; 29% of full time and 37% of part time students are caring for dependents; and 13% of full time and 40% of part time students are taking classes only on the weekends or evenings (CCSSE, 2012). Part time enrollment has also been found to have a negative correlation with student persistence (McKinney & Novak, 2012). In addition, Rath et al. (2013) found that 6 out of 10 students who left college were paying for college themselves and were forced to leave due to family financial obligations.

Another challenge many students face is inadequate emotional support from their families. This can create barriers for the students in staying engaged with the college from entry to completion. To combat these issues, students must be made aware of available supports to help them financially and emotionally as they struggle to accomplish their goals. Early, continuous, and consistent contact and solid personal relationships with faculty and staff are instrumental in student persistence (Drake, 2011).

Each of the aforementioned barriers contributes to low completion rates on many scales. Not only is completion in the national spotlight, but it is also becoming part of state community college funding formulas. This change in funding is critical for small, rural institutions that have minimal local revenue and rely primarily on state funding. It will also force local institutions to identify barriers and provide increased student support so that they can remain competitive.

The North Carolina Community College Completion Dilemma

North Carolina community colleges are experiencing the strain of inadequate student completion rates much like schools across the nation. In 2010, the curriculum completion rate as calculated by the North Carolina Community College System's Performance Measures for Student Success was 39% across the 58 community colleges in the system (NCCCS, 2014).

NCCCS defines completion as the number of students who (1) achieve credentials, (2) transfer to a four-year institution, or (3) remain continuously enrolled six years after beginning a program at a North Carolina community college. First year progression is a benchmark indicator that NCCCS uses to project student completion. NCCCS defines successful first year progression as the number of first-year students who complete 12 credit hours within their first academic year: fall, spring, summer (NCCCS, 2014). The system average for student progression in 2010 was only 68% (NCCCS, 2014).

In Fall 2010, the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges, working in association with leaders from the North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents and the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees, endorsed a significant planning initiative, SuccessNC, to foster guiding goals that would positively impact student success. The goals of SuccessNC are to (1) facilitate the sharing of best practices, (2) initiate statewide policies to foster student success while removing those that inhibit student success, and (3) develop new performance-based student success measures between 2010 and 2013.

According to the NCCCS, SuccessNC's guiding goals were established to focus on bringing more college-ready students into high-quality educational and workforce training programs that will allow them to be well prepared for the post-recession economy as employees or entrepreneurs. These goals were developed as part of the System Office's strategic planning initiative with input from state board members, community college presidents, trustees, faculty, staff, and System Office leadership. They are:

Improve Student Success: Increase the number of students leaving with a job-ready credential that can lead to becoming a successful employee or employer in a global economy and provide for better skills, better jobs, better pay, and continued educational attainment.

Increase Student Access: Develop policies and practices that provide increased opportunities for students to enter into and proceed successfully through post-secondary education and training programs.

Ensure Program Excellence: Examine and continually improve rigor, relevance and quality in all academic and training opportunities to ensure that successful completion equates to a competitive position in the workforce or in the attainment of higher educational goals.

As part of the statewide Performance Measures for Student Success, NCCCS established a target to increase student completion rates from a state-wide average of 40% for the fall 2004 cohort to 59% for the fall 2014 cohort (www.successnc.org). Doing so will bring North Carolina closer to meeting President Obama's 2020 completion challenge.

To help move North Carolina community colleges forward, NCCCS has established intermediate target goals for curriculum completion and first-year progression. The System Excellence Level for curriculum completion has been set at 45.6%, and the first-year progression Excellence Level has been set at 74.6%. These goals were set at one standard deviation above the System mean and will be reassessed for the 2016 report to establish new goals (NCCCS, 2014).

Isothermal Community College: Historical Perspectives of Student Success

Completion rates as defined by NCCCS through annual Performance Measures of Student Success Reports at the College for 2014 are 38.6%, which is below the System average of 43% and the goal of 45.6% (NCCCS, 2014). The College's completion rate has averaged 38.1% over the past five years, ranging from 35% to 41%. The College's first-year progression rate for 2014 is 67.8%, which is slightly below the System average of 68.3% and well below the System goal of 74.6%. Over the past five years, the first-year progression rate at the College has ranged from 71% to 65% with an average of 68.4%.

Internally, the College monitors student retention as another indicator of student progression toward completion. Since 2010, the fall-to-spring retention rate has decreased from 78% to 67% and the fall-to-fall retention rate has decreased from 47% to 43%, which parallels the patterns demonstrated in the NCCCS Performance Measures report (Unpublished raw data, 2013 & 2014).

Even more disconcerting is that Isothermal lags behind or is on par with several neighboring colleges in the completion and first-year progression measures for student success. Several schools have made substantial progress toward improving their performance measures between the 2013 and 2014 report while Isothermal has remained at near identical performance levels.

As neighboring schools become more and more competitive in recruiting students from surrounding areas, and students become more savvy consumers in comparing their options for post-secondary education, it is critical for the College to make progress toward improving student success to attract and retain students.

Conceptual Framework

The Completion by Design initiative sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been adopted by many states and is reflected in North Carolina's SuccessNC initiative (Nodine, Venezia, & Bracco, 2011; www.successnc.org). The four key objectives of the initiative are to (1) raise completion rates for large numbers of students, (2) contain costs, (3) maintain open access, and (4) ensure quality.

To achieve these objectives, Completion by Design advocates for the development of completion pathways for students that integrate institutional policies, practices, and programs designed to maximize student progress at each step of the process (Nodine et al., 2011).

The design elements of Completion by Design can be seen in many models of improvement found in the literature, including Achieving the Dream. While Completion by Design has been formally adopted by NCCCS to guide system-wide improvement efforts, there are community colleges within North Carolina that are also participating in Achieving the Dream, including Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Central Piedmont Community College, Guildford Technical Community College, and Gaston College (“Achieving the Dream,” 2012). Both models are capable of working hand in hand with each other to have the greatest effect upon student success. The proposed improvement plan for Isothermal Community College most closely aligns with the Completion by Design initiative.

The literature provides evidence that it is critical to address barriers that prevent students from completing their goals at the beginning of their college experience. Getting started on the right foot with strong supports to build “college knowledge;” engage with peers, mentors, and advisors; and develop clear academic and life plans will help students to be more successful.

All first-time enrollees should initially be targeted for additional supports to build college knowledge from the beginning and start to develop strong connections and skills to navigate through the entire college environment. These students need career counseling and advising from the start to assure they have clear, long-term academic plans to achieve their ultimate career goal and to determine if they are truly in the right program of study (Tinto, 2012).

In line with these findings, CCSSE research supports the following aspects of the SSFS program model:

Mandatory Orientation. Students who participate in any orientation (online or face-to-face) are 1.30 times more likely to persist fall-to-spring and 1.24 times more likely to persist fall-to-fall than students who do not report attending orientation (CCSSE, 2014). The literature provides evidence that it is critical to address barriers that prevent students from completing their goals at the beginning of their college experience. Getting started on the right foot with strong supports to build “college knowledge;” engage with peers, mentors, and advisors; and develop clear academic and life plans will help students be more successful.

Early Registration in a Student Success Course. Students who report participating in a student success course are 1.71 times more likely to persist fall-to-spring and 1.49 times more likely to persist fall-to-fall than students who do not report attending a student success course within their first academic term (CCSSE, 2014).

Master Academic Planning (MAP). Students who report that an advisor helped them with their academic goals setting before the end of their first academic term are at least 1.45 times more likely to complete a gatekeeper English or mathematics course than students who do not report receiving such assistance (CCSSE, 2013).

Dynamic Advising. Research shows students who report someone at their college contacted them if they were struggling academically were 1.67 times more likely to complete a developmental English course than were students who were not contacted through an early intervention procedure (CCSSE, 2013).

Early Intervention Form (EIF). Morehead State University conducted a pilot study to determine if contacting students who display a pattern of excessive absenteeism through an early alert referral system would impact student grades. Hudson (2006) reports that “contacted students were surprised to learn that their attendance was being monitored and were amazed someone cared enough to contact them” (p. 225). Bourdon and Carducci (2002) report that students involved in their early intervention program were more likely to complete the course for which they were referred and maintained higher levels of continuous enrollment than their peers not involved in the program.

Summary of Models

- In CCSSE’s 2013 second installment of “A Matter of Degrees,” several high-impact practices designed to increase student engagement were highlighted. Those that would most impact students at the entry point of college are academic goal setting and planning, including intrusive advising, orientation, fast-track developmental education, first year experience, and student success course enrollment (CCSSE, 2013).
- ACT’s 2010 article, “What Works in Student Retention,” highlighted a four-pronged approach including:
 1. Require first-time students to attend orientation, with online orientation programs available
 2. Require students to take a college success course
 3. Provide greater financial aid awareness
 4. Use proactive intrusive academic, personal, and career advising and counseling
- Valencia Community College implemented LifeMap in their efforts to increase success by focusing on the front door of the college (Shugart & Romano, 2006). Through LifeMap, Valencia established five primary goals:
 1. Use a developmental advising model that promotes social and academic integration
 2. Develop student planning and goal setting
 3. Create normative expectation that students have life, career, and academic goals
 4. Establish a digital system to develop and document these goals
 5. Document the achievement of goals

Three years after implementing their LifeMap initiative, Valencia’s graduation or transfer rate increased to 51% compared to 39% for the national average (Adam, 2012). To achieve these goals they instituted several changes including:

1. Set application deadlines and enforced them
 2. Assessed, advised, and oriented students before class
 3. Students needing additional support attended the Bridges to Success program
 4. Flex start classes were created
 5. Student coaches were paid a stipend to repeat a course as a Supplemental Instructor to help students be successful in more difficult courses
- Century College in Minnesota created a similar program in 2006 named GPS LifePlan (Century College, GPS Plan, 2008). GPS LifePlan is a holistic program designed to help students plan for their futures and features five areas of development:
 1. Career
 2. Education
 3. Finance
 4. Leadership

5. Personal

In each area, students are encouraged to take assessments, set goals, and create plans. The program contains three components:

1. The GPS Website
 2. eFolio (student-owned virtual portfolio)
 3. Campus workshops and events
- El Paso Community College followed the design principles of Achieving the Dream to implement several initiatives aimed at boosting student success. These initiatives centered around two goals:
 1. To help prospective students improve their readiness for college to reduce or eliminate developmental courses.
 2. To reduce the time required to complete developmental coursework

To achieve these goals, EPCC began collaborating with area high schools to improve student knowledge of the placement test and to test them while in high school. Students were then given interventions to refresh skills while still in high school and were retested after the interventions. Students still needing developmental courses were allowed to enroll in a summer bridge program (Kerrigan & Slater, 2010). College ready student test scores rose from 30% to 35%. Students placing in the lowest level of developmental decreased from 31% to 22% (2010).

