

QEP Executive Summary: **Compass – Navigating Excellence through Effective Communication**

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Sul Ross State University (SRSU) initiated a broad-based institutional process of identifying possible QEP topics in the fall of 2015, which involved solicited input from all stakeholders and a review of institutional data and best practices. From this process, the need for students to understand how to communicate effectively through written, oral and visual communication emerged as our focus.

Our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) addresses student communication needs across all academic programs, academic colleges, and campuses. Based on input from the SACSCOC On-Site Committee, the goal for the QEP is achieved in one student learning outcome: *The student will create works that exhibit skill in prepared and purposeful communication (written, oral or visual).*

Successfully implementing **Compass** increases opportunities for SRSU students to demonstrate competency in written, oral, and visual communication and will enhance the capacity of SRSU educators to teach communication skills through increased professional development experiences. During the first year of implementation, Dr. Sherry Morreale, communication scholar, provided training for faculty at all campuses. Accordingly, the QEP enhances student communication skills and expands faculty skills to teach oral, written and visual communication.

The QEP focuses on junior and senior level courses at all campuses. The Student Learning Outcome is taught and assessed in all designated communication-infused courses. Faculty (called Navigators) volunteer to infuse the communication SLO into their courses. They will be assisted by Faculty Guides who serve as pedagogical leaders to mentor the Navigators in the development of their courses, the creation of their assessments, and the use of the scoring rubric (called Cardinal Rubric). The QEP calls for adding additional Navigators each year; thereby increasing the number of communication-infused courses available for students.

At the end of each semester, the Faculty Guides will collect student artifacts (writing, oral, or visual) from each of the Navigators. SRSU contracted with Dr. Marcia Imbeau, an expert in assessment, to provide training for Navigators and other faculty who agree to participate in the scoring process, using the Cardinal Rubric. The Assessment Days are held each semester to collect quality data that can result in improved instruction in the communication modes to strengthen students' skills.

Students, faculty, staff, and community members embrace this QEP, as it aims to develop students in ways that can enhance their potential to contribute to a civil society as well as making them more marketable to potential employers. In this way, the name **Compass** is apt. We see this QEP equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate toward a life of excellence.