Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway Courses: The Quality Enhancement Plan of Hillsborough Community College, Florida

9/21/05
College Mission
Adopted by the Board of Trustees, August 20, 2003

Hillsborough Community College, a public, comprehensive institution of higher education, empowers students to excel through its superior teaching and service in an innovative learning environment.

College Vision
Adopted by the Board of Trustees, August 20, 2003

Hillsborough Community College will deliver education of the highest standards enabling a diverse community of life-long learners to achieve their maximum potential in a global society.

College Goals
Adopted by the Board of Trustees, April 21, 2004

1. Promote institutional learning through excellence in teaching, support services, and instructional delivery systems.
2. Foster partnerships with the local and global communities to position the College as a premier educational institution for college transfer, career workforce and economic development, lifelong learning, and community initiatives.
3. Enhance access, flexibility, and responsiveness to meet the changing educational needs of the students and the community.
4. Provide the resources and skills necessary to prepare students, faculty, and staff to function effectively in a technologically-driven world.
5. Promote an institutional culture that values the individual; fosters diversity; and encourages professional development, action, creativity, and risk taking.
6. Continuously improve programs and services while aggressively seeking and effectively managing human, financial, physical, and technological resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Mission</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Profile</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Characteristics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Awarded</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Campuses</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Accreditation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Learning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the Quality Enhancement Plan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Steering Committee</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Selection Process</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEP Development Process</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Gateway Initiative to the College</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Learning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Evaluation Process</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Laboratory Experimental Model</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be included in 2nd Draft:
COLLEGE PROFILE

History and Characteristics

Hillsborough Community College (HCC) serves Hillsborough County in west central Florida with a population of over 1,000,000 residents. The College enrolls over 45,000 students representing more than 16,000 FTE (2003-04 credit and non-credit). More than half (54 percent) of the FTE is generated by the college transfer program; 32 percent in 55 workforce programs (credit and non-credit) and 14 percent in preparatory coursework. Almost half of the enrollment in workforce programs is in the public service and health sectors. A profile of the student body (headcount, credit and non-credit) includes the following:

- 34 percent are age 24 or younger; 66 percent are age 25 or older;
- 46 percent are male; 54 percent are female;
- 17 percent are enrolled Full Time; 83 percent are enrolled Part Time; and
- 19 percent African American, 4 percent Asian, 17 percent Hispanic, and 59 percent White.

The racial/ethnic profile of the student body approximates that of the service area with 16 percent of the population African American, 3 percent Asian, 20 percent Hispanic, and 60 percent White.

In 2002-03, the college employed 237 full-time and 1,031 part-time faculty. Ninety-four percent of the full-time faculty holds advanced degrees, and twenty-seven percent possess the doctoral degree.

HCC opened its doors in the fall of 1968. It was accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1971. The College grew throughout the following decades, adding Dale Mabry, Plant City, and Ybor City campuses in the 1970s. Ground was broken for Brandon campus in 1989. The Corporate Training Center @ HCC, established in 1998, is located on the grounds of the District Administrative Offices on Davis Island near downtown Tampa. Presently, a fifth campus is in the planning stage to serve the southernmost portion of Hillsborough County.

Since 1997, Dr. Gwendolyn W. Stephenson has served as HCC’s 6th president. Each campus is represented by a “campus president” reporting to Dr. Stephenson. The institution is governed by a local Board of Trustees consisting of five members appointed by the governor. The mission of the institution, as approved by the Board of Trustees reads: Hillsborough Community College, a public, comprehensive institution of higher education, empowers students to excel through its superior teaching and service in an innovative learning environment.

HCC employs an open-door admissions policy requiring, in general, a high school diploma or its equivalency.
Degrees Awarded

Hillsborough Community College offers associate in arts (AA), associate in science (AS), and associate in applied science (AAS) degrees. Associate in arts degree concentrations include, but are not limited to agriculture; architecture; art; building construction; business administration; communications, mass; computer information systems; computer science; dance; dramatic arts; education and teacher preparation; engineering; graphic design; liberal arts and sciences; medical science; music; and pharmacy. In 2003-04, almost 1,500 students received an associate in arts degree.

Associate in science and applied science degree and college credit certificate concentrations include the following health science programs: dental hygiene; diagnostic medical sonography technology; emergency medical services; counseling and human services; nuclear medicine technology; nursing; opticianry; optical management; radiation therapy; respiratory care; and radiography.

Associate in science and applied science degree and college credit certificate concentrations also include these additional occupational programs: accounting; aquaculture; architectural design and construction technology; biomedical equipment engineering technology; business administration; computer engineering technology; computer information technology; computer programming; criminal justice officer administration; criminal justice technology; culinary management; database technology; digital media/multimedia technology; early childhood management; electronics engineering technology; environmental horticulture technology; environmental science technology; fire science technology; hospitality and tourism management; industrial management technology; internet services technology; legal assisting; manufacturing technology; networking services technology; office administration; radio and television broadcast programming; restaurant management; and sign language interpretation.

In 2003-04, almost 500 hundred students received an associate in science or associate in applied science degree. Additionally, 1,253 workforce certificates were awarded in the same year.

Four Campuses

HCC has four main campuses; they are Dale Mabry and Ybor City, located in Tampa; Brandon, located in the town of Brandon; and Plant City, located in the town of Plant City. A fifth campus is in the planning stage for the southern portion of the county near Sun City.

