

**Blinn College  
Quality Enhancement Plan**



***Passport to Success Through Learning Communities***



**On-Site Visit  
October 28-30, 2014**

**Submitted to SACSCOC September 2014**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Blinn College is a comprehensive community college committed to educational excellence and to individual and community enhancement. After extensive research, the College identified **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** as the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and learning communities as the practice most likely to improve student learning and success. Learning communities “represent an intentional restructuring of the students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning and foster connections among student, faculty, and disciplines (Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gebelnick 2004: 67)”. Students’ social and intellectual integration into the academic and social college communities are essential in determining student retention (Tinto, Goodsell, and Russo 1994). The goal of the College’s QEP is to enhance the learning experiences of first-time-in-college students (FTIC) and help them establish and achieve their educational goals. Through participation in the learning communities, FTIC students will engage in integrative learning experiences in the context of a supportive network; these experiences will allow them a better opportunity to master core learning outcomes.

The College’s QEP features a three part implementation plan that includes: (1) the creation of learning communities featuring three linked courses including two academic and one success course, EDUC 0100: Journey to Success, (2) the creation of a “success network” that will include a QEP Leadership and Implementation Team and student support services, and (3) professional development training for faculty and staff involved in the learning communities.

Data revealed that first-time students at the College struggle with identifying and utilizing academic resources, persistence in their education, and being successful in their classes. To improve student success in the first year, FTIC students will participate in linked courses that build a learning community, including a one hour success course that facilitates exploration of college resources, best practices for success, and collegial relationships that support high academic achievement. FTICs had a lower success rate than students who came to Blinn College with previous college credit, and the literature suggests that students without a declared major have lower success rates and lower persistence rates than students with a declared major and defined career path. Four courses were identified as high enrollment/lower success (compared to the College’s overall success rate) and therefore selected for inclusion in the learning communities: General Biology I (BIOL 1406), Composition and Rhetoric (ENGL 1301), United States History I (HIST 1301), and Mathematics for Business and Social Sciences (MATH 1324). Linked courses will be blocked so a student will enroll in a cohort (e.g., a student will be enrolled in BIOL 1406, MATH 1324, and EDUC 0100).

The success of the QEP will be measured by: (1) QEP Student Learning Outcomes, (2) EDUC 0100 Student Learning Outcomes, and (3) QEP Program Outcomes. The assessment plan has clearly defined outcomes and involves criteria for success to monitor progress towards the achievement of the QEP’s goals.

Blinn College’s mission, vision, and strategic plan reveal its dedication to student success in the first year achieved through the students’ experience in learning communities. It is the hope that student involvement in the learning community will aid them in their journey to reach their destination: Success.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Hello and thank you for your interest in the Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)!

As an important aspect of our 2014 reaffirmation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Blinn College has selected **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** as our QEP topic. National research has shown that first-year college students have below-average success and retention rates, so to help first-year students make the transition from high school to college, we have focused our QEP on the development of learning communities.

This QEP topic is designed to strengthen Blinn's already exemplary reputation for academic excellence. In 2013, our academic transfer rate was recognized as the highest in the state by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and our Transfer Enrollment at Texas A&M (TEAM) program received the THECB "Recognition of Excellence." Additionally, we have been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest accolade an educational institution can receive for its commitment to service and civic engagement.

As part of our commitment to educational excellence as well as individual and community enhancement, these learning communities will improve our first-year students' success rate by engaging them in the learning process and providing a support network of peers, faculty and staff to help them succeed in a college learning environment.

As part of this QEP, Blinn has identified four high-enrollment courses – History 1301, Biology 1406, English 1301, and Math 1324 – in which first-year students have a lower success rate than the average Blinn student. As part of Blinn College's QEP, learning communities will be created for first-year students taking two of those four courses, and the College will introduce a success course that teaches students about diverse career opportunities as well as the College's many learning resources.

College administrators, faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders have worked together to develop this initiative after conducting a thorough literature review; analyzing institutional student success and retention rates; and gathering input from College employees, students and community leaders. While we considered a national array of data and literature, our QEP has been crafted with consideration to the unique needs and characteristics of Blinn College students and we look forward to the positive impact this initiative will have on our first-year students' success.

For more information on our QEP, visit [www.blinn.edu/qep](http://www.blinn.edu/qep). We look forward to seeing you on campus!



Harold Nolte, Ed.D  
District President  
Blinn College



## PART I: INTRODUCTION

### Historical Statement

Blinn College, the Junior College District of Washington County, is based in Brenham, Texas, and serves a 13-county service area with campuses in Brenham, Bryan, Sealy, and Schulenburg. The school was founded in 1883 by the Southern German Conference of the Methodist denomination under the name of Mission Institution. In 1889 the name was changed to Blinn Memorial College in honor of the Rev. Christian Blinn of New York who had donated a considerable sum of money to make the school possible. The institution was originally founded for the purpose of training young men for the ministry, but academic courses were added to meet the demands of the public. After operating for five years as an institution for men only, Blinn College was made coeducational in 1888. Until 1927 the school was of academy rank. In 1927 the Board of Trustees, under the leadership of President Philip Deschner, organized a junior college. In 1930 the school was merged with Southwestern University (Georgetown, Texas). In 1934, a new charter was procured by the citizens of Brenham, and a private nonsectarian junior college, under the name of Blinn College, was organized with nine regents as the board of control. In February, 1937, all connection with Southwestern University and the Methodist denominations were severed. An election held in Washington County on June 8, 1937, for the purposes of creating a public junior college district and levying a small tax, was successful. Blinn thus became the first county-owned junior college district in Texas. The college continues to operate as one of the largest of the state's 50 public junior/community college districts.

The College currently operates campuses in Brenham, Bryan, Schulenburg, and Sealy, Texas, in addition to offering courses via distance learning and at area high schools.

### Governance, Mission and Vision Statements

Blinn College, Junior College District of Washington County is governed by a legal body of seven members with specific authority over the institution.

The Board adopted the College Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives for 2013-2016 on November 19, 2013.

Vision Statement: Blinn College will be the leading educational, cultural and economic resource for our stakeholders.

Mission Statement: Blinn College is a comprehensive community college committed to educational excellence and to individual and community enhancement.



## Strategic Plan and Outcomes

As a result of the strategic planning process, Blinn College adopted three strategic priorities and defined specific goals and objectives related to those priorities. The College's QEP is aligned to the first strategic priority, Student Success.<sup>1</sup>

### Strategic Priority: Student Success

#### Goal 1: Improve processes to support a seamless student experience

##### Objectives:

1. Improve student satisfaction ratings in the following areas:
  - a. Timely communication from Blinn to students
  - b. Clear communication from Blinn to students
  - c. Admissions application process time
  - d. Financial Aid process time
2. Improve facilities utilization as measured by the facilities usage report
3. Reduce process time between students' application for admissions and registration
4. Increase student satisfaction with registration

#### Goal 2: Enhance student skills to support academic achievement

##### Objectives:

1. Increase the percentage of students who complete 15 and 30 academic credits
2. Increase student success rates in courses
3. Increase the utilization of the Center for Teaching and Learning by faculty
4. Increase the proportion of students utilizing academic support services
5. Increase the proportion of sections using electronic grade book, with 100% utilization by the fall 2015 semester
6. Increase the proportion of students with a degree plan on file, with 100% of students having a plan by the fall of 2015 semester

#### Goal 3: Prepare students to meet workforce needs

##### Objectives:

1. Increase career and technical offerings to meet regional labor market needs
2. Increase latticed career pathways from non-credit to AAS degrees (badges, marketable skills awards, certificates, and degrees)

#### Goal 4: Foster personal responsibility, social responsibility and teamwork among students

##### Objectives:

1. Increase the proportion of students participating in service learning
2. Increase the proportion of courses that include service learning components
3. Increase the proportion of students participating in co-curricular activities
4. Increase the proportion of students meeting student learning objectives related to personal responsibility, social responsibility, and teamwork core objectives

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<sup>1</sup> For the complete strategic plan, visit the College's website at [http://www.blinn.edu/strategic\\_plan/index.html](http://www.blinn.edu/strategic_plan/index.html).

## Alignment of QEP with Blinn College's Mission and Strategic Plan

After researching and reviewing multiple strategies for fulfilling the College's mission for the students, Blinn College's QEP Development Team identified learning communities as the practice most likely to improve student learning and success. Learning communities take a holistic approach to learning by creating an environment where students, faculty and staff work together. Tinto, Goodsell, and Russo (1994) found that a student's social and intellectual integration into the academic and social college communities are essential in determining student retention. By creating learning communities, the College improves the student experience with support services, enhances academic skills through the EDUC 0100: Journey to Success course linked with academic courses, and fosters responsibility and teamwork among these students.

The goal of **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** at Blinn College is to enhance the learning experiences of first-time-in-college students (FTIC) and help them establish and achieve their educational goals. The College's mission statement emphasizes, "Blinn College is a comprehensive community college committed to educational excellence and to individual and community enhancement". Learning communities foster student learning by improving the students' experiences inside and outside of the classroom. By developing learning communities for students, the College is committed to student enhancement and educational excellence.

The College's first Strategic Priority is Student Success and to achieve that success through the following goals:

- Goal: Improve processes to support a seamless student experience
- Goal: Enhance student skills to support academic achievement
- Goal: Foster personal responsibility, social responsibility, and teamwork among students

Blinn College's mission and strategic plan reflect the college's dedication to student success in the first year achieved through the student's experience in learning communities. Learning communities "represent an intentional restructuring of the students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning and foster connections among student, faculty, and disciplines (Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gebelnick 2004: 67)". The students' participation in a learning community will include interaction among the students, faculty, and staff to enhance their learning experiences and aid the students in their journey to reach their destination: Success.

Blinn College's Quality Enhancement Plan is **Destination Success: First-Year Focus**.





## **PART II: QEP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

### **Background**

Blinn College's first Quality Enhancement Plan, "Increasing Student Engagement in High-Risk Core Curriculum Courses Through Enhanced Academic Support and Continued Assessment," was implemented from Fall 2004 through Fall 2011 and focused on students who were not prepared for college-level work. The plan identified 17 high-risk courses with lower student success rates than reported in other courses and sought to increase student engagement to improve student success. The plan focused on course-based faculty teams developing field-based student learning outcomes, enhanced academic support, and course-based assessments within high-risk core curriculum courses. Although post-test results showed no significant improvements in student learning or course withdrawal rates, this plan resulted in improved data collection methodologies and the development of data-informed decision-making processes. Blinn College's first QEP provided the institution an opportunity to experience how the process can positively impact student learning and the student learning environment.

In Spring 2013, Blinn College began developing a second QEP based on key issues emerging from institutional assessment and closely related to the College's overall mission and strategic outcomes. The topic selection and development involved a 19-month, broad-based process engaging all institutional constituencies: faculty, administrators, staff, students, trustees, and advisory boards.

### **Preliminary Topic Selection**

Topic selection began in January 2013 with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management (IEEM) gathering preliminary information to guide the topic selection process and to determine needed steps and develop an appropriate timeline for the QEP process. This proposed process was shared with faculty leadership and the Executive Council. With their approval the process kicked off on January 23, 2013 with an open-ended question survey emailed to all Blinn faculty and staff asking for their input on potential QEP topics.

### **Campus and External Constituent Participation**

To ensure the involvement of all appropriate campus constituencies and the community, listening sessions (abbreviated focus groups) were held in February, March, and April 2013. Campus constituencies included students, faculty, and staff on all campuses and community leaders and advisory boards in our service area. Information on potential QEP topics and strategic priorities was gathered at the seven sessions held. Questions included "What can Blinn College do to help students to learn?" and "What should Blinn College's priorities be for the next 3-5 years?"

The survey results, listening session notes, and review of assessment data led to the identification of five potential topics. In July 2013, three topics emerged based on examination of available data coupled with the faculty/staff survey, listening group feedback, and Executive Council input.

