



**Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):** Destination Success: First-Year Focus  
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Blinn College's QEP, Destination Success: First-Year Focus, has as its goal improving student success in the first year of college. The QEP is aligned with the College's mission as a comprehensive community college committed to educational excellence and to individual and community enhancement. The College selected its QEP after a comprehensive and collaborative process involving all College stakeholders and reviewing data from surveys, focus groups, assessments of student learning, analyses of student success and persistence, and literature reviews.

Blinn College's QEP will improve first-year student success through the use of learning communities: "an intentional restructuring of the students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning and foster connections among student, faculty, and disciplines" (Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gebelnick 2004: 67). Cohorts of first-year students will take three linked courses: two academic courses and a student success course titled Journey to Success. The academic courses are chosen from among four courses with high first-year enrollment but success rates below the College average: Composition and Rhetoric, Biology for Science Majors I, US History I, and Mathematics for Business and Social Sciences. Each cohort will link two of these courses with the success course. The instructor for the success course will be the "success coach" for that cohort of students, a single point of contact to assist students in their transition to college. An integrative assignment will require students to assimilate their learning across the academic courses.

The learning outcomes of the QEP are based on the learning outcomes of the core curriculum, with one additional program outcome focused on the transition to college:

- Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate effective communication skills. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate quantitative reasoning skills. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate personal responsibility. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate social responsibility. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate teamwork skills. (learning outcome)
- Students will demonstrate the ability to develop an educational pathway to achieve a focused exit goal. (program outcome)

The outcomes will be assessed through the use of rubrics to score the integrative assignments, students' completion of a degree plan, and student persistence to their second year of college.

The learning communities will be phased in over the five-year term of the QEP. The first year (2014-15) focused on faculty and staff development in structuring learning communities and designing an effective success course. By the end of the five year plan, the goal is for all first-time-in-college students to participate in a learning community in their first semester.