

Write Here, Write Now!
Creating a Culture of Writing
At
Piedmont Virginia Community College

Many studies and reports have noted the deficits and shortfalls with written products and communication among college students. Data gathered on the writing abilities of students attending, graduating, and transferring from Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) echo these concerns. PVCC's QEP Topic Selection and Planning Teams, after considering all available evidence and input, concluded that student writing was an area in need of improvement and resolved to both emphasize the value of writing and provide students with appropriate opportunities to engage in the writing process. It is the collective desire of PVCC's faculty, staff, administrators, and board members that its graduates are prepared to meet the expectations of transfer institutions and employers in regard to written communication skills. Therefore, PVCC has established a vision for a "Culture of Writing" as (1) the collective belief within our community that the act of writing has value, and (2) the consequent actions that teach, reinforce, and instill in our students the processes and practices required of proficient writers.

The goal of PVCC's QEP is to prepare graduates to meet the writing expectations of four-year institutions and the workforce by providing increased and deliberate opportunities to expand the breadth and depth of student writing experiences at PVCC and by promoting the value of writing as a tool for learning and communicating. Strategies to achieve this goal include: (1) revising first-year college composition courses to include expanded writing requirements, specific instruction in grammar and punctuation, and engagement in writing process activities; (2) implementing a new PVCC Writing Rubric to provide a common language and format for assessment of student writing and formative feedback to students; (3) integrating writing-to-learn and writing process activities into required information technology and computer science courses; (4) implementing a Writing Intensive course requirement in each associate degree program; (5) expanding the role of PVCC's Writing Center in providing writing tutoring and other resources; (6) providing faculty professional development on writing strategies and assessment; and (7) marketing the value of writing to PVCC students and faculty.

As a result of implementing the QEP, students will: (1) compose texts that are appropriate for purpose and audience; (2) compose texts in which ideas are supported in well-developed, logical paragraphs; (3) compose texts that demonstrate unity and coherence; (4) compose grammatically and mechanically correct sentences that convey the writer's message in a clear, precise, and readable way; (5) use writing-to-learn and writing process activities *on their own* as a means to explore and articulate ideas; (6) perceive themselves as "improved writers" as a result of their PVCC experience; and (7) express confidence in their ability to write effectively.

Write Here, Write Now! will be phased in with cohorts of associate degree programs over five years. Multiple measures, including cross-sectional, value-added assessment of student learning in required courses and at graduation, as well as student and faculty surveys, will be used to assess the implementation and impact of the QEP. PVCC's QEP Implementation Team will monitor assessment results and make necessary adjustments to implementation.

Questions about PVCC's QEP development and implementation may be directed to:

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