

## STUDENTS FIRST

### Improving the Mathematical and Written Communication Skills of Students with Identified Deficiencies

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The Wade College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to improve the competencies of students with identified weaknesses in mathematical and written communication skills. This will be accomplished through three initiatives: 1) Implementation of diagnostic placement exams using the standardized ACCUPLACER *Arithmetic* and *Sentence Skills* exams; 2) Creation of a developmental education program offering college preparation classes in mathematics and writing; and 3) Creation of supplemental education laboratories to augment class instruction in the above-named areas.

Wade College utilized institutional data, anecdotal evidence, literature review, and extra-institutional data to support the assertion that a significant portion of the student population is underprepared in mathematics skills and written communication skills. Data shows that many students begin college woefully unprepared to handle collegiate expectations, both in the classroom and out. These deficiencies stem from a number of sources: poor preparation in high school, being a non-traditional student, and having learning disabilities, to name a few. This lack leads to frustration on the students' and instructors' parts, poor grades, and higher attrition rates. In order to combat the lack of preparation, Wade College plans to implement programs and services that will provide students with additional preparation and support to bolster needed skills in order that students may succeed in their classes and ultimately in life beyond college.

Wade College's QEP will begin with an initiative to identify those students with academic deficiencies in the mathematical and written communication skills areas. This will occur during the admissions process in order to let students know prior to matriculation what will be expected of them if a deficiency (or deficiencies) should be identified. After enrollment is completed, but before students begin classes, all students will take mandatory placement exams via the College Board's ACCUPLACER in the areas of mathematics and written communication skills.

Students who score below a pre-determined internal benchmark on either or both of these tests will be required to successfully complete the appropriate college preparatory course—either *DMAT 0075-Fundamentals of Mathematics* and/or *DCOM 0095-Fundamentals of Composition*—before they can enroll in *MATH 1332-Math for Liberal Arts* or *ENGL 1301-Composition*.

The third and final initiative of Wade College's QEP is to implement supplemental instruction laboratories open to all students enrolled in either the college-preparation class(s) or college-level class(s). These laboratories will emphasize one-on-one student assistance in the respective areas with the instructor acting as a facilitator, providing assistance when necessary. Students will be able to work individually through course concepts provided by assignments, workbooks, or course-specific computer software. The two-hour laboratories will be held a minimum of thirteen times throughout a trimester; the subject-specific laboratories are held concurrently, by trimester, with the college-level and/or the college preparation courses in which they are integrated. Attendance will be optional until a student fails either the college preparatory class or the college-level class, at which time attendance will become mandatory.

These three initiatives support the Wade College QEP's goals. Student learning outcomes, as well as QEP outcomes will be measured on an ongoing, regular basis in order to assure achievement of interim and long-term goals.

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