



Strengthening the Online Student Learning
Environment at Montgomery Community College

On-site review: September 24, 25, and 26, 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montgomery Community College (MCC) is a two-year college offering associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates in 26 active programs offered in both traditional and distance learning formats.

To determine the topic for the MCC Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) a Planning Committee was selected by the President's Cabinet which included primarily faculty representatives, as well as representatives from the College administration, Curriculum Administration, Institutional Effectiveness, Student Services, the Library, Marketing, and Continuing Education. The QEP Planning Committee conducted a series of surveys of students, faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees to help determine an area that was of interest to the college community. From those surveys, it was determined that the topic of the QEP would be in the area of online learning.

Online distance learning has shown tremendous growth at MCC. In the spring of 2013, MCC offered 144 distance learning classes including online, hybrid and supplemented courses. Distance learning students represented 66 percent of the college's duplicated headcount and 31 percent of the total college FTE, up from 23 percent of the college's duplicated headcount and 20 percent of the total college FTE in 2008.

With more MCC students involved in online distance learning, it behooves the college to look closely at ways to strengthen the online student learning environment to provide online students with the supports and resources they need to be successful. The actions, assessments and timeline of the Montgomery Community College QEP are based on the overall strategy of an ongoing comprehensive online student orientation and support program. Starting in September, 2013, the College will embark upon a five-year plan that will address this strategy.

HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

Montgomery Community College (MCC) is a two-year college offering associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates in a variety of programs. MCC has 26 active programs and an option for students to transfer to a four-year college or university. Courses are offered in both traditional and distance learning formats. The College also provides an extensive continuing education program in support of economic development within the community.

MCC began as Montgomery Technical Institute on September 7, 1967, when the State Board of Education issued a charter establishing the institution. As directed by law, eight members were appointed to the Board of Trustees. In November 1967, administrative and teaching personnel were employed. Extension classes were conducted in 1967-68, and full-time curriculum students were accepted in August 1968. The institution's first students graduated in June 1969. Adult Basic Education and adult high school diploma programs began in October 1968.

In June 1968, a building on Page Street in Troy was occupied as a temporary location of Montgomery Technical Institute. On June 3, 1971, the State Board of Education approved Montgomery Technical Institute as a charter technical institution, effective July 1971. In compliance with law, four additional trustees were appointed by the Governor on December 1, 1971. Responsibility for local control of the college was given to the Board of Trustees, including the president of the Student Government Association who serves as an ex-officio member of the Board.

In October 1975, the citizens of Montgomery County passed a bond issue authorizing the construction of a new campus of 64,000 square feet of space on a 149 acre tract of land. The State Board of Education Department of Community Colleges accredited Montgomery

Technical Institute on December 7, 1978, and on December 19, 1978, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools affirmed its accreditation.

The Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmed the Institute's accreditation on December 19, 1983. Also in 1983, Montgomery Technical Institute became Montgomery Technical College in accordance with legislative and board approval, and in September 1987, the Board of Trustees and Montgomery County Commissioners voted for the name to be officially changed to Montgomery Community College as authorized by the North Carolina General Assembly. On December 19, 1993, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmed Montgomery Community College's accreditation to offer associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates.

In 1992, local citizens and North Carolina voters approved, through a bond referendum, \$2.6 million in matching funds to finance a Business, Industry, Technology Resource Center (BITRC) and the Montgomery County School Board voted in 1994 to transfer approximately four acres of land to the College to be used for the facility. The Center contains 44,800 square feet of space utilized for a library, an interactive classroom to transmit and receive real-time voice, video, and data on the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH), and classrooms/laboratories. The building serves as a facilitation site for employers to train all levels of staff.

MCC was reaffirmed by the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 2003.

In 2004, Building 500 on the MCC campus underwent a 3,000 square feet renovation which now houses the Criminal Justice Complex. The Complex has classrooms and a physical

fitness center, as well as showers, which complement the College's Criminal Justice and Basic Law Enforcement Training programs. In 2009, new construction of a building for the Forest Management Technologies program added approximately 6,400 square feet to the campus. Classrooms and labs in Building 100 formerly used for the Forestry program were renovated to provide operatories and learning labs for the Dental Assisting program. The campus now includes facilities of approximately 134,400 square feet on 153 acres of land.

MISSION, GOALS, and VALUES

Montgomery Community College (MCC) is one of the 58 community colleges that makes up the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). The NCCCS serves nearly 850,000 students across the state of North Carolina. The mission statement of the NCCCS states

The mission of the North Carolina Community College System is to open the door to high-quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing:

- Education, training and retraining for the workforce including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs.
- Support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry and in collaboration with the University of North Carolina System and private colleges and universities.
- Services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life.

In support of the NCCCS mission, MCC's mission states

Montgomery Community College will provide quality traditional and distance learning educational opportunities including basic skills, occupational, associate, and pre-baccalaureate programs; support economic development by offering workforce training and retraining; improve the quality of life for individuals and the community; and address changing local, state, national and global needs.

In addition, the College's goals and values support the mission and further emphasize the philosophy and direction of the institution:

College Goals

In accomplishing our mission, we commit our resources to serving our community in the successful achievement of its educational goals through the implementation of these strategic college goals:

- **Goal 1:** Develop and implement **instructional programs and student support services**, in traditional and distance learning formats, consistent with the assessed needs of the constituent groups in the College's service area and with state, regional, and national standards.
- **Goal 2:** Provide **facilities, technologies**, and information services that enhance student learning.
- **Goal 3:** Support businesses, industries, and **community initiatives** through educational services that facilitate economic growth and workforce training.
- **Goal 4:** Create a culture for employing and retaining **quality faculty and staff** to support student success.

- **Goal 5:** Develop, and manage human, financial, and infrastructure resources essential to **fiscal stability** and meeting student and community needs.
- **Goal 6:** Consistent with accrediting standards and the College mission, engage in ongoing, systematic institutional planning and evidence-based assessment, resulting in continuous quality improvement and **institutional effectiveness**.

College Values

Excellence

We value . . .

- continuous growth and improvement in every aspect of campus life.
- securing and providing adequate resources so that improvements can be seen and measured.
- freedom to instruct students using various techniques and the development of methods that will help them achieve their maximum potential.
- personal and professional development of all staff and faculty.
- courage to provide leadership, to take risks, to welcome change, and to persevere.

Honesty & Integrity

We value . . .

- academic and personal honesty as essential elements in education.
- integrity which binds us to fairness, to truth, and to actions and philosophies that meet the highest ethical standards.
- intellectual honesty and academic freedom, and pledge to foster an environment of trust and responsibility in the learning community.

Learning

We value . . .

- learning as a lifetime reward.
- input from learners in the achievement of their goals.
- empowered learning in a high-tech/human-touch environment.

Commitment

We value . . .

- prompt, fair, friendly, courteous, and people-oriented service to our communities, to our stakeholders, and to each other.
- a safe and nurturing educational environment.
- opportunities to help make our community, state, nation, and the world a better place in which to live and to work.

Respect

We value . . .

- diversity of life experiences and contributions of the students, staff, and faculty that assist with enrichment of the learning community.

- the responsibility of treating people with dignity and respect whereby each team member operates unselfishly for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Communication

We value . . .

- open and honest dialogue, feedback, and active listening, flowing in all directions.
- teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, innovation, and creative problem solving.

MCC's QEP is mission-driven. The mission, goals, and values of the College are the foundation of the QEP.

QEP PLANNING

Planning Committee Selection - In September 2011, a mission-driven Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was initiated when the President's Cabinet established an ad hoc committee that decided to select co-chairs for the QEP Steering Committee. The idea of co-chairs leading the QEP initiative was based on the notion of balancing the workload and promoting a faculty-driven process. The ad hoc committee recommended faculty members Ann Black (Practical Nursing faculty member) and Kiera DesChamps (Human Services Program Chair) because of their administrative experience and their interest in program improvement. The Cabinet approved the ad hoc committee's recommendation.

The co-chairs met with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison in late September, 2011 to begin the process of establishing a draft planning timeline and selecting QEP Steering Committee members that represent all relevant constituencies. These constituencies included primarily representative members of the faculty, as well as representatives from the College administration, Curriculum Administration, Institutional Effectiveness, Student Services, the Library, Marketing, and Continuing Education.

The original QEP Steering Committee membership is as follows:

- Kiera DesChamps, Program Head of Human Services Technology, (Co-chair)
- Ann Black, Practical Nursing Faculty, (Co-chair)

- Dr. Mary Kirk, President
- Dr. Jeff Hamilton, Vice President of Instruction
- Randy Gunter, Dean of Curriculum
- Tim Kennedy, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison
- Mary Chesson, English Faculty, (Arts and Sciences Department)
- Mike Collins, Program Head of Business Administration, (Business Technology)
- Tracey Wyrick, Program Head of Criminal Justice, (Health and Public Service)
- Riley Beaman, Coordinator of Campus Life, (Student Services)
- Abraham Encinas-Torres, English as a Second Language Faculty, (ESL)
- Kathy Garner-Smith, Career & College Readiness Coordinator, (Continuing Education)
- Michele Haywood, Public Information Officer
- Sharon Faulkner, Director of Learning Resources/Library

The Committee decided that a more appropriate name for this body should be the QEP Core Committee because the work of the Committee would be subdivided among several subcommittees to more effectively accomplish its mission. This Committee name later evolved to the QEP Planning Committee.

The Cabinet approved the QEP Planning Committee membership.

Once the QEP Planning Committee approved the chosen QEP topic, membership was expanded to include representation from specific areas of the College related to the topic. The additional members included:

- Julie Kennedy, Director of Professional Development and Learning Technologies
- Mitch Walker, Director of Information Technology
- Neil Claasen, Student Government Association President

Topic Selection - The first QEP Planning Committee meeting was held October 27, 2011. The first item on the agenda was to distribute and discuss the proposed planning timeline. The first items on the timeline included informing the faculty and staff about the QEP and gathering data to begin the topic selection process.

The Committee decided that the most effective way to begin to generate ideas for a QEP topic was to use an open-ended survey to gather data. The survey would introduce the concept of a QEP and would give respondents the opportunity to list three areas that they felt would

improve student learning at Montgomery Community College.+The survey would be distributed to all college email addresses via SurveyMonkey.com. For Continuing Education students who did not have a college-provided email address, paper copies of the survey would be completed in class. The survey was also translated into Spanish for the English as Second Language (ESL) students who are primarily native Spanish speakers at MCC. This survey was distributed on November 7, 2011.

The QEP concept was defined and the QEP process was described by the Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison to MCC faculty and staff at the monthly employee meeting on November 29, 2011. The QEP Core (Planning) Committee was introduced by the Vice President of Instruction.

The QEP Planning Committee met on December 1, 2011 to tabulate and review the results of the first survey. Areas identified in the survey that would not improve student learning (i.e., alumni activities, student/club activities, tobacco policy, parking, café, and bookstore) were eliminated from consideration. From the survey results, the following potential topics were identified and categorized: advising & academic planning, online learning, core competencies, instructional delivery, and tutoring.

A second survey was planned to further narrow the QEP topic. The QEP co-chairs and the Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison refined the questions for the second survey. The second survey asked respondents to select one of the five topics. The survey included additional questions for three of the five topics: instructional delivery, online learning, and essential (core) competencies. Survey respondents were asked to indicate a preference for an area of emphasis within these particular topics. More specifically, for instructional delivery the areas of emphasis included teaching styles, learning-centered environment, collaborative (cooperative) learning, learning communities, creative learning, and course hybrids. For online learning, the areas of emphasis included preparation and orientation,

new course and new program offerings, and course methodology (structure and content). For essential (core) competencies the areas of emphasis included writing, reading, critical thinking, technology literacy, information literacy, and diversity.

The second survey was distributed in January 2012 to curriculum students via student email, to continuing education students, including ESL, in hard copy, and to faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees using the interactive SMARTi Response system which uses responders, usually known as "clickers," to register selections and provide immediate feedback on responses.

The QEP Planning Committee met March 1, 2012 to discuss the results of the second survey. The majority of respondents, forty-seven percent, selected online learning as their preferred topic. Out of these respondents, forty-one percent indicated an interest in new course and program offerings. Twenty-seven percent indicated an interest in preparation and orientation and thirty percent of respondents indicated an interest in course methodology. The Committee discussed the survey findings with the notion that the QEP needs to positively affect student learning. Three potential foci for the topic "online learning" were identified: instructor preparation, student preparation/readiness, and advising.

The QEP kick-off event scheduled for the next day included sharing with faculty and staff the results of the survey that indicated the topic of online learning had the most interest. During the Kick-off Luncheon, faculty and staff were invited to participate in a brainstorming session to identify their specific areas of interest and/or concern within the broad topic of online learning.