- Proactive Advising or Coaching Models: Proactive advising, formally known as intrusive advising, builds structures that include intervention strategies for students who might not otherwise seek help (NACADA, 2013). The proactive advising and coaching models generally employ the use of professional, full-time advisors/coaches who are trained by department faculty for specific programs and who can fully interact with faculty advisors to enhance advising for students.
 1. Completion Agenda: A Call to Action advocates that completion must be imbedded into the fabric of the institution by focusing on rigor, relevance, and relationships. Student engagement can be improved through communication such as telephone calls, emails to students, and utilization of student groups to foster engagement through peer support (McPhail, 2011).
 2. Zane State College introduced proactive advising to boost retention for underprepared, at-risk students. Students who were contacted and successfully completed the first year had a 90% chance of graduating within three years. The completion rate for developmental English courses rose from 44% to 67%, and the rate for developmental math completion rose from 14% to 35% after implementing the advising model (CCSSE, 2013).
- The University of South Carolina implemented a proactive advising model centered around coaching students toward academic success and engagement on campus. In the two-pronged framework, coaches helped students develop academic plans focusing on self-assessment, reflection, and goal setting. Engagement plans focused on assessment of current involvement on campus, mind-mapping techniques, and learning outcomes to help them identify opportunities and resources to get connected on campus. Assessment of the model indicated that 92% of students who used the coaching center improved their GPA and demonstrated academic improvement. In addition, 40% fewer students were suspended than predicted (Robinson & Gahagan, 2010).

Actions to be Implemented

To fully implement improvements, the College will employ the following methods:

- Form a committee to oversee the evaluation and planning processes of the program. The committee will be called the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. (SSFS) Committee. For committee structure and membership, see the “Organizational Structure” section.
- Seek approval from the Academic and Student Learning Council (ASLC) to make orientation mandatory starting Fall 2016 and require completion of ACA in the first two semesters starting Fall 2016.
- Form a Support Team comprised of representatives from each academic department, Financial Aid, and Learning Support and Retention.
- In 2015-16, utilize the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee to evaluate the pilot of the enhanced curriculum and recommend improvements.
- Expand faculty training on educational planning to include more time and training specifically related to educational planning, early intervention reporting, and the role of the Support Team.
- Utilize the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee to create faculty development activities for implementing the enhanced ACA course curriculum, particularly the educational planning module.
- Utilize the Academic and Student Learning Council (ASLC) to develop and carry out methods to increase the utilization of Early Intervention Forms.

The personnel needed to implement new practices and improvements will be supported by institutional resources in the following ways:

- The LSR Director will oversee the development of the Dynamic Advising.
- The College is contributing staff and faculty time to establish the Support Team
- The Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation will coordinate annual assessment reporting and oversee the evaluation plan.
- The ACA Coordinator position has been filled by a current full-time faculty member who will reduce his course load to take on new duties and responsibilities.
- A current faculty member who set up the initial timetabling program through a supplemental contract will receive a three-credit course reassignment to maintain the UniTime application to streamline course scheduling and advising.

The new practices and improvements developed during the project will be sustained in the following ways:

- Mandatory orientation curriculum is developed; assessment will be ongoing; development and maintenance costs are included in the QEP budget.
- The enhanced ACA curriculum will be maintained by the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee and the ACA Coordinator.
- Faculty development will ensure current faculty and advisors are trained in new practices; ongoing training will be provided by college professional development resources, such as professional development committees which will incorporate training into new employee trainings and future professional development activities.
- To obtain early intervention software, the College has partnered with Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) to seek a grant for additional funding for software and a Success Coach. Partnering with peer institutions will reduce costs, reduce duplication of effort, leverage shared resources, and

increase collaboration within the NCCCS network. Grant notification is October 2015 and is not included in the QEP budget.

Conclusion

The literature helped inform the QEP committees about best practices that would most impact students at the entry point of college. This broader understanding, in conjunction with the qualitative and quantitative data gathered, led to the development of the SSFS program model focused on empowering Isothermal Community College students to set academic goals early and develop problem solving skills to achieve their stated goals.

See Appendix E for Sources.

Timeline

The SSFS Initiative has followed and is expected to follow the major milestones listed below in Figure 4, which shows 2015-16 (Year Zero) activities with grey shading and the Five-Year Milestones with blue shading. It demonstrates that the program components will be phased in logically and that all components will be in operation in the 2016-17 academic year.



Figure 4 SSFS Milestones

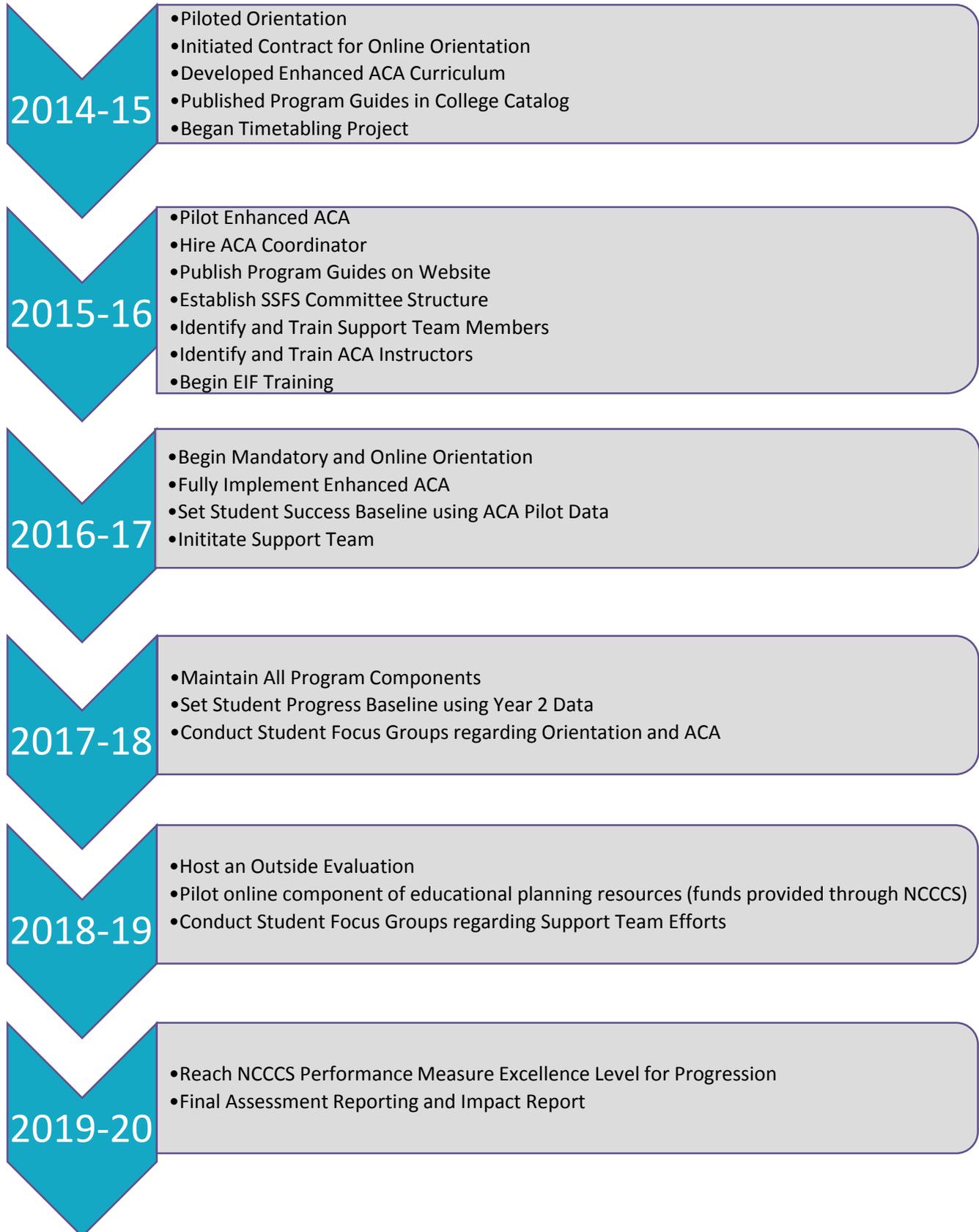


Table 10 describes the implementation strategy developed for the project and how each strategy relates to the project goals. It demonstrates that the timeframe for carrying out the project is realistic and its goals and outcomes are likely to achieve the expected results.

Table 10: Detailed Implementation Strategies

| Strategy | Goal | When | Who | How | Expected Results |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Year One: 2015-2016 | | | | | |
| Pilot enhanced student success course (ACA) curriculum | 1 | Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters | Student Success Course (ACA) Coordinator | Registration policies; institutional processes for data collection | Students enrolled in course will create MAPs and provide input for course development |
| Hire ACA Coordinator | 1, 2 | Fall 2015 | Executive VP | ICC HR policies | ICC faculty issued new workload |
| Conduct timetabling of Spring 2016 course schedule | Support | Oct 2015 | Director of Inst. Assessment and UniTime Programmer | UniTime system | Ensure that course conflicts do not pose barriers to completion |
| Further develop assessment methods and tools | 1, 2 | Oct-Dec 2015 | Director of Inst. Assessment, Director of LSR, and ACA Coordinator | Consensus | Assessment tools finalized |
| Hold EIF workshop for all advisors | 2 | Nov 2015 | Director of LSR and staff | Attendance | Faculty advisors trained on EIF strategies |
| Begin Start Strong. Finish Stronger. (SSFS) Committee structure | 1, 2, and Support | Nov 2015 | Director of Inst. Assessment and Faculty Co-chair | College Council approval; Add committee to policy manual | Establish institutional structure for collaboration and accountability |
| Launch Program Guides on website | 1 | Nov 2015 | Webmaster | Plans submitted by lead instructors and approved by deans | Online access to program-level educational plans |
| Complete ACA Instructor's Manual | 1, 2 | Dec 2015 | ACA Coordinator | Meetings with Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee | Standardize practices |



| Strategy | Goal | When | Who | How | Expected Results |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|---|---|
| Develop online orientation video | Support | Jan 2016-Aug 2016 | Director of Enrollment Management and the Orientation Subcommittee | Work with vendor, IT, and Communication departments. | Develop online orientation video to facilitate mandatory orientation component. |
| Run non-mandatory, face-to-face spring orientation | Support | Jan 2016 | Director of Enrollment Management and the Orientation Subcommittee | Orientation sessions held a.m. and p.m. | New students understand college context, including the MAP assignment. |
| Identify Support Team faculty members | 1 | Jan 2016-May 2016 | SSFS Committee | Meetings and dean approvals | Recruit a faculty member from each division |
| Recruit and train ACA instructors | 2 | Mar 2016 | ACA Coordinator | Training sessions | Instructors trained to support educational planning goals |
| Establish policies for mandatory orientation and requirement for ACA in first two semesters | 1 and Support | Nov 2015 Mar 2016 | SSFS Committee | Approval from College Council or appropriate committees | Policies in place to enforce student success procedures |
| Training for Support Team members, targeted academic faculty, and deans | 1 | Apr 2016-May 2016 | SSFS Committee | Training schedule created | SSFS staff and stakeholders trained to support project and track results |
| Attend FYE (First Year Experience) Seminar | 1, 2, and Support | Apr 2016-Jul 2016 | SSFS Committee | Registration and attendance | Learn best practices |
| Hold Educational Planning Workshop for faculty advisors | 2 | Feb 2016-May 2016 | Advising Coordinator and Educational Planning Subcommittee | Attendance | Faculty advisors trained to support EIF and Support Team strategies |



