

QEP Executive Summary

Genesis Project: Improving Student Engagement and Success through Support for Learners

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Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC) believes emphatically in Student Learning as the core of who we are and what we do. From the communities served by BSCTC to the Board of Directors, from the faculty, staff and administration to the students, the consensus over the past three years became that of providing the means through which students can become acclimated to the college environment and supported in the achievement of identified goals. Based on this consensus, the Genesis Project, our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), identifies “Improving Student Engagement and Success through Support for Learners” as our topic.

Through the three facets of the Genesis Project – Transition, Advising, and First-Year Experience, our purpose is to focus on increasing the level of student engagement and involving the entire College community in achieving this end. Specific objectives for accomplishing this goal include (1) the provision of a transitional (developmental) program that leads to successful completion of a student’s educational goal; (2) the development and implementation of improved advising services that increase a student’s ability to identify, select, and execute an academic plan; and (3) the implementation of a first-year experience program that will engage students and establish connections to learner support services throughout their college career. Achieving these objectives supports our shift from a teaching-centered paradigm to that of one which is learning-centered and builds on services recently added for students and the coming together of Academic and Student Affairs as a united entity in addressing student needs.

Strategies central to the accomplishments of our objectives include numerous actions reaching students even before they become a part of BSCTC. Partnerships with area high schools will strive to ease the transition to college through successful placement in entry-level collegiate courses rather than placement into the series of developmental coursework. Bringing high school and college faculty together to align curriculum and to create a mentoring relationship as well as providing a series of workshops for the high school teachers will ultimately support increased success rates for the students. Provision of a wider range of opportunities through which students will be successful when developmental work is necessary will also be a part of this plan.

The creation of a Center for Student Engagement will support improved advising services and the effective utilization of these services by students. Developing new policies and procedures for working with students through their academic planning and career exploration will lead to a greater number of students making appropriate and timely decisions. This will also provide greater opportunity for students who are challenged academically to receive the assistance needed to become successful. Greater retention of first-time students has already been recognized through the use of the Introduction to College course. The enhanced First-Year Experience program will create increased awareness of the multiplicity of ways in which students can utilize college resources to their advantage and will encourage them to do so.

Built into our plan are measures of assessment for each initiative as well as for the overall QEP itself. As a part of our on-going annual planning process, the oversight committee will monitor the progress, provide analysis of data and other assessment information, and oversee revision as required as we move from one year to the next. In addition, those who are working at the more specific levels of the plan will also be monitoring its progress as individual entities.

These initiatives follow the direction established by BSCTC as an institution dedicated to addressing the needs of the surrounding community and being responsive to student needs. They build on the positive attributes of our faculty and staff and provide a mechanism by which we can continue to demonstrate that student learning is at the center of what we do.