During the brainstorming session, faculty and staff identified a number of concerns within the topic of online learning. These concerns included faculty training, faculty knowledge and use of technology, standardization of course layout, advising of potential online students,

grading/assessment, student preparation and readiness for online learning, and the online student orientation process.

All of the input from surveys and brainstorming session was processed by the QEP Planning Committee subcommittees and incorporated into their reports at the next Planning Committee meeting on April 26, 2012. The subcommittee charged with developing a topic sentence proposed the topic sentence "Strengthening the Online Student Learning Environment at MCC" for approval. They identified two main areas of potential focus: 1) student readiness and support and 2) instructor readiness and support.

INITIAL STEPS

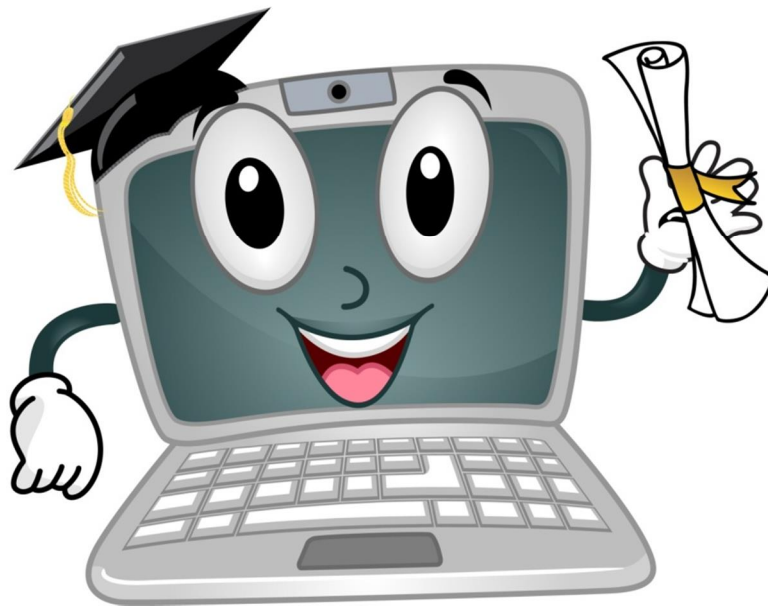
Once the QEP topic sentence was approved by the QEP Planning Committee, subcommittees were organized to further define the topic and develop a mission statement, conduct literature reviews, discuss marketing ideas, and consider how the QEP could be evaluated and assessed.

The research subcommittee conducted preliminary research and shared with the committee short synopses of several articles and a bibliography of books in the MCC library relevant to the topic of online learning. These items are housed in a small office in the library that has been designated as the QEP workroom. The room houses a computer, conference table for four faculty/staff and a bookcase that will be used to house books and other research materials relevant to the QEP.

The evaluation/assessment subcommittee generated a proposed assessment plan that suggests five potential areas of assessment/evaluation including: faculty technical skills, student technical skills, student learning outcomes, online course evaluation by students, and distance learning support evaluation by employees.

The evaluation/assessment subcommittee also presented information gathered about commercially available diagnostic tools like the SmarterMeasure Learning Readiness Indicator (<http://www.smartermeasure.com>) to assess student readiness for online learning. Faculty readiness and possibilities for professional development were discussed.

The marketing subcommittee discussed ideas for a mascot/logo that would best represent the QEP at MCC. The marketing subcommittee presented %Montgomery+to be the mascot of the QEP. %Monty+as he would be known, represented positive online experiences leading to student learning and ultimately graduation. He was unanimously accepted.



The mission statement development subcommittee met on June 20, 2012 to develop a mission statement from the topic sentence. The mission statement, %The MCC QEP will strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success+was presented to the QEP Planning Committee at the July 17, 2012 meeting. In addition, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison presented the draft Outcomes Assessment Reports (OARs) for the QEP including one operational, one program, and one student learning

outcome OAR. These will continue to expand and be refined as the QEP planning process continues. The QEP Implementation Committee will be responsible for finalizing the QEP OARs and defining appropriate assessment measures. Since all curriculum areas already have OARs, including student learning outcomes, many of the QEP assessments will be the same since they will apply to both the seated and online sections of a course.

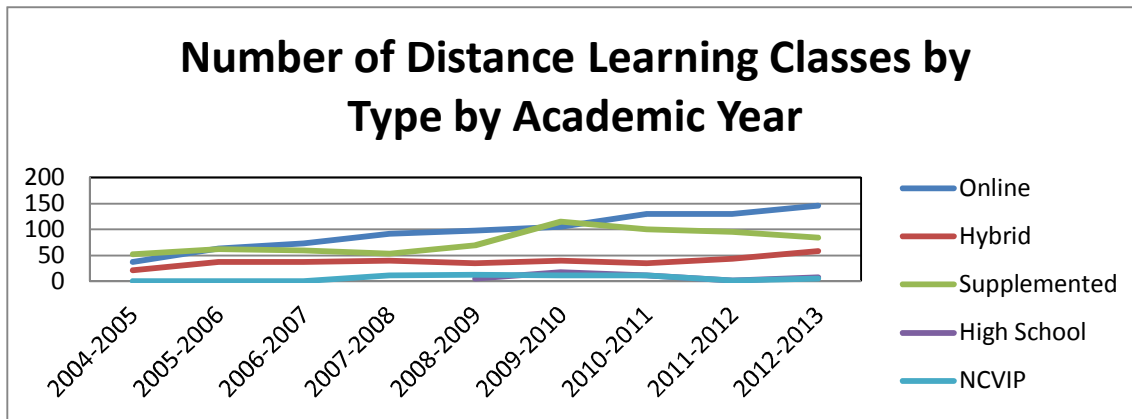
The marketing subcommittee developed a draft budget for promotional items like banners, pens, lanyards. The recommendation was made to look for an item that was technology related and durable that staff members could keep within sight as a reminder of the QEP. Other marketing suggestions included prominent placement of the QEP topic sentence including placing it in employee email signatures, on the College webpage, or on BlackBoard.

Montgomery Community College's QEP was introduced to the students, faculty, and staff at the College's annual Convocation held September 11, 2012. The QEP introduction at Convocation was well-received. A number of technologies including Skype, PowerPoint, and an interactive SMART whiteboard were used to present the program.

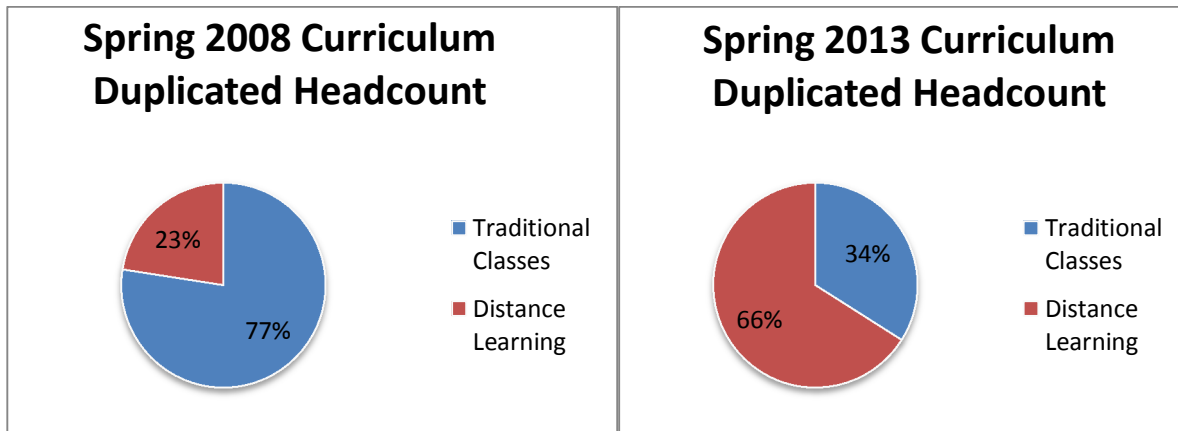
HISTORY OF DISTANCE LEARNING AT MCC



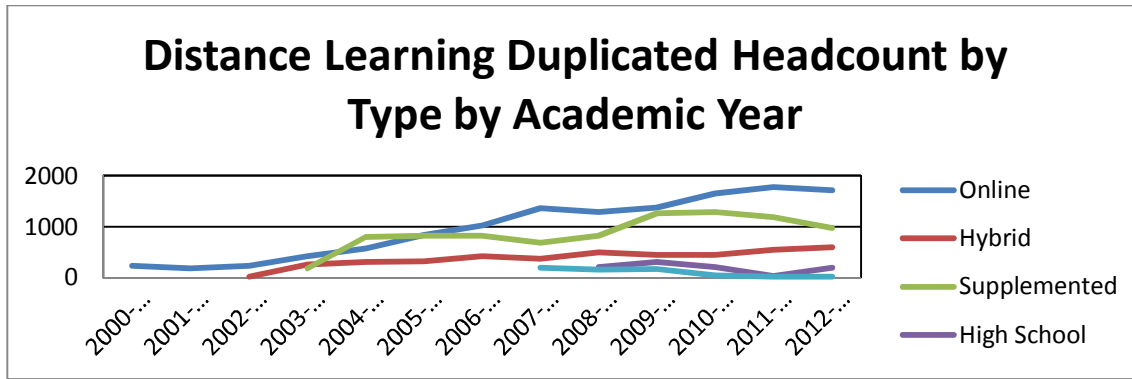
Background - Montgomery Community College first started the online program during fall 2000 with 100 students. Blackboard was chosen as the learning management system to support the distance education courses. MCC has continued to use Blackboard as the LMS since the onset of distance courses. Distance learning quickly grew and during spring 2003 the first hybrid courses were given. Since then, traditional courses have supplemented their offerings with Web-based learning management sections (fall 2003). In the spring of 2013, MCC had 144 distance learning classes including online, hybrid and supplemented courses. The graph below illustrates the increasing trend of distance learning class offerings over a 9-year period.



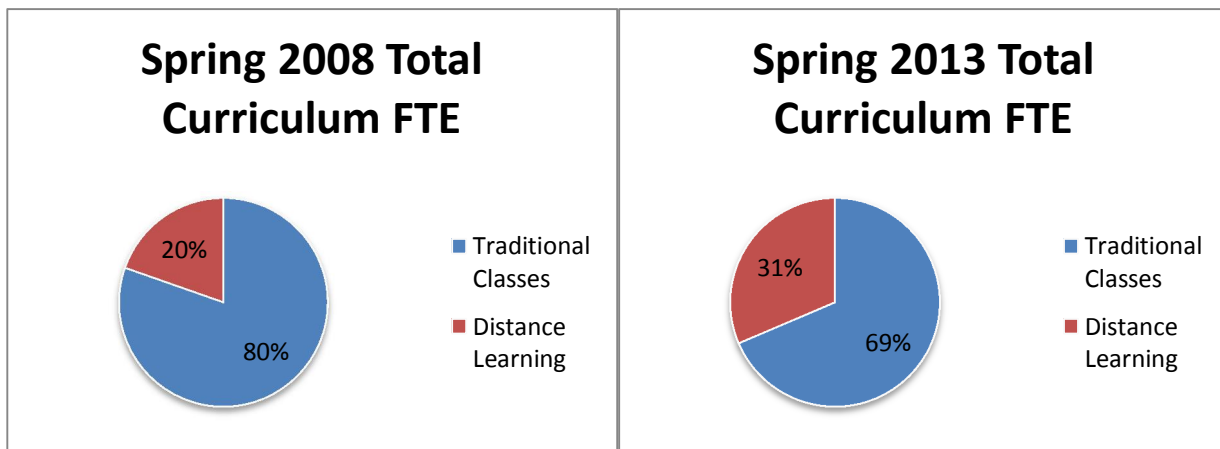
Over the past five years, duplicated headcount in Distance Learning has comprised a larger and larger share of the overall college headcount. In spring 2008, distance learning students represented 23 percent of the college's duplicated headcount. During spring 2013, distance learning students represented 66 percent of the college's duplicated headcount.



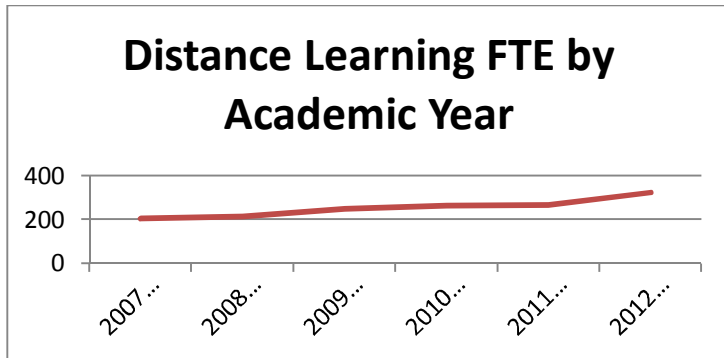
The graph below illustrates the increasing trend of distance learning duplicated headcount over a 9-year period.



