

Communication for Professional Success

CHANGES & FUTURE DIRECTIONS **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

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PILOT YEAR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

1. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Analysis found that five of the SLOs had double-digit rates of failing to meet expectations. The focus of the QEP is professional readiness. As such, , and as such future efforts should begin by addressing areas of improvement. That type of approach is best accomplished when efforts are limited to a fewer number of outcomes.

2. CONDUCT A BASELINE ANALYSIS IN YEAR 1

The Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CUTLA) has access to upper division writing samples. These samples represent student work submitted before the QEP's pilot year. An analysis of all or a sample of these work products would be useful for comparative purposes.

There is also value in assessing baseline data from lower-division courses or experiences when students enter UWF. This would provide valuable longitudinal understanding of a student's progression through our curriculum. Potential areas where first-year data may be captured are

- Orientation (e.g., taking a writing/grammar test that could be administered later as part of a QEP project),
- English Composition I (ENC 1101)
- Basic Communication Skills (SPC 2608)

3. CONTINUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH GALE WORKMAN

Feedback from attendees was very positive. An opportunity still remains in getting more faculty participation as the sessions were largely attended by staff. Sessions for students could also be of value. rative purposes.

4. REVISE THE QEP RUBRIC

Based on feedback from faculty and staff using the initial rubric we should explore revising the language to make the SLOs easier to understand, reduce the number of SLOs, consider separating oral and written communication, and develop a rubric that can be used for grading and the assessment of learning outcomes.

YEAR 1

CHANGES TO THE PLAN

1. REDUCED THE NUMBER OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Based on Pilot Year data, feedback from faculty members, project summary reports, and the results of Dr. Jane Halonen’s QEP project, we reduced the number of SLOs from 23 to seven. The QEP now employs a simpler set of professional communication skill outcomes that are grounded in the areas where UWF students need the most improvement. Faculty members have responded favorably to the redesign effort. One new outcome was also added to reflect overall polish and professionalism (further reinforcing our expectations “professional communication skills”).

Revised Set of SLOs for Year 2 and Beyond

New (Old) SLO #	Short description	Long Description	Year 1 Scores			
			N	Mean	Std. Dev	% Met
1 (10)	Sources	Uses sources that are appropriate and relevant.	207	1.47	.64	92
2 (22)	Spelling	(a) Spelling is generally error-free.	254 (205)	1.42 (1.45)	.85 (.75)	76 (84)
	Pronunciation	(b) Pronunciation and diction are generally error-free.	92	1.66	.48	100
3 (20)	Grammar	(a) Exhibits standard rules of grammar, syntax, and punctuation.	362 (318)	.89 (1.07)	.84 (.81)	58 (70)
		(b) Exhibits standard rules of grammar, tone, volume, and tempo.	119	1.43	.50	100
4 (4)	Audience	Language and content serve the intended purpose of the communication.	537	1.42	.74	85
5 (2)	Language	Uses language and jargon tailored to audience understanding.	320	1.56	.57	96
6 (16)	Conclusion	States a clear conclusion that is consistent with the evidence presented.	201	1.31	.70	87
7 (NA)	Polish	Presents work with a professional level of polish.	162	1.49	.53	99

Note: (a) represents written communication, (b) represents oral communication

2. SEPARATED SLO RUBRIC INTO ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

With a smaller and simpler set of SLOs, faculty also wanted a separate tool for the type of communication product. The single rubric was simply repackaged into separate rubrics for written and oral communication.

3. DISCONTINUED PLAN TO ASSESS WRITING SELF-EFFICACY AND COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

After the pilot year, faculty reported that the QEP's outcomes were too cumbersome, complex, and numerous. Decisions were made to prioritize the analysis of direct assessment based on the SLOs. The measures were discontinued as a formal component of assessment; however, the instruments themselves remained part of a "toolkit" of resources available to faculty and staff wishing to conduct formative assessment of professional communication skills.

4. REVISED COMMUNICATION PLAN

As senior leadership changed within the University College, the QEP gained access to a professional staff member with direct expertise in marketing and communication. It was her recommendation that we modify our ongoing communication strategy. Summer plans were made to redesign the logo of the QEP using a high-impact project approach with Art faculty and students in the graphic design program. The second phase of this redesign will occur as a second high-impact project launching in the fall 2016 semester. This phase will be a HIP collaboration between the QEP and the Department of Communication.

5. REVISED PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review process was moved to a committee of QEP Liaisons and chaired by the QEP Director. This change occurred to streamline and simplify the review process. Liaisons now have conversations with their respective college Dean. These conversations establish college priorities and inform the consensus-building review process undertaken by the respective review committee. Conversations with the deans indicated that this revision would make the review and selection process more efficient and effective.