| Strategy | Goal | When | Who | How | Expected Results |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Assessment | 1, 2, and Support | June 2016- Aug 2016 | SSFS Committee | Review outcomes and results, determine strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendation | Revise and improve SSFS for next year |
| Develop training for intervention software, if funded | 2 | July 2016- Sept 2016 | Director of LSR, Advising Coordinator, and Educational Planning Subcommittee | Develop print and online resources | Faculty, including part-time, empowered to use EIF process |
| Unique 2016-17 Activities | | | | | |
| Begin mandatory, face- to-face and online orientation | Support | Aug 2016 | Director of Enrollment Management and Orientation Subcommittee | Orientation sessions held a.m. and p.m.; manage contract with Advantage | New students will understand college context, including educational planning |
| Enhanced ACA course fully implemented | 1, 2 | Aug 2016 | ACA Coordinator | Oversee trained faculty | Enhanced curriculum implemented with MAP assignment across all sections |
| Set Student Success Baseline using ACA Pilot #s | 1 | October 2016 | ACA Coordinator and Enhanced ACA Curriculum | Data Review and Consensus | Threshold for future decision making established |
| Support Team begins | 1 | Aug 2016 | Advising Coordinator and Support Team members | Outreach to students, tracking tools, and regular Support Team meetings | Students progress |
| Unique 2017-18 Activities—All Components Running | | | | | |
| Set Student Progress Baseline using Year 2 Action Plan Data | 2 | October 2016 | Advising Coordinator and Educational Planning Committee | Data Review and Consensus | Threshold for future decision making established |



| Strategy | Goal | When | Who | How | Expected Results |
|---|-------------------|-------------|--|---|---|
| Solicit student input about QEP | 1 and Support | Oct; April | SSFS Committee | Focus groups and surveys Annual Emphasis: Year 3: Orientation and ACA | Student input re: orientation and ACA analyzed |
| Unique 2018-19 Activities | | | | | |
| Outside Evaluation (formative and summative) | 1, 2, and Support | June-Aug | SSFS Committee and Independent Evaluator | Review results; determine strengths and weaknesses; and form recommendations | Revise and improve SSFS for next year |
| Solicit student input about QEP | 2 | Oct; April | SSFS Committee | Focus groups and surveys Emphasis: Year 4: Support Team | Student input re: Support Team is gathered and analyzed |
| Pilot online component of educational planning resources and conduct face-to-face training (funds provided through NCCCS) | 2 | March | Advising Coordinator and Dir. of Tech. Enhanced Learning | Course management system and/or website | On-demand resource for faculty support of educational planning initiative |
| Unique 2019-2020 Activities | | | | | |
| Share results of NCCCS Performance Measure Results for First Year Progress and Curriculum Completion | 1, 2 and Support | August 2019 | SSFS Committee | Through campus-wide emails, publicity, report to Board of Trustees | Celebrate reaching Excellence Level for both measures |
| Finalize QEP Impact Report | 1, 2, and Support | Feb. 2020 | Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation | Consensus with SSFS Committee | No recommendations |



Annual Activities Years 2-5

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---|---|--|
| Identify students targeted for intervention by cohort, such as 2016FA, 2016SP | 1 | Oct- Nov Jan- Feb | Director of LSR and Advising Coordinator | Informer reports from Colleague data systems and reports from EIF process. | Students will maintain course load. |
| Follow up on concerns raised about students targeted for intervention (by cohort) | 1 | Oct- Nov Jan-Feb | Advising Coordinator and Success Coach | Support Team will work with faculty advisors to contact identified students. Referring instructors will be notified of actions. | Students will maintain course load. |
| Hold EIF workshops online and face-to-face for all advisors | 2 | Oct | Director of LSR, Advising Coordinator and Success Coach | Attendance | Faculty advisors trained to support EIF and Support Team strategies |
| Identify students who did not take ACA (by cohort) | 1 | Oct and Feb | Dir. of Institutional Assessment | Informer reports from Colleague data systems | First-time students will take ACA in first two semesters. |
| Follow up on first-time students needing to take ACA | 1 | Oct- Nov Jan-Feb | Advising Coordinator and Success Coach | Support Team will work with faculty advisors. | First-time students will take ACA within first two semesters. |
| Run mandatory, face- to-face or online orientation | Support | Oct- Sept online; Jan and Aug face-to- face | Director of Enrollment Management and Orientation Committee | Orientation sessions held a.m. and p.m.; manage contract with Advantage | First-time students will understand college context, including educational planning. |
| Identify students receiving no shows, financial aid warning letter in first year, or an EIF (by cohort) | 1 | By Dec and May | Dir. of LSR, Registrar, and Dir. of Financial Aid | Support Team receives list of at-risk students, contacts the students, and makes necessary reports to academic advisor. | Impact student progression |



| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Conduct timetabling of course schedules | Support | February and October | Dir. of Inst. Assessment and contract faculty member | UniTime system | Ensure that course conflicts do not pose barriers to completion |
| QEP assessment activities | 1, 2, and Support | Nov and April | SSFS sub-committees | Review results; determine strengths and weaknesses; and form recommendations | Adjust or modify activities as needed |
| Recruit and train ACA instructors | 2 | March | ACA Coordinator | Training sessions | Instructors trained to support educational planning goals |
| Attend FYE Seminars | 1, 2, and Support | April-July | SSFS Committee designees | Registration and attendance | Learn best practices |
| End-of-the-year Assessment (formative and summative) | 1, 2, and Support | June-Aug | SSFS Committee, Independent Evaluator, and Institutional Assessment Asst. | Review results; determine strengths and weaknesses; and form recommendations | Revise and improve SSFS for next year |
| Conduct training for EIF | 2 | Oct and Feb | Dir. of LSR and Advising Coordinator | Work with vendor and/or develop webcasts | Faculty, including part-time, empowered to use EIF reporting |
| Conduct performance appraisals on SSFS personnel | 1, 2 | April-June | Executive VP and Dir. of LSR | ICC HR evaluation policies | Evaluate and secure in Human Resources Office |
| Identify students targeted for intervention for next cohort | 1 | Sept | Dir. of Institutional Assessment | Informer reports from Colleague data systems and EIF reports | First-time students will maintain course load. |
| Follow up on concerns raised about cohort | 1 | Sept | Advising Coordinator and Success Coach | Support Team will work with faculty advisors to contact identified students | First-time students will maintain course load. |

Organizational Structure

The training and experience of the key personnel involved in the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative prepare them to successfully carry out the program’s objectives. A brief description of the *primary personnel* is listed below, and a table of all key personnel follows. The organizational charts included below diagrams all project personnel and committee structure.

Profile of Primary Personnel

Jessie Fletcher – Ms. Fletcher has a Master’s degree in College Student Development from Appalachian State University. She has ten years of experience in higher education, including experience on an early intervention team. Her current position is the Advising Coordinator. She will chair the SSFS Educational Planning Committee and the Support Team Lead.

Alice McCluney – Ms. McCluney will be finishing her EdD from Western Carolina University, expected 2016. Her dissertation focused on college completion. She has a Master’s degree in School Administration. She has ten years of experience in higher education, is currently the Director of Enrollment Management Services, will serve as the Orientation Lead, and chair the SSFS Orientation Subcommittee.

Anne Oxenreider – Ms. Oxenreider has dual Master’s degrees in Higher Education/Adult Learners from Appalachian State University and English/Composition and Rhetoric from Western Carolina University. She has ten years of experience in higher education, including grant writing/management, instruction, and program coordination. She is currently the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation and the SACSCOC Liaison. She will provide student data, oversee the assessment plan, and co-chair the SSFS Committee.

Kimberly Snyder – Ms. Snyder has a Master’s degree in Community Counseling from Appalachian State University and is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). She has eleven years of experience in higher education, including career and personal counselling provider. She is currently the Director of Learning, Support, and Retention. She will oversee the early intervention services, including EIF, and supervise LSR staff.

Bret Watson – Mr. Watson has a Master’s degree in Sports Science and Pedagogy from Gardner-Webb University and an additional 18 graduate hours in biology from Clemson. He has eight years of teaching experience and has taught 15 sections of ACA at the College since Fall 2011 in traditional, internet, and hybrid delivery methods. He is currently a physical education instructor. He will work with the academic deans to recruit ACA instructors and then train them. He will also work with the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee to develop the ACA curriculum and serve on the SSFS Committee.

Overview of Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Personnel. Table 11 shows all key personnel (present and proposed), educational background, and work experience. For each position, the same table lists the outcome focus, percent of time dedicated to the project, roles, and job description associated with the position.



Table 11: Personnel Overview

| Name & Title | Academic Preparation | Professional Experience |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Lisa Courtney, Success Coach</p> <p>Time Commitment: 50%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: SLO 2 and LEO 2</p> <p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Team Member • EIF and Educational Planning Trainer <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and develop educational/career planning • Offer educational planning support to students both seeking enrollment and those enrolled • Serve as member of the Support Team • Provide support to faculty and staff training related to EIF and Educational Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA (Christian Education), The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary • BA (Religious Studies) Gardner- Webb University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-Present, Success Coach Advisor for CTE/Transfer Programs, ICC • 2011-Present, Minister of Music, Youth and Children, Mount Vernon Baptist Church • 2011-2015, Instructor, Continuing Education, Human Resources Development, ICC • 2009-2011, Academic Advisor, Appalachian State University • 2009-2011, Minister of Youth, First Presbyterian Church • 2005-2008, Bereavement Coordinator and Grief Counselor, High Country Health Care & Hospice |



| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Jessie Fletcher, Advising Coordinator Time Commitment: 50%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: SLO 2 and LEO 2</p> <p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Team Lead • Educational Planning Trainer • Co-chair Educational Planning Subcommittee <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and develop educational/career planning • Offer educational planning support to students both seeking enrollment and those enrolled • Oversee the development of the Support Team process and its assessment • Serve on the SSFS Committee and Co-chair the Educational Planning Subcommittee • Train Support Team members • Train faculty advisors regarding academic advising processes • Oversee implementation of the Support Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA (College Student Development), Appalachian State University • BS (Recreation Management), Appalachian State University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013-Present, Advising Coordinator, ICC • 2008-2013, Director, University Tutoring, Appalachian State University • 2006-2008, Assistant Director, University Tutorial Services, Appalachian State University • 2005-2006, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Appalachian State University |
|---|--|--|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Blain Jones, Networking Instructor Time Commitment: 17%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: Supporting Action</p> <p>Role: UniTime Programmer</p> <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload semester course schedule so that an optimized schedule is available for advanced registration each semester • Provide academic deans with data that identifies course conflicts and high demand sections • Support educational planning training related to use of the UniTime program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS (Technology Systems) East Carolina University, 36 Hrs-Technology Systems/Computers • BS (Computer Science) The University of North Carolina-Wilmington, 48 Hrs-Computers • AAS (Architectural Technology) Virginia Western Community College | <p>Certifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPI Linux Essentials, Linux Professional Institute (March 2014) • The Faculty Learning Community On Student Engagement Techniques, Isothermal Community College (April 2013) <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Relevant Training: 9 months, CAD Operator, Sun Forest Architects and Construction (1990) • Subject Area Experience: 1 yr, Computer Consultant/Manager, Designed Solutions, Inc. (2000-2001) • Subject Area Experience: 1+ yrs, Computer Consultant II, The University of North Carolina-Wilmington (1997-1999) • Subject Area Experience: 1+ yrs, Designer/CAD Operator, Syntheses Architects, Inc. (1991-1993) • Subject Area Experience: 3+ yrs, Computer Support Technician, The University of North Carolina-Wilmington (1994-1997) • Subject Area Experience: 5 months, Computer Consultant III, Black Mountain Center (1999) • Subject Area Experience: 6 months, Manager/Designer, Design Tech, Inc. (1993-1994) • Subject Area Experience: 7 months, Manager/Designer/Computer Operator, Fastsigns, Inc. (1990-1991) • Teaching Experience: 1 yr, Information Systems/Networking Instructor, Isothermal Community College (1999-2000) • Teaching Experience: 1+ yrs, Information Systems Instructor, Isothermal Community College (2013-Present) • Teaching Experience: 12 yrs, Lead Networking Technology Instructor, Blue Ridge Community College (2001-2013) |
|--|---|---|