Dale Mabry campus specializes in health sciences and technology and offers the required courses for both the AA and the AS degrees. It also provides a wide variety of continuing education and distance learning courses. Ybor City campus specializes in the program areas of childcare, office education, fire science, art, dance, drama, music and criminal justice training. It also offers a full complement of general education offerings. Plant City campus offers a full range of college transfer and technical courses, as well as continuing
education courses. In addition, Plant City hosts a growing branch campus of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences. After earning their AA degree at Plant City Campus, students can take all the coursework and complete the BS in Agriculture degree and the Masters in Agriculture from the University of Florida on the Plant City Campus. In addition to offering a complete array of courses for the Associate in Arts degree, the Brandon Campus has a federally-funded manufacturing center and a training program in aquaculture which supports the number one export from Tampa International Airport.

**Distance Education**

Distance education credit offerings that can be obtained primarily through electronic means include honors American history, American literature, art history, astronomy biological foundations, computers and technology, computer information systems, child development, economics, educational technology, English, British literature, finance, business, geology, human nutrition, internet research, world literature, college algebra, management, marketing, college prep and intermediate algebra, opticianry and ophthalmology, business law, political science, psychology, college success, and sociology. These offerings primarily serve those students residing in Hillsborough County. The only programs in which 50 percent or more of instruction can be taken using electronic methods are the opticianry program and computer science program.

**Program Accreditation**

In addition to institutional accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the programs listed in the table below have received specialized accreditation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Accrediting Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Management</td>
<td>American Culinary Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Assisting</td>
<td>Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygiene</td>
<td>Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS (Paramedic)</td>
<td>Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for EMS Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS (State)</td>
<td>Bureau of Emergency Medical Services – Florida Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>Council for Standards in Human Services Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Medicine</td>
<td>Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opticianry</td>
<td>Commission on Opticianry Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Therapy</td>
<td>Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiography</td>
<td>Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Care</td>
<td>Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Management</td>
<td>American Culinary Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonography</td>
<td>Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus on Learning

Hillsborough Community College’s mission and its current Board Goals focus on providing an environment for student learning and creating an institutional culture that promotes student learning.

The Office of the Student and Educational Development has led many efforts at the college to enhance student learning. A multi-year initiative titled “Communities of Learning” resulted in the development of tutorial centers, writing centers, learning community projects and Supplemental Instruction projects. The office has also led efforts in faculty development to provide numerous opportunities for the college’s faculty to attend on-site workshops related to such topics as Learning College Concepts, Student Learning Outcomes Development, Teaching Strategies and Learning Styles and has led the effort for internal sharing of best practices related to learning and teaching.

Recent college actions to promote a culture and environment focused on student learning include the creation of the Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee in the summer of 2001. This committee of faculty and administrators has concentrated on student success at HCC by providing faculty with student performance data, by providing input into the development of student learning initiatives, by reviewing state accountability data, by soliciting input relating to student placement, and by developing an academic annual report.

This committee’s actions have led directly to the development of two major, district-wide, student-learning initiatives: First Year Experience and Achieving the Dream. Both of these initiatives have a current emphasis on enhancing student learning outcomes in our developmental program and on easing the transition for students moving from developmental courses to college-level courses. As recommended by the Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee and by the QEP Steering Committee, the Gateway Learning Initiative will serve as a natural development in this process by focusing on students in many of their initial college-level courses.

DEVELOPING THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

QEP Steering Committee

In the summer of 2004, Craig Johnson who was serving as the faculty representative on the college’s SACS Leadership Team for Reaffirmation of Accreditation was selected by the Leadership Team to chair a Quality Enhancement Plan Task Force which came to be known as the QEP Steering Committee. By the beginning of the fall term of 2004, a steering committee was appointed with membership representing each campus and the district offices and representing faculty and administration. The committee was charged by the Leadership Team to (1) Review the SACS requirements for the Quality Enhancement Plan; (2) Identify a topic addressing student learning outcomes; (3) Provide opportunities for widespread involvement in
development of the QEP; (4) Ensure its integration into the planning and evaluation process of the college; and (4) Draft the QEP.

The initial six member committee quickly grew with the almost immediate addition of six volunteer members. The committee’s initial timeline demanded working with faculty and staff to develop a topic for the QEP by May of 2005, composing an initial draft of the QEP by September 2005, allowing for faculty, staff, student, and administrative development and review of the draft, and finalizing the draft by May of 2006. Initial efforts for the fall of 2004 focused on informing the college community about the QEP requirement and process.

**Topic Selection Process**

Inclusion of faculty, students, staff, and administrators has been a key element in the selection of the topic. Numerous sessions were held in the fall of 2004 with key groups such as the Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee, the Institutional Advisory Council, two Campus Advisory Councils, and the Student Services Staff. Several open forums were also scheduled, at least one at each campus during the fall term. Presentations and workshops were also held during All College Day in October 2004 and at Faculty In-Service Meetings in both the fall and spring terms. Workshops included information about the nature and purpose of the QEP, as well as open discussions on possible topics, target populations, and student needs. The College also posted a QEP web site to keep stakeholders informed. It included a specific QEP email address for stakeholders to communicate ideas or concerns to the committee. Several emails were shared with the college community providing information about the QEP, updating the staff about HCC QEP activities, and soliciting ideas.

One key element of expressed interest on the part of faculty emerged early in the process: “Improving the first-year experience of students through engagement.” However, this was identified as the topic of a current Title III grant that is already in its early pilot stage at one campus and, therefore, seen as an inappropriate topic for the QEP.

