

Develop **READING DREAMS** Excellence and Maximize Success

a newsletter dedicated to our QEP initiative for 2009

SACS/COC VISIT COMING UP!

QUALITY
ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The first two QEP newsletters provided the basic information in order to get the word out about our QEP: DREAMS. Since the campus will be visited very soon, this newsletter's goal is to provide all of the basic QEP information once again in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs). All of these questions were also covered in the faculty/staff meetings held over the past several weeks.

What is a QEP? To begin with, QEP actually stands for Quality Enhancement Plan. The QEP is designed to be a plan that continuously improves upon and focuses on student learning. It cannot focus on institution goals such as retention, enrollment, placement, etc. Instead, areas must be evaluated where students are not successfully achieving the desired student learning outcomes. During this evaluation process, whenever we find an area of student learning that needs improvement or that could simply be better, we have found a potential QEP topic. The QEP is then designed to improve the areas in order to increase student learning.

Why is a QEP important? The intrinsic value to implementing a QEP is to ensure that the college is continuously monitoring and improving areas of student learning; essentially, implementing an approved QEP will inevitably improve the students' quality of learning here at Albany Technical College. Extrinsically, implementing a QEP is a specific requirement set forth by SACS/COC (the organization that accredits institutions such as colleges and universities and allows them to grant awards/degrees). As a part of the reaffirmation

process, the SACS/COC committee will be evaluating Albany Tech's QEP.

Who is involved? Every stakeholder of the college needs to be aware of the definition of QEP, and more specifically, Albany Tech's QEP. When the COC team comes to visit the campus in October of 2009, they could possibly ask random stakeholders if they are aware of a QEP and/or ATC's QEP. Therefore, to answer the question of who has to participate, everyone must participate to some extent. Not only can the college maintain its COC accreditation, but the QEP's focus - student learning - will certainly be beneficial for many groups. Obviously, the students will benefit from the increased success in student learning.



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THE COUNTDOWN IS ON!

Who are the stakeholders of the QEP? According to the Encarta Dictionary, a stakeholder is a person or group with a direct interest, involvement, or investment in something. For example, some of the stakeholders of Albany Technical College include students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, advisory members, employers, community members, etc. All stakeholders will be expected to know what ATC's QEP is and what it is about in October when the COC team visits the campus.

How did the QEP committee involve a broad based constituency in selecting the topic? In the process of selecting Albany Tech's QEP topic, many stakeholders were surveyed. In the group of those surveyed included faculty, staff, board members, advisory council members, students, alumni, etc. The committee included as many stakeholders as possible in the topic selection process in order to promote broad based participation and broad based results.

What is the title of ATC's QEP? What does it stand for? Albany Tech's QEP is DREAMS: Develop Reading Excellence And Maximize Success. Our QEP is primarily focused on the improvement of students' reading skills that will, in turn, enable them to be successful at a higher level of learning.

What are the specific expected outcomes of DREAMS? There are three specific outcomes that have been determined in the QEP

document. These outcomes will be evaluated to measure whether or not DREAMS has achieved the level of success the college had originally intended. The three specific desired outcomes of the QEP (as written in the college's QEP document) are the following:

1. Increase the number of students who successfully complete Learning Support Reading (097).
2. Increase the number of Learning Support students who succeed in subsequent program level coursework.
3. Increase the number of Learning Support students who graduate from an instructional program.

What specific group of students will be the focus of DREAMS? Students enrolling in RDG 097, a Learning Support reading course, will be the focus of the QEP. These students will be the ones used when assessing the specific expected outcomes of the QEP.

Why have we focused on reading as the topic for DREAMS? Reading was selected as our topic of choice from the topic-selection surveys. The surveys were given to a wide variety of stakeholders; this practice is crucial to having a broad based involvement of the college and community in the QEP. When the college had to pick one skill to improve upon out of reading, math, and writing, the surveys' results named reading as the chosen area for improvement.

What processes will be used to implement DREAMS? There

are four basic processes that will be implemented and utilized for DREAMS. The following are the nuts and bolts of DREAMS:

- Assessing students' strengths and weaknesses
- Traditional classroom instruction
- Supplemental instruction
- Retention counseling

Traditional classroom instruction includes completing all of the objectives listed in the state standards. Included in supplemental instruction activities are peer-led tutoring and faculty-led tutoring.

How is the Academic Achievement Center different than the QEP? The Academic Achievement Center was established with the Title III grant. The QEP focuses only on a specific component of the Title III grant. While the QEP is narrowly focused on enhancing reading skills, the Title III grant targets a much broader spectrum in addition to reading. Math, English, and historically difficult courses such as PSY 101, SCT 100, and AHS courses are included in the Title III grant's focus. Another difference to mention is the fact that the Title III grant and its objectives are already in place – occurring in the Academic Achievement Center in C-321. The QEP has not yet been put into place; on the contrary, it is in the process of being developed and approved.

DREAMS is published quarterly by the QEP Committee and the Albany Technical College Public Relations Division. Comments, suggestions, or questions should be sent to Kelley Castro at 229.430.3619 or email kcastro@albanytech.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SITE VISIT DATES

The SACS/COC team will be on Albany Tech's campus beginning on Tuesday, October 27, 2009. The team's last day on our campus will be Thursday, October 29, 2009. Make sure that you and your students are up-to-date on the QEP information!

INFORMATION LOCATION

The latest information on Albany Technical College's QEP is posted on the college website under the DREAMS icon. There, one can find the newsletters as well as general information on the quality enhancement plan.