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| <p>Alice McCluney, Director of Enrollment Management</p> <p>Time Commitment: 10%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: Supporting Action</p> <p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation Lead • Co-chair Orientation Subcommittee <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the development of the Orientation curriculum and its assessment • Serve on the SSFS Committee and Co-chair the Orientation Subcommittee • Recruit and train Orientation presenters and guides • Oversee implementation of online orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EdD Candidate (Educational Leadership, Community College Concentration), WCU, expected completion 2016 • MA (School Administration), Gardner-Webb University • BS (Elementary Education- Math), University of North Carolina-Greensboro | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2009–Present, Director of Enrollment Management, ICC • 2006–2009, College Liaison for High School Programs, ICC • 2001–2005, Middle School Mathematics Teacher, Rutherford County Schools • 2001, Supplemental Instruction Instructor, ICC |
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| Name & Title | Academic Preparation | Professional Experience |
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| <p>Anne Oxenreider, Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation, SACSCOC Liaison</p> <p>Time Commitment: 10%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: All</p> <p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Coordination • SSFS Co-chair <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the completion of each Subcommittee’s annual Assessment Plan Summary (APS) reporting • Write the annual Department Analysis Report (DAR) • Support data collection needs of the program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA (English-Composition and Rhetoric), WCU • MEd (Higher Education-Adult Learner), Appalachian State University • BA (English Literature), Wheeling Jesuit College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012-Present, Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation, ICC • 2005-2012, Instructor of English and QEP Director, Montreat College • 1999-2005, Grant Writing Consultant, Free Lance • 1995-1999, Project Coordinator and Development Director, Family Services Center |
| <p>Kimberly Snyder, Director of Learning Support and Retention</p> <p>Time Commitment: 10%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: SLO 2 and LEO 2</p> <p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-chair Orientation Subcommittee • Dynamic Advising Oversight • EIF Lead • Trainer <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the development of the EIF process and its assessment • Serve on the SSFS Committee and Co-chair the Orientation Subcommittee • Train full and part time instructors regarding the EIF process. • Supervise the Advising Coordinator and Success Coach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA (Community Counseling), Appalachian State University • BS (Psychology), Gardner-Webb University • Certificate (Expressive Arts Therapy), Appalachian State University • National Certified Counselor (NCC) • Distance Credentialed Counselor (DCC) • Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014-Present, Director of Learning Support and Retention, ICC • 2004–Present, Learning Support and Retention Counselor, ICC • 2002-2004, Graduate Assistant, Research and Sponsored Programs, Appalachian State University • January 2004 – June 2004, Intern, New River Behavioral Health Care • February 2002 – July 2002, Case Manager/High Risk Intervention Specialist, Rutherford-Polk Mental Health |



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| <p>Bret Watson ACA Coordinator Time Commitment: 22%</p> <p>Outcome Focus: SLO 1 and LEO 1</p> <p>Roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACA Instructor • ACA Trainer • Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee member • SSFS Committee member <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the development of the ACA curriculum and its assessment, particularly the MAP Assignment • Serve on the SSFS Committee and Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee • Recruit ACA Instructors in collaboration with Department deans • Train ACA Instructors and coordinate communication among instructors • Guide any curriculum changes and textbook evaluation and selection • Assist Co-Chairs in developing a recognition system for ACA instructors • Share MAP assignment development with ACA coordinator for high school sections and online high school sections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's: MA, Sports Science and Pedagogy (Gardner-Webb University, August 2006) 30 Hrs-Sports and Pedagogy • Bachelor's: BS, Management (Appalachian State University, August 1995) • Credentialed Hours: (Clemson University, 2013-2015) • 18 Hrs-Biology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2011-Fall 2015, Experienced ACA Instructor • 2006-Present, Teaching Experience: Physical Education Instructor, Isothermal Community College • 2002-2004, Teaching Experience: 1+ yrs, Physical Education Instructor, Appalachian State University • 2000-2006, Subject Area Experience: 15 yrs, Aquatic/Fitness Director, Valdese Recreation Department • 1993-2000, Subject Area Experience: 6+ yrs, Assistant Aquatics Director, Watauga County Parks and Recreation |
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| <p>Vacant, (five positions; one per academic area, including Academic Development)</p> <p>Department Representative on Support Team</p> <p>Outcome Focus: SLO 2 and LEO 2</p> <p>Time Commitment: 17%</p> <p>QEP Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend weekly Support Team meetings • Communicate and coordinate student concerns with academic advisors • Complete Action Plans with identified students and revise MAP when needed • Serve as a resource to educational planning and EIF training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credentialed faculty member in discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years of experience as a faculty advisor at Isothermal Community College |
|--|---|--|

Project Management Plan

The following personnel and committee structure will provide the needed management system for the SSFS Initiative.

Personnel

The SSFS Initiative will be managed through the administrative support of the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation who will devote 10% of her time to overseeing the overall evaluation plan. The Director of Learning Support and Retention (LSR) will commit 10% of her time to the goals by overseeing the Support Team, supervising LSR staff, and reporting Support Team assessment results to the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. (SSFS) Committee. See the SSFS Initiative Organizational Chart in Figure 5 for additional clarification regarding program management.

Committee Structure

The SSFS Committee will be co-chaired by the Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation/SACSCOC Liaison and a faculty member. In addition, its membership includes a Student Services representative, ACA Coordinator, Director of LSR, Advising Coordinator, and a faculty member at-large. See the SSFS Initiative Committee Structure Chart in Figure 6 for additional clarification regarding committee structure.

The task of the SSFS Committee will be to oversee professional development activities, coordinate all orientation and educational planning activities, ensure the effectiveness of the overall assessment plan, and analyze and make decisions based upon assessment data. The SSFS Committee has three subcommittees that are responsible for the program operations and evaluation.

- The Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee is co-chaired by the ACA Coordinator and a faculty member, and representative from each academic division, the High School ACA Coordinator, and an Academic Development representative. This subcommittee is responsible for the operations and evaluation related to Student Learning Outcome 1 and Learning Environment Outcome 1, as well as operations and evaluation related to the timetabling supporting action. This subcommittee will work with and have representation on the ACA Advisory Committee (previously called ACA Steering Committee).
- The Advising Coordinator chairs the Educational Planning Subcommittee. Members also include the Registrar, the Success Coach, and a representative from each academic department including academic development (these may be members of the Support Team). This subcommittee is responsible for the operations and evaluation related to Student Learning Outcome 2 and Learning Environment Outcome 2.
- The Director of Enrollment Management chairs the Orientation Subcommittee. Members include the Registrar, Director of LSR, Bookstore Manager, I.T. representative, Financial Aid Counselor, Campus Enforcement Officer, and faculty representatives. This subcommittee is responsible for the operations and evaluation related to the orientation supporting action.

The College's Institutional Effectiveness procedures, as described in the Assessment Manual, provide the necessary procedures to ensure quality. Each subcommittee of the SSFS Committee will complete an Assessment Plan Summary (APS) for annual reporting. (See Appendix F: Drafted 2015-16 APS Part I.) The Director of Assessment and Accreditation will compose a Department Analysis Report (DAR) after receiving recommendations from the SSFS Committee. The goals of the DAR are evaluated at an institutional level for applicability to mission and strategic goals.