The College was also involved in major study of student performance as part of a Lumina study on improving student success, including graduation and transfer rates among low-income students and minority students, institution completion and retention rates, student persistence, and a combined student success measure. Data was provided, comparing Hillsborough Community College Students to state averages and to specific data from several other state schools in the Lumina project. Data related to student retention and student persistence in the programs showed Hillsborough Community College students to be below the state average in several measures. Coordination between the Lumina team and the QEP Steering Committee was a key factor. At least three members of the QEP Steering Committee also worked extensively with the Lumina team. Data analysis of student performance and materials from several student focus groups were shared with the QEP Steering Committee. Of key interest to the committee was data analysis specific to student performance within the courses. This led to a presentation at the 2004 All College Day entitled “Courses Behaving Badly” that highlighted several courses with
low student success rates and high withdrawal rates. Many of these were introductory level general education courses or program prerequisite courses. Results of the Course Performance report were presented to the Steering Committee and seen as a possible area for topic development. The committee also studied focus reports from student focus groups, collected as part of the assessment of the First Year Experience Initiative. There were several student comments also focused on the difficulty of mastering some of the introductory general education courses or program prerequisite courses.

Culmination of inclusion activities took place in April 2005 with a series of charette/workshops. On April 1, 2005, five charettes were held involving 375 faculty, students, staff and administrators. Six topics identified as possibilities by the Steering Committee were subjected to SWOT analysis by numerous teams at each charette. Results of these charettes were shared by email with the college. On April 15, a follow-up charette was held with representatives from each of the five campus charettes to discuss the campus results. At that charette, discussion focused on the possibility of combining ideas from the six topics into a single QEP topic. This became the focus of the following two Steering Committee meetings, resulting in the choice of the barrier course topic, but with an emphasis of utilizing Early Alert and faculty advising as strategies to improve student learning outcomes in these courses.

A meeting with members of the community was held on May 5 to discuss the QEP and the potential topic. Community members participated in a workshop and discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the topic.

The steering committee met with Dr. Carter, our SACS liaison, on May 19, 2005. Further refinement of the recommended topic began following that meeting. This led to the selection of the Gateway course topic, with a realization that the change from barrier course to gateway course was more than a semantic shift. Gateway courses could possibly be courses with high student performance and success levels, though they could also include courses that might be considered barrier courses.

The following topic was recommended to the HCC SACS Leadership Team and the HCC Board of Trustees and approved by both bodies: The Quality Enhancement Plan Steering Committee recommends “Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway Courses” as the topic for HCC’s QEP. Gateway courses are those which serve as the foundation for the students’ subsequent academic success throughout the remainder of their program of study. The concept would suggest identifying and removing barriers to learning manifested in gateway courses. Utilizing gateway courses will allow the QEP to impact a large number of students while still remaining focused on a relatively small number of courses. If the QEP is effective and student learning is improved in these courses, then the impact should be felt in overall programs as well.

QEP Development Process

An initial draft proposal for the quality enhancement plan on the topic “Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway Courses” was developed by the QEP Steering
Committee during the summer of 2005. This initial draft was shared with the college community in late September of 2005. The Steering Committee followed the release of the draft with a series of workshops and presentations, open to the entire college community to discuss and develop sections of the Gateway Initiative. These presentations and workshops focused on select parts of the plan, such as goals, parts of the methodology, the assessment plan, and so forth. Also, specific overview presentations were made to selected groups such as the Institutional Advisory Council, the Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Government Association, and others.

(The remainder of this section will have to be completed in the final draft because this section is to document development activities that will continue through the spring of 2006.)

IMPORTANCE OF THE GATEWAY INITIATIVE TO HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Gateway Initiative is a major learning initiative to improve student learning outcomes in the institution’s college-level, credit courses and programs. While the college has two major grant funded initiatives to enhance student learning in its non-credit, preparatory programs which should enhance student skills in the subsequent college-level courses, it currently does not have a major, institution-wide initiative working directly on student learning outcomes in the college-level courses or programs. The Gateway initiative aligns well with First Year Experience and Achieving the Dream, the two preparatory initiatives, by providing important resources for the students and faculty in many of the initial college-level offerings where the fundamental gateway knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for success in the credit programs are learned. The development and dedication of resources for students will enhance the learning of those transitioning from the preparatory programs and of those who have placed directly into college-level coursework. A faculty development focus on developing alternative teaching and learning strategies will enhance the effectiveness of those teaching the college-level courses. The experimental model for the Gateway Initiative will provide an opportunity to develop new strategies, test them against control groups, and assess their effectiveness. Institutional best practices can then be shared across the college. The experimental model itself will become a research model for strategy development at any level of college coursework at Hillsborough Community College.

DEFINITION OF STUDENT LEARNING

The definition to be used by Hillsborough Community College to meet the needs of the Gateway Initiative is one that must address a concept of learning focused on specific assessable skills and areas of knowledge related to the specific learning outcomes expected of students in the Gateway courses. To this end, Peter Ewell’s definition of learning as “Particular levels of knowledge, skills and abilities that a student has attained
at the end of engagement in particular sets of collegiate experiences” (APA citation needed) articulates a concept of learning perfectly fitting to the Gateway Initiative.

Equally important to the Gateway Initiative is an institutional definition of Gateway Courses. A Gateway course
• includes strategies that enhance a learner’s ability to be more effective in subsequent coursework;
• is a foundation for knowledge, skills, and abilities that will serve as or will be the basis of future academic endeavors;
• helps develop critical thinking skills necessary for building success in execution of higher cognitive tasks; and
• includes the demonstrable mastery of select and critical student learning outcomes that enhance a learner’s ability to be more effective in subsequent coursework.