Additionally, distance learning has comprised a larger share of the total curriculum FTE over the past five years. During spring 2008 semester, distance learning FTE represented 20 percent of the total college FTE. In spring 2013, the percentage of total college FTE earned through distance learning was 31 percent.



Along with the number of courses, distance learning FTE had grown over time as seen in the following graph.



Today, MCC offers the following Associate in Applied Science degrees (AAS), diplomas (D) and certificates (C) completely online:

AAS, D, C	Accounting
AAS, D, C	Business Administration
AAS, C	BA: Shooting and Hunting Sports Management
AAS, C	Criminal Justice Technology
AAS, D, C	Early Childhood Education
C	Infant/Toddler Care
C	School Age Care
AAS, C	Office Administration: Legal Concentration

Course Development and Review - Over the years, a systematic process has been developed to create courses, review courses and provide training for students and instructors on the Blackboard® system in accordance with the SACS/COC Best Practices and Guidelines. When new courses are developed, program heads review the course for content. Prior to the second offering of the course, a peer review process is completed. This review process begins with the instructor completing a self-evaluation of the course using the Standards of Good Practice+document. These standards were developed and approved in-house. Next, the course is reviewed by several members of the course peer review team made up of membership from the Distance Learning Team. Once the course is recommended as meeting the standards, the course may be used as an online/hybrid course in the future.

Support for Students - Students at MCC come from a diverse set of backgrounds. The County of Montgomery (North Carolina) is situated in a rural, mountainous region in the center

of the state. Many students who attend MCC have limited Internet access and are not familiar with distance learning. In order to give students the best possible online learning experience, the Office of Learning Technologies (formerly Office of Distance Learning) has implemented new tools for student success when taking online courses. These tools include:

- MCC Distance Learner Profile
- Self- profile for student considering online courses
- Online Courses . Advising Students
- Talking Points for Advisors
- Distance Learning Orientation Course
- Orientation course which all students have access to during the semester
- In Person Orientation
- Orientation for student one-on-one and in small groups

The orientation course and in-person orientation covers basic functions of the Blackboard[®] system and expectations of the students by the college and faculty. For example:

- Announcements - Instructions on Attendance Verification and Gmail instructions.
- Contacts - Information on MCC support staff
- Helpful Documents - Financial Aid To-Do List, instructions on submitting assignments, gradebooks, saving work, using SIRSI, using the library, sending attachments, copy and pasting etc.

Support for Faculty - All faculty at MCC who teach online/hybrid courses meet the same standards for qualifications that traditionally taught courses require. Once a faculty member is selected to teach an online/hybrid course, the Office of Learning Technologies will review the faculty member's level of preparedness. If the faculty member has never taught online/hybrid, the faculty member must work with the Director of Learning Technologies until the Director feels that the faculty member is capable of effectively teaching the course. This is routinely from 10 . 15 hours of one-on-one and small group instruction using the Distance Learning Training Course. The Director will then recommend to the Vice President of Instruction if the faculty member is ready to teach an online/hybrid course.

If a faculty member comes to MCC having taught online/hybrid at another institution, the Director of Learning Technologies will meet and discuss with the faculty member the information needed to be an effective distance learning teacher at MCC. This is routinely a 2-3 hour meeting.

Each faculty member is enrolled in an online support course. This course (MCC-DLTRAIN) provides resources in everything from online learning pedagogy to the use of each of the tools in Blackboard. This site is kept up-to-date by the Office of Learning Technologies.

Professional development for online faculty is provided during the annual fall professional development conference known as *Quality Trails*, during October professional development days and in January prior to the start of spring semester.

With the increase in number of students enrolling in online/hybrid courses and the increase in course offerings completely online, improvements in the distance learning system at MCC are needed. This support may take many forms including support for students, faculty and staff professional development, online student orientation prior to taking an online/hybrid course and ongoing review of existing courses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the growing body of online learning literature can be described as ~~%a~~faculty-focused and addresses issues such as the amount of time it takes to teach online, adapting face-to-face teaching strategies to the online environment, and best practices for setting up and teaching an online class. While all of this information is important in establishing an effective online learning program and will be addressed in faculty professional development, the MCC QEP Planning Committee focused its literature search and review on literature that was more ~~%a~~student-focused and could provide insight into ways to enhance the College's online learning program.

The Community College Research Center at Columbia University has done extensive research into online learning at community colleges. This research has provided major areas that should be addressed to improve online course completion and progression. These areas include assessing student ability to succeed, teaching online learning skills, and enhancing non-instructional and instructional supports. (Jaggars, Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students? 32-33)

Students who anticipate taking online courses need to assess their skills and abilities to be sure that they understand the demands of online learning. %Becoming a successful online learner involves not only an adjustment to the nature of college coursework but also the ability to navigate the necessary technology, as well as the classroom Web site.+(Globokar 4)

Assessing a student's readiness either through self-assessment, an institution-designed instrument, or a commercial product like SmarterMeasure[®] allows the student to evaluate his/her preparedness for online learning. Online learning is not ideal for every student and a pre-course assessment may %at least give them a heads up as to what to expect.+(Dahl 7) Making students more aware of the requirements and demands of online learning through an assessment program %may help cut down on the number of withdrawals and dropout from the course.+(Lorenzetti, Lesson Learned About Student Issues in Online Learning 1)

Student readiness for online learning has been studied and discussed since the earliest days of online learning. One of the earliest studies conducted by Warner *et al* (1998) and cited by Smith, Murphy, and Mahoney (2003) defined three aspects of student readiness for online learning: (a) students' preferences for online delivery as opposed to face-to-face classroom instruction, (b) student confidence in using electronic communication for learning, (c) students' ability to engage in autonomous learning. (Smith, Murphy and Mahoney 57) Smith, Murphy, and Mahoney also analyzed the reliability and validity *McVay's Readiness for Online Learning Questionnaire* (McVay 2000, 2001) and concluded that it provided a %useful tool for research

and practice in the area of readiness for online learning while recommending refinements of some of the factors. (Smith, Murphy and Mahoney 65) The McVay instrument has been studied and tested multiples times, recently by Hall in 2011 in an attempt to determine the extent to which the McVay Revised Readiness for Online Learning questionnaire could service as a predictor of student performance in distance learning classes.+(Hall 2) Hall's study concluded that the revised McVay questionnaire may have some applicability as a counseling tool for prospective distance education students.+(Hall 6) One of the advantages of the McVay questionnaire is its brevity. However, that brevity contributes to its limited predictive ability.+(Hall 6) Like Lorenzetti, Hall notes the benefit of a questionnaire in student awareness of individual traits and technical skills that are generally believed necessary to be successful in a distance education course.+(Hall 7)

Dray *et al* developed an instrument that focused on learner characteristics and technology capabilities. (Dray *et al* 32) Questions about learner characteristics are similar to many other surveys and include such things as self-direction, writing abilities, time management, and locus of control. Questions about technology capability measure basic technology skills such as using email and the Internet, technology access including devices and bandwidth, and experience and frequency in technology use. Dray *et al* cite the research of Dabbagh which describes changes in the profile of the online learner and describes those characteristics perceived as critical to the success of an online learner. (Dabbagh 220) The survey developed by Dray *et al* to in part assess these learner characteristics enabled learners to self-assess their readiness/preparedness so that institutions of higher education can make informed decisions about how to improve outcomes for online learners.+(Dray *et al* 44)

Pillay, Irving, and Tones, from Queensland University of Technology in Australia, did a validation study of the *Tertiary Students' Readiness for Online Readiness (TSROL)*. While they recommended some revisions to the *TSROL*, they noted four potential uses of the instrument:

(a) assessment of online learning readiness of students prior to course commencement, (b) periodic administration during an online course to identify students who may be at risk of non-completion, (c) identification of potential barriers to student achievement, satisfaction, or completion and referral to online skills coaching or other supplemental learning materials, and (d) evaluation of intervention courses. (Pillay, Irving and Tones 233)

Martinez, Torres, and Giesel review best practices in institutional efforts to determine student readiness for online instruction which they define as multiple support services that prepare students for successful online instruction.+(Martinez, Torres and Giesel 1) The models they review indicate a strong preference for an initial interactive assessment to help students determine their readiness for learning in an online environment.+(Martinez, Torres and Giesel 2) The assessments reviewed focus heavily on technical skills and study skills.

Many colleges, universities, and systems have developed online self-assessment tools for potential online learners. In many cases, these tools are freely available to anyone whether or not they have an affiliation with the institution. The University of Georgia system provides the *Student Online Readiness Tool (SORT)* which was developed by Dr. Lynn Schrum. (Schrum 2003) SORT has been used across the nation by individual colleges, universities, and university systems. SORT includes six modules that include a brief description, interactive questionnaire, immediate feedback, and strategies and resources for each module. These modules include: (1) technology experience, (2) access to tools, (3) study habits, (4) my lifestyle, (5) goals and purposes, and (6) learning preference.

In addition to online tools available to potential online learners, many books are on the market that address becoming a successful online learner. The Montgomery Community College (MCC) Library collection contains three of these titles aimed at the potential online student. Gilbert's *How to be a Successful Online Student* provides readers with a self-test+

and a %Checklist+to help determine if they are good candidates for online learning. (Gilbert 74-78)

Globokar's *Introduction to Online Learning: A Guide for Students* provides an introduction to online learning by discussing common myths associated with online learning. These myths address common issues like computer access, time commitments, and communications in an online class. The end of the chapter includes reflection questions to help the reader define his/her expectations about online learning. While not an actual checklist or survey, this chapter, and the rest of the book, serves the purpose of making potential online learners more aware of what to expect from an online learning experience. (Globokar 1-13)

Watkins and Corry provide an %E-Learning Readiness Self-Assessment+for readers. This assessment addresses seven areas: (1) technology access and protection, (2) technology skills, (3) online relationships, (4) motivation, (5) online video/audio, (6) online discussions, and (7) importance to your success. Directions are included for how to score the assessment and there is a guide to additional sections of the book for resources in areas where the reader scores poorly. It is recommended that after the appropriate sections are read and studied, the self-assessment is retaken to evaluate progress toward developing skills necessary to be a successful online learner. (Watkins and Corry xxii-xxvi)

The best known commercial product available to assess a %learners' likelihood for succeeding in an online and/or technology rich learning program+is SmarterMeasure[®]. Rather than rely on self-assessment, SmarterMeasure[®] %uses a sequence of activities to measure the degree to which students possess the traits needed for success+in online learning. (smartermeasure.com) The SmarterMeasure[®] program assesses seven major areas: (1) individual attributes, (2) life factors, (3) learning styles, (4) technical competency, (5) technical knowledge, (6) on-screen reading rate and recall, and (7) typing speed and accuracy.

Whether an institution provides an assessment instrument it has designed, adapts a free instrument, or contracts with a vendor to provide an assessment program, the institution must determine how the results of the assessment will be used. The Community College Research Center, which has done extensive research on online learning in community colleges, recommends that whatever readiness assessment a college chooses not be used as a gatekeeper. The argument has been made that taking an online class is a privilege rather than a right. (Jaggars, Edgecombe and Stacey, *Creating an Effective Online Environment* 4; Jaggars, Edgecombe and Stacey, *What We Know About Online Course Outcomes*) A student who does not seem likely to perform well in an online class based on a readiness assessment should not be allowed to take an online class until better prepared as demonstrated by successful completion of a workshop on online learning skills or earning a minimum GPA. (Xu and Jaggars 25) This strategy would disadvantage some students who need the flexibility of online courses and would no doubt cause a drop in enrollments in online courses. (Xu and Jaggars 25) Colleges should use readiness assessments as a tool to communicate the expectations of online coursework and to improve students' self-awareness of how their academic assets match (or do not match) the features and challenges of online learning. (Jaggars 33)

Once a plan has been developed to assess student readiness for online learning, the next step is to develop activities or programs to support online learners. For many colleges this begins with some type of orientation program. These programs range from short face-to-face session, to online mini-courses, all the way to full semester courses. The Instructional Technology Council (ITC) *2012 Distance Education Survey Results* show that orientation/preparation for taking distance education classes has ranked as either the number one or number two student challenge listed in the survey since 2004, ranking number one in both 2011 and 2012. (Instructional Technology Council 22)

Brescia *et al* conducted surveys of online students using an open-ended interview format. The questions addressed the themes of experiences, challenges and coping strategies in the transition to an online/hybrid course format. (Brescia *et al*) In questions about student experiences, respondents commented on the need for self-responsibility and independence in completing course assignments.