Figure 5: SSFS Initiative Organizational Chart

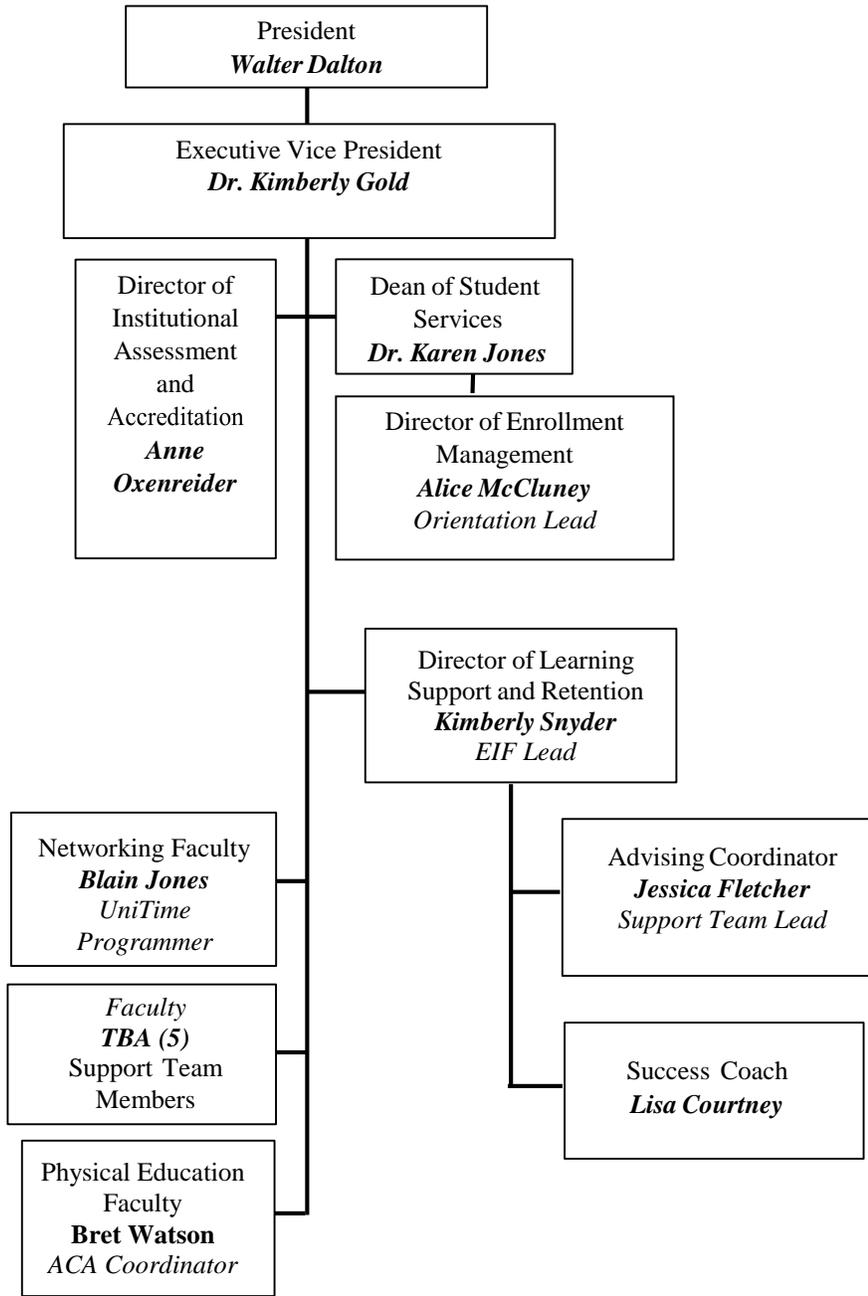
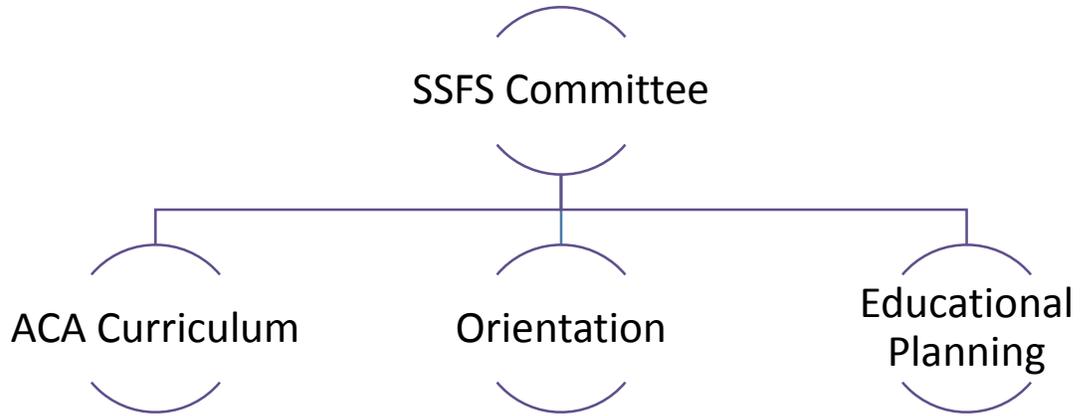




Figure 6: SSFS Initiative Committee Structure Chart



Sources of Funds

In order to accomplish the goals of the QEP, the institution will allot sufficient resources to this endeavor to ensure the success of the project. The cost will primarily be devoted to providing sufficient personnel to support the activities of the QEP. The costs of the QEP fall into four categories: salary reallocation, course release and stipends, salary benefits, and other miscellaneous costs. The salary reallocation costs are those activities that will be accomplished by assigning tasks to existing personnel. In most cases, these duties are closely aligned with current job duties and do not require additional funds but rather are a reallocation of each individual's job tasks and time.

In other cases, activities will be assigned to faculty who will be granted course release time in order to focus on the activities of the QEP. These activities include support and training for ACA instructors and course development, faculty involvement in early intervention and student support, and the overall coordination of the QEP project. In order to provide for course release time, additional part-time cost will be incurred. This cost will be budgeted for and assigned to each faculty member's departmental budget. Department budget managers have been a part of reviewing faculty workloads and approving faculty release time and will budget for this cost in their departmental budgets. Other stipends will be covered through the budget of the Assessment, Planning and Research office. In each case, the course release time and stipends will come from state funds generated from full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) generation.

The other miscellaneous costs needed to support the QEP include items such as marketing, consulting, travel, supplies, software, and other promotional items. Marketing, consulting, professional development travel, supplies, and software will be allotted from state funds. Food and promotional items will be allotted from institutional funds. All miscellaneous funds will be budgeted through the office of Assessment, Planning and Research. This office will ensure that items are included in each year's budget requests and will monitor the spending for each category. Although the College has experienced a decline in enrollment and an accompanying decline in revenue over the past several years, the institution has the capacity and sufficient resources to successfully implement and evaluate the impact of this project. The budget presented reflects a sufficient and realistic estimation of the costs required to carry out this project.

Assessment

Assessment results will be analyzed by the SSFS Committee, which will make recommendations for programmatic changes to meet long-term goals. The three subcommittees of the SSFS Committee will collect data related to the program objectives and report results and preliminary analysis to the SSFS Committee annually, using the College's systematic assessment processes. The SSFS Committee structure is described above in the Program Management Plan section.

Reports will follow the College's institutional effectiveness planning formats and timelines, as published in the Assessment Manual. Data collection methodologies are found in the following four tables.

Student Learning Outcome 1

Student Learning Outcome 1 reads, "Students enrolled in the Enhanced ACA, specifically those pursuing an associate's degree, will develop a 'Master Academic Plan' for completing community college academic goals." It focuses on students acquiring goal setting and problem solving skills by creating a MAP, a time bound academic plan that not only identifies academic program of study but also asks the student to consider enrollment intensity and potential barriers to success. See MAP assignment in Appendix C.

The MAP is a core assignment that will be given to all ACA students starting in Fall 2016. The assignment will be graded with a common rubric. See MAP Rubric in Appendix D. Instructors will provide feedback to the student and also report assignment results at the trait level with student identification number using a Survey Monkey data collection tool. The MAP Rubric traits are assessed on the levels of complete, partially complete, and incomplete and are listed below:

- Student can successfully identify the program of study.
- Student can successfully identify the level of study: degree, diploma, and certificate.
- Student can successfully identify the correct amount of credit hours needed to earn a degree/diploma/certificate.
- Student can make appropriate choices when faced with an option of multiple classes.
- Student can successfully outline a semester- by-semester plan of courses which includes all classes needed for completion.
- Student can successfully match his or her MAP with the intended program of study.
- Student can identify barriers to completion of the MAP when applicable.
- Student can identify resources that might be helpful when redesigning his or her MAP.

As a course activity, ACA students will demonstrate goal setting and problem solving skills by identifying from a suggested list potential barriers to their stated MAP goal. They will respond to a question regarding length of time needed to complete the degree and, if longer than anticipated, select from a list potential reasons why. ACA Instructors will complete the MAP in the first eight weeks of the semester. By the time early registration begins, students will revisit their MAPs for self-evaluation. This part of the assignment asks students the following:

- Do you feel that you have stayed on track with your MAP?
- If the answer is no to the previous question, what steps have you taken to get back on track? What is your new action plan?
- Have you been contacted by any of the following with regards to your progress in class and with your MAP? (Choose from list.)

The answers to Part 5 will be collected via Survey Monkey using student identification number. This exercise will not only establish academic goal setting and problem solving skills; it will also provide the groundwork for any necessary intervention with at-risk students in SLO 2.

Table 12 below shows the Student Success, Student Learning, and Student Satisfaction assessment measures related to SLO 1.



Table 12: Student Learning Outcome 1 Evaluation Plan

| Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning. | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Goal 1. Empower students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving | | | | |
| Student Learning Outcome 1. Students enrolled in the enhanced ACA, specifically those pursuing an associate’s degree, will develop a Master Academic Plan for completing community college academic goals. | | | | |
| Supplier | Purpose | Description | Methodology | Sources |
| Student Success | To ensure students engage in academic goal setting to create a momentum point that helps predict future credential completion | Fall to fall retention rate comparison of students who do and do not successfully complete the MAP assignment. | <u>Denominator:</u> Fall to fall retention rate of students who do not successfully complete or attempt the MAP assignment. <u>Numerator:</u> Fall to fall retention rate of students who successfully complete the MAP assignment, receiving greater than or equal to a 75% on the assignment. <u>Baseline:</u> Baseline will be established for Year Two based on pilot data. Annual comparisons. | Student cohort using MAP assignment completion, student ID numbers Retention reports using Informer reporting for each group, using student ID numbers |
| Data Element | Data Collection Procedure | Data Analysis Procedure | Data Usage Procedure | Baseline Indicator |
| Student Success | The APR Office will track by cohort the number of students who remain enrolled the following fall and compare the retention rate of those who do successfully complete the MAP assignment to those who don’t attempt or don't successfully complete the assignment. | Findings reported in the spring semesters to the SSFS Committee by the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee | If benchmarks are not met, formative evaluation activities (such as focus groups and satisfaction surveys) will be used to inform possible programmatic adjustments to improve student outcomes. | Baseline will be established for Year Two based on pilot data. Annual comparisons will follow. |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Student Learning | ACA Coordinator will manage and report data collection of Master Academic Planning assignment. Instructors will input assignment scores with student ID number using an online data collection tool. | | Instructors will use a common 4-trait rubric to assess the Master Academic Planning assignment; analysis of low-scoring traits will be used to make curricular revisions. | 80% of students who complete the assignment receive $\geq 75\%$ |
| Student Satisfaction | ACA Coordinator will coordinate student satisfaction surveys and focus group related to the student success course. Emphasis in Year 3 student focus groups is on the ACA course. | | Students surveyed at the end of semester on satisfaction with overall quality of the ACA course and the Master Academic Planning assignment. Low satisfaction levels may indicate a need to create follow-up questions or make curricular revisions. | Baseline is 83% based on overall course satisfaction set on average rating between the Fall 2013 and Spring 2015 semesters. Annual Goals: 2016-17: 85% 2017-18: 90% 2018-19: 95% 2019-20: 98% |

Student Learning Outcome 2

Student Learning Outcome 2 reads, "First-time students who receive a no show for a course, a financial aid warning letter in their first year, or an Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral will develop an Action Plan to maintain or improve academic progress."

The Support Team will handle workflows related to student follow up and Action Planning during weekly meetings. Each referral is reviewed by a Support Team member. Each student is contacted individually, and the referring faculty member is notified that a referral was received and is being acted on. Each referral is assessed individually, and each response is customized to address the specific concerns about and needs of the student and will include the creation of an Action Plan. Typical Action Plans may include any combination of the following:

- Meeting with an educational advisor for program planning or testing;
- Identifying an appropriate tutor;
- Connecting the student with a peer mentor;
- Arranging for a counseling appointment to address career or personal counseling issues; and
- Meeting with a financial aid advisor for financial planning



SLO 2 focuses on at-risk students acquiring goal setting and problem solving skills by working with a Support Team member or their Academic Advisor to complete an Action Plan. The Action Plan Session Summary Sheet is found in Appendix G.) Action Planning Sessions will focus on reviewing, for past ACA students, or creating Action Statements related to academic goals.

