

Executive Summary of the Quality Enhancement Plan:
*ACT for Your Future: A First-Semester Course focused on
Academic, Career & Transfer Planning*

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of Richard Bland College (RBC) centers on development, delivery and assessment of a First-Semester Course (FSC) focused on academic, career and transfer planning. The founding principle of the course is to engage students in cultivating and articulating their own career and academic plans. Research confirms such engagement can positively affect student interest, motivation, responsibility and performance. Hence, our QEP aims to improve student learning via several projected learning outcomes. We believe participation in the FSC will: increase student knowledge of relevant facts relating to career area, academic major and transfer institution options; enhance students' development of personal, academic and career goals as well as of informed strategies for their attainment; and increase student utilization of existing learning resources, including the library, mathematics and writing centers, RBC email, Blackboard online course management system and Banner information system.

The FSC, required of all full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students, will focus on achieving increased: contact between these students and their academic advisors; percentages of students with advisors in their academic area of interest; and student exploration of career and transfer possibilities. These explorations will involve student inquiry through a variety of platforms and culminate in the development of an Academic and Career Portfolio and two customized reports relating to career and transfer options.

Led by the Quality Enhancement Plan Development Committee, the selection process for this topic resulted in college-wide input and a desire to address an area for improvement viewed as indigenous to Richard Bland in light of the institution's mission and an upcoming period of change and challenge. The First-Semester Course, RBC 101, will be served by an oversight committee of faculty and staff, reporting directly to the Provost and charged with overseeing and assessing the efficacy of the course in the context of learning outcomes, curriculum, faculty, budget, the College's advising program and all other aspects of the evolving first-year experience program.