GOALS

I. Goal: Improve Student Learning Outcomes in Gateway Courses – to achieve demonstrable student learning gains in identified gateway knowledge, skills and abilities

II. Goal: To increase the student success rate in subsequent program courses through demonstrable student learning gains in identified gateway knowledge, skills and abilities utilized in subsequent program courses

Strategic Approaches

a. Utilize the Gateway Course Review Model to
   1. identify foundation knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for academic success in the related college programs;
   2. identify specific knowledge, skills and abilities outcomes that pose potential barriers to student learning in the course;
   3. identify multiple teaching/learning strategies to improve student learning outcomes in the course, focusing on identified foundation knowledge, skills, and abilities with a focus on identified barriers to student learning;
   4. develop a research implementation model and schedule for classroom-based research on the effectiveness of identified strategies; and
   5. identify appropriate measures and assessment tools to gauge outcomes performance related to the specific researched strategies.

b. Utilize best practice strategies identified through the research to
   1. provide resources to improve student learning outcomes for direct use by students taking the Gateway Courses;
   2. provide resources to improve student learning outcomes for faculty teaching Gateway Courses; and
3. create a Gateway Course Webpage for Gateway Courses that provides an institutional listing of all available services specific to the courses, an FAQ section, and an “ask a faculty member” service, as well as other features as appropriate.

c. Align appropriate related services, such as academic advising and counseling, library services, and academic support services to support improving student learning outcomes in Gateway Courses.

d. Utilize the strategic objectives to conduct research to identify strategies that will enhance student learning and to apply those best practices to all sections of the selected Gateway Courses and to utilize those best practices where appropriate to other college courses.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

1. Identifying the gateway knowledge, skills and abilities learning outcomes by faculty – The Gateway Initiative coordinator will work with faculty in the college level programs to identify important fundamental knowledge, skills and abilities important to continued student success in the programs that should be learned in introductory or gateway courses.

2. Mapping the identified knowledge, skills, and abilities outcomes to specific program courses – Faculty Clusters will take the list of identified knowledge, skills and abilities in step one and then identify the courses where they should be learned. This course mapping will help to insure that these expected outcomes are indeed covered in gateway courses and will identify the courses for potential selection to the Gateway Initiative.

3. Selecting Courses – The Gateway Initiative coordinator and the Gateway Initiative Team will select specific courses for learning outcome improvement. Criteria for selecting the specific courses for gateway initiative include the following:
   • the number and importance of faculty identified gateway skills would be an important criteria for course selection;
   • it must be a course that students have to take as a program requirement;
   • the number of students taking the course would be a consideration, especially for gateway courses relating to the AA program; and
   • past student performance in the course would be considered - course GPA, Withdrawal rates and successful completion rates

4. Evaluating the Gateway Course - The Gateway Initiative coordinator will select a lead faculty member from those who regularly teach the course to help facilitate the planning process, including course evaluation and strategy experiment procedures. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will
conduct the gateway course evaluation following the specific Gateway Course Evaluation Procedure, which is explained in a later section of the Methodology.

5. Recommending Strategies - The Gateway Initiative coordinator and lead faculty member will recommend specific strategies to improve outcomes within course to the appropriate cluster.

6. Designing the Gateway Course Webpage - The Gateway Initiative coordinator will develop the Gateway Course Webpage with input from the teaching faculty.

7. Developing the Experiment - The Gateway Initiative coordinator along with the lead faculty member will develop the strategies experiment process specific to the course, but following the Gateway Course Experiment Model, discussed in detail later in the Methodology.

8. Scheduling the Initial Gateway Strategies Experiment - Following the planning term, the college will implement the experiment and control sections, utilizing common assessment instruments to assess the effectiveness of individual teaching and learning strategies. All selected gateway courses will include experimental sections utilizing “Early Alert,” a nationally recognized educational best practice, and control sections to assess its effectiveness with the selected gateway courses. It is anticipated that following the experiment phase, “Early Alert” will be a strategy utilized in all sections of the Gateway Course.

9. Implementing Student Resources - Following the planning term, the college will implement recommended additional student resources appropriate to the course – all such resources will be listed on the Gateway Course Webpage or linked to the page if they are online resources.

10. Assessing the Experiment - The Office of Institutional Research will work with the Gateway Initiative coordinator at the end of the term to provide analysis of the classroom strategies experiments and of the usage and impact of additional student resources.

11. Analyzing the Results - Following the initial experiment term, combined strategies experiment sections and control sections will be conducted and analyzed for effectiveness.

12. Implementing the Gateway Course, utilizing the effective learning strategies.
OVERVIEW OF GATEWAY INITIATIVE PROCESS
Course Evaluation Process

1. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will choose a lead faculty member teaching the course to help perform the course evaluation.
2. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will work with Institutional Research (IR) to analyze course performance data, segmented by campus, term, and faculty type, with background information on at least one or two sections as cohorts (placement testing information, prerequisite information, and subsequent course performance information on the cohort students).
3. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will conduct focus groups and utilize questionnaires to solicit information from faculty and students about what course skills and knowledge are of greatest importance as the students’ progress through the program. This information will be correlated with the previously identified gateway knowledge, skills and abilities. Working with faculty, the coordinator will determine minimal outcome performance levels for continued program success and will identify missing foundation outcomes. The coordinator and lead faculty member will identify foundation outcomes where students are encountering problems with mastery. They will prioritize, if possible, these foundation outcomes.
4. The coordinator will compare the above information to institutional course objectives in the course history files at district (or now in public folders).
5. Working with the appropriate faculty cluster to align gateway foundation outcomes with course objectives, the coordinator will recommend changes in institutional course objectives and if necessary and provide updated Academic Affairs Course Modification forms and process them through the Academic Affairs procedure.
6. Working with the appropriate faculty cluster, the coordinator will examine prerequisites – both in terms of prerequisite course work and in terms of actual prerequisite abilities (in the Alverno and Ewell sense of the word “ability”). The coordinator will recommend changes to course prerequisites through the Academic Affairs procedure as necessary.
7. The coordinator will examine the course delivery methods – considering non-traditional delivery methods such as online sections. If only traditional delivery methods are used, the coordinator will analyze the appropriateness of adding additional delivery methods and make appropriate recommendations to the faculty cluster.
8. The Gateway Initiative coordinator and lead faculty member will identify specific learning outcomes that provide opportunities for improvement – these learning outcomes will become the focus of directed strategies for improvement in the experimental model.
9. The coordinator will catalog existing teaching and learning strategies being utilized for the outcomes identified in step 7 (questionnaire to all faculty teaching this course).
10. Working with the Library Cluster, the coordinator and lead faculty member will conduct literature review and idea shopping for appropriate teaching and learning strategies for these outcomes. They will then recommend to the appropriate
teaching faculty specific strategies and student resources for improving identified student learning outcomes