Students identified a number of challenges including accessibility issues, lack of navigation skills, resources for e-learning, the amount of work and the time required to complete it, the need for documentation, and writing skills. (Brescia *et al* 5) Students who did not have a computer at home often found accessibility to be a challenge. Those with less technology experience felt that more technology savvy students would have an advantage. One of the biggest challenges faced by the students was a lack of understanding about the quantity of work involved and the self-discipline required to accomplish the work. (Brescia *et al* 5) To address these issues, every student they interviewed recommended a formal, extensive orientation to the technology and support materials. (Brescia *et al* 6) To address the double challenge of mastering course content along with navigating delivery methods, Brescia *et al* recommended developing strategies to address the concerns of students who self-indicated as needing special orientation to this new learning environment. (Brescia *et al* 8)

Mupinga, Nora and Yaw also surveyed online students to determine their needs and expectations as online students. Based on the frequencies of responses to the open-ended questions, the top four needs of online students were: (1) technical help, (2) flexible and understanding instructors, (3) advance course information, and (4) sample assignments. Ninety-three percent of the students surveyed expressed a need for technical help with computers, logging on to the university network, and navigating through the course management platform. (Mupinga, Nora and Yaw 187) These are the types of needs that can be addressed through a comprehensive orientation program.

Susan Gaide provides an outline of a seven-module orientation based on a program established by Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) and overseen by Sue Medeke. Medeke notes that students who inquire about online courses at SWTC are counseled about basic skills requirements from the time they first inquire.+(Gaide, Seven Steps to Meeting the Technical Needs of Online Students 4) Like Montgomery Community College, SWTC has an open door policy and Medeke notes that they do not turn students away simply because they lack the technical skills required for online learning. Rather, we assess, orient, and tutor students so that they can gain those skills.+(Gaide, Seven Steps to Meeting the Technical Needs of Online Students 4) The SWTC online student orientation program is made up of seven modules: (1) time-management skills, (2) student hardware/software skills evaluation, (3) e-mail skills, (4) word processing skills, (5) learning style activity, (6) Blackboard skills, and (7) Internet skills. As a result of providing these modules and ongoing support to their online students, SWTC is seeing an increase in student satisfaction and retention. (Gaide, Seven Steps to Meeting the Technical Needs of Online Students 5)

Bozarth, Chapman, and LaMonica describe a project to design a 1-credit-hour orientation course for new online students. Beyond technical issues, the client institution for whom the course was being designed was interested in using an orientation course to (a) set appropriate expectations, (b) provide guidance in online etiquette, (c) provide information on available support services, and (d) assess the readiness of the student for online learning. (Bozarth, Chapman and LaMonica 88) To assist in developing this course, instructors were surveyed to determine their expectations of online learners. Online students were surveyed to determine what their expectations and reality were of their initial online learning experiences. The results of these surveys and a job analysis allowed the researchers to develop a duties or task list of tasks necessary to perform the job of online learner.+ These duties were: (1) Adapt to the online learning environment, (2) Establish technical resources for online learning, (3)

Access course web site, (4) Navigate course web site, (5) Use e-mail to communicate, (6) Manage course assignments, (7) Participate in online discussion, (8) Participate in synchronous chat, (9) Complete online quizzes, and (10) Complete online assignments. (Bozarth, Chapman and LaMonica 98-99) Using this task list and other information gathered from surveys, the designers established their recommended list of course competencies for students who have completed the orientation course. These competencies included: (a) locate and use support resources for technical troubleshooting, (b) access course web sites, (c) navigate a course web site including use of navigational links, (d) use e-mail, (e) open, close, create, and send files, (f) manage course assignments and meet deadlines, (g) participate in online discussions and synchronous chat, and (h) complete online tests and quizzes as well as complete online assignments. (Bozarth, Chapman and LaMonica 101)

Lynch also hypothesized that the creation and implementation of a student orientation course would provide a significant positive impact on student success in an online learning environment. (Lynch 2) To test this hypothesis, a completely online six-week course consisting of three learning modules was taught to over 300 students during a six-month study period. During this course, students completed a number of self-assessment checklists; wrote two short papers; and participated in discussion board activities, chats, and simulations. The study concluded institutions would benefit from providing a required student orientation course. Such an orientation course should be taught entirely online to simulate the actual online learning environment. In addition to a focus on the technology, an orientation course should also assist students in becoming more aware of their own learning styles and personal suitability for online learning. (Lynch 6)

Higher education institutions have traditionally offered students an orientation program to assist students in making a smooth, successful transition to college. Scagnoli notes that orientation for online courses serve those same objectives by trying to make this startup easy

to avoid delays or frustrations that may be caused by inexperience with the new media used for instruction.+(Scagnoli 20) Whether the orientation is held face-to-face, online, or some combination of both, certain concepts should be included including discussion about realistic expectations about the type and amount of work required, instructional media used in the course, communication tools, and activities that will help build a sense of community. Scagnoli describes an ideal orientation as one that includes the coordinator of online courses, instructors and the technical support team. %This kind of collaborative effort would be a good demonstration of campus cooperation and commitment to student learning.+(Scagnoli 23)

Robin Smith from Tarleton State University, cited in Gaide (2004), outlined Tarleton's online student orientation program at the 11th Annual Distance Education Conference. Tarleton's orientation combines video, print, and a three-module %mini-course+to make students comfortable with their online program, courses they will take, and the institution (Gaide, Student Orientation at Tarleton State Takes the Distance Out of Distance Education 4) Tarleton's online student orientation program has eight key outcomes: (1) Create a sense of welcome and belonging for the online student, (2) Provide an orientation to the course requirements of the academic program, (3) Advise students about course sequence and prerequisites, (4) Inform students about how to deal with various administrative issues, (5) Familiarize students with the feature and navigational elements of WebCT (or other interface), (6) Acquaint students with the %same look and feel+design of all courses in the program, (7) Develop student skills in working with online library resources available to online students, and (8) Raise student %comfort level+with the online learning environment in a non-threatening course environment. (Gaide, Student Orientation at Tarleton State Takes the Distance Out of Distance Education 4)

Martinez, Torres, and Giesel review a number of orientation models along with the readiness assessments discussed above. At San Antonio College, students who complete the Readiness Test are directed to a three module preparation course. Washington Online Virtual

Campus provides a Blackboard® **Week Zero Tutorial** and a **Learn-to-Learn Course** module. The **Week Zero Tutorial** is a self-paced online tutorial that is most effective when completed prior to the start of classes. **Learn-to-Learn** helps students learn online course navigation, how to use e-mail, how to participate in chat rooms, browser functionality, and study skills. (Martinez, Torres and Giesel)

Tyler-Smith provides suggestions for orientation programs as a part of a review of factors that contribute to failure to successfully complete online learning programs. Tyler-Smith has found that a face to face workshop prior to the start of a distance learning course makes a significant difference in a first time online learner's perceptions and experiences in online learning. Tyler-Smith proposes a model which identifies the multiple learning tasks that a first-time eLearner must deal with immediately and simultaneously on embarking on an eLearning course. (Tyler-Smith 8-9) These tasks include: (1) negotiating the technology, (2) negotiating the Learner Management System (LMS) interface, (3) negotiating the learning content, (4) becoming an eLearner, and (5) negotiating synchronous and asynchronous Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

Tyler-Smith suggests that when it is not possible to bring learners together for a face to face orientation, a paper-based **How to get started** instruction booklet with screen shots and instructions in simple jargon free language will help get learners get up to speed with the technology and web interfaces. (Tyler-Smith 10) He also suggests an orientation module on the appropriate LMS several weeks before a course begins that can give students an overview of the course site, its navigation and structure, provide an opportunity to resolve technical issues, and develop an internal schema of how the course site works before the pressure of the course schedule kicks in. (Tyler-Smith 10)

Lorenzetti reports on Steven Malikowski's research at Saint Cloud State University. After studying two sections of a required zero credit 12-week course at a university, Malikowski has approached online orientation development from a different perspective - by looking at what not to do. Malikowski in Lorenzetti notes that "University leadership often turns to an orientation course to give students an eclectic load of information they will need to succeed". The rationale for instituting such courses is an effort to integrate students into the institution and hopefully, take a bite out of attrition along the way. (Lorenzetti, How NOT to Run an Orientation Course: Research Reveals Flaws in Orientation Course for Online Students 3) Malikowski presents four lessons from his research: (1) beware of mission creep, (2) beware the "simple course" fallacy, (3) be clear about expectations for students and faculty, and (4) do plan in an evaluation.

Lesson one, mission creep, happens when courses attracted additional content over time to the point that they had little effect on integrating students into the institution.

Lesson two, "simple course" fallacy, happens when different course elements are created and maintained by a variety of stakeholders. Someone, perhaps an instructional designer, has to try to put all the pieces together in a way that faculty can deliver. Faculty may be lulled into thinking that this is just a "simple course" and not be as active and supportive in teaching the class as they would be in a course that they designed and had a stake in.

Lesson three, student and faculty expectations, may come about because faculty feel this disconnect to the course and are disengaged. Because of some faculty members' disconnect or casual approach to the orientation course, students were often confused about the course expectations.

Lesson four, planning in an evaluation, would provide a way for the school providing the orientation course to see what was and was not working. The university in Malikowski's study

did not have an evaluation so they had no way of determining the effectiveness of the orientation course.

Malikowski recommends a needs analysis to determine what should be in an orientation course for online students. He recommends interviewing students to get the real picture on what elements they were missing that could have helped them succeed.+(Lorenzetti, How NOT to Run an Orientation Course: Research Reveals Flaws in Orientation Course for Online Students 6) In addition, he recommends giving these courses credit where possible including graded assignments in a for-credit course. This would give the course a focus and sense of seriousness.+(Lorenzetti, How NOT to Run an Orientation Course: Research Reveals Flaws in Orientation Course for Online Students 6)

Providing online instructional and non-instructional support to online learners is critical to their success, especially for those identified in research as more likely to struggle in an online environment: males, ethnic minority students, and those with lower levels of academic preparation. (Xu and Jaggars 23) Xu and Jaggars suggest that colleges take at least four distinct approaches to improve student performance in online courses: screening, scaffolding, early warning, and wholesale improvement. (Xu and Jaggars 25) Screening through readiness assessment has been discussed above.

Scaffolding includes incorporating the teaching of online learning skills such as time management, organization and reading strategies (Jaggars, Edgecombe and Stacey, Creating an Effective Online Environment 4) into online courses. Scaffolding is heavily influenced by the constructivist theory of Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD describes how when supported, modeled and scaffolded with assistance by peers, facilitators and instructors, students learn optimally.+(Rourke and Coleman 56) McLoughlin defines scaffolding as certain kinds of support which learners receive in their interaction with experts,

teachers and mentors as they develop new skills, concepts or levels of understanding.
(McLoughlin 2)

Scaffolding activities can take many forms but all have a common goal of helping students attain independence and self-responsibility for learning. (McLoughlin 4) Rourke and Coleman explain that digital scaffolding has provided a metaphorical bridge for students that supports them in the online learning process as they make more decisions about when, where and at what pace they seek to study. (Rourke and Coleman 56) For their research, Sharma and Hannafin define scaffolding as a two-step process of supporting the learner in assuming control of learning and task completion. (Sharma and Hannafin 29) Naomi Boyer describes education as a dance and scaffolding as a framework where learning becomes an instructional dance, where students lead movements, direction, and pace while instructors follow in step, provide assistance, and enhance the experience. (Boyer 125)

Scaffolding differs from other types of support because it is continually adjusted, faded, and eventually withdrawn as students move toward expertise. (Whipp and Lorentz 170) It is this fading and eventual elimination of scaffolds that is a key distinction between scaffolding and other forms of support. (Sharma and Hannafin 29)

Xu and Jaggars note that one potential drawback to focusing scaffolding activities in courses where less-adaptable students tend to cluster is that some students may enroll in several scaffolded courses and become bored and frustrated with the now-unnecessary online learning skill exercises. (Xu and Jaggars 25)

One specific type of scaffolding activity that has shown positive results is using a generalized checklist to assist students in completing and submitting their work. Cavanaugh, Lamkin and Hu conducted research to examine the effect on project submission times of providing a generalized checklist of assignments to online students. The use of the checklist

had a positive influence on timeliness of assignment submissions which improved course satisfaction for students and instructors. (Cavanaugh, Lamkin and Hu)

Xu and Jaggars' third strategy to improve student performance in online courses is the implementation of an early warning system to identify and intervene with students who are having difficulty adapting. (Xu and Jaggars 25) McElroy and Lubich have completed preliminary research on the predictive value of delay as an indicator of course outcome. They found that the date of first posting in an online class has a significant and negative relation to the letter grade earned in the class. (McElroy and Lubich 93) They recommend from their research that instructors can use the timing of first posts as early warning of students who may need additional help to be successful.

