

**Learning Excellence Initiative  
Tri-County Technical College**

Galen DeHay  
P.O. Box 587  
7900 Highway 76  
Pendleton, SC 29670  
[gdehay@tctc.edu](mailto:gdehay@tctc.edu)

**Executive Summary**

Tri-County Technical College's Quality Enhancement Plan, the Learning Excellence Initiative (LEI), seeks to improve students' learning and their learning capacity during the transitional experience, and to foster their social and academic integration into the institution. Beginning prior to enrollment and continuing through the first semester, students will be provided with structured learning experiences that result in the foundational knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors they need to achieve academic success and reach their educational goals.

Based on the work of Bowen (1977) and Domjan (1993), Tri-County defines student learning as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors that facilitate intellectual development as well as academic and social integration into the College.

Tri-County Technical College's Learning Excellence Initiative includes three components: 1) Smart Start (a brief but structured learning experience that occurs prior to enrollment in the first semester); 2) Freshman Seminar (a new, first-semester course with specific learning outcomes to support students' academic and transition success); and 3) a learning community (using Freshman Seminar linked with two developmental or credit courses as a mechanism to promote deeper learning, based on established course-level student learning outcomes). The LEI will serve first-time postsecondary students who meet criteria for the specific courses in the learning community such as appropriate placement test scores and intended major.

The College's Learning Excellence Initiative meets the required acceptability indicators for a Quality Enhancement Plan by providing a clear focus for the initiative; by thoroughly describing the institution's capability to initiate, continue, and assess the plan; and by showing evidence of the broad-based involvement of the campus community in developing the plan.

Tri-County has clearly defined problems associated with student unsuccess and the relationship between these problems and has clearly defined the primary goal of the LEI-to enhance student learning and thus improve academic achievement and student success. A concise purpose statement along with supporting goals and outcomes provides the necessary focus and framework for the Learning Excellence Initiative. In addition, the College clearly sees and has documented the potential benefits of the LEI to the entire campus community. The understanding of these benefits, which came as a result of intensive, broad-based development efforts, contributes to an appreciation of the quality enhancement plan as an achievable and exciting way to enhance student learning and success.

The College has a comprehensive and ambitious assessment plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Learning Excellence Initiative. The plan is extensive not only to meet the acceptability standards for a quality enhancement plan, but also to address the College's need to embrace a "culture of evidence" as part of becoming a more learner-centered institution.

Faculty, staff, administrators, students, and Board members have been involved in various aspects of developing the College's Quality Enhancement Plan. The result has been unprecedented levels of dialogue, debate, collaboration, and creativity among the many participants. The benefit has been unprecedented levels of enthusiasm and support for the Learning Excellence Initiative, which will undoubtedly prove to be one of the College's most significant and meaningful undertakings.

Tri-County's Quality Enhancement Plan is being directed by Mr. Galen DeHay, Science Department Head.