

MORE

MAXIMIZING ONLINE
READINESS AND EXCELLENCE
M.O.R.E.

QEP TOPIC: The name of Midlands Technical College’s Quality Enhancement Plan is M.O.R.E.: Maximizing Online Readiness and Excellence. The focus of M.O.R.E. is to increase online student success at Midlands Technical College.

PROCESS OF SELECTION: M.O.R.E. arose out of the college’s strategic plan and was selected through a representative process whereby various constituent groups took part in defining its focus. The strategic plan called for increasing student success in targeted gateway courses through all modes of delivery. Online learning in particular was identified as an area of focus as enrollment in online classes at MTC has continued to increase, but success rates for online students have lagged behind those in face-to-face classrooms. Once the overall topic was identified, a series of listening sessions were held with faculty, staff, and student government to solicit input for how the QEP could improve online student success. Additionally, surveys were distributed to students and faculty to generate ideas for specific areas of need related to online learning with over 1,100 students participating. These ideas were then narrowed down to three key interventions by the topic selection committee.

QEP INTERVENTIONS: The QEP consists of three primary interventions: an online student readiness course referred to as the “Virtual Backpack,” an online faculty learning community for online instructors, and enhancements to student support services (including 24/7 online tutoring, intrusive advising via early alerts, adding the option of video web conferencing for advisors and advisees, and increasing library support for online learners). The student readiness course is open to all online students but is required of first-time online students enrolled in one of six targeted gateway courses. The online faculty learning community and student support services are currently being piloted in the six gateway courses.

MARKETING AND CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT: The topic selection process generated widespread knowledge of and support for the QEP, but numerous other measures have kept the campus community informed and engaged. Various councils of faculty, staff, and students received regular updates on QEP activities; communications were sent out both directly and through public and intranet websites; QEP leads participated in two additional informational sessions for students; and the college’s marketing department distributed a number of buttons, T-shirts, banners, and other items to help publicize the QEP both on MTC’s core campuses as well as affiliated local high schools. Altogether, seven different committees consisting of 38 faculty and staff members played a direct role in generating the QEP topic and its initial implementation, as well as hundreds more students, faculty, and staff who contributed ideas and provided feedback throughout the process.

ASSESSMENT PLAN: The QEP assessment plan builds on baseline data drawn from the most recent available academic years and sets concrete, achievable goals of increasing online student success. Success is measured through successful completion of targeted online courses, decreasing withdrawal rates, as well as other identified goals tied to each of the interventions. The assessment plan also calls for using a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as formative and summative assessments, which will be analyzed by QEP leads, shared with relevant stakeholders, and used to take corrective actions as necessary.

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