6. STANDARDIZED ANNUAL PROJECT AWARD AMOUNT

To potentially fund more projects, the review committee placed a cap of \$5,000 per year on project awards. UWF plans to invest \$115,000 in projects next year, which translates to resource support of at least 23 projects next cycle. Before this change, the QEP Director met with each College Dean to elicit their support. All Deans responded favorably to this change.

7. SECURED FUNDING FOR THE CO-CURRICULUM QEP LIAISON POSITION

When UWF established its QEP, the position of Co-Curriculum Liaison was filled, however, no budget allocation was identified to support their effort. This oversight was corrected. A budget request of \$12,154 was secured for QEP Year 2.

8. ESTABLISHED A COLLEGE OF HEALTH QEP LIAISON POSITION WITH FUNDING

When UWF established its QEP, the College of Health did not exist. After organizational re-alignment in 2016, the College of Health was established. An increase to the QEP budget was requested and approved to accommodate this request. A budget request of \$14,516 was secured for QEP Year 2.

9. SIMPLIFIED THE FUNDING “POOL” FOR PROJECTS

When UWF established its QEP, the allocation formula identified for project awards was unsustainably complex. The original formula called for allocation at the College-level, based on a proportionate share of 3-year average upper-division FTEs generated. In one instance, a College did not use all of its allocation, which created a situation where viable projects from elsewhere within the UWF community went unfunded or underfunded. Given the collegial nature of UWF Deans and QEP Liaisons, all parties agreed that a simpler collective pool of money should be implemented. QEP Liaisons consulted with their respective Dean after the project submission deadline. These consultations resulted in priority lists from each area. The review committee distributed funds equitably across the curriculum and co-curriculum. The process involved building consensus around the relative merits of each proposal and the overarching goal to ensure every UWF student (eventually) graduates having experienced at least one QEP project.

10. IMPROVED THE DESCRIPTION OF THE “CONTROL” PROJECT.

The consolidation of review and funding allocation created a new opportunity to define appropriate baseline/control projects for the QEP. The original QEP Proposal articulated a desire to fund “control or baseline” projects. This component was loosely described, and funded separately from the projects at the college level. With consolidated review and funding, one project award (\$5,000) will be reserved for general education courses, lower-division high impact practices, or laboratories that enroll a large portion of lower-division students. The goals of this component remained unchanged: (a) to collect a baseline measure of the student learning outcomes from which trends and comparisons may be made later in the students’ academic career, and (b) to foster situations where the tools, resources developed for the QEP may permeate into all areas academic life.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

1. FACULTY AND STAFF REFLECTIONS

We recognized a need for an annual process to collect qualitative summary reflections from faculty and staff participants. Faculty reflections gathered from summary reports included:



Frequency, repetition, and practice are key to enhancing professional communication skills in your classroom. Assign lots of writing and presenting in both lower- and higher-stakes activities. Create assignments or projects that help students write and speak to professional audiences beyond the classroom. Set aside class time for rehearsal, revision, and delivery. Make the process more visible and explicit.

Attempt to engage students with non-classroom personnel (e.g., guest panelists). This may help the students realize just how effectively professionals communicate and how they might work to improve.

The QEP project is an innovative way to bring ideas to life to enhance professional communication skills of students. It provides an opportunity to incorporate high-impact practices in the classroom and also translate those classroom practices into real-world experiences. We are thankful for the QEP funding to run this project. We would not have been able to have as many students participate without the funding.

Involve a few students in the design phase – their perspective is invaluable as an end-user.

Involve QEP and IRB in the development of the project assessment tool.

I would tell someone who wanted to enhance professional communication in the skills in the course to absolutely pursue it. The students are hungry for opportunities like this and definitely need to develop their communication skills to help ensure professional success.



2. CONDUCT AN ARCHIVAL BASELINE ANALYSIS

The Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CUTLA) has access to upper division writing samples. These samples represent student work submitted before the QEP's pilot year. An analysis of all or a sample of these work products would be useful for comparative purposes.

There is also value in assessing baseline data from lower-division courses or experiences when students enter UWF. Such analysis would provide a valuable longitudinal understanding of a student's progression through our curriculum. Potential areas for first-year data capture are:

- Orientation (e.g., taking a writing/grammar test that could be administered later as part of a QEP project)
- English Composition I (ENC 1101)
- Basic Communication Skills (SPC 2608)

3. IDENTIFY AND ON-BOARD THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH QEP LIAISON

Having now established the QEP Liaison position and funding source, it will be necessary to identify and onboard a faculty member from the College of Health. The point of contact for this effort will be the College Dean.

4. CONTINUE TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE QEP

The profile of the QEP could be raised through several possible tactics, such as

- Marketing campaigns featuring the new logo
- Redesigning the website to simplify its content and focus attention on the projects and faculty
- Workshops at the college and campus level that showcase faculty projects
- Support of professional development to conferences and professional meetings where information obtained can be disseminated back on campus