

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Title: Improving Student Learning Outcomes through the Implementation of Service-Learning as an Instructional Methodology

Description of Focus: The focus of the QEP at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College will be on the introduction of service-learning as an instructional methodology into our campus culture. Service-learning has a real-world focus on mastering course objectives, and it utilizes a reflective writing component as a means for evaluation. Our goal is to take advantage of these two traits to positively impact student learning in both class content and writing skills areas. It is our aim to begin by implementing service-learning projects on a limited course-by-course basis. By the end of our evaluation period, we wish to spread this teaching approach throughout our various curricula and programs. As we do so, we recognize the need for keeping the following goals in mind:

- Committing to the service-learning project by focusing on an assessment of community needs and issues, reviewing student capacities and interests, looking at students' academic goals and connecting them to service, and putting community and student needs into a service-learning plan
- Setting goals in a student outcomes plan by concentrating on assembling the participants, focusing on outcomes, accomplishing outcomes, developing support networks, and measuring indicators of constituent outcomes
- Linking service and learning with reflective learning experiences by using student outcome plans to state goals and objectives, develop reflective learning experiences, and create a means for sharing instructional responsibilities
- Evaluating projects by developing service-learning evaluation plans, implementing these evaluation plans, and analyzing/interpreting this evaluative data

Reason for Selection: As our QEP Team narrowed the focus of our initiative, two themes emerged: a learning communities approach to instruction and the need for enhancing writing skills. Further research led us to service-learning. With its focus on forming campus/community partnerships, service-learning allows for a collaborative approach to instruction. Furthermore, because reflection is central to the concept, and, conversely, communication skills are at the core of any exhibition of reflective thinking, a service-learning program invites an excellent opportunity for enhancing writing skills. Thus, service-learning seemed to be the perfect choice for connecting our two focus interests. Throughout our selection process, our QEP Team kept these four institutional competencies that all Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College graduates should possess in mind: (1.) proficient oral and written communication skills, (2.) effective problem-solving techniques, (3.) capacity to use cutting-edge technology, and (4.) development of interpersonal skills through quality classroom delivery systems, innovative teaching methodologies, and multiple assessment measures. Service-learning reaffirms these goals and provides the means to lead the College into an exciting new direction.