1. Student success in STEM (science and math) courses
  - In the listening sessions, students and faculty said students sometimes struggle with science and math classes
  - About 60% of students successfully pass math and natural science classes, as compared to the College-wide pass rate of about 70%
  - Less than half of the students in natural science classes are attaining the learning objectives for those classes based on assessment results
2. Student success in Distance Learning, improving the use of technology for learning
  - In listening sessions, students noted a need for more consistent usage of eCampus
  - Less than 70% of students successfully pass Distance Learning classes, five percentage points less successful than students in face-to-face sections
  - National data show that online and face-to-face classes have equivalent success rates, with students even more successful in blended classes; there are good practices that the College may not have implemented yet
  - Expanding usage of, and success in, online and blended sections can help to address facility utilization issues
  - Closing the gap between student success in distance vs. face-to-face courses is a topic receiving attention at the national level
3. Student success in the first year in college
  - In listening sessions, students, faculty, and community members noted a need to assist students with the transition to college
  - First-year students make up about 40% of the student body
  - About 70% of first-year students are successful in their classes
  - About 40% of first-year students beginning in the fall persist to the next fall
  - Just over half of first-year students successfully complete 15 credit hours in their first year

### **QEP Planning Team Process**

In August 2013, the Dean of IEEM presented three potential QEP topics during the annual Faculty and Instructional Staff Convocation. The IEEM office distributed a survey to all employees summarizing the topics and asking for input regarding which topic would have the greatest impact for Blinn College and our students. The QEP Planning Team<sup>2</sup> was developed and reviewed input from the college community and make a final topic selection.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for a list of QEP Planning Team members.

After compiling the survey data, the Dean of IEEM communicated the results to the College district. Based upon the survey results, the QEP Planning Team identified “Student Success in the First Year” as the focus of the Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan.

### **Preliminary Topic Selection Timeline**

The timeline for the preliminary QEP topic selection process was as follows:

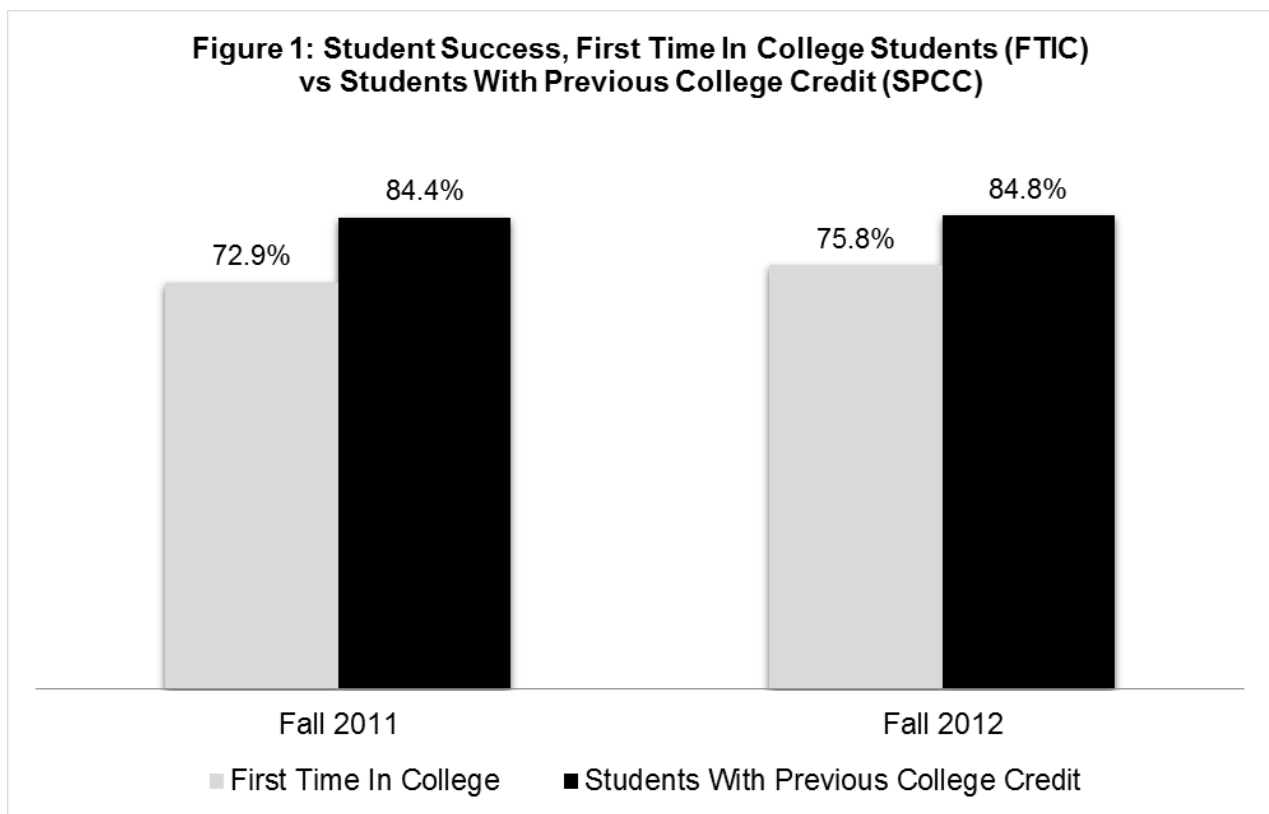
<b>Table 1: QEP Initial Planning Process</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
January 2013	Preliminary Topic Selection planning meeting	IEEM
February 21, 2013	Community listening session w/ Brazos County Advisory Council (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
February 28, 2013	Community, employee, and student listening sessions, Schulenburg campus (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
March 5, 2013	Community, employee, and student listening sessions, Sealy campus (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
April 2, 2013	Student listening sessions, Bryan campus and Health Science Center (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
April 5, 2013	Employee listening session, Bryan campus (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
April 9, 2013	Student listening session, Brenham campus (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team
April 12, 2013	Employee listening session, Brenham campus (QEP and strategic priorities)	QEP Planning Team



### PART III: IDENTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC AREA

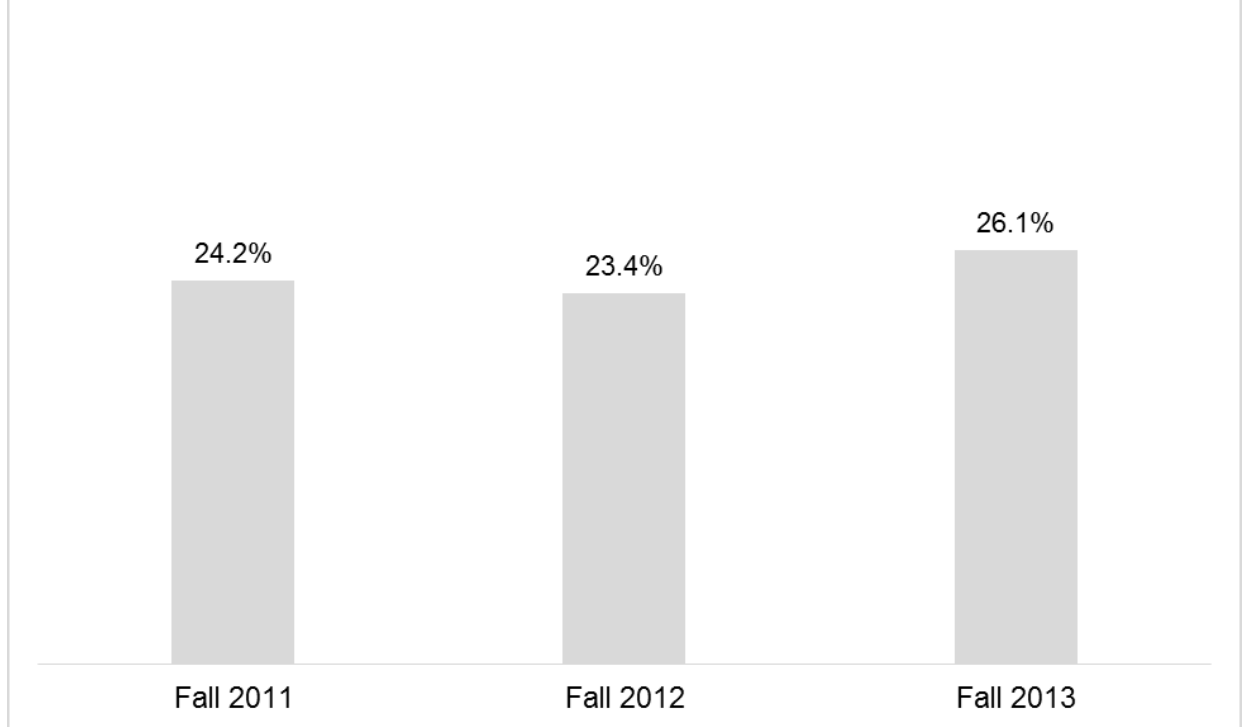
#### Phase I: QEP Topic Development

To focus the topic, the QEP Planning Team reviewed data regarding FTIC students and transfer students who enrolled in Blinn College with previous college credit hours, based on student persistence fall to spring, student persistence fall to fall, completion of at least 15 and 30 semester hours in one academic year, overall course success rates (i.e., passing a course with a grade of “C” or better), and student satisfaction and utilization of college resources. Transfer students were compared to FTIC students with the inference that the former were likely to have had an initial “college experience” at another two- or four-year Texas institution, and for the sake of the proposed topic the QEP Planning Team decided to focus on FTIC students. As FTIC students make up 50% of the College’s entering class, a focus on that group seemed relevant. The data revealed FTIC students were generally less successful in achieving 15 and 30 hours (with the exception of Fall 2012) and passing their courses with a grade of “C” or better compared to students with previous college credit.



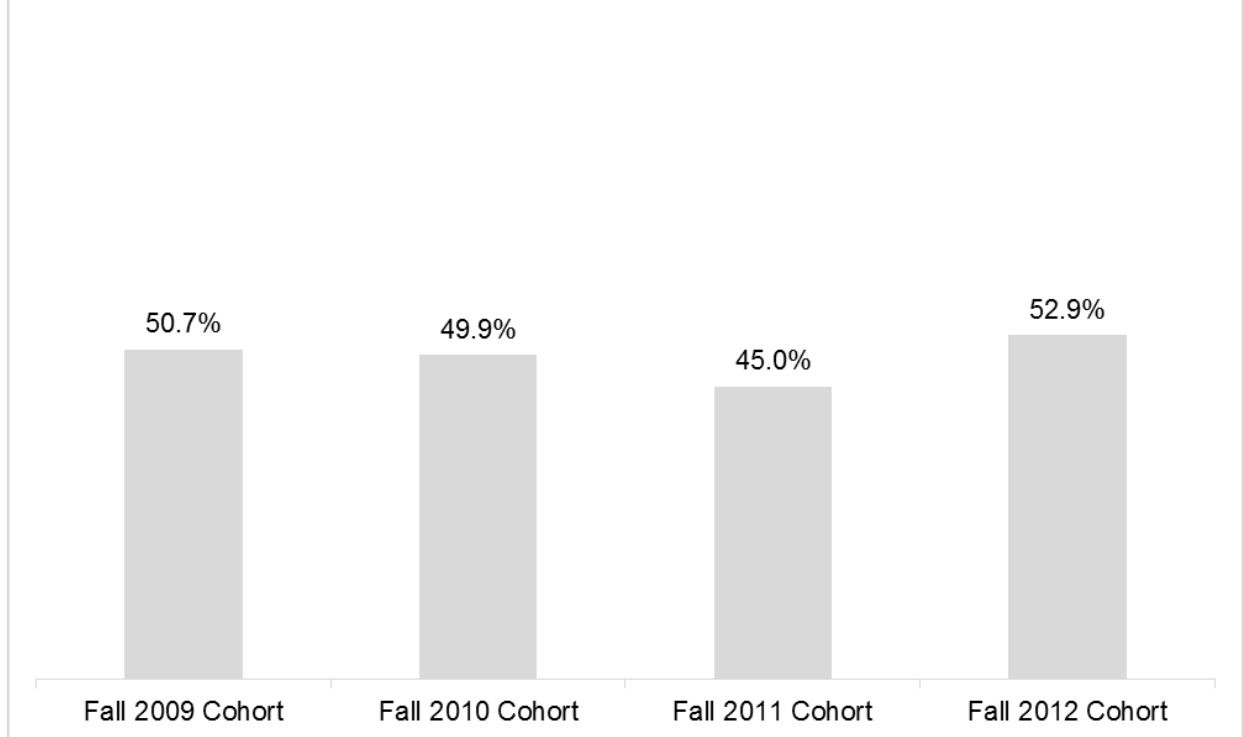
Source: Discoverer Report, March 2014.