11. The qep coordinator will prepare the experimental procedures for the directed strategies for improvement, following the Gateway Initiative Experimental Model, explained later in the Methodology.

12. The Gateway Initiative coordinator and lead faculty member will recommend materials for Gateway Course Web Page – identify faculty for the Web Page “Ask a Faculty Member” feature – prepare FAQ’s on most common questions, both general course questions and course content questions. FAQ sections will develop over time, based on student responses to “Ask a Faculty Member.” The Web Page itself will be incorporated into Campus Cruiser, the HCC student online portal system (a major budget item here will involve some sort of compensation for faculty participating in the “Ask a Faculty Member” process).
COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Select Lead Faculty Member
2. Course Data Review
3. Focus groups
4. Examine Prerequisites and outcomes
5. Examine Course Delivery Methods
6. Identify outcomes for improvement
7. Catalog existing strategies
8. Literature Review of Strategies
9. Design Course Web Page
10. Recommend strategies for outcomes improvement and prepare Experimental Model
Classroom Laboratory Experimental Model for Directed Strategies for Improvement

(This process is to be organized and all paperwork is to be completed by the Gateway Initiative coordinator and lead faculty member)

1. Identify the specific strategy for improvement and identify the specified teaching and learning outcomes to be affected by the strategy.
2. Prior to beginning actual experiment with new strategy, provide baseline data on student performance with specified outcomes, through a common assessment instrument from a sample of students – both those currently in classes and, if possible, from some who have recently completed the course. This step is also a part of the assessment process, discussed in the Assessment Section of the plan.
3. Develop the Hypothesis – what is the expectation for the identified strategy?
4. Provide a detailed explanation of the methodology for implementing the strategy.
5. Develop common assessment instruments for the expected affected outcomes, to be utilized in both the experimental sections and control sections.
6. Identify faculty and sections for the experiment – coordinate with campus deans
   - First term sections will only deal with one strategy at a time
   - Second term sections will combine strategies.
7. Utilize control sections, administering the same assessment instruments as used in the experiment sections during both terms of the experiment.
8. Explain analysis of assessment process.

Roles

Gateway Initiative Coordinator – The coordinator will report to the Vice President of Education and Student Development. The coordinator will be responsible for the overall administration of the initiative. The coordinator will chair the Gateway Initiative Team; select lead faculty members for selected courses; conduct the course evaluations; develop the experimental models for selected strategies; work with the academic deans to schedule experiment and control sections and to select faculty for those sections; organize faculty development plans for faculty teaching both the experimental and control sections; coordinate assessment with the Office of Institutional Research; prepare an annual report on Gateway Initiative activities; develop and maintain the budget for the initiative; act as the liaison to appropriate faculty, staff and administrative committees; work with District Office of Student Services to develop appropriate in-service activities for student services employees and to develop appropriate orientation and publication materials to provide information to students; and perform other such initiative activities.
as necessary. The coordinator is responsible for organizing the annual QEP Spring Institute.

Lead Faculty Members – The lead faculty members will be chosen from faculty members who regularly teach the selected courses, to work with the coordinator on course evaluation, development of the experimental model, development of the course web page, assessments, and creation and delivery of faculty development activities.

Gateway Initiative Team – This team of faculty, staff and administrators will be selected by the College President. Membership will be representative of both AA and AS faculty, faculty from all campuses, Student Services staff, non-academic staff, and administrators. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will as chairperson of the team. The team will provide oversight for all Gateway Initiative activities. The committee will make recommendations to Vice President of Education and Student Development in regards to gateway course selection, modification or approval of course evaluations, modification of approval of course experimental processes, modification or approval for the implementation of teaching and learning strategies, and modification of the Gateway Initiative Quality Enhancement Plan based on assessment results.

Student Services – Student services personnel will have a variety of responsibilities to the Gateway Initiative. At the district-wide level, student services will be responsible for incorporating information about the Gateway Initiative into college publications, such as the catalog and student handbook. Student services will develop and present information about the initiative in all new student orientations. Counselors and advisors will need to emphasize the importance to students of scheduling gateway courses early in their academic journey, immediately upon entering the college-level curriculum. They will also emphasize the need for students to schedule sequenced program course requirements in terms immediately following those in which gateway courses are completed. For those students who self advise, student services will develop a scheduling intervention notification, to encourage course scheduling that allows students to receive the greatest benefit from the gateway initiative through proper course scheduling. Student services will provide appropriate student learning support activities by developing and presenting gateway course specific workshops in such areas as time management and study skills.

Academic Deans – The academic deans will work with the Gateway Initiative coordinator to schedule sections, ensuring adequate scheduling of both experimental and control sections and to ensure distribution of the sections across the campuses when possible. The academic deans will assist the coordinator with the task of utilizing both full-time and adjunct faculty in the initiative. They will also provide assistance with the distribution and collection of assessment materials.

