

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

**Title:** Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway Courses

**Institution:** Hillsborough Community College; 39 Columbia Drive; Tampa, FL 33606

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### **Summary:**

Hillsborough Community College's faculty, staff and students identified improving student learning outcomes in initial college-level foundation courses (Gateway courses) as an issue for learning enhancement. Various accountability measures indicate low performance levels by students at Hillsborough Community College in some courses critical to the completion of their college program. Consequently, this plan is centered on the development of means and strategies to improve student success in courses leading to program completion. The specific goals for this Gateway Initiative are as follows:

- 1) To improve Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway courses by achieving demonstrable student learning gains in identified gateway college-level knowledge, skills and abilities; and
- 2) To increase the student success rate in subsequent program courses through demonstrable student learning gains in identified gateway college-level knowledge, skills and abilities utilized in those courses.

Faculty have identified foundation college-level knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) necessary for academic success in the College's programs and then mapped those into the College curriculum to identify the actual Gateway courses where such knowledge, skills and abilities are initially taught. Two courses, College Algebra and General Psychology, have been chosen as the pilot Gateway courses. Specific criteria for selection included the fact that these two courses both fulfill General Education requirements for the Associate in Arts (AA) program and fulfill program requirements for a majority of the Associate in Science (AS) and Applied Associate in Science (AAS.) programs. Four additional Gateway courses will be chosen each year for the first three years of the Gateway Initiative. After courses are selected for the Gateway Initiative, the Initiative itself will involve the following strategic approaches:

- 1) Identify foundation (Gateway) college-level knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for academic success in the related college programs;
- 2) Identify multiple teaching/learning strategies to improve student learning outcomes in the courses;
- 3) Develop a research implementation model and schedule for each course for classroom-based research on the effectiveness of identified strategies using control and experimental course sections;
- 4) Utilize the research to identify strategies that will enhance student learning and then apply those best practices to all sections of the selected Gateway courses by:
  - a) providing resources to improve student learning outcomes for direct use by students taking the Gateway courses;
  - b) providing resources to improve student learning outcomes to the faculty teaching Gateway courses;
  - c) conducting within-course and repeated-measures assessments that provide baseline and longitudinal follow-up measures, such that the impact on student learning of the instructional interventions used may be gauged and continuous improvement of student learning in these courses facilitated;
- 5) Align appropriate related services, such as academic advising and counseling, library services, and academic support services, to support improving student learning outcomes in Gateway courses and track the effect of such improved alignment; and
- 6) Utilize those best practices where appropriate with other college courses and measure the subsequent impact on student learning outcomes.