Executive Summary

Austin is a hotbed for technology and innovation. Due to the number of tech companies in Austin, the city has been nicknamed “Silicon Hills.” Data from Burning Glass reports reveals, “more than 8 in 10 middle-skill jobs in the U.S. (82%) require digital skills” (Bradley, Restuccia, Rudnicki, & Bittle, 2017). There is an intersectional influence of factors that support the need for bolstering digital fluency skills - for those reskilling, upskilling, and for almost anyone else. Due to the rapid digitalization of the workforce, both opportunity and inequity have been paradoxically amplified, making it a critical priority for ACC to address the digital fluency skills gap to ensure collegiate success and economic mobility. Therefore, ACC’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Digital Fluency and Innovation (commonly referenced as Digital Fluency for sake of brevity), aims to address digital inequity.

ACC defines Digital Fluency as the user’s ability to effectively transfer digital skills from one technology to another to problem solve and communicate (Goodfellow, 2011; Bergson-Shilcock, 2020). ACC will address digital inequity by committing resources for the creation of an Office of Digital Fluency and Innovation and by offering its diverse population four microcertificates – each with three to five microcredentials for a total of 16 microcredentials to improve digital fluency and critical professional skills. ACC’s no-cost, non-credit model utilizes best practices, such as Competency-Based Education, Open Educational Resources, and Digital Badges, while providing a flexible yet rigorous learning environment. The four microcertificates and 16 microcredentials are as follows:

- **Fundamentals of Computer Skills for Job Readiness:** Intro to Computers and Internet Search (1), Word Processing (2), Presentation Software (3), Spreadsheets (4), Database Management (5)
- **Web Presence Fundamentals:** Web Builder (6), Photoshop (7), HTML/CSS (8), Web Analytics (9)
- **Interactive Presentations for Effective Communication:** Advanced PowerPoint (10), Interactive Media (11), Social Media (12), Data Analytics (13)
- **Problem Solving with Systems Thinking and Technology:** Systems Thinking (14), Problem Solving with AI (15), Project Management (16)

A microcredential may be assigned by a faculty member as co-curricular with a contextualized assignment, or they may recommend that students enroll in a microcredential to help improve class performance. In addition, a student may voluntarily enroll in a microcredential without faculty intervention. Digital Navigators will act as facilitators to support and guide students, as well as provide early intervention to increase persistence rates. Once a student successfully completes a microcredential, they will be awarded with a portable digital badge as proof of skill that can be published socially. ACC’s QEP, Digital Fluency and Innovation, will ensure that students can not only participate fully in an increasingly digital economy, but also have the skills to advance in a collegiate setting and the flexibility to move from one job to the next, providing greater mobility in career paths.

**QEP Contact:** Linda Smarzik, Dean, Digital Fluency & Innovation | lsmarzik@austicc.edu