



Spartanburg Methodist College Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary



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Choosing a QEP Focus

Beginning in August of 2005, Spartanburg Methodist College implemented a broad-based process for determining the focus of our QEP. A QEP Team was selected which represented each academic division, key staff positions, and the student body. The QEP Team reviewed research data (for example, CSEQ and course evaluations) and collected input from faculty, students, staff, administration, alumni, trustees, and friends of the College through brainstorming sessions. After careful consideration of the assessment data, the QEP Team chose to focus on the issue of student involvement. In particular, our focus became student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction. Based upon the well-documented success of learning communities in improving student involvement, we set out to establish a learning community to address this issue. The title of our QEP became, "Pioneer Learning Community- Learning Through Interaction".

QEP Goals and Implementation

Out of five successful learning community models, the Linked Courses model was chosen to best support our focus of increased student involvement. It was decided that we would begin the Pioneer Learning Community with 50 self-selected incoming freshmen divided into two cohorts of 25 students. These students would take the following linkages: First Semester – English 101, Psychology 101, and SMC 101 (our Freshman Year Experience course); Second Semester – English 102, Religion 103, and SMC 102. These linkages would be designed to support achievement of our Student Learning Outcomes or SLO's. The SLO's for the Learning Community were outlined as follows:

1. Students will engage in student-to-student interaction and student-to-faculty interaction through increased discussion time, meeting time with professors, design and implementation of group projects, and development of an electronic portfolio.
2. Students will set personal goals and identify steps to take to achieve those goals through appropriate goal-setting activities within the linked courses.
3. Students will clearly describe course-to-course interdisciplinary relationships among the LC courses through the sub-focus of Engaging Self, Engaging Others: by completing integrated assignments, evaluating personal learning styles, demonstrating written and oral communication skills as well as research skills.
4. Students will demonstrate behavior and attitudes that are typical of conscientious and reliable citizens by developing a budget, developing an academic resume, adhering to deadlines, participating in community service and campus organizations.

It was decided that a Director of Learning Communities would be hired to implement the Pioneer Learning Community QEP. A QEP Oversight Committee would be assembled to review actions taken to fulfill the QEP Goals.

QEP Resources

From its regular operating budget, the College made a commitment of resources to the implementation and sustainability of the plan. The commitment included, but was not limited to, hiring a Director of Learning Communities, funding for faculty/staff development, funding for assessments and other resources for students, and marketing the LC.

QEP Progress

- A QEP Oversight Committee has been established and a Director of Learning Communities has been hired.
- The Director has successfully enrolled the 50 students in the Pioneer Learning Community (PLC). Marketing to students was successfully accomplished through brochures, a mail campaign, an email campaign, and a phone campaign. Students were invited to join the PLC and enrollment was voluntary. The demographic of the PLC students is representative of the demographic of SMC.
- Several PLC faculty members have attended staff development on Learning Communities and more will attend this year.
- The linked English 101, Psychology 101, and SMC 101 curriculum has been established and is ready for implementation.
- Electronic portfolio templates have been designed and are ready for student use. A facebook page has been developed.
- The Director and Oversight Committee made suggested changes to Orientation plans and have included PLC orientation during the regular college Orientation Days.
- Assessment methods have been chosen to collect data regarding the success of the PLC in achieving the SLO's. Suggested changes were made in assessment to align the assessment of the PLC with the assessments already in place in the College.
- The College has committed resources to implement and sustain the PLC.

Details of specific assignments, assessments, marketing plans, other methods of implementation and progress of the PLC can be obtained by contacting Kathleen Brown, Director of Learning Communities at brownk@smcsc.edu.