Table 13: Student Learning Outcome 1 Evaluation Plan

| Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Goal 1. Empower students to complete their educational goals through academic planning and problem solving | | | | |
| Student Learning Outcome 2. First-time students who receive a no show for a course, a financial aid warning letter in their first year, or an Early Intervention Form (EIF) referral will develop an Action Plan to maintain or improve academic progress. | | | | |
| Data Element | Purpose | Description | Methodology | Sources |
| Student Progress | To ensure early detection of at-risk students for intervention with the Support Team in order to engage in problem solving using an Action Plan | Percent of change in count of first-time students receiving NS, financial aid warning letters in their first year, or EIFs, measured per academic year. | <u>Denominator:</u> Fall to fall retention rate of first-time students who do not successfully complete or attempt an Action Plan with a Support Team member or their Academic Advisor. <u>Numerator:</u> Fall to fall retention rate of first-time students who successfully complete an Action Plan with a Support Team member or their Academic Advisor. <u>Baseline:</u> Baseline will be established for Year Two based on pilot data. Annual comparisons. | First-time student cohort using National Student Clearinghouse reporting. Distance Learning Data Hub report showing no shows. Financial Aid Office reports of warning letters. LSR reports of EIF referrals. Retention reports using Informer reporting for each group using student ID. |



| Data Element | Data Collection Procedure | Data Analysis Procedure | Data Usage Procedure | Baseline Indicator |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Student Progress | The APR Office will compare the rate of re-enrollment or graduation the following semester for students receiving a “NS,” financial aid warning letter in their first year, or EIF and who developed an Action Plan to the re-enrollment or graduation rate of students receiving a “NS” or EIF who did not develop an Action Plan. | Findings reported annually to the SSFS Committee by the Educational Planning Subcommittee. | Data will be used to identify hard-to-reach, at-risk students in order to understand who they are and identify ways to reach them more effectively. | <p><u>Threshold:</u> A threshold will be set in Year Three based on the previous year's data.</p> <p>Annual goals will be set.</p> |
| Student Learning | Advising Coordinator will track the number of advisee choices and compile summary data from Action Plans. | | <p>If the student-level benchmark is not met, formative evaluation activities (such as annual focus groups and satisfaction surveys) will be used to inform possible programmatic adjustments to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Summary data of action items chosen by students will be reported to faculty advisors. Open-ended responses will be reviewed to consider adding or re-wording corrective action items.</p> | <p>80% of advisees who complete an Action Plan will identify two or more success strategies.</p> <p>Indirect Measure: Maintain statistically significant positive difference from Small College cohort for “Academic advising/planning” for advising use, importance, and satisfaction on 2018 CCSSE</p> |

| | | | | |
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| <p>Student Satisfaction</p> | <p>LSR Director will coordinate advisee satisfaction survey related to Action Planning. The focus of Year 1 student focus groups is on Action Planning.</p> | | <p>Students who created an Action Plan will be surveyed on satisfaction with overall quality of the advising and the Action Plan process. Low satisfaction levels may indicate a need to create follow-up questions in the survey or focus groups, revise advisor training materials, or make process revisions.</p> | <p>Overall Success Team and Action Plan Satisfaction: Baseline established Year Two; threshold established Year Three</p> |
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Learning Environment Outcome 1

Learning Environment Outcome (LEO) 1 reads, "Increase data collection of students completing the MAP assignment to 98% by Fall 2016." It focuses on positive instructional methods, specifically instructor metacognition, that establish a learning environment that encourages goal setting and problem solving. The College has an established tradition of teaching in student-focused and collaborative ways. The enhanced ACA curriculum continues that tradition of focusing on student engagement and motivation but has applied it specifically to academic planning through the acquisition of goal setting and problem solving skills.

The end product of the process to select appropriate ACA instructors and to train them well to implement the MAP assignment is the collection and analysis of the data associated with the MAP assignment. Instructors will use the common MAP Rubric to give students feedback. In addition, instructors will submit trait-level results with student ID number through a Survey Monkey collector. This data collection process was developed three years ago for the College's general education competency assessment processes and has generated useful data.

The Survey Monkey version of the rubric will allow faculty to submit data through a web-based collector on or off campus and will allow data collection to occur in a central repository across sections and across the implementation timeframe. In addition, the collector will be set to have all traits and the student ID as required fields to avoid incomplete data.

While the collection of the MAP rubric data is crucial to the formative and summative assessment of the QEP, it is also an instructional practice that creates a metacognitive tool for instructors related to the instruction and assessment of the MAP assignment. To this end, each ACA instructor will be provided with a link to his or her own MAP results in which they can track aggregate results and view individual respondent data.

The ACA Coordinator will facilitate the identification and training of the ACA instructors in coordination with academic deans and the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee. He will communicate with ACA instructors to ensure proper data collection across all sections for institutional purposes and ensure that data is used by instructors in formative ways.

Table 13 provides the evaluation plan details for Learning Environment Outcome 1.



Table 13: Learning Environment Outcome 1 Evaluation Plan

| Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning. | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Goal 2. Develop faculty participation in comprehensive educational planning practices. | | | | |
| Learning Environment Outcome. 1 Increase data collection of students completing the MAP assignment to 98% by Fall 2016. | | | | |
| Supplier | Purpose | Description | Methodology | Sources |
| Internal | To ensure first-year students engage in academic goal setting to create a momentum point that helps predict future credential completion | Percent of ACA sections taught by trained instructors who implement the MAP assignment | <u>Denominator</u> : Count of MAP Rubric data per academic year <u>Numerator</u> : Count of MAP Rubric data per section per year that are taught by trained instructors. <u>Baseline</u> : 2014-15; annual comparisons | College report of ACA sections taught each academic year. List of trained faculty submitting MAP assessment data. |
| Data Element | Data Collection Procedure | Data Analysis Procedure | Data Usage Procedure | Baseline Indicator |
| New Course Saturation Rate | ACA Coordinator will track the number of faculty-submitted MAP assessment data. | Findings reported annually to the Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee and the SSFS Committee by the ACA Coordinator | If benchmarks are not met, formative evaluation activities (such as training and user satisfaction surveys) will be used to inform possible programmatic adjustments to improve assignment and reporting usage rates | Baseline: 0% 2015-16: 27% 2016-17: 90% 2017-18: 98% 2018-19: 98% 2019-20: 98% |



Learning Environment Outcome 2

Learning Environment Outcome (LEO) 2 reads, "Increase the number of instructors who provide complete and timely Early Intervention Forms (EIF) to the Support Team to 75% by 2020." It focuses on positive behavioral supports that establish a learning environment that encourages goal setting. LEO 1 focuses on ACA instructors; LEO 2 focuses on the increased use of the EIF process by all instructors.

Not only is it important that instructors provide EIF referrals to assist in generating leads to at-risk students to receive help from the Support Team, but it is also important to create a learning environment in which instructors have a heightened awareness of student at-risk behaviors in their classrooms and of their role in behavioral support.

The College has applied for a grant that will provide both a software package for early alert and an additional Success Coach. The College will hear the outcome in October. If the grant is not awarded, the College will implement a simple web-based survey, similar to the MAP rubric process described above, but focused on the identification of student behaviors exhibited in the classroom that could lead to poor academic outcomes.

The following behaviors are listed risk factors: being inattentive or sleeping in class; struggling with course content to the point of failing tests and assignments; attending class without required materials or textbooks or assignments; and frequently missing class. Faculty members can provide additional details and are asked to indicate whether they informed the student of the referral before submitting it. EIFs are received in a dedicated e-mail account that is managed and accessed by the Support Team members.

Table 14 provides the evaluation plan details for Learning Environment Outcome 2.

Table 14: Learning Environment Outcome 2 Evaluation Plan

| Focus Statement: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning. | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Goal 2. Develop faculty participation in comprehensive educational planning practices. | | | | |
| Learning Environment Outcome 2. Increase the number of instructors who provide complete and timely Early Intervention Forms (EIF) to the Support Team to 75% by 2020. | | | | |
| Supplier | Purpose | Description | Methodology | Sources |
| Internal | To ensure early detection of at-risk students for intervention with the Support Team in order to engage in problem solving using an Action Plan | Count of full and part time instructors who submit complete EIFs in the first six weeks of the fall or spring semester | <u>Denominator</u> : Count of full and part time instructors <u>Numerator</u> : Count of instructors who submit complete EIFs in the first six weeks of the fall or spring semester. <u>Baseline</u> : Average of faculty utilization in past three years | Colleague report of all faculty List of instructors submitting complete and timely EIFs annually |

| Data Element | Data Collection Procedure | Data Analysis Procedure | Data Usage Procedure | Baseline Indicator |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| EIF Usage Rate | The Director of LSR will track the number of instructors who make complete and on-time EIFs using an online data collection system such as Survey Monkey. | Findings reported annually to the SSFS Committee by the Educational Planning Subcommittee | If benchmarks are not met, formative evaluation activities (such as training and user satisfaction surveys) will be used to inform possible programmatic adjustments to improve usage rates | Fall 2012-Fall 2015 13% of instructors (n=40 unique faculty members). Annual Goals: 2016-17: 40% 2017-18: 55% 2018-19: 70% 2019-20: 75% |

Conclusion

In 2010, Isothermal Community College established the Learning Support and Retention Office to better understand and systematically address student success. During this time, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) established two relevant performance measures: First Year Progression and Curriculum Completion. These measures provided significant data for the College. As the national conversation about completion grew louder, the College's internal processes responded with greater concern. However, the exact strategy to remediate the College's below average rates for both measures remained unclear.

In 2013, campus listening projects and a review of best practices pointed towards clear tactics, including mandatory orientation, an enhanced ACA course, and proactive advising. These developed into a Quality Enhancement Plan called Start Strong. Finish Stronger. As a learning college focused on the question, "Are we doing the best that can be done to help students learn?" the College had to determine the relationship between completion and learning outcomes.

Most students "start strong" at the College with an aspiration to achieve academic success. For many, this means completing a degree. It is widely known that with degree completion come lower unemployment and higher lifetime earnings, which is a vital hope in a community designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission as a "distressed county."

It became clear that the College needed to focus on the front door to support academic goals. In doing so, the College realized that the act of setting a realistic, time-bound goal, such as degree completion, is a learning outcome. In addition, the ability to solve complex problems, such as how to work two jobs while taking twelve credits, is a key learning outcome that is best achieved with support for at risk students. For all students, knowing how to progress in college and complete a degree requires the ability to anticipate barriers to a stated goal, reevaluate those barriers, and then adjust actions or revise the goal. It is purposeful inquiry.

The process that the College underwent to develop the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative is similar to its student learning outcomes. As part of the goal setting and problem solving process, the College deepened its desire for student success and learning. In direct response to our core mission to improve lives, the College sees the potential for the learning outcomes obtained through the SSFS Initiative to transfer to future aspirations for our students, such as owning a home, completing another degree, or attaining a promotion. In addition, it is hoped that students completing degrees at Isothermal will be inspired to set similar goals for their children, thus helping the community's future generations to overcome the county's current distressed status and achieve greater prosperity. The College has learned that finishing stronger gives students the deep satisfaction achieved by setting a realistic goal and obtaining it, despite knowing the potential barriers.

