

MIDDLE GEORGIA COLLEGE

Enhancing Student Engagement in Reading and Improving Student Reading Skills

Mr. Johnny McMoy (jmcmoy@mgc.edu), Director of Planning and Assessment,

Focus of the Plan: The purpose of the Middle Georgia College *Quality Enhancement Plan* is to develop an institutional culture that values reading as a portal to academic success and personal growth, and to improve student reading skills. The plan defines reading as the active construction of meaning as a reader transacts with text (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1983; Smith, 1994). The five components of the plan include the establishment of a reading instruction module embedded in Freshman English, a modeling reading initiative that includes reading skills workshops in the Freshman Experience Program, a learning communities program in which the entire college participates in a thematic reading project across multiple disciplines and campuses, a print-rich environment, and reading resources on the college's website.

Broad-Based Involvement of Campus Community: To ensure that the *Quality Enhancement Plan* includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation, the QEP Team and its six subcommittees comprised representation of the institution's diverse campus community. The development of the plan was a regular agenda item in presidential cabinet meetings and was announced in various civic and industry settings to enlist the support of community stakeholders. To help galvanize the campus around this initiative, a slogan has been approved for posters and other mass-distribution campus publications: "It's Your Education—Own It....Read."

Assessment: The College's broad-based development of the *Quality Enhancement Plan* is also evidenced in the multi-faceted assessment of its effectiveness. Both formative and summative assessment instruments will be employed, including student and faculty surveys and focus groups, as well as the nationally normed Collegiate Academic Assessment of Proficiency (CAAP) to measure the overall impact on student learning and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to evaluate the effect on reading habits and culture.

Institutional Capability for the Institution and Continuation of the Plan: Each aspect of the plan has been developed with the input and participation of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Director for Planning, Assessment, and Grants, and other key college leaders with sustainability a significant underpinning of this entire initiative. A five-year budget was developed by the QEP Team and submitted to and approved by the President and the President's Cabinet. The budget includes funding for professional development and faculty stipends for key faculty participants in the project's implementation and evolution. Once the QEP is approved by SACS, the modules of instruction, the modeling of reading, and learning community schema will become part of the college's academic infrastructure and culture.

Conclusion: The Middle Georgia College *Quality Enhancement Plan* will enhance student learning for years to come not only in the way that students engage their texts and other resources as part of their collegiate classroom learning experience, but will also positively affect their perspectives on lifelong learning and its critical role in enriching every dimension of life for themselves and those they touch.