

QEP ABSTRACT FOR SACS WEBSITE 7-24-14

QEP TITLE: Math At the Root of Success (MARS)

INSTITUTION: Indian River State College (IRSC)

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SUMMARY:

Indian River State College's Mission and Goals focus on promoting student access and success by providing educational opportunities for all students and creating a superior teaching and learning environment in which individual student success is cultivated. IRSC is also committed to the Completion Agenda which seeks to double graduation rates by 2020. To accomplish this completion goal, it is imperative that students be retained through strategies designed to minimize barriers to graduation. IRSC's QEP initiative is the result of a broad-based, comprehensive evaluation of challenges to student success that included input from all College stakeholders.

Math At the Root of Success (MARS) is a faculty-led, institution-wide initiative committed to improving student learning and success through the course redesign of Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033). The course redesign of Intermediate Algebra was selected by the QEP Development Committee because of the number of students impacted by this gateway course. For example, in 2012-2013, 46% of all degree-seeking students were either enrolled in or had taken MAT 1033. MAT 1033 is the first college-credit course in mathematics a student may take at IRSC. Although it serves as a college-credit elective, it does not satisfy the general education mathematics requirement. However, it is the prerequisite/gateway course for every mathematics class that does satisfy the general education requirement. It became clear from examination of student course enrollment and success, retention and completion data that an increase in success rates for this course should significantly impact the number of students who will go on to complete their degree.

The redesign of Intermediate Algebra incorporates active learning strategies and two variations on the emporium model in an effort to improve student learning and student success in the College's diverse student population. The two emporium models which make up the QEP are the Supplemental Emporium (SE) and the Mastery Emporium (ME). In the SE the students will meet with their instructor twice each week for a one hour class meeting (focus hour with active learning) followed by one hour of lab time in the MARS Lab. The ME is a self-accelerated, mastery-based model with mandatory attendance in the MARS lab at scheduled times. Both emporiums have the same modules and assignments on the interactive software and have an instructor and tutor present for just in time assistance.

The QEP focuses on three MARS goals: 1) student learning in MAT 1033 will improve, 2) student course success rates in MAT 1033 and a subsequent math course will increase, and 3) three-year and six-year completion rates for Associate degrees will increase. The QEP will be integrated into the IRSC planning and evaluation processes and IRSC will measure the success of the QEP by assessing the results of the two emporium models compared to a traditional delivery model in terms of these three goals. Analysis of the assessment data will allow the QEP leadership team, the QEP advisory team, and College administrators to monitor the progress and performance of the project, revise strategies as needed, and continue to allocate resources appropriately.

IRSC hopes and expects that the redesign of Intermediate Algebra will address the needs of today's diverse college student population and will ultimately lead to improved student learning in MAT 1033 and to increases in overall student success. The College plans to scale and adapt techniques and interventions that are found to be effective in the QEP to other courses and disciplines.