**Figure 2: First Time In College (FTIC) Students  
as Percent of Total Student Population**



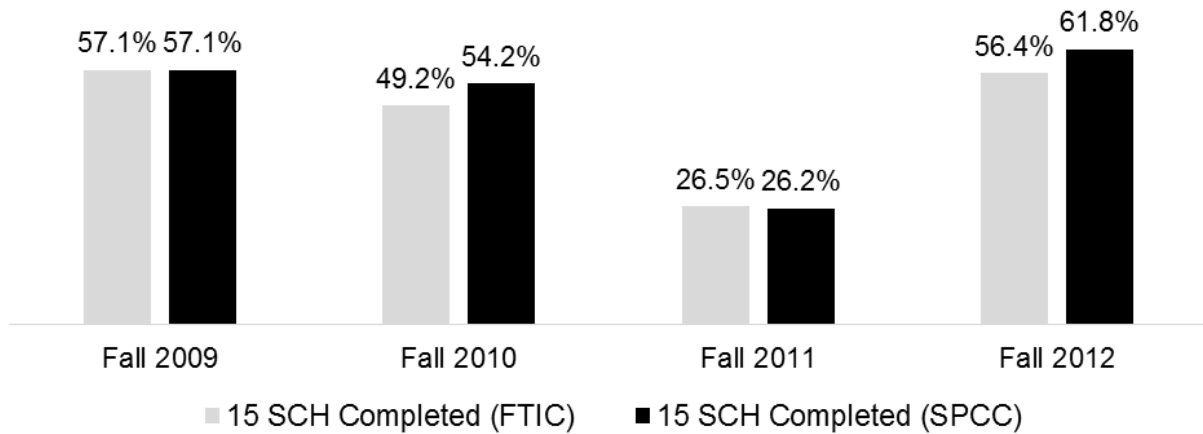
Source: Discoverer Report, March 2014.

**Figure 3: Student Persistence, Fall to Fall**



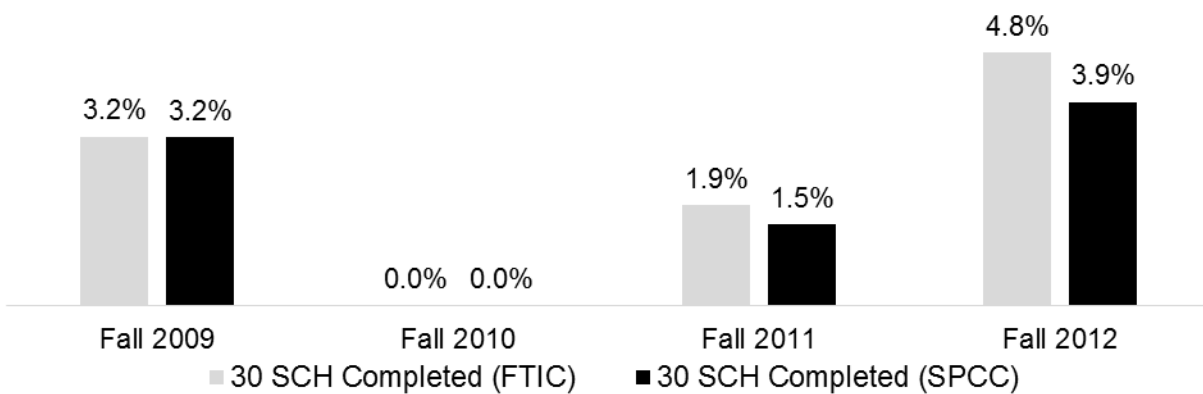
Source: Discoverer Report, Spring 2014

**Figure 4: Percent Completers of 15 Semester Credit Hours(SCH)  
First Time in College Students vs Students with Previous College  
Credit**



Source: Discoverer Report, Spring 2014

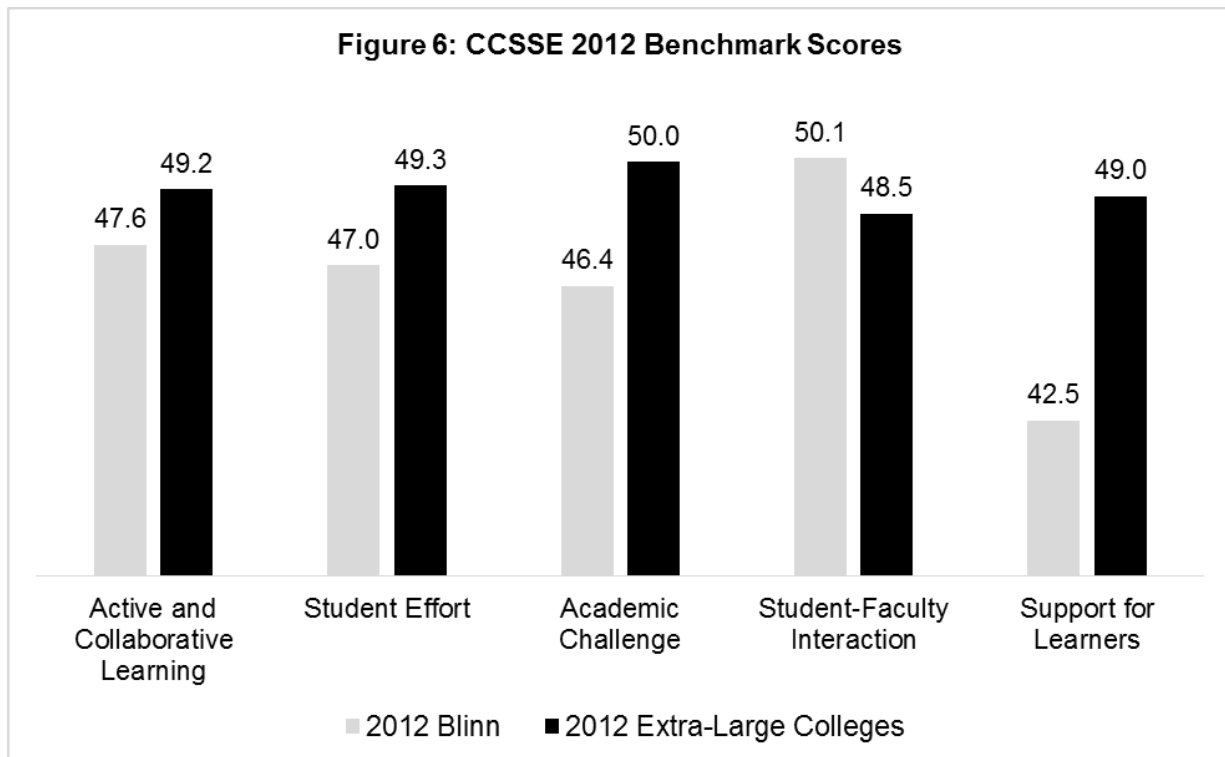
**Figure 5: Percent Completers of 30 Semester Credit Hours (SCH)  
First Time in College Students vs Students with Previous College  
Credit**



Source: Discoverer Report, Spring 2014

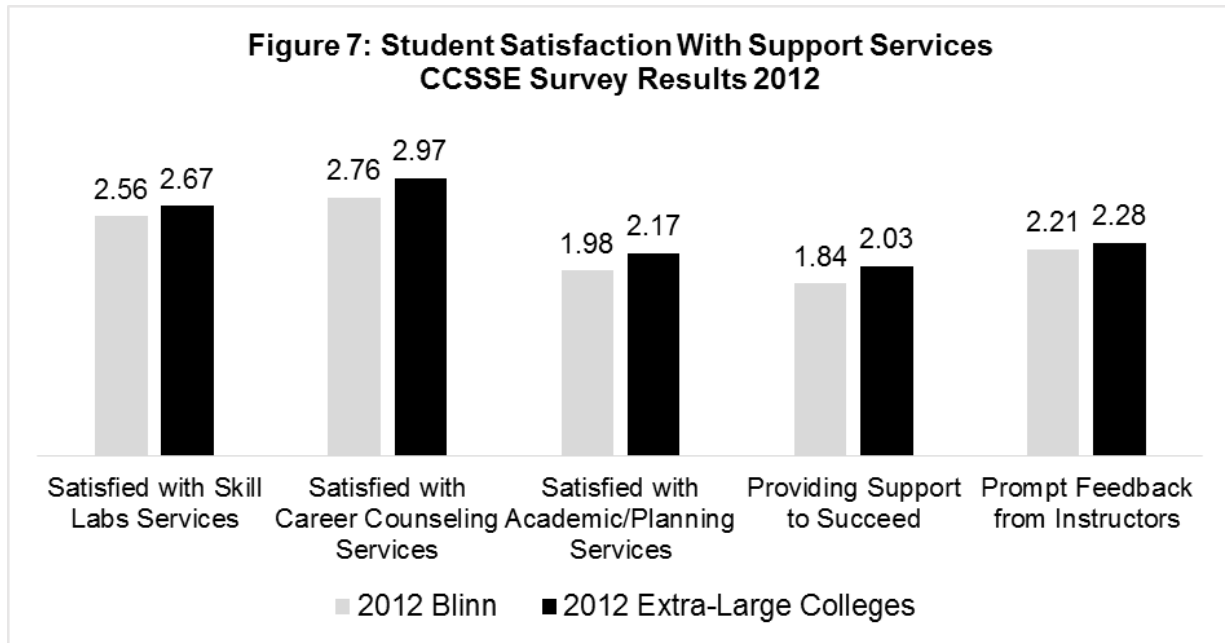
Additionally, the College has taken part in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) on a biennial basis since 2004, and the results show that our students' perceptions in the categories of Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, and Support for Learners are comparatively lower than our peer group. However, Blinn College students generally consistently score higher than our peer group on Student-Faculty Interaction. These general categorical perceptions lead to further contemplation of the data to note particular issues.

To narrow the QEP topic, a focus group consisting of faculty and staff from the College district, including two student leaders from the Bryan and Brenham campuses, was conducted by the QEP Planning Team to discuss the future of the QEP. The discussion included suggestions on how the QEP should move forward and what the program should include. In October, the Planning Team met numerous times to review focus group notes, the FTIC and students with previous college credit success/retention data, learning points from the previous QEP, and new data on specific course success rates (courses typically taken in the first year of college by Blinn students).



Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) reports





Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) reports

Note: Figures above are CCSSE scores based on a 5-point scale.

The QEP Planning Team identified the need for a focused, tangible topic that would lend itself to effective planning, assessment, and measurability. A focused meeting was held with the QEP Planning Team, Blinn College Board of Trustees, Executive Council, and Blinn President Dr. Harold Nolte. The QEP Planning Team conducted an analysis to determine which courses from the College's former QEP were important to a student's educational career and showed a notably lower success rate than the College average. In focusing the topic for the current QEP, the Planning Team examined grades as one source of archival data that allowed disaggregation by year, course, and student characteristics. The Team recognized that grades are an incomplete measure of student learning, but were useful in identifying the courses that should be the focus of the QEP. Based on that criteria, the team selected four courses to include in the QEP: General Biology I (BIOL 1406), Composition I (ENGL 1301), United States History I (HIST 1301), and Mathematics for Business and Social Sciences (MATH 1324). Each of these courses were high-enrollment courses popular among first-year students.