Office and staff of the District Vice President of Education and Student Development – The academic vice president and directors will work with the coordinator to provide district-wide coordination and oversight of the Gateway Initiative by providing support in budget development, scheduling of faculty development opportunities, assisting with the development of assessment instruments, assisting with the analysis of assessment results,
and supporting all initiative activities. The student services director will provide support through the coordination of all student services activities related to the initiative.

Office of Institutional Research – The Office of Institutional Research will assist in the development of and analysis of all assessment instruments, procedures, and results.

Librarians – The faculty librarians will work with the coordinator and lead faculty members in the development of the Gateway Course Web pages. They will develop materials such as appropriate academic links to websites and database materials to provide student support. When appropriate, the librarians will develop and present library orientations (for use on-site and on-line) specifically designed to reinforce gateway courses.

Academic Support Services – Tutorial centers, writing centers, open computer labs and other support services will work with gateway faculty on the development of specific gateway course materials and procedures for the direct benefit of students in the gateway courses. All such services will be accurately listed in terms of time and location on the Gateway Course Webpage.

**Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Listed below are several possible teaching and learning strategies that might be utilized as Gateway Initiative Strategies. Early Alert, the first listed strategy, will be tested in the experimental phase for each selected Gateway Course. The other strategies are options that might be considered, some of which the college has utilized successfully in past programs. However, during the planning stage, through use of the Course Evaluation Process and the Experimental Model Process, the coordinator, lead faculty member and other faculty will utilize a literature review process to research ideas for strategies which will lead to the development of strategies not contained in the list below.

- Early Alert – Early Alert provides a communication system allowing faculty to notify an Early Alert team about students who within the first three weeks of an academic term have displayed “at-risk” behaviors or performance. The team would then make contact with the students to provide intervention strategies to enhance the students’ abilities to meet the needs of the courses. Early Alert has emerged as a nationwide best practice and has been utilized at Hillsborough Community College as a student-success strategy in a few developmental and college-level courses (We will need to provide HCC performance data here or in an Appendix). Providing Early Alert assistance in the Gateway Initiative will align its strategies with those of our First Year Experience and Achieving the Dream programs. Because of Early Alert’s proven effectiveness, each course selected for the Gateway Initiative, will automatically use Early Alert as a strategy in the experimental phase, and if proven effective for the specific gateway course, in the overall implementation phase of tested strategies.
• Supplemental Instruction (SI) – SI utilizes a peer-tutor approach by hiring students who have already successfully completed a course to work with faculty teaching the course to provide tutorial assistance. SI tutors attend one section of the course, maintaining visibility with current students and are available for scheduled tutorial hours to provide both individual and group assistance. Like Early Alert, SI is a nationally recognized educational best practice and one that has been utilized on a limited basis at two of Hillsborough Community College’s campuses (Again, we need some specific data on SI performance at HCC). It is currently being used in the Achieving the Dream program as a student success strategy, and its potential use in the Gateway Initiative will provide further alignment between this program and the Achieving the Dream Initiative.

• Learning Communities – Traditional learning communities strategies involve developing cohort groups of students to work together, usually through the coordinated scheduling of the group into two or more related courses in any given term. Faculty in the cohort classes would work together to link their courses whenever possible through assignments, presentations, extra-curricular activities, and so forth. The option for developing gateway cohorts into learning communities will be explored as a possible strategy option. The college has utilized learning community strategies in the past, and numerous faculty have experience with the strategy.

• Service Learning – Another nationally recognized educational best practice, Service Learning provides opportunities for students to work directly with community groups on projects and activities that are tied to the course curriculum to enhance learning through engagement in services.

• Student Study and Time Management Strategies will be provided in cooperation with Student Services through regularly scheduled seminars and workshops, enhanced by on-line materials on the Gateway Course Web Page.

• Specific Discipline related strategies will be identified in the course evaluation phase through literature review of best practices.

Faculty and Staff Development

Because of requirements in the Developmental Programs and in the First Year Experience Program, a great number of our students are taking the College Success course. Faculty development in the Gateway Initiative will be utilized to allow for reinforcement of the College Success skills in the selected Gateway Initiative courses. All teachers working in the gateway courses will be offered a moderate stipend to take the College Success course training required of those who teach the course. In addition, the Gateway Initiative coordinator and lead faculty member will develop a secondary level of training to train faculty to then utilize aspects related to student time management, study skills and testing skills as learned in the College Success course in their own gateway courses, to reinforce the skills these students have learned in College
Success. The secondary training would focus exclusively on implementing these reinforcement strategies in the gateway course. The lead faculty member working with the QEP Coordinator will develop course specific training for implementing these reinforcement strategies. This will align the QEP with the First Year Experience program and our developmental program.

Funding will be provided to allow faculty and staff working with selected gateway courses to attend conferences or to hire consultants to develop strategies and assessment instruments and procedures for improving specific learning outcomes in the gateway courses. Funding will also be provided to train faculty to participate in the “Ask a Faculty Member” service of the Gateway Course Webpage, and to develop FAQ’s for the page.

Specific faculty development activities following the experimental phase of the methodology will be necessary to train faculty and staff (full and part-time) to utilize the effective strategies identified in the experimental phases.

An annual QEP Spring Institute focused on the Gateway Initiative and other aligned learning initiatives will be scheduled each spring as a developmental retreat for a variety of presentations, a time for program reflection, best practices sharing, and developmental workshops related to the initiative. This will provide an opportunity to review the current progress on the initiative, to preview the next academic year’s scheduled activities, to review best practices, to align Gateway Initiative activities with the activities of other learning initiatives at the college, and to plan for new quality enhancement programs focused on student learning.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Overall responsibility for assessing the effectiveness of the overall initiative is assigned to the Gateway Initiative coordinator and the Office of Institutional Research (IR). Working together with the faculty, they will design, conduct, and analyze multiple assessments to determine the effectiveness of individual initiative activities as well as the overall initiative itself.