Smith, Lange and Huston conducted research to identify factors that led to online success which they defined as a final letter grade of C+ or higher. They hoped to develop a practical predictive model that could serve as an early alert system. From their research, Smith, Lange and Huston developed two predictive models: Eighth day at-risk model, and Progress and Course Engagement Model. An intervention strategy was developed for Eighth Day Interventions which involved some form of direct informal contact via telephone for students identified as at-risk based on LMS activity logs, past enrollment patterns, and current enrollment status. Their research showed no evidence to indicate that the students who received direct contact did any better than those who did not. (Smith, Lange and Huston)

Smith, Lange and Huston did however find during the development of the predictive models that early log in activity was one of the strongest predictors of long-term student success. (Smith, Lange and Huston 59) To encourage students to log in early, an automated welcome email system was piloted. The results of the email pilot showed that the emails

generated an approximately forty percent decrease in the drop rate from the control group. (Smith, Lange and Huston 60)

Smith, Lange, and Huston's Progress and Course Engagement Model (PACE) was developed for use with the RioLearn Learning Management System (LMS). It was developed to use statistical data generated within the LMS to provide instructors a weekly update on student progress based on log-in frequency, site engagement, and pace. They found that the model accurately predicted the likelihood of course success at every point through the course. (Smith, Lange and Huston 58)

Hachey, Wladis, and Conway have found a correlation between previous online success or failure and current online success. Their research suggests that community college support services for online courses could be most effectively targeted at those students who have previously withdrawn from or earned a D+ grade or below in an online course, as these are the students at highest risk of dropping out or failing a future online course. (Hachey, Wladis and Conway 19) They suggest that previously unsuccessful students will probably need more assistance at the beginning of the semester from advisors and instructors. Awareness of a student's previous online course history should certainly be a part of any early warning system.

The fourth strategy presented by Xu and Jagers, wholesale improvement, is reflected throughout the Montgomery Community College Quality Enhancement Plan to strengthen the online student learning environment. Karen Milheim (2012) used Maslow's hierarchy of needs model as a conceptual framework to make recommendations for addressing student needs at various levels in online courses, from basic needs to self-actualization. Physiological and Safety needs, levels one and two, can be addressed through readiness assessment activities and orientation programs. Relationships and Self-esteem, levels three and four, can be addressed with ongoing support through scaffolding and instructor and peer communication and

feedback. Self-actualization, level five, which is the ultimate goal in Maslow's hierarchy is the hardest to achieve. Milheim recommends that those researching or using Maslow's hierarchy to improve online course design and delivery evaluate three areas: (1) new technologies and tools and their impact on student needs and satisfaction; (2) more effective ways to analyze self-actualization in online settings; and (3) the relationship between course design, instructional/teaching strategy, and student satisfaction. (Milheim 166)

The literature review served as a guide in developing the goals and objectives of MCC's QEP. In addition, the literature review will continue to influence the continual development and progress of the QEP through the work of the Implementation Team.

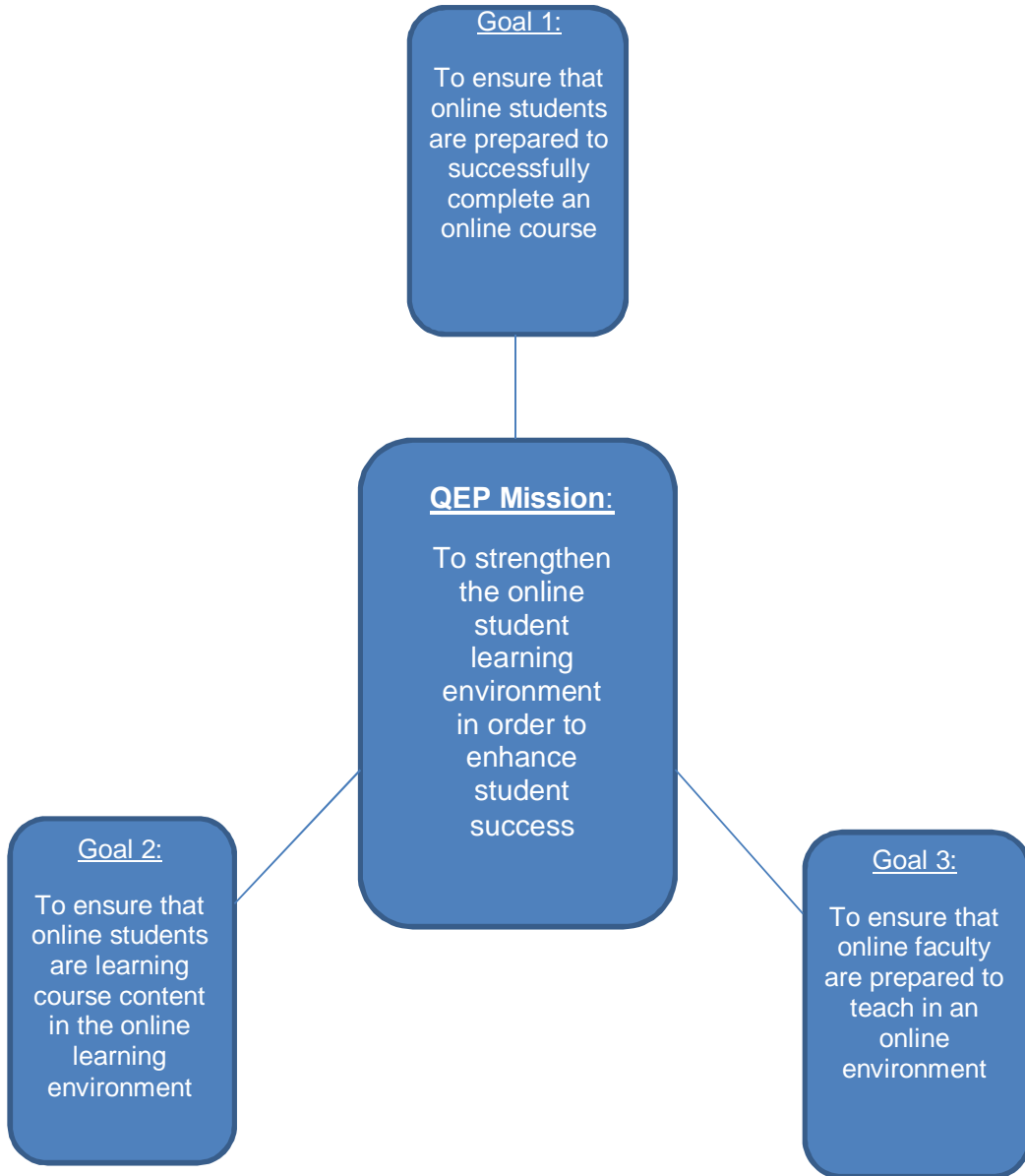
QEP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The MCC QEP mission is to strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success. This mission statement aligns with the overall mission of the College:

Montgomery Community College will provide quality traditional and distance learning educational opportunities including basic skills, occupational, associate, and pre baccalaureate programs; support economic development by offering workforce training and retraining; improve the quality of life for individuals and the community; and address changing local, state, national, and global needs.

The figure below illustrates that the accomplishment of the QEP mission will involve achievement of three formal goals: (1) to insure that online students are prepared to successfully complete an online course, (2) to insure that online students are learning course content in the online learning environment, and (3) to insure that online faculty are prepared to teach in an online environment.

Montgomery Community College QEP Mission, Goals, and Objectives



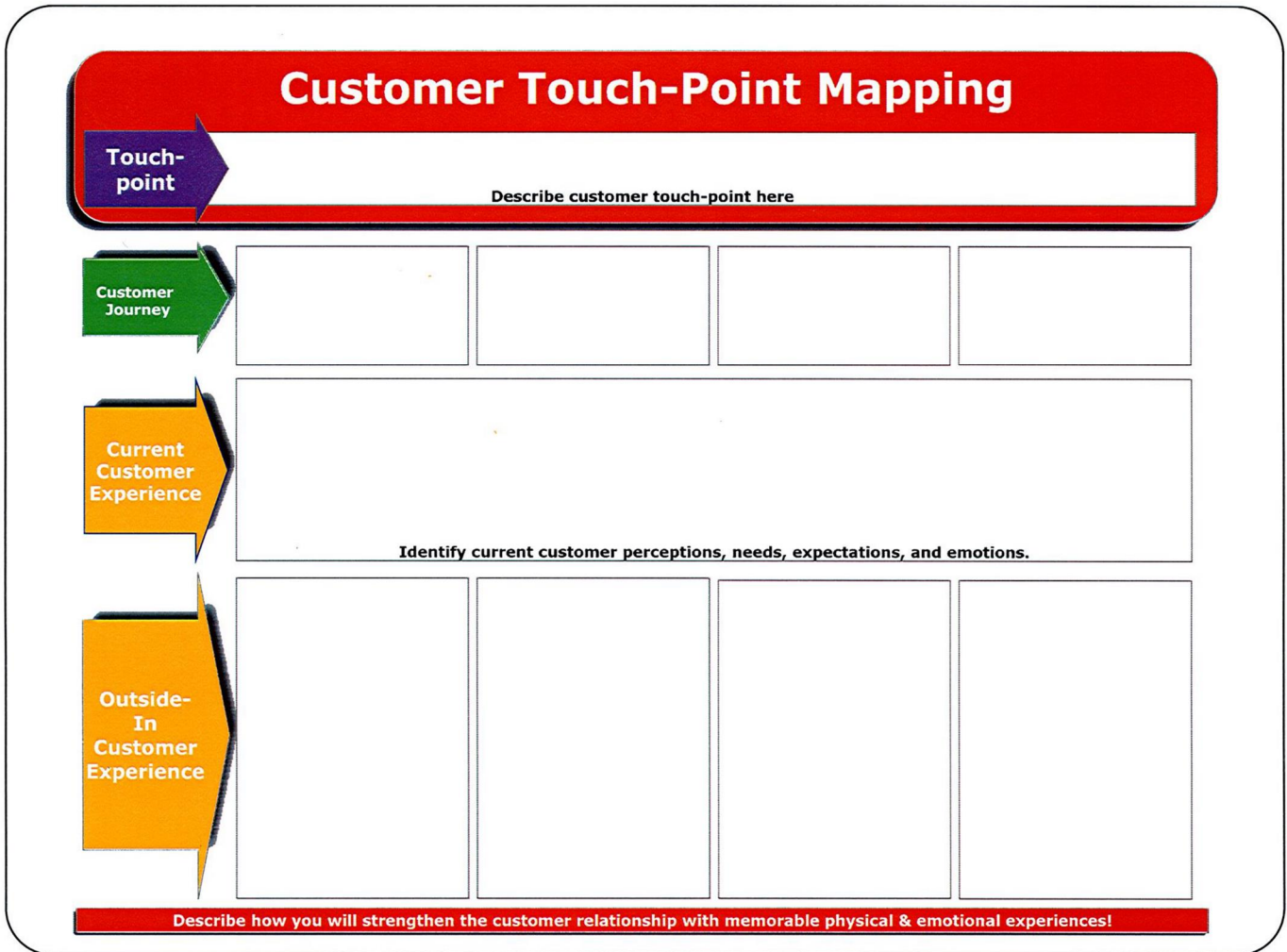
Each of the formal goals has one or more objectives that will guide the assessment process. In the table below, the formal goals of the QEP and associated objectives are presented.

QEP Formal Goals and Objectives

Mission : To strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success	
Goals	Objectives
1) To ensure that online students are prepared to successfully complete an online course	<p>A. Students will complete an online student orientation.</p> <p>B. Students will be tested on their technical skills.</p> <p>C. Students and instructors will benefit by knowing the student's technical skill level.</p> <p>D. Students found to have a low level of technical skill will have an opportunity to take a remediation course/workshop.</p>
2) To ensure that online students are learning course content in the online learning environment	<p>E. Students and advisors will have access to necessary information for proper placement to ensure the potential for success in meeting the online course requirements.</p> <p>F. Students will gain intended learning benefits in online courses from their measured performance on student learning outcomes.</p>
3) To ensure that online faculty are prepared to teach in an online environment.	<p>G. Online faculty will have continual access to online teaching resources.</p> <p>H. Online faculty will be offered professional development in online course development and delivery.</p> <p>I. Online faculty will demonstrate a set of skills for teaching in an online environment.</p> <p>J. Faculty online teaching skills will be assessed for quality improvement.</p>

QEP STRATEGY

After the Director of Professional Development and Technology Support presented the committee with a report detailing the current distance learning program, the Director of Learning



Resources/Library shared a process called "Touch-Point Mapping" to help committee members identify areas of the current distance learning program that could be enhanced through the QEP, especially in those areas previously identified in the literature search. The Touch-Point Mapping process identifies touch-points, any place that an online student interacts with the College from locating classes, registration, orientation, getting assistance, communicating with instructors, financial aid, and more. Once the touch-point is identified, the current journey that a student has through that touch-point is outlined. The student experience including perceptions,

needs, expectations, and emotions, both negative and positive, at this touch-point are evaluated and changes that are needed to make this touch-point a positive experience are identified.

Committee members were asked to identify areas for enhancement.