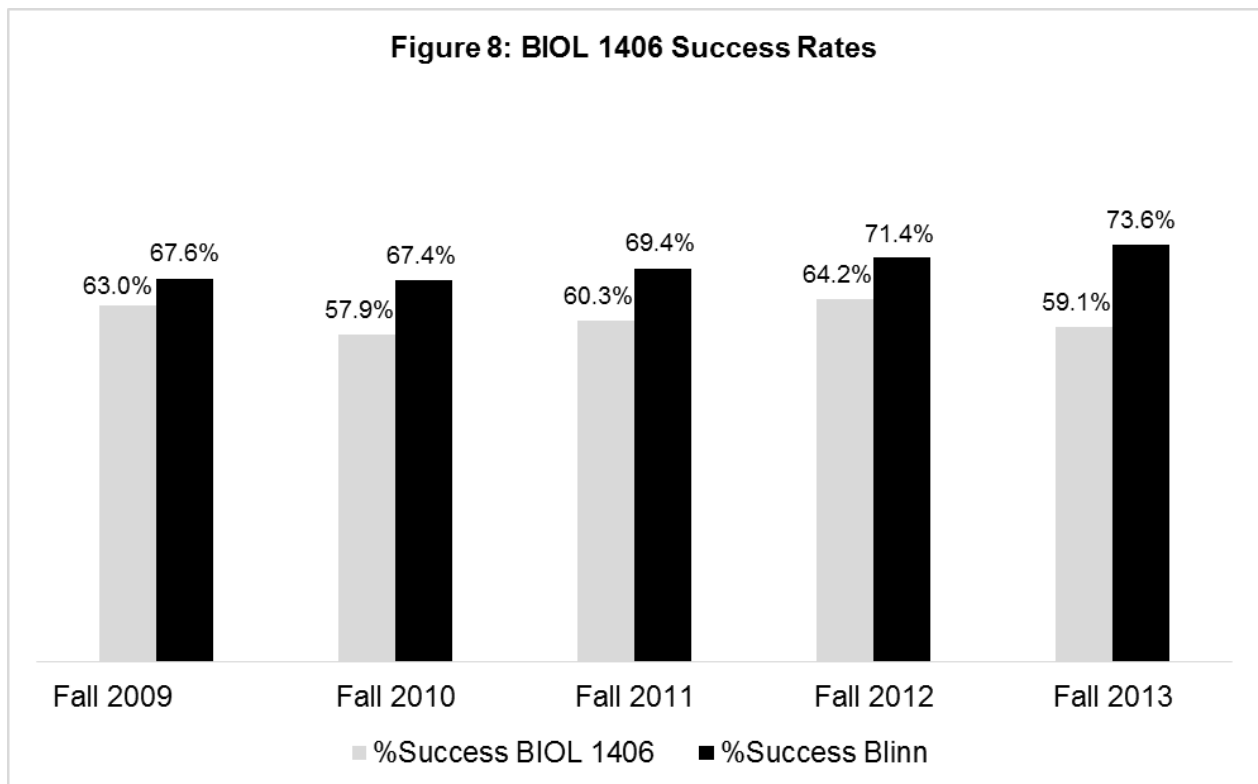
*BIOL 1406, General Biology I:* Success rates for the period Fall 2007-Fall 2013 have fluctuated between 57.9% and 64.2%, with a drop rate for the same period between 18.4% and 25.5%.

*ENGL 1301, Composition I:* Success rates for the period Fall 2007-Fall 2013 have fluctuated between 67.2% and 70.0%, with a drop rate for the same period between 14.1% and 17.1%.

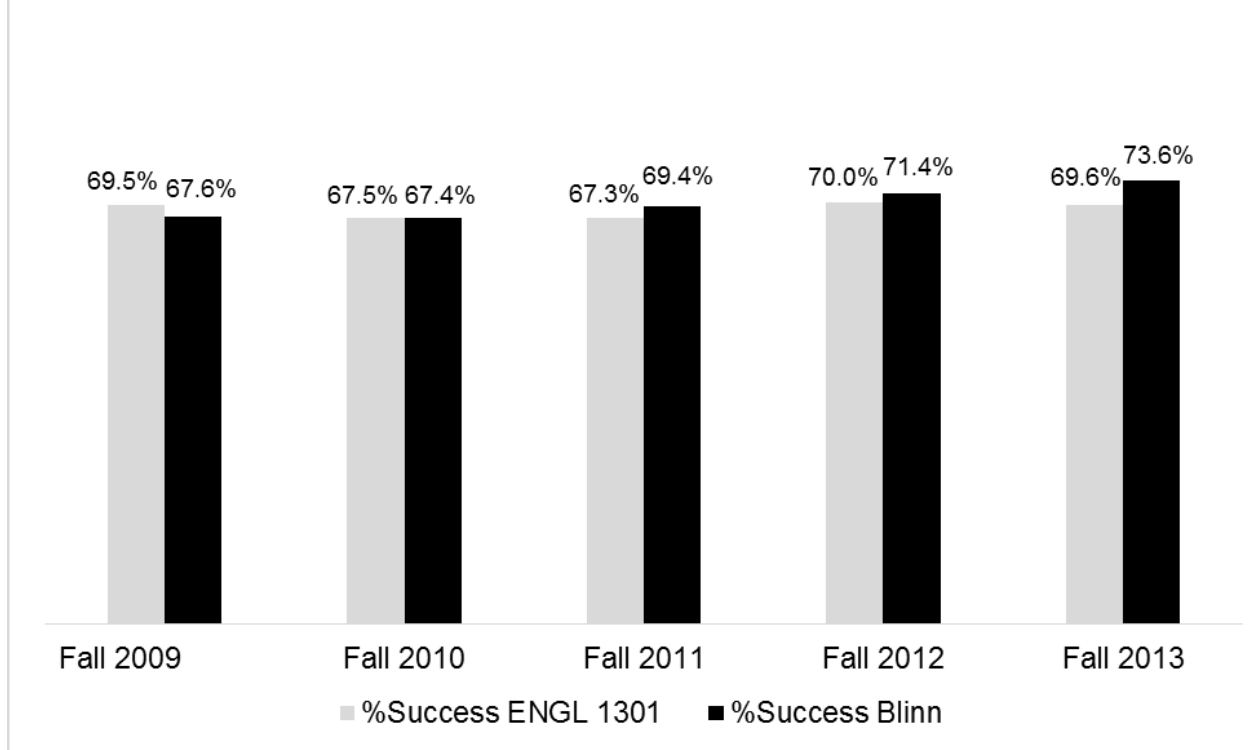
*HIST 1301, United States History I:* Success rates for the period Fall 2007-Fall 2013 have fluctuated between 61.3% and 69.6%, with a drop rate for the same period between 12.4% and 18.5%.

*MATH 1324, Mathematics for Business and Social Sciences:* Success rates for the period Fall 2007-Fall 2013 have fluctuated between 66.4% and 75.0%, with a drop rate for the same period between 14.6% and 20.3%.

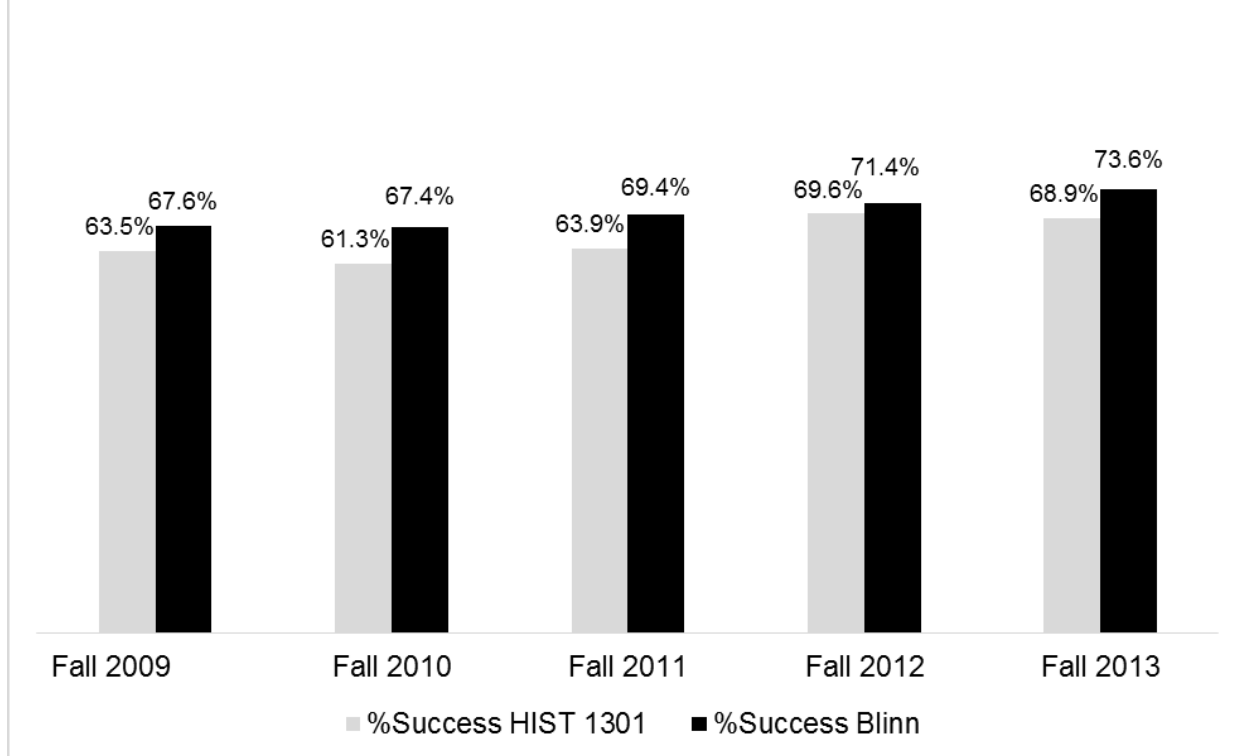
While the success rates for MATH 1324 have been historically higher than the College average, it was chosen as the target math class for the QEP because it has and will continue to have the highest enrollment of first year college students. The State of Texas has made significant changes in the requirements for freshman level math courses during the past year. All students who are college ready in math will be allowed to register for the first course of their choice from: College Algebra (MATH 1314), Math for Business and Social Sciences I (MATH 1324), Contemporary Math for Liberal Arts Students I or II (MATH 1332 or MATH 1333), Statistics (MATH 1342), or STEM College Algebra (MATH 1414). The state has mandated that the College accept either MATH 1314 or MATH 1324 as the pre-requisite course for MATH 1325. Since MATH 1314 does not meet any degree requirements at the most popular transfer destinations for Blinn College students, the College expects to see an increase in the enrollment for MATH 1324 in the Fall semester. Also, MATH 1324 and 1325 are the best choices for students who aren't positive about their degree program or four-year destination.