Individual Learning Outcomes

Once the faculty have identified a working list of gateway knowledge, skills and abilities, these will be designated as the initial gateway measures. The coordinator and IR will develop an overall assessment instrument to establish baseline data relative to pre-initiative performance on the initial gateway measures. Sampling of outcome performance by students currently in courses identified through course mapping and of students in subsequent program courses will establish the baseline performance levels on the initial gateway measures. Analysis provided by IR will be utilized by the Gateway
Initiative Team in the actual course selection process and for comparison data in later assessments.

Individual outcomes assessment is also a key factor for determining the effectiveness of the specific teaching and learning strategies implemented in the experiment stage of specific gateway course initiatives. During the course evaluation process, key learning outcomes developed from the gateway knowledge, skills, and abilities lists will be identified. As strategies are developed to enhance the learning specific to these outcomes, faculty designing the strategies experiment, working with the Gateway Initiative coordinator and the lead faculty member, will design specific assessment measures and instruments for these outcomes. These common assessment instruments will be given in both the experimental sections and the control sections. Analysis of the assessment results by IR will be used to determine the effectiveness of the strategies on these outcomes measures. This information will be shared with the faculty members teaching the sections as quickly as possible. The Gateway Initiative Team and the College Success, Retention, and Placement Committee will utilize the information from the assessments to determine whether there is a need for more experimentation and the development of other alternative strategies or if the course is ready for final integration of the tested strategies at the overall course level.

IR will develop a student demographic profile for both the experimental sections and the control sections, to allow for comparison data of students’ academic histories, college placement scores, full-time or part-time status, work status and so forth. Such information will be considered in analysis of student learning outcomes assessments. All sections of a course at the college are required to have the same intended student learning outcomes. For each strategy initiative, for a minimum of two terms, both experimental and control sections of the courses will utilize common assessment instruments (tests, essays, portfolios…) of the course’s student learning outcomes. Data derived from the assessment instruments will be collected and analyzed by IR to determine the effectiveness of strategies, to determine if there is statistical significance in the differences in learning performance between the students in the control and experimental sections. The data and analysis from IR will be submitted to the Gateway Initiative Team and to the college’s Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee for further analysis and will be incorporated into the college’s annual academic report.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

IR will continue to assess strategies once they are integrated into courses following the experimental process. Following the initial experimental terms for at least one follow-up term, experimental and control sections will utilize common assessment instruments to determine the effectiveness of combinations of strategies. Also, data relative to GPA measures, Withdrawal measures, and student completion measures will be collected and analyzed and compared to pre-initiative data. The Gateway Initiative Team and the Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee will review these assessment
results to determine the effectiveness of the Gateway Initiative strategies upon student outcome performance in the selected Gateway course. If the assessment results do not show continued performance improvement, the committees will recommend that additional course evaluation and strategies development for the course be undertaken.

Subsequent course assessment will take place when the Gateway course selected is part of a sequenced set of courses, with at least one course immediately sequenced after the completion of the Gateway course, and requiring passage of the course. When that situation occurs, IR will conduct sampling of strategies assessments in the immediate subsequent course in the term immediately following the gateway section offerings. Data will be used in conjunction with the original course data as part of the course level assessment.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

On an annual basis, IR will conduct sampling assessment testing using common assessment instruments to determine the long-term effectiveness of the changes made at the course level. IR will also work with the Gateway course lead faculty member to develop a faculty questionnaire focusing on student performance in subsequent courses on specific Gateway course student learning outcomes. The questionnaires will solicit specific faculty input on the retention of student learning and the ability of students to utilize knowledge, skills and abilities related to the Gateway course student learning outcomes. The Gateway Initiative coordinator will conduct faculty and student focus groups, sampling both groups, to review those groups’ perceptions of the impact of changes at the course and outcome level.

For each selected Gateway course, cohort groups of students will be identified for longer-term analysis. IR will develop student demographic profiles (as described above) for each cohort. Factors from the demographic profiles will be considered in all subsequent assessment analysis. Cohorts groups from the Gateway Initiative sections of courses will be compared to identified cohort groups from pre-initiative sections. IR will collect and analyze comparison data of subsequent course performance by both cohorts. IR will also utilize cohort data to compare program completion rates, transfer rates, persistence rates, and subsequent GPA (at both our institution and transfer institutions).

IR will provide program assessment results and analysis to the Gateway Initiative Team and to the Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee. If necessary, they will recommend changes to the Initiative based on program assessment to the College President and Cabinet.

**Institutional Learning Outcomes**

The Gateway Initiative Coordinator and IR will prepare an annual report on Gateway Initiative activities, presenting combined outcome, course, and program data and analysis. The Student Success, Retention and Placement Committee will review this
overall assessment of yearly gateway initiatives and make appropriate recommendations to the College President and Cabinet. Gateway Initiative Annual Report information will be included in the College’s Academic Annual Report.

In addition, key outcome measures of the Gateway Initiative will be incorporated within the annual Critical Success Factor report. This resource serves as a chief assessment of institutional performance.

The Gateway Initiative will also be integrated within the Institutional Effectiveness planning process of the college. It will be manifest as one of the Presidential Initiatives. This will lead toward the development of specific unit-level objectives that will target attainment of enhanced learning in gateway courses. The online Planning System will capture this information and produce annual reports of progress toward implementation. Reference the section, “Integration within the College Planning and Evaluation System” for more detail.

