

Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE): A Focus on Freshmen

Texas State University-San Marcos

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Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) which focuses on freshmen is the theme of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Texas State University-San Marcos. The plan includes two goals, each with three student learning outcomes. Outcomes are supported with discussion of actions and a corresponding description of the organizational structure and resources necessary to achieve the outcome, as well as an assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of the plan. In addition, four main initiatives, designed to organize and implement the actions denoted in the plan, are identified.

The two interrelated goals of the freshman-focused QEP are (I) to help students clarify their career goals and (II) to assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan to meet their goals. The goals are accomplished through the following six student learning outcomes in which students will (1) assess their future career opportunities; (2) relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values; (3) choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world; (4) select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities and career goals; (5) chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion; and (6) choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.

Initiatives designed to achieve the goals include the development of a *PACE Center*, a fully-staffed, one-stop / total-intake advising / mentoring / career exploration location for freshmen that also provides the leadership, development, and services needed for the overall implementation of the QEP; the enhancement of the course *US 1100: University Seminar*, a required one-credit course that introduces students to the nature and aims of university education where a portion of the curriculum encourages Personalized Academic and Career Exploration through related instruction, guidance, and the development of a portfolio; utilization of *Faculty Liaisons* from each academic college, who coordinate activities to assist students in exploring academic and career pathways; and enhanced *technology* providing student scheduling and record keeping software and electronic portfolio applications.

The concept grew from a comprehensive, methodical, and logical planning process conducted during a three-year period. Starting with the QEP Topic Development Team which solicited ideas and proposed topics, and shifting to the QEP Task Force which narrowed the topic and developed the plan details, the QEP resulted from the input and efforts of faculty, staff, and students representing the broadest range of University stakeholders. Existing practices, empirical data from campus assessments, and best practices served as a foundation for the development of the plan.

Actions, organizational structure, resources, and a timeline needed to achieve the plan were discussed, designed, and related to the achievement of the student learning outcomes. Student learning will be assessed with various quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures. Formative assessment to measure success and suggest modifications has been incorporated, as well as summative assessment to measure the overall success of the plan.