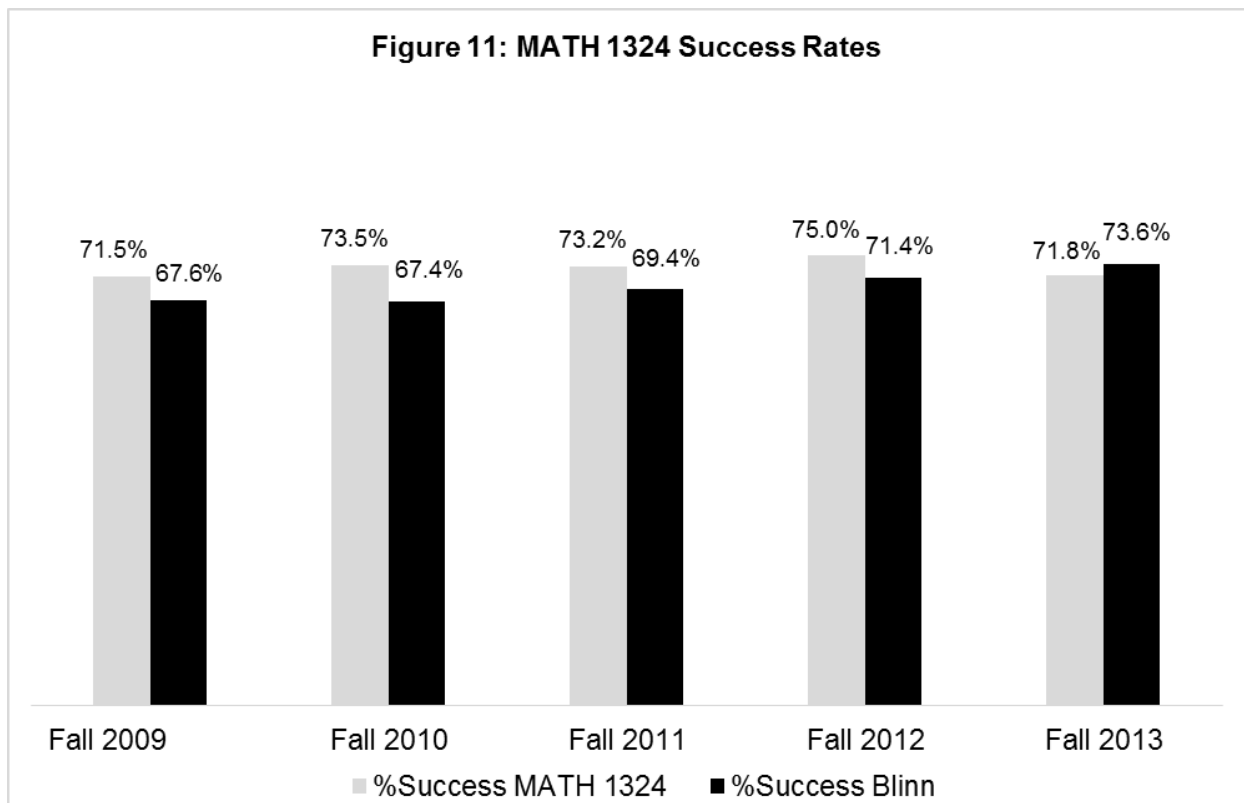
Source: Discoverer Reports, Spring 2014

**Figure 9: ENGL 1301 Success Rates**

Source: Discoverer Reports, Spring 2014

**Figure 10: HIST 1301 Success Rates**

Source: Discoverer Reports, Spring 2014



Source: Discoverer Reports, Spring 2014

#### *Selection of QEP Title*

The Planning Team concluded its charge by announcing the College's QEP would be titled **Destination Success: First-Year Focus**, with the goal of improving first-year success focusing on the four identified courses through an initiative to be developed by the QEP Development Team. The Planning Team decided to identify a QEP Director and broaden the involvement of the campus community to fully develop the QEP topic. The team began the nomination process in November for Blinn College faculty and staff to be included on the QEP Development Team. The team would flesh out the details and write the QEP report. Once the QEP is approved by SACSCOC, the College will transition to the QEP Implementation Team. The QEP Planning Team compiled a list of nominations for the QEP Development Team and corresponded to determine which additional nominations were needed to complete the committee.

In December, Dr. Nolte, Blinn College's District President, named Dr. Kathy Anzivino QEP Director. As QEP Director, Dr. Anzivino will lead the QEP Development Team in researching the topic and identifying best practices, crafting an implementation strategy, developing a timeline and budget and creating an assessment plan. During this process it was also decided to use a co-director model identifying one person from Student Services and one person from Instruction.

*QEP Topic Development Timeline*

The following timeline outlines the work of the Planning Team as they refined and narrowed the focus to develop a QEP topic:

<b>Table 2: QEP Topic Development Process</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
August 20, 2013	Three potential QEP topics announced during the Faculty and Instructional Staff meeting	Dean, IEEM
August 21, 2013	Employee survey summarizing the topics and asking for input on topic selection	IEEM
September 6, 2013	QEP Planning Team developed	Dr. Harold Nolte, President
September 9, 2013	Survey results communicated to College and that College would pursue "Student Success in the First Year" for the QEP	QEP Planning Team
September 16, 2013	Report compiled by IEEM regarding the success rate of both FTIC students and students with previous college credit	IEEM
September 18, 2013	A focus group of faculty, staff and students held to discuss the future of the QEP and how to move forward and what the program should include.	QEP Planning Team
October 2, 2013	QEP Focus Group results shared with external consultant	QEP Planning Team
October 10, 2013	QEP Planning Team met and decided to identify a focused, tangible topic that would lend itself to effective planning, assessment, and measurability	QEP Planning Team
October 28-29, 2013	QEP Planning Team, Board of Trustees, Executive Council, and Dr. Nolte met and provided a report of their findings and suggestions for QEP	QEP Planning Team
October 31, 2013	QEP Planning Team determined ENGL 1301, MATH 1324, and BIOL 1406 to have lower success rates and to give them further consideration to include in QEP	QEP Planning Team
November 1, 2013	Nomination process began for QEP Development Team	QEP Planning Team
November 13, 2013	Compiled list of QEP Development Team nominees to determine if additional nominations were needed	QEP Planning Team

November 15, 2013	QEP Planning Team decided to include HIST 1301 as a course of consideration for current QEP	QEP Planning Team
December 20, 2013	Dr. Kathy Anzivino announced as the QEP Director to lead the QEP development	Dr. Harold Nolte, President

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## Phase II: Refinement of QEP Topic

At the spring faculty convocation in January 2014, the Dean of IEEM presented a summary of the QEP process to date, the next steps that had been identified, and a timeline for completion. Faculty were invited to express interest in serving on the Development Team. A presentation of the QEP process, topics, and formation of the development team was also made at the staff convocation held February 14, 2014. A Q&A session followed both presentations to gather feedback from faculty and staff.

The QEP Development Team<sup>3</sup> was finalized in January, 2014, the QEP co-Directors were announced, Dr. Kathy Anzivino<sup>4</sup> and Dr. Mary Barnes-Tilley, and the first meeting was held on January 31, 2014.

### *Data Collection and Review*

After an overview of the QEP process thus far, the data used to form the topic selection, and a review of examples of other Colleges' QEPs, the Development Team established subcommittees to fully develop the topic: **Destination Success: First-Year Focus**. The following four subcommittees were identified: Communications and Marketing, Institutional Data Review, Best Practices/Literature Review- Academic Affairs, Best Practices/Literature Review- Student Services.

Subcommittees met several times and brought information back to the entire QEP Development Team on February 28, 2014. The QEP Development Team identified the following key issues:

- High drop rates
- Lack of prompt feedback from faculty to students on academic standing in class
- Lack of resources for non-academic challenges
- Lack of career counseling resources
- Lack of use of tutoring/writing resources
- Low scores on Student Effort benchmark in CCSSE results
- Students unaware of career focus -- undeclared majors

The drop rate impacts overall persistence and graduation and often exceeds the drop rate for the institution as a whole. Further, undeclared majors are twice as common among FTIC students at Blinn College.

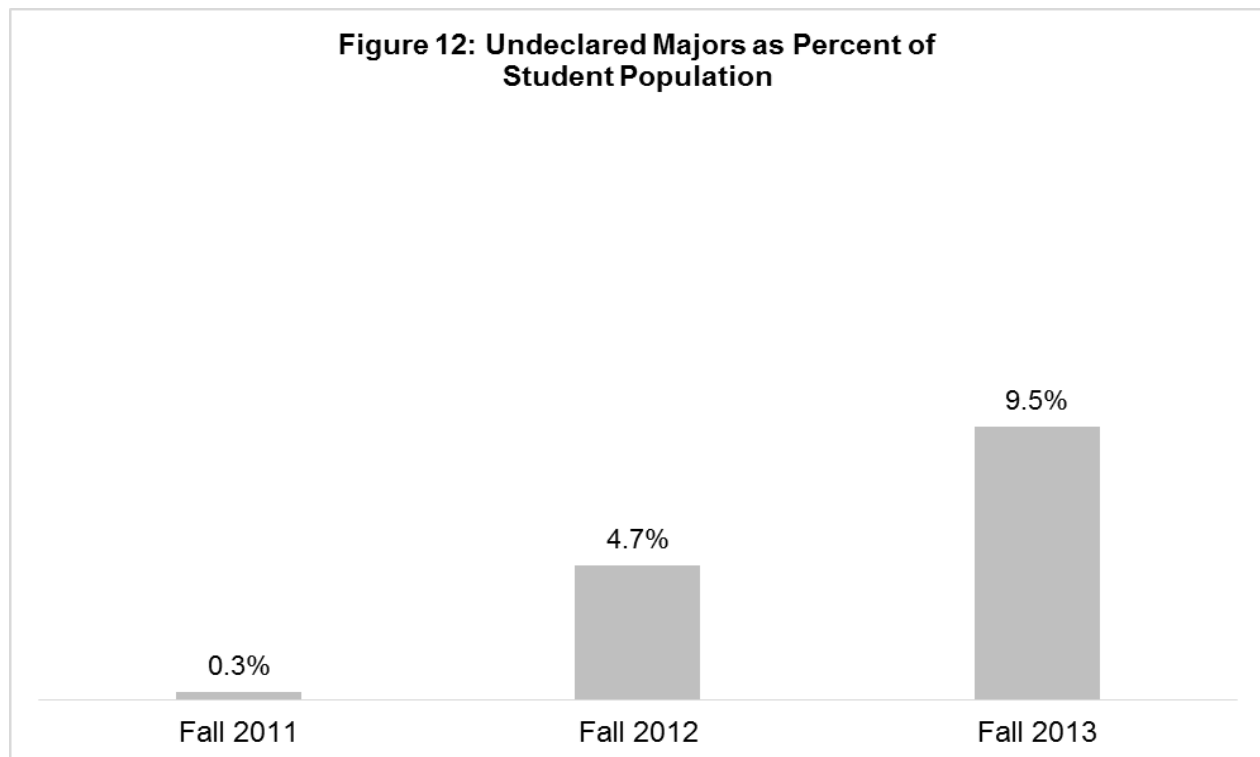
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<sup>3</sup> For a complete list of QEP Development Team Members, see Appendix D.

<sup>4</sup> Kathy Anzivino left the College in May 2014 and was replaced by Jeremy Thomas who serves as Dean of Student Success and QEP co-Director.