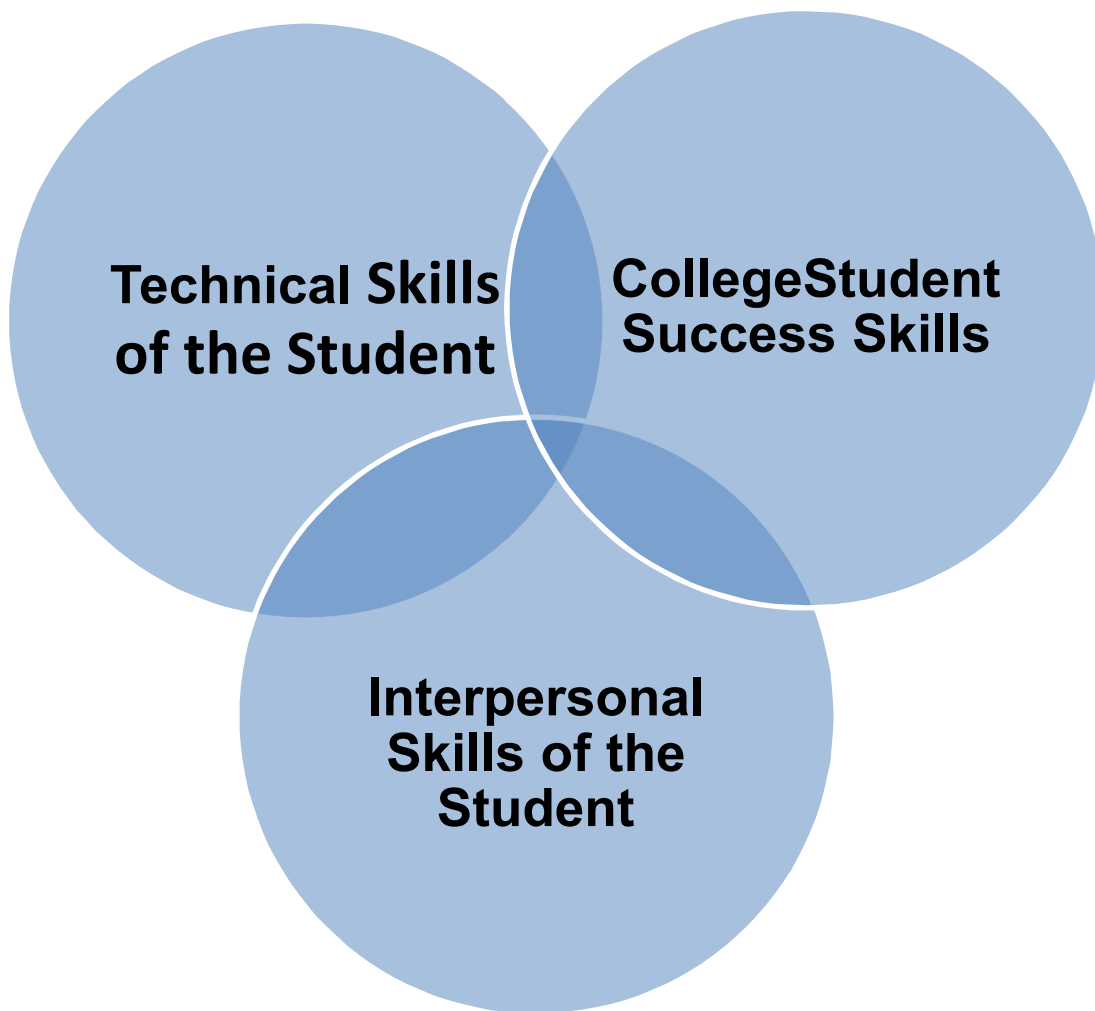
QEP Planning Committee members reported on the areas they identified for enhancement using the Touch-Point Mapping process at the October 3, 2012 meeting. These areas included student use of library resources, formal assessment of student readiness, students who are enrolled in online classes not by choice but because of the lack of an equivalent seated class, online student orientation, faculty readiness for online teaching, first time student/first class, website accessibility for the potential online student, and online registration. After much discussion over the next month about which of these areas would best enhance the current distance learning program and produce measurable student learning, it was determined that an ongoing comprehensive online student orientation and support program is needed. This would include an evaluation of student readiness for online learning; academic support services such as student services, library resources, and tutoring; online learning support services such as logon assistance, course navigation, and intra-course communication guidance; and professional development for faculty. Professional development will insure that all courses adhere to standards and that all faculty know the services available to their students and how to guide students to those services.

QEP FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING

The QEP Planning Committee concluded that students who struggle with online learning technology will have difficulty learning the content of online courses. As the literature revealed, student readiness for taking an online course is in many cases determined according to three factors: (1) Technical Skills of the Student - demonstrated ability to navigate a comprehensive online education platform, (2) College Student Success Skills . demonstrated understanding of

course specific requirements, rigor, successful performance, and knowledge application in an online environment, (3) Interpersonal Skills of the Student . demonstrated ability to communicate with instructor, prepare for assignments, manage time, collaborate with classmates, critically think, problem-solve, and respond appropriately to the course structure in an online environment. The figure below illustrates the factors of student readiness for online learning:

Student Readiness for Online Learning



QEP ACTIONS AND TIMELINE

The actions and timeline of the QEP are based on the overall strategy of an ongoing comprehensive online student orientation and support program. Starting in September, 2013, the College will embark upon a five-year plan that will address this strategy. The following table presents the general course of action. Once implemented, this course of action and associated timeline will be further developed relative to assessment results.

<u>YEAR 1</u>	<u>YEAR 2</u>	<u>YEAR 3</u>	<u>YEAR 4</u>	<u>YEAR 5</u>
GATHER BASELINE DATA	IMPLEMENT PILOT	ASSESS PILOT AND MAKE ADJUSTMENT	TRANSITION PILOT TO PRODUCT	PRODUCT ROLLOUT AND ASSESSMENT
CONTENT ANALYSIS	DESIGN AND DEVELOP PILOT	POST-TESTING	IMPLEMENT ADJUSTMENTS	IMPLEMENT ROLLOUT
INTERNAL FOCUS GROUP	TEST PILOT	COURSE EVALUATIONS	TEST PRODUCT	MONITOR AND SUPPORT
EXTERNAL FOCUS GROUP	IMPLEMENT FOR SELECTED COURSES	FOCUS GROUPS	FACULTY ORIENTATION	STUDENT ASSESSMENT
PRE-TESTING	SET-UP INFORMATION GATHERING SYSTEMS	COMPLETION RATES	SET-UP INFRASTRUCTURE	FACULTY ASSESSMENT
LITERATURE REVIEW		OARs	ESTABLISH POLICY	POST- TESTING
PILOT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN		ADJUSTMENT PLAN	MARKETING PRODUCT ROLLOUT PLAN	

QEP OUTCOMES

MCC's Outcome Assessment Reports (OARs) will be used to assess the expected outcomes developed around the QEP goals and objectives. OARS document goal-driven

outcome statements that are measurable. Actual outcome results are generated from the measures and are compared to the expectations. The end result of this analysis is to identify and implement quality improvements as interventions that are subsequently applied to the OARs process to promote ongoing assessment.

The QEP OARs for year one are presented below:



Montgomery Community College
QEP Outcomes Assessment Report (O.A.R.)

2012-2013

Program: QEP Person(s) Responsible: QEP Committee SLO Program				
Operational X				
Mission: The MCC QEP is designed to strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success				
Goal: To insure that online faculty are providing the support necessary for student success in an online environment.				
Improvement Action Taken Last Year	Expected Outcome	Assessment Measure	Outcome Results	Quality Improvement Action
Not applicable . Year 1 assessment.	<p>100% of online faculty will have access to online teaching resources.</p> <p>100% of online faculty will receive professional development in online course development and delivery.</p> <p>80% of online faculty will demonstrate a set of skills for supporting students in an online environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation checklist • Announcements/Updates • Resource Room Log • Online Resource Log • Professional Development Log • Session evaluation form • Pre-Test Skills Assessment • Post-Test Skills Assessment • Student Evaluation of online instruction 		

Program: QEP Person(s) Responsible: QEP Committee SLO Program Operational X				
Mission: The MCC QEP is designed to strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success				
Goal: To insure that online faculty are providing the support necessary for student success in an online environment.				
Improvement Action Taken Last Year	Expected Outcome	Assessment Measure	Outcome Results	Quality Improvement Action
	to include: 1) technical skills, 2) interpersonal skills, and 3) student success skills.			



Montgomery Community College

QEP Outcomes Assessment Report (O.A.R.)

2012-2013

Program: QEP Person(s) Responsible: QEP Committee SLO Program X				
Operational <input type="checkbox"/>				
Mission: The MCC QEP is designed to strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success				
Goal: To insure that online students are prepared to successfully complete an online course.				
Improvement Action Taken Last Year	Expected Outcome	Assessment Measure	Outcome Results	Quality Improvement Action
Not applicable . Year 1 assessment.	<p>100% of online students will complete the online student orientation.</p> <p>80% of online students will pass the online competency pre-test with a score of 70% or better.</p> <p>80% of online students will pass the online competency post-test with a score of 80% or better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation Log • Online competency pre-test scores • Online competency post-test scores 		



Montgomery Community College

QEP Outcomes Assessment Report (O.A.R.)

2012-2013

Program: QEP Person(s) Responsible: QEP Committee SLO X Program <input type="checkbox"/>				
Operational <input type="checkbox"/>				
Mission: The MCC QEP is designed to strengthen the online student learning environment in order to enhance student success				
Goal: To insure that online students are learning course content in the online learning environment.				
Improvement Action Taken Last Year	Expected Outcome	Assessment Measure	Outcome Results	Quality Improvement Action
Not applicable . Year 1 assessment.	80% of students will gain the intended learning benefits (knowledge, abilities, skills, values, behavior, and attitudes) from their performance in an online course as revealed by an academic unit's student learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data gathered and analyzed from the academic unit's Outcomes Assessment Report (OAR). 		

The QEP OARs will provide measures for quality improvements focused on better preparation for online students, learning parity between online and traditional settings, and faculty with expertise to guide the online learner toward success.

QEP ASSESSMENT

Year one will involve collecting baseline data on student learning outcomes and technical skills, as well as developing surveys, conducting focus group sessions, providing professional development for faculty, continuing the literature review, expanding the outcomes assessment plan, and planning for a pilot test of quality enhancement interventions. In addition, the developing and editing of various College documents, such as the College Catalog, website, handbooks, and official policies will be continually revised as needed for communication and operational purposes.

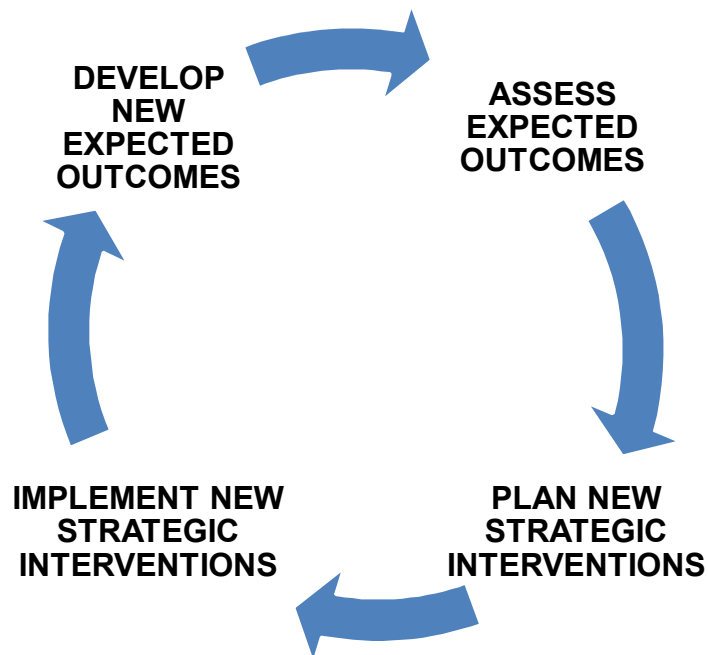
Year two will be highlighted by the implementation of the pilot test, where strategies and interventions will be introduced to selected courses for the purpose of strengthening the online student learning environment. The pilot test will provide the first opportunity to assess strategies and interventions using the QEP Outcomes Assessment Reports (OARs).

The assessment methodology, as guided by the OAR process, is goal-driven. A specified goal determines a series of expected outcome statements. These statements are developed by stakeholders in collaborative fashion so that input is broad-based. For each expected outcome statement, an assessment measure is detailed using both direct and indirect measures. After a period of time, the expected outcome is measured against the actual outcome and analysis is provided. Stakeholder collaboration will interpret the analysis and establish quality enhancement interventions. This process is continued in subsequent time periods assessing the impact of the interventions. In this way, the OARs process is a systematic, ongoing process.

Once the OARs methodology has been applied to the pilot test, a more comprehensive QEP assessment will be developed for the full implementation. Information gained from the pilot test will be used to expand the assessment, once again, using the OARs process.