**INTEGRATION WITHIN THE COLLEGE PLANNING & EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The biennial planning process is the vehicle by which Hillsborough Community College integrates the Strategic Plan of the institution with significant institutional initiatives and tactical plans across all academic, administrative, and educational support units. The Strategic Plan consists of mission, vision, and goals as approved by the Board of Trustees.

The initiative to improve student learning outcomes in gateway courses contributes toward fulfillment of college goals one and six which seek to

- promote institutional learning through excellence in teaching, support services, and instructional delivery systems (Goal #1); and
- continuously improve programs and services while aggressively seeking and effectively managing human, financial, physical, and technological resources (Goal #6).

The college is currently in the midst of implementing its 2005-07 Institutional Effectiveness Plan reflecting both its strategic and tactical aspirations. Development of the 2007-09 Institutional Effectiveness Plan will occur in 2006-07 concurrent with the final development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. This begins with a review of mission, vision, and college goals. The review is informed, in part, by an empirical examination of college performance as revealed in a Critical Success Factor document. QEP outcome measures will be incorporated within those Factors.

It is also at this time that the President has opportunity to outline more specific “Presidential Initiatives” for the College to pursue. One of the initiatives will include pursuit of improved learning outcomes in gateway courses.
Subsequently, through use of an online Planning System, tactical plans are crafted by all units in fall 2006 requiring objectives that demonstrate a contribution toward fulfillment of college goals and Presidential Initiatives. At their core, the unit plans contain objectives that upon achievement will improve or advance the outcomes of the College. The Planning System requires the following per each objective:

- identification of the individual(s) responsible for achievement;
- target date for achievement;
- identification of the college goal and Presidential Initiative the objective supports;
- identification of expected student outcomes/criteria of success and means of assessment;
- strategies for achievement; and
- identification of financial resources required.

Though plans are developed biennially, progress reports are made annually. Inculcation of the QEP focus within the Planning System efficiently allows precise monitoring of all efforts, progress, and outcomes supporting improved learning in gateway courses.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation will follow a traditional Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model. This will be true for the overall Gateway Initiative and for the implementation of specific courses into the plan as well. The initial “Plan” stage for the overall initiative will involve the identification of gateway knowledge, skills and abilities, and the mapping of those into the initial program courses. At this point an overall list of gateway courses will be assembled. From this list, the Gateway Initiative Team (or prior to spring 2007, the QEP Steering Committee) will utilize the course selection criteria to select specific courses for the plan. Also, at this point we will utilize assessment to determine baseline performance on desired learning outcomes. “Do” at this level involves evaluating the initial courses, engaging in specific strategies experimentation and resource implementation until combined strategies and resources are the norm for the selected courses. “Study” will involve analysis of assessments from the specific knowledge, skills and abilities outcome level, through course performance, performance on outcomes in subsequent program courses, and overall student performance in relation to program level student learning outcomes. If the initiative’s actions to enhance student learning as demonstrated by improved outcome performance levels, then the initiative will move on to complete implementation at the multi-course level in the “Act” stage; however, if the effectiveness does not reach expectations, then revision of the approach and further study will be necessary.

Similarly, the PDSA format will be utilized for the implementation of any selected course into the overall initiative. Once selected, the “Plan” stage involves the course evaluation, experimental model, and baseline assessments. “Do” will involve the actual strategies experimentation and student resource implementation. “Study” involves analysis of the assessments to determine strategies effectiveness. This may lead to more strategies.
experimentation if necessary, or moving to the “Act” stage by full implementation of combined strategies and student resource implementation at an overall course level.

For the purposes of this first draft, we present a possible time-line of implementation as seen at this point, prior to actually having completed final draft. In subsequent drafts, implementation will be demonstrated in traditional implementation tables, such as the Microsoft Project platform, showing actions, timelines, personnel or departments responsible, and necessary measures and indicators to indicate task completion and so forth.

A. Fall 2005
- Rough draft of plan – late September
- Initial workshops to establish a list of gateway initiative skills – October
- Assign clusters to provide initial course mapping of skills to courses
- Utilizing criteria from the Methodology, the QEP steering committee will choose two courses for examples for the Gateway Initiative.
• Pick two lead faculty members who regularly teach those courses to work with the Chair of the QEP steering committee to conduct course evaluations and develop initial experimental models for each course.
• Begin constructing a budget for QEP
• Have numerous QEP development workshops to discuss the draft – Almost every Friday in October and November.

B. Spring 2006
• Picking consultants to the visiting team – our two picks
• 2\textsuperscript{nd} draft of QEP, due in March, including drafts of implementation and budget sections
• Finalizing the draft by the end of April
• Spring QEP institute – internal retreat – Saturday April 1 – marketing the QEP to faculty and staff
• Provide release time to two lead faculty members to work with the Chair of the QEP Steering Committee to conduct course evaluations, initial baseline assessments, and create the course experimental model.

C. Summer 2006
• Editing the plan – May and June
• Submitting the plan – July
• Marketing to faculty and staff – constant
• Preparing for an extensive combination in-service/all college day QEP show day

D. Fall 2006
• Market, market, market – everybody must know
• The VISIT
• Choose the QEP coordinator

E. Spring 2007
• Revisit the identification of gateway knowledge, skills and abilities
• Verify the course mapping
• Identify the Gateway Initiative Team
• Verify course selections for initial phase
• Identify lead faculty members
• Baseline assessment on student outcomes related to gateway knowledge, skills and abilities
• Initial phase course evaluations – verify and improve earlier course evaluations
• Initial phase strategies experimentation models reviewed and/or developed
• Prepare course web pages
• QEP Spring Institute
D. Fall 2007
   - Initial experimental phase

E. Through Fall 2112 – All of this should be in the actual plan

**BUDGET PLAN**

To be completed in the 2nd draft along with implementation tables.