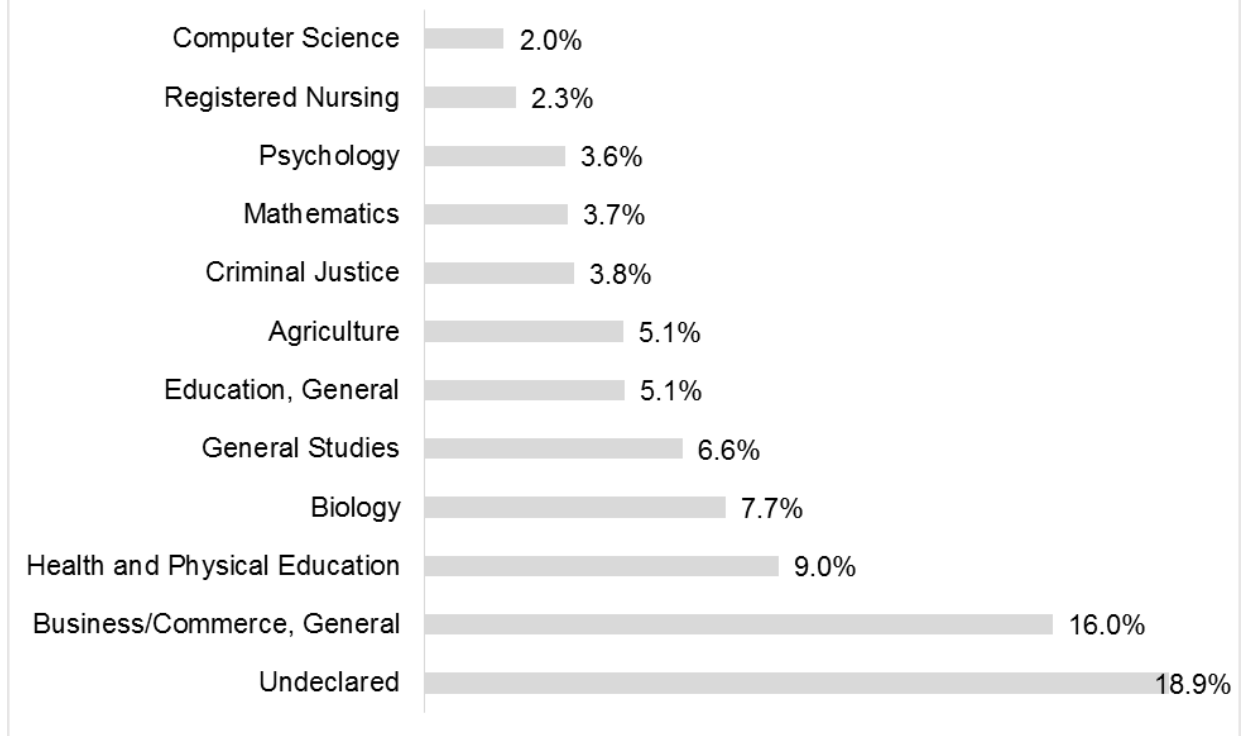
<b>TABLE 3: Percent of Students Dropping Classes</b>					
	<b>Institution</b>	<b>ENGL 1301</b>	<b>BIOL 1406</b>	<b>HIST 1301</b>	<b>MATH 1324</b>
FALL 2005	16.8%	17.8%	17.4%	13.8%	17.6%
FALL 2006	16.2%	17.1%	16.6%	11.6%	23.7%
FALL 2007	16.0%	17.1%	20.5%	12.4%	20.6%
FALL 2008	15.0%	14.1%	20.1%	12.4%	19.8%
FALL 2009	15.3%	15.2%	20.8%	14.7%	18.3%
FALL 2010	15.2%	16.6%	22.1%	18.5%	14.3%
FALL 2011	15.4%	16.5%	18.4%	16.9%	14.9%
FALL 2012	14.7%	15.6%	19.6%	14.3%	14.1%
FALL 2013	15.4%	14.3%	25.4%	13.3%	18.5%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>

Source: Discoverer Report, February 2014



Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, CBM 001 reports (certified)



**Figure 13: Percent of Majors Among FTIC, Fall 2013**

NOTE: 42 additional majors added together comprise the remaining 16.2% of the total.

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, CBM 001 report (certified).

Kuh, et al (2005), after extensive research on student engagement, begin with the idea that “what students do in college counts more in terms of what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college” and “the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development” (8). Based on these ideas and identification of key issues, the team began drafting potential Learning Outcomes.

The Development Team discussed a range of possible strategies to achieve these outcomes, such as required summer orientation, required distance education orientation prior to enrolling in distance education courses, use of learning communities, not allowing FTIC students to drop courses using the online drop feature, added services (counselors, career center, etc.), early alert system, better understanding for students of relevance of courses, student contracts, first year seminar class, personal responsibility, etc. The subcommittees continued their work in March and divided into new subcommittees focused around the initiatives that would become the QEP. In April 2014, Learning Communities was selected as the best strategy to achieve the emerging desired learning outcomes. This information was shared with the QEP Development Team, and all members were invited to a meeting on April 16, 2014 to discuss the topic further. The subcommittee structure was again used to finalize the QEP and included: Communications and Marketing (existing committee continuing work), Learning

## Communities Development, Infrastructure Support Needs, Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Development.

In an effort by the College to ensure student feedback was considered, student focus groups were held in April and May on all four campuses. Students were introduced to learning communities and asked about any experience they have had with this program. They were also asked to discuss support services they needed to be successful and their experiences working with other students. Students on all four campuses agreed there was a need for more tutoring services, extended hours for the library, learning and writing centers, and accessibility to these services. Students also mentioned the positive experiences they have had working with other students but expressed a concern that the student groups had not been formally organized in the past. Students were very excited about opportunities for more experienced students to work with incoming freshmen to assist them with FTIC issues, questions, and concerns.

After assessing student feedback and exploring the literature and best practices on learning communities, the Development Team proposed a linked courses model for the targeted courses supplemented with high-impact student support services. The linked courses would pair combinations of two of the four college-level cohort courses with a supplemental student success course that would help students develop good habits of time management, study skills, academic and career planning, and other practices towards college success. This combination of classroom experience, a “success network” support structure, and professional development training for faculty and staff will strengthen student success and improve persistence and graduation rates in the long run, along with building student awareness of critical thinking, communication and other skills.

The subcommittees continued to meet through August to help develop the key components of learning communities and provide assistance in writing the first draft.

### QEP Development Timeline

TABLE 4: QEP Development Team Process		
DATE	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
January 2014	Announcement of QEP topic and title at Faculty Convocation	Dean, IEEM
January 2014	QEP co-directors announced	Dr. Harold Nolte, President
January-April 2014	QEP Development Team developed and meetings to conduct internal research, literature reviews and narrow focus and development project plan	QEP Development Team
May-August 2014	QEP Development Team Subcommittees working on Learning Communities initiative development and assisting with writing first draft	QEP Development Team Subcommittees

April-May 2014	Student Focus Groups on all campuses	QEP Development Team
May 2014	First QEP draft proposal and review	QEP Review Team
June 2014	Second QEP draft and review	QEP Review Team
July 2014	Final review of QEP	QEP Review Team
August 2014	Blinn College QEP Proposal due to SACSCOC	QEP co-Directors
October 28-30, 2014	On-site visit	All

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## PART IV: Desired Student Learning Outcomes

As part of its Quality Enhancement Plan, Blinn College will develop learning communities using the linked courses model and develop a student success course to be included as part of the learning community. The success course is entitled EDUC 0100: Journey to Success and will be designed for FTIC students. The pilot is designed to reach FTIC students who do not have a declared major (explained in Part VII). As part of the up scaling of the QEP, Blinn College will work with existing discipline specific courses for students having a specific major to redevelop or redefine the success course to meet the needs of the FTIC student with a declared major. Students will be block scheduled with two academic courses and the student success course, EDUC 0100. The academic courses linked in the learning community triad have been identified by the College as high enrollment/low success: BIOL 1406, ENGL 1301, HIST 1301, and MATH 1324.

Blinn College's QEP student learning outcomes, program outcomes, and means of assessment are defined in the tables below.

**TABLE 5: QEP Student Learning Outcomes**

<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>
SLO 1: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the BIOL 1406, ENGL 1301, HIST 1301, and MATH 1324 courses</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>
SLO 2: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the linked BIOL 1406, ENGL 1301, HIST 1301, and MATH 1324 courses</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>
SLO 3: Students will demonstrate quantitative reasoning skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the BIOL 1406 and MATH 1324 academic courses</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>
SLO 4: Students will demonstrate personal responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the ENGL 1301 and HIST 1301 academic courses and EDUC 0100 course</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>
SLO 5: Students will demonstrate social responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the HIST 1301 academic courses</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>

SLO 6: Students will demonstrate teamwork skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Score on the rubric for the common assignment in the BIOL 1406 and ENGL 1301 academic courses</li> <li>2. Students in the learning communities cohort will outperform those in traditional classes</li> </ol>
SLO 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to develop an educational pathway to achieve a focused exit goal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student completion of a degree plan</li> <li>2. Student persistence to second year</li> <li>3. Student persistence with chosen major</li> <li>4. Student transfer rate</li> <li>5. Student graduation rate</li> </ol>

For purposes of the QEP, the College adopts the following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)<sup>5</sup> definitions to clarify the expectations of student learning as explained in Table 10:

- Critical Thinking: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- Personal Responsibility - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
- Social Responsibility - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- Teamwork - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

These learning outcomes will be made more concrete and specific with the development of the scoring rubrics scheduled for fall, 2014.

TABLE 6: QEP Program Outcomes	
Program Outcome (PO)	Criteria for Success
PO1: Students will be engaged in the linked courses	Course success rate in linked classes
PO2: Students will demonstrate awareness of support services	Student utilization of support services (e.g., tutoring, library services, academic advising, career and personal counseling)

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the THECB's website at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=427FDE26-AF5D-F1A1-E6FDB62091E2A507>.



PO3: Students will achieve educational milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student attainment of 15 credit hours in first year</li> <li>2. Student attainment of 30 credit hours in first year</li> </ol>
PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percentage of faculty completing training module</li> <li>2. Percentage of staff completing training module</li> <li>3. Number of faculty and staff attending conferences related to learning communities or first year experience</li> </ol>
PO5: Students will receive timely feedback on their progress in classes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percentage of sections of linked classes using electronic gradebook</li> <li>2. Percentage of all sections using electronic gradebook</li> </ol>
PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percentage of faculty and staff rating themselves "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on survey related to learning communities program</li> <li>2. Percentage of faculty and staff rating themselves familiar with the learning communities program on survey</li> </ol>





## PART V: Literature Review and Best Practices

“Learning communities are the pedagogical embodiment of the belief that teaching and learning are relational processes, involving co-creating knowledge through relationships among students, between students and teachers, and through the environment in which these relationships operate” (Price 2005: 6).

### Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize the research that supports learning communities as an intervention for FTIC student success. The learning community is defined as a linked course model that links two courses with a common cohort of students who receive additional support from seminars and student support networks. The review will be divided into five sections. The first section will describe the relevant research on Learning Communities. This is followed by a section on FTIC students, which will be the target population for this initiative. The third section will address the literature that relates learning communities to linked courses. The First Year Experience review will document research that describes the content and nature of seminars for student success. The final section of the review will describe initiatives in student services that support FTIC student success.

### Learning Communities

Learning communities are not new to educational reform. Studies show that learning communities improve academic performance and retention (Hotchkiss, Moore, & Pitts, 2006). Reports also indicate positive outcomes from enhanced engagement between faculty, as well as faculty and students. The same report showed new partnerships, new programs, and professional development are essential to sustainability (Levine & Shapiro, 2004). Based on the 2009 experience of six community colleges that implemented 130 learning communities with 3,000 students, key findings indicated that student cohorts resulted in academic and personal support networks. Additionally, changes in teaching practices required support from a paid coordinator who set expectations and managed the learning communities (Visser, Schneider, Wathington, & Collado, 2010). Finally, Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York randomly assigned 1,534 freshmen to either a learning community or a control group. Findings showed students in the learning community had improved college experience and accelerated movement through developmental English (Scrivener, et al., 2008).

### First Time in College

Many FTIC students arrive in community colleges without college-ready academic skills and are thus more likely to drop out than students at more selective four-year institutions (Fike, 2008). Specifically, Bahr notes that community college students require more remedial math assistance than any other subject (Bahr, 2011). One significant issue is the variety of academic career options available to these students: transfer, vocational, drop-in, noncredit, experimental, and exploratory (Bahr, 2010).



Institutions are faced with students who may only take one or two courses before transferring out, students who migrate from academic transfer to vocational programs (and vice versa), and students who are unsure of their career paths and are therefore “shopping” courses and majors.

Studies suggest that intervention programs can help first-time students succeed (Pan, 2008). Such programs can improve retention and cumulative GPA rates, particularly for this group. Academic advising has proven beneficial in the success rates of underprepared students (Bahr, 2008). Students who are academically deficient achieve higher pass and retention rates if they are steered in the right direction when selecting courses. The use of intrusive academic advising with a community/technical college experimental group of FTIC students showed higher overall GPAs and second semester retention rates than students who were not given the same opportunity (Ryan, 2013). To better assist FTIC community college students, learning communities can combine academic assistance with other needs to help students develop or maintain a career trajectory.

