

Writing Ourselves In **Quality Enhancement Plan - Executive Summary**

Writing Ourselves In is designed to increase student success in first-year English composition, reduce equity gaps, and improve students' sense of belonging. After extensive review of disaggregated data and recognition of the correlation between writing skills and indicators of student success, *Writing Ourselves In* emerged as an important QEP topic that aligns with the mission and strategic future of NOVA.

Writing Ourselves In has one clear institutional goal to increase students' course success in English 111 (College Composition I) with a specific focus on closing existing equity gaps. English 111 is an important course that is linked to several transfer academic degree and applied programs. The course provides students with essential instruction in writing and reading that impacts their performance in future classes that are integral to degree completion. The QEP institutional goal is further reinforced when factoring in the declining success rates in English 111 experienced across all demographic groups with the largest declines for students who self-identify as BIPOC (Black, or Indigenous, or People of Color). Finally, NOVA's QEP institutional goal is timely because of its connection to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) goal of ensuring that every community college achieves equity in access, learning outcomes, and success for students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group.

Writing Ourselves In has two clear student learning goals. The first goal is to prepare English 111 students for college writing. The second goal is to improve English 111 students' sense of belonging in the classroom. Both goals are integral to overall student success. When students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom, it can increase their motivational outcomes. When students' overall motivational outcomes improve it has a direct impact on their productivity to meet stated student learning outcomes. These two student learning goals are important since both work together to result in positive gains for college students' such as improved social, cultural, and emotional well-being and increased academic achievement in college writing assignments.

To achieve these goals, *Writing Ourselves In* has three specific intervention actions: (1) developing comprehensive professional development in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), Transparent Assignment Design (TAD), and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for English faculty and stakeholders who support student learning; (2) fostering an inclusive teaching and learning environment in ENG 111; and (3) building a stronger culture of assessment. NOVA's QEP cultivates teaching practices that keep the standards high while facilitating inclusivity and equity to meet students where they are and provide the support they need. Equity-based practices like CRP, TAD, and PBL make the implicit expectations of course material clearer to students and build a sense of belonging in the classroom that makes a difference. Assessment focused on building self-evaluation skills, giving or responding to feedback, and gathering diverse perspectives will also help to drive iterative understandings of course-level writing and improve outcomes in the course for students and faculty.

Writing Ourselves In utilizes holistic assessments of students' writing; annual reviews of faculty-created assignments; faculty and student surveys to determine perceptions about learning equity-minded instruction; and other essential formative and summative assessment measures. Overall, NOVA's QEP is a plan designed to prepare students for success in college writing while also holding the College accountable for providing culturally responsive practices that will help students achieve their goals. By enriching faculty and staff with tools to meet the growingly diverse student population, the initiative will help all students improve their college writing skills.

NOVA's QEP will be overseen by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Eun-Woo Chang (echang@nvcc.edu).