

Central Piedmont Community College's *Career Compass: Career Exploration Through First Year Advising* is a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that seeks to empower students to make informed career and academic decisions within their first year. Through structured advising, Career Compass integrates intentional career conversations and exploration tasks into students' initial academic experience.

The QEP originated from strategic initiatives focused on enhancing student success and community workforce needs. Efforts have included self-assessments, resource reallocations, branding studies, and strategic planning enhancements. Central Piedmont understands that a key component of fulfilling its mission for students to reach their educational, career, and life goals is to ensure that all students are afforded the best opportunity to make informed choices about their path.

*Career Compass* focuses on a single goal: students will clarify their academic and career path during their first year. To that end, Central Piedmont has established multiple initiatives to engage students in activities designed to enhance their understanding of career choice and empower them to decide on a career path they can pursue with confidence. There are three student success outcomes addressed by *Career Compass*:

1. Students will explore career information during their first year.
2. Students will be confident with their career choice during their first year.
3. Students will enroll in a program of study during their first year.

Initiatives to achieve these outcomes include integrating career development concepts into new student orientation, incorporating career conversations into required first year advising sessions, and emphasizing career-development modules embedded in the college student success class, ACA-122. Students are surveyed throughout the process to assess their level of career confidence.

Institutional stakeholders at Central Piedmont Community College are engaged in ongoing planning, overseen by the QEP Leadership Team, which meets regularly and includes representatives from nine departments across Academic Affairs, Strategy and Organizational Excellence, and Student Affairs. Annual evaluations, shared outcomes data, and campus conversations further reinforce transparency, feedback, and resource adjustments as needed, ensuring Career Compass effectively supports students in exploring career and program options and clarifying their educational path.

Central Piedmont's QEP will empower students to make informed decisions about their academic and career pathways during their first year, leading to increased confidence and student success.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Brad Bostian, Executive Director of Student Success, and Chair of the QEP Leadership Team (brad.bostian@cpcc.edu).