

## **Information Literacy: Because We C.A.R.E.**

Through our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), **Information Literacy: Because We C.A.R.E.**, we seek to transform the culture at Forsyth Technical Community College by improving student learning in information literacy. We define “information literacy” as *the ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively in areas such as critical thinking, technology, career decision making, and lifelong learning*. Commenting on National Information Literacy Month, President Obama stated, “An informed and educated citizenry is essential to the functioning of our modern democratic society, and I encourage educational and community institutions across the country to help Americans find and evaluate the information they seek in all its forms,” (Wiener, 2010). Clearly, improved information literacy skills will benefit not only our students, but our college, community, state, and country, as well.



Our QEP focuses on four student learning outcomes denoted by the acronym **C.A.R.E.** to emphasize essential skills: **C**ommunicate, **A**ccess, **R**esearch, and **E**valuate. These outcomes are based on the core outcomes of information literacy as defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

**Communicate:** Students will be able to develop the questions necessary to obtain the information they seek.

**Access:** Students will be able to identify and access appropriate information sources.

**Research:** Students will be able to search/retrieve/utilize information for a specific purpose.

**Evaluate:** Students will be able to critically evaluate information.

In order to achieve these outcomes, Forsyth Tech’s information literacy QEP relies on two key components: a supportive learning *environment* and specific strategies to *engage* students in the learning process. Within this two-dimensional framework, we expect our students to gain information literacy skills that will prepare them to compete and succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The environmental components of the plan include the creation of a teaching and learning center, enhancement of our learning environments by upgrading 54 classrooms to “smart” classrooms equipped with interactive tools, creation and offering of professional development to support the initiative, and implementation of an incentive grants program that will help foster new and creative ways to integrate information literacy across the campus. The teaching and learning center will serve as a centralized setting for learning and will offer services for students, faculty, and staff. It will be both a physical and virtual environment complete with the technology, people, and tools for creating a more information literate college community. These components are designed to broadly address information literacy needs and are expected to directly and indirectly influence student learning.

Our engagement strategies are designed to address specific student needs, as detailed in the **C.A.R.E.** model, and are expected to directly influence student learning. The strategies to address demonstrated needs include: development of modules that can be easily implemented into courses, student workshops offered in group and one-on-one consultation sessions, an information literacy based Career I-Search project included in ACA 090 which serves as an academic support orientation course, expansion and mandating of new student orientation, and the development of technology readiness competency evaluation and remediation measures.

All of the above-mentioned environmental and engagement strategies will help drive Forsyth Tech’s information literacy initiative and the **C.A.R.E.** outcomes. The **C.A.R.E.** outcomes are the crux of our QEP, and their successful implementation will be instrumental in integrating a focus on information literacy skills into the institution’s culture.