Years three, four, and five will involve a systematic, ongoing assessment process to determine whether MCC is achieving its mission of strengthening the online student learning environment. Measurement of the comprehensive expected outcomes, based on the OARs for the pilot test, will provide evidence for the effectiveness of strategic interventions on student learning in online courses.

Whenever the assessments reveal that outcome expectations have fallen short of the mark, the Implementation Team will review the evidence and recommend a course of action. The figure below illustrates the quality enhancement cycle: intervention, assessment, and revision.



Quality Enhancement Cycle

Expected outcomes will be measured using multiple measures as appropriate. Both direct and indirect measures will be used.

Direct Measures - are based on data derived directly from testing or observation of student learning activities. Student learning will be measured from pretest and posttest data from technical skills testing of students and information gathered from the academic units' OARs for online courses. Selected courses will be chosen by the QEP Implementation Team to participate in the technical skills testing and the student learning outcomes process to promote the validity of the measures. Specific measurable student learning outcomes will be developed using embedded assignments and questions, course activities, and rubrics as measures. This data will be collected for each selected course throughout the implementation of the QEP, including year one baseline data prior to the implementation of any intervention strategies. These courses will consist of ones offered every semester and taught by the same instructor. This methodology will allow comparisons to be made of technical skills and student learning outcomes both prior to and after the intervention strategies with minimal extraneous effects.

Indirect Measures . are based on data derived from opinion on the effects of QEP interventions and attainment of outcomes. Indirect measures will include an analysis of faculty, staff and student perceptions gathered from opinion surveys. Additional surveys will be used to measure the success of orientations, training, workshops, and seminars. Course attrition rates and failure rates will also be used as indirect measures of the success of intervention strategies.

QEP MARKETING

The first marketing efforts for the establishment of Montgomery Community College's (MCC) QEP began with informational articles in the student newsletter, *yourspace*, beginning in

November 2011. Students were encouraged to go online and take a survey to help the college establish a QEP topic.

ATTACHMENT A

yourspace

a place for MCC students



Vol. 4 Issue 36
November 7 - 13 2011

Spooktacular highlights

More Spooktacular photos can be viewed on MCC's Facebook page.

What's a QEP?

We are so glad you asked!

A QEP is a Quality Enhancement Plan, and very soon, Montgomery Community College will have one.

A Quality Enhancement Plan is used to improve the quality of learning for our students. It is part of an ongoing process that will lead to the College's re-accreditation in the year 2014.

How does Montgomery Community College get a Quality Enhancement Plan?

We are glad you asked that, too!

YOU have a lot to do with that. MCC's Quality Enhancement Plan Committee is asking for YOUR input. We would like every student, employee and board member to answer a one-question survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/68WQ95T> and let us know what you think.

This link will also be sent out to all MCC student and employee e-mails, and will be posted on Twitter and Facebook. It is your opportunity to have a say in how we do things around here, and that is very important to us.

Thank you in advance for your help in improving the quality of learning for all our students.



Practical Nursing Blood Drive

Thursday, November 10, 9 AM - 2 PM
Multipurpose Room
Give the gift of life! Receive snacks!



ON SALE NOW IN THE LIBRARY

Relay Hoodies: \$22
Long-Sleeve T's: \$15
Short-Sleeve T's: \$12
(Prices vary with children's and extra sizes.)

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A CURE FOR CANCER

happenings

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

Advising for Spring Semester.....	November 7 - 30
Last Day to Drop a Course with a "W".....	November 9
Veterans Day Event.....	Flagpole & The Outpost, 11 ^{AM} , November 10
PN Blood Drive.....	Multipurpose Room, 9 ^{AM} - 2 ^{PM} , November 10
Trailblazer Spirit Day.....	November 10
Marine Corps Birthday (Semper Parvum).....	November 10
Literary Magazine Meeting.....	Room 257, 11 ^{AM} , November 14
3MP & HS Thanksgiving Meal.....	The Outpost, 12:30 ^{PM} , November 15
Great American Smoke Out.....	November 17
Wellness Team Loaded Gym Bag Raffle.....	Now through November 21
Wellness Team Thanksgiving Bake Sale.....	November 21
Deadline for SGA Photo Contest Entries.....	November 23
Thanksgiving Holiday Break.....	November 22 - 26
"A Christmas Memory".....	Auditorium, 6 ^{PM} , November 29
Registration for Current Students.....	December 1
SGA Holiday Meal.....	11 ^{AM} - 1 ^{PM} & 5:30 - 7 ^{PM} , Multipurpose Room, December 1

- Little Known November Observances -

National Bittersweet Chocolate With Almonds Day.....	November 7
Abet and Aid Punsters Day.....	November 8
Domino Day.....	November 12

Winners



Winner of the Early Childhood 50/50 drawing \$500 was HVAC student, Fandell Dixon.



Winner of the Early Childhood Toilet Tissue Mummy \$25 Walmart gift card was Business Administration student Yolanda Simmons.



Winner of the Early Childhood Toilet Tissue Mummy \$25 Walmart gift card was Pottery student Annette Hatley.

Literary Magazine Meeting

Monday, November 14
11:00 AM
Room 257 (off the Library entrance)
Anyone interested in working on the new literary magazine is invited to attend.

TRAILBLAZER SPIRIT DAY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

GET YOUR SPIRIT ON!

As the QEP was narrowed down to five potential topics, students were again asked to go online and complete a survey to narrow the topic down to a single QEP topic.

ATTACHMENT C

yourspace

a place for MCC students



Vol. 5 Issue 4
January 30 - February 5, 2012

New digs for BIO and HVAC students

There has been a lot of construction going on around MCC in the past several months. Two of the major renovations took place in Building 100.

The former autobody repair lab was transformed into a heating, ventilation and air conditioning lab. The new HVAC program started last August.

Then, over the Christmas break, the Biology Lab was transformed, complete with ergonomic stools and tables. If you haven't already seen them, check them out!





happenings

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Deadline for entries in Literary Magazine - January 31
Human Services Club Meeting - February 2
All Beta Lambda (P&L) Meeting - February 2
P&L Weak Celebration - February 2
CJ Club Valentine Carnation Sale - February 2
MOE Valentine Buffet - February 2
F&L check disbursements - February 2
Financial Aid (FAFSA) Night - February 2
Polar Valedictory Month Celebration - February 2
Spring break - February 2
Forestry Club Fishing Journey - February 2
Empowerment Expedition - February 2
Woodmen's Trillium - February 2

-JANUARY-
11 AM - 1:30 PM, The Outpost, February 2
1 PM - 3 PM, The Outpost, February 2
1 PM - 3 PM, Students Lounge, February 2
8 AM - 10 AM, The Outpost, February 2
6 PM, Bldg. 200, February 2

-FEBRUARY-
8 AM, Sports beside Pottery Bldg., March 31
7:30 AM, Cook's Marine, March 13
Beans Month - March 13
International Host-care Month - March 17
Pull Your Socks Off the Wall Month - March 29
Spanky Old Roads Month - March 31

FAFSA night at MCC

The MCC Financial Aid Department is once again sponsoring FAFSA night at MCC on Tuesday, February 21 at 6:00 p.m. in Bldg. 200 for anyone who would like help completing their 2012-2013 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form.

The 2012-2013 FAFSA is required for anyone seeking any type of financial aid in the 2012-2013 academic year.

When you come, you should bring with you a copy of your 2011 W-2s or completed 2011 tax return, your social security number, your driver's license number, and a PIN number that you will use to sign your FAFSA electronically. To obtain a PIN number prior to FAFSA night, go to www.pin.ed.gov to apply.

QEP narrows down to five

College planners have gathered all the survey data and have narrowed down the QEP topic to five choices.

For those who are new to MCC, last fall yourspace published a link to a survey for students to have input on the college's Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP. The QEP is part of an ongoing process that will lead to the College's reaffirmation of accreditation in the year 2014.

The QEP Committee now would like your input in order to select a single QEP topic. We are asking for all students to answer the survey at the following link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5C7Q3L2>.

To assist in the narrowing-down process, here is a preview of the potential topics and an explanation of each:

TUTORING - Assisting students with learning a particular subject through faculty members or other students.

ADVISING - Counseling students on matters of career choices and academic decisions.

ONLINE LEARNING - Instruction and content delivered to students primarily over the Internet.

ESSENTIAL (CORE) COMPETENCIES - Achievement of basic college-level knowledge, skills and abilities.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY - Methods or styles of providing knowledge, skills and abilities to students.

The survey will be open until February 14. Thank you for your input!

The survey will be open until February 14. Thank you for your input!

CATS PAUSE

News and information from the Center for Academic & Technology Support

- 🐾 The Center is now open from 8 AM - 7 PM, Mon. - Thurs.
- 🐾 The Center now has an English tutor available 4 - 7 PM, Mon. - Thurs.
- 🐾 To set up an appointment for any tutoring (Math, Reading or English) call 576-6222, extension 523 or see Donna Rush in the Center.
- 🐾 The Center needs English tutors during the day. See Donna Rush for an application.

If everyone in the U.S. purchased a pink car, we'd be a Pink Car Nation!

CJ Club Valentine Carnation Sale
Place your orders early or buy on February 14 while supplies last
\$2 each or 3 for \$5
12 for \$18
Deliveries available on campus

Women of Empowerment
Unlimited Potential
Celebrate 61 or 6 for \$5
See Crystal in the Coding Center
Dressing February 14 at noon

17th Annual MCC Forestry Club Fishing Tournament

Saturday, March 17th at Cooks Marina
7:30 a.m. Take Off - 3:00 p.m. Weigh In

Tournament is open to all students, faculty, staff and forestry graduates. There must be one person per boat who meets one of the criteria listed. If you are a guest of a qualifying participant you must have a guest ticket from that participant along with an entry form and both must be presented at registration on tournament day. Two person per boat limit.

\$30.00 entry fee per boat
5 fish limit - 14" on Golden Rule: Large-mouth ONLY
Optional: \$5.00 per person Big Fish Contest with 100% payback
20% of the proceeds go to MCC Forestry Club with:

1st Place: 50%
2nd Place: 20%
3rd Place: 10%

Safety 101

Stress can be beneficial by helping people develop skills needed to cope with and adapt to new and potentially threatening situations. Beneficial aspects diminish when it is severe enough or prolonged enough to overwhelm a person's ability to cope. Getting the right care can put problems in perspective. Here are some tips for those difficult times: Avoid drugs and alcohol as they tend to compound the stress. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Exercise regularly. Get enough sleep. Give yourself a break if you need it. Ask for help from a parent, friend, counselor, doctor or pastor. Tell them about the stress you feel.

ATTACHMENT D

yourspace

a place for MCC students



Vol. 5 Issue 5
February 6 - 12, 2012

February is Black History Month



Home of the Trailblazers

QEP Q & A

Last week we asked students to participate in the second survey to establish a topic for the college's Quality Enhancement Plan. Because we are an institution of higher learning, many academic terms are used to describe what we do at MCC every day. We know what we do, but some may not know what it's called.

So for clarification, we'd like to define some of the terms you'll see on the survey to make it easier to choose a topic that is important to YOU, the STUDENT.

For the QEP topic, Instructional Delivery (Item D on the survey):

Teaching Styles - Just as people have individual learning styles, teachers have teaching styles that work best for them.

Learning-Centered Environment - An area where teachers base leadership, curriculum, and instruction directly on the life, needs, interests and goals of learners.

Collaborative (cooperative) Learning - Collaborative learning is where participants work together to solve a problem. Cooperative learning is where each individual is responsible for a portion of the work.

Learning Communities - A group which shares common values who are actively engaged in learning together from each other.

Creative Learning - Learning that develops our capacity to be creative and encourages imagination, independence, and tolerance of ambiguity and risk.

Course Hybrids - A blend of face-to-face instruction with online learning.

If you have not already done so, please take a minute to complete the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5C7Q3L2>.

The survey will be open until February 14.

FAFSA night

Organizers of FAFSA night asked that yourspace let you know that you should bring your completed 2011 tax return **and** your W-2s to FAFSA night if you wish to complete the application process at that time.

Without a completed tax return, you can only estimate the information needed to complete the FAFSA. (You can begin the process and go back to complete it once you have your 2011 return, however.)

Criminal Justice Valentine's Day Carnation Sale

February 14
10 am - 1 pm
Student Lounge
Deliveries available on campus
\$2/each
\$5/three
\$18/doz.

happenings

MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . .

Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) Meeting	1:30 PM, Student Lounge, February 9
PBL Week Celebration	1:30 - 3 PM, Student Lounge, February 9
CJ Club Carnation Sale	10 AM - 1 PM, Student Lounge, February 14
WOE Valentine Basket Raffle	Testing Center, Now through February 14
PELL Check Disbursements	8 - 10 AM, The Outpost, February 17
PELL Check Disbursements	10 AM - 3 PM, Business Office, February 17
PELL Check Disbursements	Regular Business Hours, Business Office, after February 17
Financial Aid (FAFSA) Night	6 PM, Bldg. 200, February 21
SGA Meetings	11:00 AM & 5:30 PM, The Outpost, February 22
Black History Month Celebration	10 AM, Blair Auditorium, February 22
PBL Meeting	1:30 PM, The Outpost, February 23
Polar Volleyball	12 PM, grass at College entrance, February 28
Spring Break	March 5 - 10
Midterm	March 12
Forestry Club Bass Tournament	7:30 AM, Cook's Marina, March 17
Empowerment Explosion	All Over Campus, March 28
Woodsmen's Trailblazer 5K Run/Walk	8 AM, BLET Obstacle Course Start, March 31
- Little Known February Observances -	
Extraterrestrial Visitor Day	February 9
Read in the Bathtub Day	February 9
Be Electric Day	February 11
Satisfied Staying Single Day	February 11

In honor of Black History Month, and to recognize some of the many African American achievements throughout our history, yourspace will be running a weekly Black History Trivia Quiz throughout the month of February.

Send your answers to haywoodm@montgomery.edu to win a prize each week for a correct set of five answers. (All five answers must be correct to win a prize.)

Ready? Here are the first five questions:

- 1) What Civil Rights Group was started in 1909?
 - 2) In 1985, Alice Walker won a Pulitzer Prize for what novel?
 - 3) What is the nation's oldest African-American private university?
 - 4) Which scientist discovered new uses for peanuts and sweet potatoes?
 - 5) In what year did Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka take place?
- Good luck!

Phi Beta Lambda invites you to celebrate

Phi Beta Lambda invites you to celebrate PBL week February 6 - 9. Monday and Tuesday you can find out about all things PBL at an information table in the hallway near the Hole-in-the-Wall Cafe. Membership is open to any student, faculty or staff member. Wednesday, February 8 is Dress to Win Day and Advisor Appreciation Day. PBL members invite all students

to dress for success on this day. They also want to encourage other club members to appreciate their club advisors by recognizing the extra work advisors do for their members. Then on Thursday, February 9, PBL invites you to come out to the Student Lounge from 1:30 - 3:00 PM to enjoy refreshments and celebrate PBL week with them. We'll see you there!



Woodsmen's Trailblazer 5K Run/Walk

Saturday, March 31, 8:30 a.m.

This 5K trail run/walk will take place entirely on MCC's campus in the outdoor Forestry Lab. It will be one of the preliminary activities leading up to the Mid-Atlantic Woodsmen's competition to be held here on April 21-22.

Registration Fees - Runners \$25/Walkers \$10
Includes t-shirt, goodie bag and prizes

For more information e-mail roatchg@montgomery.edu

Volunteers needed on event day! See Gay Roatch in the Foundation Office.

--- Cruising Campus ---



Look out! Yourspace has a new roving photographer. You might just be the subject of her next photo shoot! (Photos courtesy of Lynn Ashley)



Safety 101

Healthy relationships increase our self-esteem, improve mental and emotional health, and help us have fuller lives. Feeling scared, humiliated, pressured, or controlled are all signs of an unhealthy relationship. Instead, you should feel loved, respected, and free to be yourself. Friends are an important source of support and advice. They play a powerful role in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Quick Tip: Communication is essential in healthy relationships. Take time to talk with and listen to your friends and loved ones. Express your thoughts and feelings clearly and directly without intentionally hurting or disrespecting others.

The QEP marketing subcommittee formed in May 2012 and met to brainstorm ways to inform the MCC community about the newly established QEP, ~~%~~Strengthening the online student learning environment at Montgomery Community College.+Since graduation was right around the corner, and there would only be a small contingent of students and employees at the college during the summer months, the committee decided to work on developing a spectacular kickoff and introduce the QEP to the college at the Convocation in September.

The committee discussed several ways to keep the QEP fresh in everyone's minds while the QEP Planning Committee researched and established a timeline, action steps and learning outcomes. It was decided that a mascot be chosen to establish a brand for the QEP. ~~%~~Montgomery+, a computer character with a diploma in one hand and a graduation cap on his monitor, symbolized online student success as presented above.

The marketing subcommittee determined materials it would need to start a QEP marketing campaign and projected a budget for purchase of collateral materials:

- T-shirts would be provided to all MCC employees and Board members which would be used at the QEP kickoff and could be worn by employees on casual Fridays.
- Pens would be designed and distributed at the kickoff and enough would be purchased to distribute later to Board members and to new students at registration.
- Lanyards would be designed to be distributed later to bring the QEP back to people's minds, possibly at the 2013 Convocation.
- Banners with the QEP topic sentence printed on them would be purchased to display in the buildings around campus and in the library.
- USB flash drives with the QEP topic sentence saved on them would be provided for distribution to students at special events.

In July, 2012, the QEP marketing subcommittee met to discuss the QEP kickoff at Convocation and establish a budget.

Proposed QEP Marketing Budget					
Description	Vendor	Number	Cost	Purpose	Requisition Done
Javelin Pen . Translucent mocha diamond with white imprint	4imprint	1000	\$290.00	To hand out at kick-off, to complete surveys or questionnaires, to keep QEP topic sentence in minds of students/faculty/staff	X
½+Economy Lanyard (orange or yellow) with white imprint	4imprint	500	\$460.00	QEP giveaways+for QEP-related events. Also for SACS visiting team.	X
Vertical banners (6x 2.5q with stands	VistaPrint	2	\$187.47	To place in Buildings 100 and 200 to publicize QEP topic sentence	X
Horizontal banner (8x2.5q	VistaPrint	1	\$41.99	To hang in library	X
Verbatim Store %+Go 2 GB USB pack of 3 for \$10.99	TigerDirect	20 pks.	\$219.80	To provide student incentives	
T-shirts . Safety yellow with front left logo and full back on color print	Sandhills Trophy and Sports	100	\$600.00	For all employees to wear at kickoff and designated Fridays throughout the year.	X
Subtotal			\$1799.26		
Convocation					
Ice Cream in cup (peach, chocolate, vanilla assorted)	Benq Ice Cream in Candor	400	\$425.00	Convocation/QEP kickoff	X
Drinks (assorted Coke products, 6 oz. cans plus water)	Food King in Troy	600	\$300.00	Convocation/QEP Kickoff	X
Sheet cakes (chocolate, vanilla, assorted)	Food King in Troy	4	\$160.00	Convocation/QEP Kickoff	X
Plates, spoons	Walmart	500	\$45.00	Convocation/QEP Kickoff	X
Subtotal for Convocation			\$930.00		
Total			\$2729.26		

The subcommittee decided that it would introduce the QEP using a variety of technologies to demonstrate the capabilities of the online student learning environment. The QEP marketing subcommittee also took responsibility for presenting the employee service awards and doing a 9/11 memorial presentation/veterans recognition so that these portions of Convocation would also fit in with the QEP kickoff presentation.

The QEP marketing subcommittee met in August 2012 with the college's Hospitality Team to discuss QEP theme-related decorations and to develop a blow-by-blow kickoff-day schedule. Cakes with the QEP mascot were ordered and table decorations included laptops, computer mice, and graduation caps.

A video invitation to the kickoff was sent via email to all students, staff, faculty, board members, county commissioners, town mayors, and other stakeholders. A digital invitation was also sent to those who may not have been able to access the video.

On September 11, 2012, the QEP marketing committee officially kicked off the QEP at Convocation by handing out pens to all attendees with the QEP topic sentence and mascot imprinted on them. In addition, the Convocation program introduced the QEP planning process, the QEP topic sentence, its purpose, and the mascot. College employees wore their safety yellow QEP t-shirts with the QEP topic sentence emblazoned on the back. Employees sat in a group so the t-shirts made a visual impact on Convocation attendees.

The program began with a two-question survey using the interactive Smartboard and responder clicker devices. Sixty audience members took the survey which asked the multiple choice questions: (1) What is a QEP? and (2) What is Montgomery Community College's QEP? These same questions were repeated at the end of the program to determine learning value. The Committee registered a 100% increase in correct answers when the program was completed.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of online technology, the college President utilized Skype to welcome students, staff and special guests to Convocation and to make introductory remarks from a remote location. She concluded her remarks by walking into the college's Multipurpose Room where the Convocation was being held and greeting the audience in person.

A four-minute video was created by the college psychology instructor who routinely utilizes video in his online courses. The video was an overview of technology in MCC's past, present, and future. The Computer Information Technology instructor created avatars to present the Excellence in Teaching and Staff Member of the Year Awards, with past recipients onstage to present the awards to the new recipients. A PowerPoint presentation was used to present service awards to employees of long-standing service to the college. The presentation consisted of photographs over the years of the employees being recognized.

At the conclusion of the Convocation, attendees were treated to QEP-themed cake, ice cream and drinks.

During the months after the kickoff, the QEP banners have been moved to various locations on campus in each building to keep the QEP topic sentence fresh in people's minds. The student newsletter, *yourspace*, has featured a QEP quiz twice in which students were asked if they knew the QEP topic sentence, and the first student to email the correct response won a lanyard imprinted with the QEP topic sentence and an MCC mug.

QEP BUDGET

The majority of the costs for implementing and assessing the QEP will be based on existing personnel and departments for the first year. To calculate personnel costs for institutional support, percentage estimates have been made for the workloads expected to fall on the departments of Distance Education, Library, Professional Development, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and Information Technology. The corresponding percentages

calculated in the budget are preliminary estimates based on meetings and correspondence with the directors of each area.

The QEP Implementation Team anticipates that as much as 50% of the normal work schedule in Distance Education will be focused on the following responsibilities:

- Customizing Blackboard's online orientation modules to fit MCC's needs.
- Designing and implementing a beta testing program for select online faculty to test the online student orientation.
- Training online faculty and counselors to support students during and after orientation.
- Tracking online students completing the orientation.
- Developing and maintaining a student assistance log and submitting reports on the numbers of students and the types of assistance provided each semester.
- Serving the role of liaison with academic leaders to foster student success.
- Developing and delivering professional development sessions twice per year.
- Working with the QEP Implementation Team to insure action steps and timelines are met.
- Preparing reports on online faculty/student success rates and tracking student problems and issues with the pre-orientation.

**Montgomery Community College
Quality Enhancement Plan Proposed Budget
Academic Years 2013-2017**

Expense Categories	AY 2013-14	AY 2014-15	AY 2015-16	AY 2016-17	AY 2017-18	Five Year Totals
Institutional Support						
Salaries:						
Institutional Effectiveness	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Marketing	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Professional Development	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Distance Education						
QEP Coordinator	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 115,000.00
DE Support Staff	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Blackboard Hosting	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 67,000.00
Software						
Purchase/Development	0	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Marketing						
Internal	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 9,500.00
External	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Professional Development and Travel	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total Estimated Budget	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 62,500.00	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 62,500.00	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 311,000.00

***10% of staff salary for PD, DE support staff, Marketing and IE. 1/3 budget for Blackboard hosting.
1/2 salary of Director of Learning Technologies/QEP Coordinator

QEP IMPLEMENTATION

MCC recognized the need to distinguish between planning and implementation of the QEP process. The College's senior leadership was determined to include a broad representation of faculty and staff involvement on this plan. Hence, other faculty and staff were

recruited to serve during the implementation phase of the plan. A plan for membership rotation was also set-up to promote inclusion.

The first rotation primarily includes faculty with online teaching experience, as well as staff members from student services, support staff, and administration. The QEP

Implementation Team includes:

Tracey Wyrick, Criminal Justice Program Head, (Chair)
Sandra Britt, English Instructor
Amanda Beaman, Medical Office Assisting Instructor
Carolyn Saunders, LPN Instructor
Randy Zielsdorf, Math Instructor, (Secretary)
Natalie Winfree, Student Services Counselor, (Vice Chair)
Jonathan Carrick, Information Technology Systems Technician
Sharon Faulkner, Dir. of Learning Resources/Library/Professional Development
Julie Kennedy, Director of Learning Technologies/QEP Coordinator
Tim Kennedy, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness/SACS Liaison

On April 16, 2013, the initial meeting of the QEP Implementation Team was held. During this meeting, the Team was oriented to the work of the QEP Planning Committee and briefly instructed on the next steps in the process. The Director of Learning Technologies/QEP Coordinator announced the creation of a Blackboard[®] site to share research, meeting minutes, schedule meetings, and provide any pertinent information. The site will allow for electronic meetings when members are not available to attend.

Two additional meetings were held in April before most faculty dismissed for the summer. Arrangements were made to conduct an electronic meeting over the summer. These meetings established information, guidelines, targets, and schedules for implementing the QEP. Members were informed that the draft QEP report would be sent to them electronically during the summer for review and input. The electronic meeting surveyed the membership on recommending courses to beta test the online interventions including orientation, assessments, scaffolding and student supports.

The Implementation Team is now poised to engage in a quality enhancement plan that will strengthen the online student learning environment at Montgomery Community College.

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