For an index of this document using the SACSCOC's QEP Guidelines, see Appendix H.



Appendices

Appendix A: Committee and Subcommittee Membership

SACSCOC Steering Committee

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Dr. Kim Gold | SACSCOC Steering Committee Co-Chair; Executive Vice-President |
| Anne Oxenreider | SACSCOC Steering Committee Co-Chair; Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation; SACSCOC Liaison |
| Dr. Kathy Ackerman | Dean of Arts and Sciences |
| Kim Alexander | Dean of Business Sciences |
| Jo James | Coordinator of Technology Enhanced Learning |
| Joe Looney | Dean, Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology |
| Dr. Johnny Smith | Dean of Health and Public Service |
| Debbie Puett | Dean of Academic Development |
| Charles Wiggins | Director of Library Services |
| Dr. Karen Jones | Dean of Student Services |
| Kim Snyder | Director of Learning Support and Retention |



Development Team

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Alice McCluney | Development Team Co-Chair, Director of Enrollment Management |
| Johnny Smith | Development Team Co-Chair, Interim Dean of Health and Public Services |
| Vanessa Capps | Registrar |
| Adam Petit | Academic Development Faculty |
| Patricia Robinson | Student |
| Ngina Smith | Faculty, Foothills Nursing Consortium Faculty |
| Jamey Spratt | Arts & Sciences Faculty |
| Pat Wall | Business Sciences Faculty |
| Debbie Wiltshire | Director of Practical Nurse Education |

Implementation Team

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Pat Wall | QEP Coordinator, Business Sciences Faculty |
| Erin Balmer | Arts & Sciences Faculty |
| Vanessa Capps | Registrar |
| Jay Coomes | Applied Sciences & Engineering Technology Faculty |
| Blake Dula | Health and Public Services Faculty |
| Jessie Fletcher | Advising Coordinator |
| Jennifer Henson | Arts & Sciences Secretary |
| Steve Hollifield | Applied Sciences & Engineering Technology Faculty |
| Melissa Johnson | Faculty Business Sciences Faculty |
| Alice McCluney | Director of Enrollment Management |
| Anne Oxenreider | Director of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation |
| Adam Petit | Academic Development Faculty |
| Sarah Rodriguez | Student Representative |
| Loreen Smith | Arts & Sciences Faculty |
| Kim Snyder | Director of Learning Support and Retention |
| Debbie Wiltshire | Director of Practical Nurse Education (<i>January 3, 2015</i>) |



Marketing Sub-Committee

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Jay Coomes | Marketing Committee Co-Chair, Applied Sciences & Engineering Technology Faculty |
| Vanessa Capps | Marketing Committee Co-Chair, Registrar |
| Cathy Alexander | Applied Sciences & Engineering Technology Faculty (ended Spring 2015) |
| Alan Beam | Webmaster |
| Scott Hutchins | Business Sciences Faculty |
| Mike Gavin | Director of Community Relations and Marketing |
| Kim Snyder | Director of Learning Support and Retention |
| Susan Straw | Manager of Campus Print Shop |
| Carolyn Young | Broadcasting and Production Technology Faculty |

Orientation Sub-Committee

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Alice McCluney | Orientation Sub-Committee Co-Chair, Director of Enrollment Management |
| Kim Snyder | Orientation Sub-Committee Co-Chair, Director of Learning Support and Retention |
| Danielle Aley | Bookstore Manager |
| Reagan Bowman | Financial Aid Counselor (ended Spring 2015) |
| Vanessa Capps | Registrar |
| Ruth Colnot | Student Activities Coordinator |
| Pamela Ellis | Financial Aid Director (began Summer 2015) |
| Jessie Fletcher | Advising Coordinator |
| Cathy Greene | Help Desk Tech |
| Jo James | Coordinator of Technology Enhanced Learning |
| Andy Millard | Campus Enforcement Officer |
| Robert Owens | Campus Enforcement Officer |
| Robby Walters | Director of Information Technology |

Educational Planning Sub-Committee

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Jessie Fletcher | Educational Planning Sub-Committee Co-Chair , Advising Coordinator |
| Vanessa Capps | Educational Planning Sub-Committee Co-Chair , Registrar |
| Jamey Spratt | Arts and Sciences Faculty |
| Dale Gaddis | Arts and Sciences Faculty |
| Steve Hollifield | Applied Sciences and Technology Faculty |
| Alice McCluney | Director of Enrollment Management |
| Adam Petit | Academic Development Mathematics Faculty |
| Erin Petrella, | Health and Public Services Faculty (ended Spring 2015) |
| Marisa Sudano | Business Sciences Faculty |

ACA Sub-Committee

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Melissa Johnson | ACA Sub-Committee Co-Chair , Business Sciences Faculty |
| Brett Watson | ACA Sub-Committee Co-Chair, Arts and Sciences Faculty |
| Rebecca Haney | Business Sciences Faculty |
| Alfreda Lindsay | Disability and Career Services Counselor |
| Michael Lyda | Applied Sciences and Technology Faculty |
| Loreen Smith | Arts & Sciences Faculty |



Appendix B: QEP Marketing Timeline

| QEP Marketing Timeline | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Promotional Activity | Responsibility Group | Target Audience | Details | Date |
| "Patriot Run" 5K Run | QEP Team Marketing Committee, various faculty/staff | Community, Students, Faculty & Staff | Preparation: The inaugural 5k was held to observe the College's 50 th anniversary. It also introduced the community, the faculty, and the students to the College's Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative. | September 27, 2014 |
| Logo Contest | Marketing Committee | Students | Preparation: All currently enrolled curriculum students at Isothermal were invited to compete in the Start Strong. Finish Stronger. logo contest. The winner won a brand new Apple iPad Mini. | November/December 2014 |
| Professional Development Day | QEP Team Marketing Committee | Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Faculty and Staff were officially introduced to the QEP slogan. The kick-off included a balloon drop as well as the unveiling of the plan's logo created by graphic design student Megan Atkins. | February 5, 2015 |
| Educational Planning Video | Marketing Committee Jessie Fletcher | Students | Awareness: Students in Carolyn Young's broadcasting class created a video to educate students about the importance of an Educational Plan. It was uploaded to the College website before registration for summer and fall semesters began. | March 2015-Ongoing |
| Printing marketing materials (Banners, magnets, bumper stickers, etc.) | Marketing Committee | Students | Awareness: Banners for student, faculty, and staff awareness of the QEP topic and improvements initiated. Banners are posted at the three locations: Spindale, Polk, and RLC. Other promotional items were printed for Sports Day. | April 14, 2015 - Ongoing |
| Start Strong. Finish Stronger. theme for Sports Day | Marketing Committee Ruth Colnot Student Government Association (SGA) | Students, Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Sports Day occurs every spring. Classes are cancelled. Students, faculty, and staff participate in games and activities. This year the theme was | April 14, 2015 |



| QEP Marketing Timeline | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|-------------------------|
| | Various faculty/staff | | dedicated to the QEP with a racing theme, including a derby and a run. Start Strong. Finish Stronger. T-shirts were awarded to students as prizes in various contests. | |
| Career Focus Publication | Marketing Committee/ Mike Gavin | Community (24,000 households) | Awareness: Publication mailed to Rutherford and Polk County households including a high profile article about the QEP | May 2015 |
| 2015-2016 Catalog & 2015-2016 Student Handbook | Handbook Committee & Catalog Committee | Students, Potential Students, Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Logo incorporated on the covers. | Summer 2015 |
| QEP posters strategically placed across campus | Marketing Committee | Students, Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Posters/signs placed across campus beginning in the summer and continuing throughout the fall of 2015; QEP Marketing Committee will change them periodically in an effort to keep interest; locations include stairwell doors, elevators, bathroom stall doors, Student Center, computer labs | Summer 2015 – Fall 2015 |
| Financial Aid Release Day | QEP Team & SGA | Students | Awareness: First day students may charge books using financial aid in the bookstore. Members of QEP Team and SGA will ensure a presence in Student Center. | September 2015 |
| QEP Quips | Marketing Committee | Students, Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Short, humorous emails sent once a week until the SACSCOC team comes; serve as a reminder and provide information about QEP. | August – October 2015 |
| Convocation | QEP Team | Faculty & Staff | Awareness: Miscellaneous QEP items given to faculty and staff; fun QEP quiz activity serves as pre-test for employees | August 17, 2015 |
| New Student Orientation | Orientation Committee Various faculty/staff | Students | Awareness: SSFS folders and other info. given to students attending Orientation. | August 19, 2015 |



| QEP Marketing Timeline | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Logo on Student Computers | Marketing Committee IT staff | Students | Awareness: All student computer monitors display the QEP logo. | August 2015 |
| Facebook Contest | Marketing Committee | Students | Awareness: Students will have the opportunity to submit their interpretation of the QEP as a funny photo or video. The winner will be announced at QEP day on October 14. | September to October 2015 |
| QEP Cards | Marketing Committee | Faculty & Staff | Awareness: A QEP card containing the logo and slogan, along with important points, will be distributed to all faculty and staff during Professional Development Day. These can be kept in a wallet, purse, or desk as a reminder of the QEP | October 8, 2015 |
| WNCW | Marketing Committee WNCW Radio | Community | Awareness: short radio spots on our campus radio station will highlight our QEP and events | August to October 2015 |
| IC3 Connect | Marketing Committee Ruth Colnot SGA | Students | Awareness: IC3 Connect is an event that happens right after classes begin. Students are invited to mingle and get information on all ICC resources. There will be a QEP booth and giveaways. | August 2015 |
| Grub "QEP" Day | Marketing Committee Ruth Colnot SGA | Students, Staff & Faculty | Awareness: Grub Day occurs every fall. Classes are cancelled. Students, faculty and staff participate in games and activities. This year the theme is dedicated to the QEP. Students will receive a QEP souvenir after completing a short quiz. | October 14, 2015 |

Appendix C MAP Assignment

M.A.P. (Master Academic Plan) Assignment

Part 1: Goals

Before you begin your academic journey, it is important to understand your goals for this journey.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions regarding your goals and expectations

1. What degree, diploma, and/or certificate are you seeking?
2. Do you plan to transfer to a 4-year university?
3. If you are planning to transfer to a 4-year university, what major will you pursue?
4. What are your career goals?
5. Is the degree, diploma, or certificate suitable for your career goals? Explain your answer.
6. How long do you expect to be enrolled in school to achieve your goals?

Part 2: Understanding the Program Guide

Each degree/diploma/certificate offered through Isothermal Community College has a Program Guide. These Program Guides provide students with a list of courses that must be taken to earn a degree, diploma, and/or certificate. It is important for students to be aware of these courses, when they are offered, how many credits each course carries, and if a prerequisite exists for a certain course. Some Program Guides are simple and straightforward. Other Program Guide are more flexible allowing students to make choices concerning which courses they would like to take.