### **Linked Courses**

Linked courses are one of five common themes for learning communities (Gabelnick, 1990). Valencia College experimented with linked courses, defined as two courses that used the same cohort of students who shared a success coach, usually an advisor who supported the student cohort with additional presentations. The data showed an increase in student course success particularly for Hispanic and African-American students where success was defined as earning a “C” or better in the course (Brighton & Phelps, 2012). In a four-year study of learning communities for community colleges, students in linked courses had higher grade point averages, lower course attrition rates, and increases in semester-to-semester retention rates (Popiolek et al., 2013). Paired courses<sup>6</sup> provide additional support for underprepared students (Tinto, 2000). Retention and achievement improved for students in a non-residential setting, as well as enhanced the social network for part-time students in linked courses (Cargill & Kalikoff, 2007).

Several conditions make linked courses popular as a learning community model. Scheduling two linked academic courses is an easier model as compared to three or more academic courses. Changes to the curriculum for linked courses are less dependent on new course development. Faculty coordination of courses can be done intermittently during the semester, which allows for more freedom than team-taught interdisciplinary courses (Soven et al., 2013).

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<sup>6</sup> Literature uses both paired and linked courses terminology. For purposes of the College’s QEP, we will use the term linked courses indicating the linkage between two academic and one success course.

## **First-Year Experience Course**

A common organizational structure to support the learning community for linked courses is a shared first-year experience course that uses a variety of active learning strategies and discussion to foster student success. One of the primary goals in a success course is to develop the critical thinking and study skills necessary to be successful in college, as well as support students in setting and assessing personal goals (Kutil, 2013). Student success courses help students develop relationships and exposure to habits and college culture that integrate them into the institution, encouraging them to persist (Karp & Stacey, 2013). Students enrolled in success courses showed short-term benefits through improvements in credit accumulation and persistence to second year (Cho & Karp, 2012). The Florida College System found long-term benefits in terms of persistence, credentialing, and transfer of students who participated in success courses (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007).

## **Success Network**

As a framework for student support, Astin's Theory of Student Involvement maintains that students who are engaged in their learning are more likely to be successful (Astin, 1985). Furthermore, Tinto (2012) found in a study on college success and completion that students involved in learning communities had increased success rates, citing that academic advising, career advising, counseling services, health services, and mentoring services all played a role in student retention and success when utilized by students. Tinto (2012) went on to state that institutions with high retention rates among first-year students often utilize learning communities to require student interaction with support services (p. 103). Extensive literature, not reviewed here, can be found on each of these support areas individually, supporting their utilization throughout many institutions.

The Learning Communities Demonstration (Weissman et al., 2012) applied these support areas to learning communities and found that these services are often enhanced within the learning community setting to give students greater access to and understanding of these resources on campus. Furthermore, more advanced learning communities were described as having dedicated resources within these support areas to serve the learning community. This is often seen in cooperation with a student success course as part of the learning community.

In addition to traditional support services, Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gabelnick (2004) states that one key to the success of the student's participating in a learning community is to foster student development through initiatives that build community, create active learning, stimulate student intellectual and identity development, and allow for student assessment and reflection. These initiatives can be met within a learning community through programs, events, and out-of-class assignments. Smith et al. (2004) additionally identify these support objectives as part of the core purposes of effective learning communities.



## PART VI: Actions to be Implemented

### Implementation Plan

The College's QEP features a three part implementation plan that includes (1) the creation of learning communities featuring three linked courses including two academic and one success course, EDUC 0100: Journey to Success, (2) the creation of a "success network" that will include a QEP Leadership and Implementation Team and student support services implemented by the College, and (3) professional development training for faculty and staff involved in the learning communities.

### Learning Communities

Learning communities provide a safety net that will ensure the success for all FTIC students. When students are engaged in working together in an academic cohort, the individual learning of each member increases more than if student are working alone. Students involved in learning communities are expected to achieve better educational outcomes including being engaged in their learning experience, retention, developing an educational pathway, and demonstrating personal responsibility.

When joining a learning community, students have immediate contact with a group of students also beginning their college journey. Students learn to hold each other accountable, form study groups, utilize campus resources when additional help is needed, and take responsibility for their education. Learning communities allow students to form bonds and start to lean on each other as they navigate through their first year of college, while the faculty members teaching the linked courses form a bond knowing they have the same students. The faculty work together, sharing observations with each other, to ensure students are adjusting to college life and progressing well in their classes. The College also provides student support services and intervention strategies to assist the learning cohort (see Success Network, below).

### *Models and Selection of Linked Courses*

Blinn College selected the linked courses model which includes two academic courses linked together with a student success course, EDUC 0100: Journey to Success. By using the linked courses model, two or more courses are taught by faculty assigned to the courses with the same cohort of students. According to Weismann et al. (2012), there can be four components of a learning community: linked course and cohorts, faculty collaboration, instructional practices, and student support. Three levels of learning communities are described, and the College will use the mid-range model including these four components:

- All students in linked courses are in the learning community,
- Instructional teams communicate periodically throughout the semester,
- Instructors assign at least one joint project during the semester, and
- Extra support is offered but not necessarily integrated into the classroom.

While the mid-range model will be the minimum required, instructors can determine the level of collaboration, planning, and coordination of common assignments above that level if they so desire.

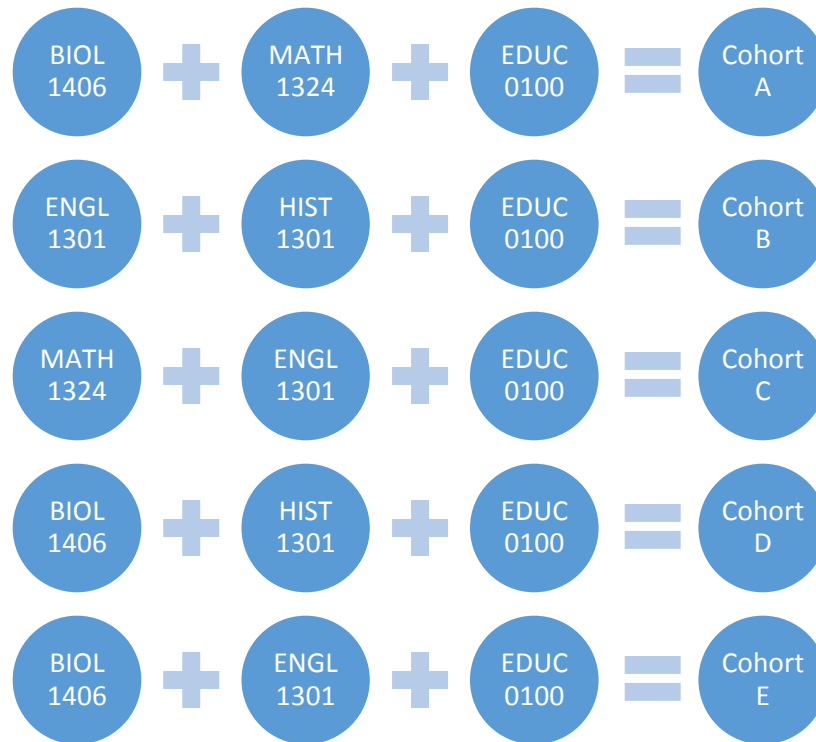
As previously noted, the overall success rate, defined as achieving a grade of “C” or better, for Blinn College students is 72.9 percent. For the purposes of topic selection and focus, four courses were identified as high enrollment but with lower success rates than the overall college success rate and therefore selected for learning communities: HIST 1301, ENGL 1301, MATH 1324, and BIOL 1406. The data also revealed that FTICs had a lower success rate than students who came to Blinn College with previous college credit, and the literature suggests that students without a declared major have a lower success rates and lower persistence rates than students with a declared major and defined career path.

To improve student success in the first year, FTIC students will be required to enroll in a learning community once the learning communities and structure are created and piloted. All FTIC students are required per College policy to meet with an academic advisor prior to enrolling in their first semester. Linked courses will be blocked so a student enrolled in one of the courses in the cohort will be enrolled in all three. For example, a student enrolled in cohort A would be co-enrolled in BIOL 1406, MATH 1324, and EDUC 0100. Students enrolled in cohort B would be co-enrolled in ENGL 1301, HIST 1301, and EDUC 0100.<sup>7</sup> The student’s remedial testing and course placement will also determine the cohort in which the student is enrolled. For example, if a student places into remedial math, he or she could be enrolled into a HIST, ENGL, and EDUC cohort with the option of enrolling in remedial math until complete. The mandated learning community requirement for FTICs will be monitored during the implementation process to determine effectiveness based on results from student learning outcomes (SLOs) and feasibility of up scaling the QEP to include all FTICs given College capacity.

The traditional learning community model mandates that students cannot drop one class without dropping all classes in the learning cohort. However, the College determined that is it not in the interest of the students to force them to remain in classes they are failing, nor should students be required to drop a class in which they are successful. Students who wish to drop a course in their learning community will be required to meet with an academic advisor and their instructor prior to dropping the course; they will not be allowed to use the College’s online system to drop a class. This intervention will assist students with getting needed assistance (e.g., tutoring, personal counseling, or advising) to successfully complete their other classes.

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<sup>7</sup> STEM majors would take MATH 1414 because of that requirement for their major. When learning communities are up scaled to include all FTIC students, the learning community for STEM majors will be defined differently.

**Figure 14: Learning Community Cohorts****EDUC 0100: Journey to Success**

The purpose of a success course is to develop a mentorship and faculty/student interaction, an understanding and usage of student support services, and an understanding of the expectations of an academic environment. EDUC 0100 includes the following topics:

- Keys to Success
- On Course Self-Assessment
- Overview of online learning management system, D2L
- Academic Action Plan
- Support Resources
- Accepting Personal Responsibility
- Discovering Self-Motivation
- Mastering Self-Management
- Employing Interdependence
- Gaining Self Awareness
- Adopting Lifelong Learning
- Avoiding Test Anxiety
- Staying On Course to Your Success

The student learning outcomes for the EDUC 0100: Journey to Success course are:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of characteristics of successful learners, factors that impact learning, and study and learning skills
2. Identify academic, career and/or personal support resources to foster student success
3. Develop and use an Academic Action Plan

An EDUC 1300 course has been taught at Blinn College for many years. EDUC 0100 is a one-hour version of EDUC 1300 utilizing the same textbook, *On Course* by Skip Downing. Since EDUC 0100 is a non-credit course, the College has more flexibility with credentialing, allowing faculty and staff who hold a bachelor's degree the opportunity to teach the course. Faculty credentialing for EDUC 0100 will be addressed by providing faculty and staff *On Course* training by attending a conference or completing in-house training workshops (see Faculty Training Preparedness and Training section below for more information).

As with the linked academic courses, faculty and staff teaching EDUC 0100 will collaborate with the faculty teaching the academic courses. The level of collaboration expected among the instructional teams (instructors from the two academic courses and EDUC 0100 course) will include communication periodically throughout the semester, discussion of student progress and concerns, and providing extra support for students as needed. The topics covered in EDUC 0100 provide students with tools and resources intended to increase their success in the linked academic courses. Using the mid-range model as the minimum, instructors can determine the level of collaboration, planning, and coordination above that level if they so desire.

### **Success Network**

Blinn College's dedication to student success in the first year will be further bolstered by the development of a success network with three components: organizational leadership structure (described in Part VIII), student support structure and professional development. As part of the preparations made in the first year of the QEP, the College will assess the needs to support learning communities and determine the feasibility of enhancing these services.

#### *Student Support Structure*

The **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** program will be part of Blinn College's overall student success network. The goal is to provide students with a number of programs working together during their first year to provide a well-rounded support system. The College provides assistance to students, but data also reveals that students need additional support to avoid heading toward academic difficulty (e.g., failing a class or going on academic probation). The EDUC 0100 course will provide an additional opportunity for faculty and staff to inform students of all the components of the Success Network.

*Advising and Counseling.* The College's advising program is an important part of the success network assisting students with development of their educational plan. As part of the implementation of the **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** program, the advising office will work to develop programs targeting specific groups: first generation students, students on academic probation, student testing into developmental courses, first time in college students, and veterans to provide a more specific advising session based on student need. In addition, students involved in a learning community will be required to see an academic advisor to provide additional support before being allowed to drop a class. The Advising and Counseling office will assist with the EDUC 0100 course to provide career advising/counseling sessions for students so they can develop a two-year plan of study as part of their career planning. The QEP Development Team proposes adding a Manager of Career Services to offer career counseling and manage the district-wide job board. The Destination Success leadership team will work with the advisors and career counselors to assist with this process.

