

Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness

# QEP Newsletter

May - June 2022 Volume I

## Student Retention: Stepping Stones to Success

### *Why the QEP Newsletter?*

The purpose of the QEP newsletter is to keep all faculty, staff, students, alumni, stakeholders, and the community at large informed about the purpose and process of Miles College's QEP. We will provide monthly updates. Please chat with us via email: [qep@miles.edu](mailto:qep@miles.edu).

### *What is the Quality Enhancement Plan?*

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a long-term plan that focuses on improving (or enhancing) student learning, performance, and student success. It is an integral component of the reaffirmation of the accreditation process. The QEP topic is derived from an institution's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhancing overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.

Miles College's accreditors require a QEP. SACSCOC is the accreditation council for degree-granting institutions such as Miles College. SACSCOC is committed to improving education by making sure each institution meets high academic standards. Thus, they require institutions to evaluate each component that impacts student learning and success and identify areas that need improving.

### *Why do we need a QEP?*

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. As part of the accreditation process, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a document developed by the institution that (1) includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates the institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identify goals and a plan to assess their achievement.

## *What's Happening Now?*

*\* We are currently in the writing phase of the QEP.*

*\* The QEP Logo is currently being designed by students with the support of the QEP Marketing Committee*

## Executive Summary

Miles College has identified student retention as the broad-based topic for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Miles College's QEP is titled "Student Retention: Stepping Stones to Success." The QEP focuses on students' communication skills, (written & oral), and academic advising by embedding stepping stones in the first four semesters that will lead to the improved retention of the first-time/first-year freshman cohort. At the onset of preparation for the selection of a new QEP topic for the institution, a Quality Enhancement Plan Committee which comprises of representatives from faculty, students, alumni, staff, and administrators was formed in October 2020. Several possible topics for improving student learning and success at Miles College emerged through ongoing conversations based on the analysis of institutional data provided by the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (OIRE).

With further review and deep dive into the survey results by the QEP Committee, a student-focused survey was administered to students to understand their focal needs that would assist with retention. As a result, the broad-based student retention evolved into a topic that focuses on the retention of cohort starting from freshman year through the sophomore year using "stepping stones to success." These stepping stones would enable students to advance toward their goal of completion on time. The selection of this topic is aligned with the institution mission where it states, "cultivates students to seek knowledge that leads to intellectual and civic empowerment."

From the survey results administered to students only, the committee also crafted three outcomes, which will assist in providing students with the necessary guidance, skills, academic resources, and support services needed to accomplish their goals and achieve success.

These outcomes will also help students in making a successful transition from general education courses (Foundation) to major courses (Focus).

The outcomes are:

1. Student learning outcome: (Written Communication Skills) Students will demonstrate improved knowledge of communication abilities by developing effective writing processes (EN 100, EN 101, EN 102,)
2. Student learning outcome: (Oral Communication Skills) Students will demonstrate improved knowledge of communication abilities by developing effective oral communication process in various contexts (REA 100, SPE III)
3. Student success outcome: (Advising) Advisors/Success coaches will assist students to craft a coherent educational plan and help in choosing a major; make sure students take at least 30 credit hours in an academic year; monitors students' persistence per semester.

Miles College expects to improve retention by implementing and achieving the above student learning and success outcomes associated with the QEP. The intent is to retain 10% more students in the cohort by the end of the 5-year implementation data collection period. Assessment of the outcomes will be evaluated by formative and summative assessments, focusing on the identified group. To assess communication abilities, the college will utilize summative assessments for writing and oral communication abilities. The advising component's assessment will be in alignment with the embedded stepping stones for each of the four semesters that ensure student persistence.

Miles College is committed to continuous improvement of student learning and student success and has earmarked required human, financial, and physical resources to ensure the success of the QEP. The goals align with the College's mission and strategic goals, which both focus on promoting student success.

### *How do we select a topic?*

The College must review its strategic plan and student data. Faculty discussions about the academic needs and performance of their students are also important. An integral part of this planning committee is to solicit student input about what they believe is missing from their academic experience or career development preparations. The topic must emerge from the strategic planning process, data, institutional goals, and focus on continuous improvement. In addition, the QEP is a course of action that is specific to an institution and its mission; therefore, the Quality Enhancement Plan is a commitment to enhancing the overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on improving student learning outcomes/ and or student success.



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## *SASCOC Standard 7.2*

The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes;(b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success;(d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and(e)includes a plan to assess achievement.

### *The QEP Milestones*

#### *“This is what we have accomplished thus far.”*

- \* Solicit feedback and facilitate input and discussion on potential QEP topics.
- \* Upon topic confirmation, solicit pre-proposals ideas from Miles College community.
- \* Select and recommend focused QEP topics from pre-proposal ideas submitted.
- \* Add a QEP Director and possible other members to the QEP Committee.
- \* Research topic-related best practices
- \* Identify needed action items
- \* Determine who is responsible for implementing
- \* Determine how it will be assessed
- \* Determine who is responsible for assessing
- \* Estimate the needed costs
- \* Determine a timeline for implementation
- \* Prepare and submit a full Quality Enhancement Plan.

### *Key Dates to Remember*

- \* QEP Submission to SACSCOC: August 23, 2022
- \* SACSCOC On-site Committee Visit: October 4-6, 2022

### *For additional information, Contact:*

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