DIRECTIONS: For this section, you must locate your Program Guide. These Program Guide can be found by clicking on the “Academic Programs” tab on the Isothermal Community College main web page. Once you land on the “Academics” page you will need to choose the division that your program falls under to locate the specific Program Guide. Review this Program Guide and decide which courses you will take to complete your degree, diploma, or certificate. As stated above, this process may be simple or slightly more complex depending upon pathway. Save & upload this document into Moodle.

Part 3: How long will it take?

Many students are often misled into thinking that a degree from Isothermal Community College will only take two years to complete. Though this option is possible, it is not always realistic for every student. It is important that you understand how long it will take for you to complete your goals.

DIRECTIONS: Using the Program Guide, complete the “How long will it take?” chart. If you have already taken courses, fill those courses in based on when you took them. Be sure to include any DMA or DRE classes that you have taken or that you will need to take. For each



| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Construction Technology • Collision Repair & Refinishing Technology • Computer Engineering Technology • Computer Integrated Machining • Electrical Systems Technology • Electronics Engineering Technology • Industrial Systems Technology • Manufacturing Technology • Mechanical Drafting technology • Mechanical Engineering Technology • Sustainability Technologies • Welding Technology <p>Health and Public Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD Nursing • AP AD Nursing • Surgical Technology • Practical Nursing • LPN Refresher • Basic Law Enforcement Training • Cosmetology • Criminal Justice • Early Childhood Education • EMS • General Occupational Technology • Occupational Education Associate • School-Age Education |
| Which level of education are you seeking? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Degree b. Diploma c. Certificate |
| Approximately how many credit hours must be earned to complete your program? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 10-19 credit hours b. 20-29 credit hours c. 30-39 credit hours d. 40-49 credit hours e. 50-59 credit hours f. 60-69 credit hours g. 70-79 credit hours |
| After mapping out the required classes, how many semesters will it take to complete your program? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1-2 semesters b. 3-4 semesters c. 5-6 semesters d. 7-8 semesters e. 9 or more semesters |
| After mapping out your required classes, were the total amount of semesters needed to complete the program more than you expected? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>If the answer to the previous question was yes, what do you think was the reason for the extended amount of time needed to complete the program? Mark all that apply. If the answer was no, mark N/A</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The need to take DMA and DRE classes to prepare for college level course work b. Taking 12 hours or less each semester c. Conflicts with job schedule d. Conflicts with personal schedule: family issues, transportation, etc... e. Difficulty with time management f. Difficulty with technology: online classes, checking email, etc... g. Classes were not offered when I needed them h. Other i. N/A |
| <p>Do you feel the M.A.P. (Master Academic Plan) has helped you gain an understanding of what is required of you to complete your program?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No |
| <p>Do you feel the M.A.P. (Master Academic Plan) will help you maintain your focus and stay on track during your time with Isothermal Community College?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No |

Part 5: Assessment #2 of your M.A.P.

DIRECTIONS: Complete the assessment assignment during the last half of the semester.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Do you feel that you have stayed on track with your M.A.P.?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No |
| <p>If the answer is no to the previous question, what steps have you taken to get back on track? What is your new action plan?</p> | <p>Comment:</p> |
| <p>Have you been contacted by any of the following with regards to your progress in class and with your M.A.P.?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Instructor b. Advisor c. Representative from Learning Support & Retention d. Other e. N/A |



Appendix D: MAP Rubric

| TASK | 1-Incomplete | 2-Partially Complete | 3-Complete |
|--|--------------|----------------------|------------|
| Student can successfully identify the program of study | | | |
| Student can successfully identify the level of study: degree, diploma, certificate | | | |
| Student can successfully identify the correct amount of credit hours needed to earn a degree/diploma/certificate | | | |
| Student can make appropriate choices when faced with an option of multiple classes. | | | |
| Student can successfully outline a semester- by-semester plan of courses which includes all classes needed for completion. | | | |
| Student can successfully match his or her M.A.P. with the intended program of study. | | | |
| Student can identify barriers to completion of the M.A.P. when applicable. | | | |
| Student can identify resources that might be helpful when redesigning his or her M.A.P. if needed. | | | |
| | | TOTAL SCORE | |

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Appendix F: Drafted 2015-16 APS Part I

ASSESSMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Service & Support Unit Part I

For Academic Year: 2015-16

Department: Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee

Division: Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative

Mission: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning.

Goals:

1. Student Success. Students who successfully complete the MAP assignment will have a higher fall-to-fall retention rate than students who do not successfully complete the assignment. (Baseline established Year 1 through pilot.) (QEP SLO 1)
2. Student Learning. Students who complete the MAP assignment will demonstrate goal-setting skills. (Threshold of 80% of completers will receive at 75% or higher.) (QEP SLO 1)
3. Student Satisfaction. Students will rate their overall satisfaction with the enhanced ACA course curriculum and the MAP assignment at or above the threshold of 83%. (QEP SLO 1)
4. New Course Saturation Rate. Increase data collection of students completing the MAP assignment to 98% by Fall 2016. (QEP LEO 1)

Review Team: The Enhanced ACA Curriculum Committee will submit APS reporting to the SSFS Committee annually and make a presentation of results to the ACA Advisory Committee.

Assessment Tools:

- Enhanced ACA Student Fall-to-Fall Retention Report. Annual. (Goal 1)
- MAP Assignment Rubric. Each Semester. (Goal 2)
- Enhanced ACA Course Evaluation. Each Semester. (Goal 3)
- MAP Assignment Rubric Data Collection Report. Each Semester. (Goal 4)

Location: Back up materials for this report can be found in the SSFS Committee Moodle site.

Dissemination & Discussion: Institution-wide survey results will be shared with deans and directors within the academic division. A summary of all survey results will be presented to the College Council for discussion. Goal updates will be presented to College Council, President's Council, and the Board of Trustees for discussion and planning and reports will be made available to all employees via the SSFS Moodle website.

Submission Date: August 2015

ASSESSMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Service & Support Unit Part I

For Academic Year: 2015-16
Department: Educational Planning Committee
Division: Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Initiative

Mission: To remove barriers to academic progression and completion through comprehensive educational planning.

Goals:

1. Student Progress. Students who successfully develop an Action Plan will have a higher fall-to-fall retention rate or graduation rate. (Baseline established Year 3 based on previous year's data.) (QEP SLO 2)
2. Student Learning. Students who complete an Action Plan will demonstrate goal-setting and problem solving skills. (Threshold of 80% of completers will identify two or more strategies.) (QEP SLO 2)
3. Student Satisfaction. Students will rate their overall satisfaction with the Action Plan process at a baseline established in Year 3 based on Year 2 results. (QEP SLO 2)
4. Early Intervention Form (EIF) Usage Rate. Increase number of instructors who make complete and on-time EIFs using an online data collection system from the 13% average from Fall 2012 to Fall 2015 to 40% by June 30, 2017. (QEP LEO 2) *Note this goal is delayed because the Support Team will not begin until Fall 2016.*

Review Team: The Educational Planning Committee will submit APS reporting to the SSFS Committee annually.

Assessment Tools:

- Action Plan Completer Fall-to-Fall Retention Report. Annual. (Goal 1)
- Action Plan Summary Data. Twice a year. (Goal 2)
- Action Plan Completer Satisfaction Survey. Twice a year. (Goal 3)
- Early Intervention Form (EIF) Data Collection Report. Twice a year. (Goal 4)

Location: Back up materials for this report can be found in the SSFS Committee Moodle site.

Dissemination & Discussion:

Institution-wide survey results will be shared with deans and directors within the academic division. A summary of all survey results will be presented to the College Council for discussion. Goal updates will be presented to College Council, President's Council, and the Board of Trustees for discussion and planning. Reports will be made available to all employees via the SSFS Moodle website.

Submission Date: August 2015



Appendix G: Action Plan Session Summary



Start Strong. Finish Stronger. Action Plan

ACTION PLAN

*** What is your student ID #?**

Do you feel that you have stayed on track with your MAP?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

If no, which of the following have contributed?

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The need to take DMA and DRE classes to prepare for college level course work | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with technology: online classes, checking email, or other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking 12 hours or less each semester | <input type="checkbox"/> Classes were not offered when I needed them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflicts with job schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with financial aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflicts with personal schedule: family issues, transportation, childcare, or other | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with personal finances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with time management | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

*** List two or more actions you will take to continue to successfully achieve your educational goals:**

Done



Appendix H: SACSCOC QEP Guidelines as Document Index



**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES
INDICATORS OF AN ACCEPTABLE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

CR 2.12: *The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. (Quality Enhancement Plan)*

| INDICATOR | EXCEPTIONAL |
|--|--|
| <u>1.A.</u> An institutional process | Plan is directly related to institutional planning efforts. Topic selection involved process that generated information and specific ideas from a wide range of constituents. Selection of topic determined by representative process that considered institutional needs and viability of plan. SSFS pps. 5-13 |
| <u>1.B.</u> Key issues identified that emerge from institutional assessment | A direct and strong relationship of QEP topic to institutional needs. Clear how accomplishment of QEP would directly improve institutional/student performance. SSFS pps. 14-19 |
| <u>2.A.</u> Focus on learning <i>outcomes</i> and accomplishing the mission of the institution | Detailed student learning outcomes tied directly to institutional needs. SSFS pps. 17-19; 55-64 |
| <u>2.B.</u> Focus on the <i>environment</i> supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution | A clear relationship between activities of QEP and the improvement of student learning, all tied to established institutional needs. SSFS pps. 19-26 |



CS 3.3.2: *The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)*

| INDICATOR | EXCEPTIONAL |
|---|--|
| <u>3.A.</u> Capability to <i>initiate</i> the plan | Very detailed budget information, institutional commitment of funds clearly indicated. SSFS pps. 53-54 If individuals are not yet identified, detailed job descriptions provided that indicate the specific skills and abilities needed for key personal. SSFS pps. 42-49 Organizational structure shows clear reporting responsibilities and oversight structures. SSFS pps. 42-49; 49-52 |
| <u>3.B.</u> Capability to <i>implement</i> and <i>complete</i> the plan | Very detailed timetable is provided for year by year activities including specific actions, budgetary expenditures and assessment processes. Timetable indicates clearly that QEP can be realistically implemented and completed in five years. SSFS pps. 35-41 |
| <u>4.A.</u> Broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the <i>development</i> of the plan | Process used ensured input from all relevant constituencies in developing the plan. SSFS pps. 6-17 |

| INDICATOR | EXCEPTIONAL |
|--|---|
| <u>4.B.</u> Broad-based involvement institutional constituencies in the proposed <i>implementation</i> of the plan | All relevant constituencies have direct involvement in implementation. SSFS pps. 19-26; 33 |
| <u>5.A.</u> Identified goals for the quality enhancement plan | Goals are clearly stated, lead to specific, measurable outcomes. SSFS pps. 18-19; 57-64 |
| <u>5.B.</u> A plan to assess the achievement of the goals of the quality enhancement plan | Assessment is based on clear outcomes, assessment methods related to outcomes, assessment methods related to outcomes, and are direct measures of those outcomes. SSFS pps. 55-64 |