*Early Alert System.* Reviewing CCSSE data, timely feedback from faculty was a concern among students. The College may develop an early alert system by utilizing the online learning management system, D2L. All faculty will be required to use the D2L gradebook by the Fall 2015 semester, and the Early Alert System may utilize D2L's capabilities to "warn" students during the semester when they struggle academically. Learning communities' enrollees will first utilize the system and the program can be scaled up to involve all classes. The College may also develop a mid-term grading policy which will address the timely feedback to students. The Destination Success Leadership and Implementation Teams (defined in Part VIII) will work with the appropriate college departments in the implementation of these programs and policies. Instructors will undergo training to ensure they understand how to use the D2L system for grading and recording "alerts" for staff to provide them appropriate services (e.g., counseling, tutoring). The College will determine, based on capabilities of D2L, whether additional software is needed to support this program. The goal of this system will be to identify students who are facing challenges and advise them.

*Tutoring.* The College recognizes the need to provide more tutoring opportunities for students. CCSSE data reveal that students are not aware of, or do not utilize, the services that are available. Therefore, to support the efforts of the QEP, the College will assess current tutoring services to ensure students continue to be aware of the services available and the services are sufficient to continue to meet the needs on all campuses. This may include expanded hours for the learning and writing centers and computer labs, more computer labs, more online tutoring, and dedicated support staff for learning communities.

*Library Services.* In addition to the physical locations of the Blinn College Library, library services and resources are available online to all students, faculty, and staff regardless of their location. Physical materials are delivered to all locations upon request. Face-to-face instruction, individual assistance, and guides are provided by professional librarians at all locations as requested by instructors. To support the QEP, library services information will be provided to students through their learning community,



specifically addressing services provided by library through their EDUC 0100 course. The Destination Success Leadership Team, along with the College's executive team, will assess the library needs to possibly include more space for learning community groups to meet and utilize services, more awareness among students, faculty, and staff about the services provided, more services available online for distance education students, and the ability to track students and the services they are using across campuses. This effort will be undertaken to ensure appropriate levels of support for learning communities but also for all student needs.

### **Faculty Training and Preparedness**

To provide the best experience for our students in learning communities, the QEP Leadership and Implementation Team (to be explained in Part IV) will identify faculty who would like to work with the linked courses learning community. Faculty may also volunteer to work with the learning community. Faculty teaching those courses will be required to do the following:

1. Have taught the academic course at least twice before being part of the learning community
2. Complete the College's professional development training for learning communities
3. Communicate and collaborate with the instructor of the companion course
4. Submit final syllabi and joint proposal for teaching a linked course in a learning community to the Learning Community Review Subcommittee
5. Receive approval of proposal by QEP Leadership upon the approval of the subcommittee.

As previously noted, the mid-range learning communities model will be adopted as the minimum standard for collaboration among faculty. Further collaboration of the lessons and planning is at the discretion of the faculty with a final review and approval by The Learning Community Review subcommittee. As learning communities progress (see timeline), faculty may choose a more advanced learning community model where there is collaboration throughout the course, including faculty who sit in on each session of the linked course throughout the semester.

Through training in how to develop the integrative learning environment of a learning community, faculty will be better prepared to help students achieve the learning outcomes of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, personal responsibility, social responsibility, and teamwork. Therefore, the College will provide the following professional development opportunities:

1. Destination Success Leadership Team, together with at least one participating pilot faculty member from each campus (at least five faculty members in the aggregate), will submit an application for the 2015 National Institute on Learning Communities at Evergreen State College. If accepted, the team will attend this training. If not, the team will attend similar training offered by another recognized group such as Kingsborough College.

2. Faculty members who elect to participate in a learning community may have the opportunity to attend one learning community conference in the year in which a course is developed. Subsequent attendance may also be made available to faculty who are developing a learning community and then to those willing to mentor and train faculty colleagues in the development and implementation of a learning community model.
3. Following a train-the-trainer model, faculty and staff who participate in the National Institute will provide training to all faculty who express an interest in creating a learning community. At least one faculty member will be designated a Faculty Fellow to lead a Learning Communities Initiative in 2015-2016 through the Office of Professional Development.
4. *On Course* training for all faculty and staff teaching EDUC 0100: Journey to Success to ensure proper credentialing. Beginning in Spring 2015, trainers from the *On Course* program will facilitate sessions. Subsequent sessions will be taught and facilitated by faculty experienced in teaching the course on the College's campus. New *On Course* instructors will be mentored by experienced instructors.

At the end of each fall and spring semester, the instructors of the linked courses will debrief with a subcommittee of the Implementation Team to discuss the successes and improvement opportunities of the learning communities. This discussion, in addition to assessment data, will drive the action planning for the next term. In addition to making modifications to how the College has implemented the linked course model, decision-makers will use this data along with course evaluation data to manage performance expectations and staff the linked courses with effective instructors.





## PART VII: Timeline

The Destination Success Team, including the Leadership Team and Implementation Team will oversee the implementation of **Destination Success: First Year Focus**. The following is a timeline for implementation including the development of the learning communities and support structure in year one followed by the pilot project and gradual increase of the number of learning communities over the five year implementation cycle. The goal is to provide all FTIC students with a learning community at Blinn College at the end of the five-year period.

### Pilot Project

The pilot project will include a minimum of one learning community per campus for a total of twelve learning communities in the Fall 2015 semester. FTIC students with no declared major<sup>8</sup> will be identified to participate in the learning community pilot project. The enrollment cap on each learning community will be 35 students. In the Spring 2016 semester, the number of learning communities will increase to twenty-two with a minimum of one per campus. Assessment of the results of the pilot project will be reviewed by the Leadership and Implementation Teams to determine revisions to the program. By the end of the 2016-17 academic year, the College's QEP will be able to place all FTIC students with undeclared majors into a learning community, and by the end of the 2018-19 academic year all FTIC students will be enrolled in learning communities.



<sup>8</sup> Blinn College designates students in this category as "general liberal arts" majors in an "undeclared" program.



Table 7A: Implementation Timeline and Activities, AY2014-15

YEAR	INPUTS	ACTIVITY	DATE	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
AY2014-15: Development of Learning Communities and Support Structure	Planning Team	Identification of Destination Success Leadership Team and Implementation Team	August 2014	Output 4: Organizational structure	
	Implementation Team	Recruitment of faculty to teach learning communities	September 2014	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
	Implementation Team	Recruitment of necessary staff to support learning communities	September 2014	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
	Implementation Team	Creation of Learning Communities Review Subcommittee	October 2014	Output 4: Organizational structure	
	EDUC 0100 Instructors	<i>On Course</i> training for faculty and staff teaching EDUC 0100: Journey to Success	November 2014	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
	Leadership Team	Application for a team to attend the National Summer Institute on Learning Communities in July 2015	November 2014	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
	Implementation Team	Collection of baseline data	December 2014	Output 5: Baseline data	

Learning Communities Review Subcommittee	Approval of learning communities linked courses and syllabi	February 2015	Output 1. Plan for how to implement linked courses in curriculum plans for linked courses	
Implementation Team	Coordination of learning groups meetings, lessons and syllabi creation	Ongoing	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
Faculty teaching linked academic courses  EDUC 0100 Instructors	Professional Development and training for faculty and staff directly related to implementation (e.g., teaching in learning communities, On Course training)	Ongoing	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
EDUC 0100 Instructors	Addition of EDUC 0100 to the College curriculum and develop assessment measures	March 2015	Output 2. Curriculum plans for EDUC 0100	
Implementation Team	Needs assessment, review, planning and implementation of student support network and support services	March 2015	Output 5: Baseline data	
Faculty teaching linked academic courses	Attendance by learning communities faculty at professional development conferences and/or campus training events	July 2015	Output 3. 25 faculty and staff completed training workshop	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program

Table 7B: Implementation Timeline and Activities, AY2015-16

YEAR	INPUTS	ACTIVITY	DATE	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
AY2015-16: Learning Communities Pilot Project	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Enrollment of first cohort in linked courses learning community	August 2015	Teach 875 students in 25 sections of linked courses in AY2015-16	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Leadership Team	Implementation of new policies and procedures related to student support network	August 2015	New policies and/or procedures in place	PO2: Students will demonstrate awareness of support services
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	December 2015	Data collected on first cohort	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Enrollment of second cohort in linked courses learning community	January 2016	Teach 875 students in 25 sections of linked courses in AY2015-16	SLO 1-6

Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Professional Development and training for faculty and staff directly related to implementation	Ongoing	50 faculty and staff completed training workshops	PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program	
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	May 2016	Data collected on second cohort	SLO 1-6	
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Leadership Team	Assessment of results and implementation of changes as needed	Summer 2016	Outcomes assessed	SLO 1-7, PO 1-6	

Table 7C: Implementation Timeline and Activities, AY2016-17

YEAR	INPUTS	ACTIVITY	DATE	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
AY2016-17: Learning Communities Pilot Project	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Enrollment of third cohort in linked courses learning community	August 2016	Teach 1,750 students in 50 sections of linked courses in AY2016-17	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Implementation Team	Based on prior year results, modify design or roll out to broader audience -- increase sections for FTIC students with undeclared majors	August 2016	Teach 1,750 students in 50 sections of linked courses in AY2016-17	SLO 1-6
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	December 2016	Data collected on third cohort	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses	Enrollment of fourth cohort in linked courses learning community	January 2017	Teach 1,750 students in 50 sections of linked courses in AY2016-17	SLO 1-6



Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100					
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Professional Development and training for faculty and staff directly related to implementation	Ongoing	50 faculty and staff completed training workshops		PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	May 2017	Data collected on fourth cohort	SLO 1-6	
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Leadership Team	Assessment of results and implementation of changes as needed	Summer 2017	Outcomes assessed	SLO 1-7, PO 1-6	

Table 7D: Implementation Timeline and Activities, AY2017-18

YEAR	INPUTS	ACTIVITY	DATE	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
AY2017-18: Learning Communities Pilot Project	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Enrollment of fifth cohort in linked courses learning community	August 2017	Teach 3,325 students in 95 sections of linked courses in AY2017-18	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Implementation Team	Based on prior year results, modify design or roll out to broader audience -- increase sections for FTIC students with undeclared majors	August 2017	Teach 3,325 students in 95 sections of linked courses in AY2017-18	SLO 1-6
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	December 2017	Data collected on fifth cohort	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses	Enrollment of sixth cohort in linked courses learning community	January 2018	Teach 3,325 students in 95 sections of linked courses in AY2017-18	SLO 1-6

Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100					
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Professional Development and training for faculty and staff directly related to implementation	Ongoing	50 faculty and staff completed training workshops		PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data for learning communities cohorts and control groups	May 2018	Data collected on sixth cohort	SLO 1-6	
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Leadership Team	Assessment of results and implementation of changes as needed	Summer 2018	Outcomes assessed	SLO 1-7, PO 1-6	

Table 7E: Implementation Timeline and Activities, AY2018-19

YEAR	INPUTS	ACTIVITY	DATE	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
AY2018-19: Learning Communities Pilot Project	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Enrollment of seventh cohort in linked courses learning community	August 2018	Teach 5,075 students in 145 sections of linked courses in AY2018-19	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Implementation Team	Based on prior year results, modify design or roll out to broader audience -- increase sections for FTIC students with undeclared majors	August 2018	Teach 5,075 students in 145 sections of linked courses in AY2018-19	SLO 1-6
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses				
	Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data learning communities cohorts and control groups	December 2018	Data collected on seventh cohort	SLO 1-6
	Support staff overseeing advising, etc.				
	Faculty teaching linked academic courses	Enrollment of eighth cohort in linked courses learning community	January 2019	Teach 5,075 students in 145 sections of linked courses in AY2018-19	SLO 1-6

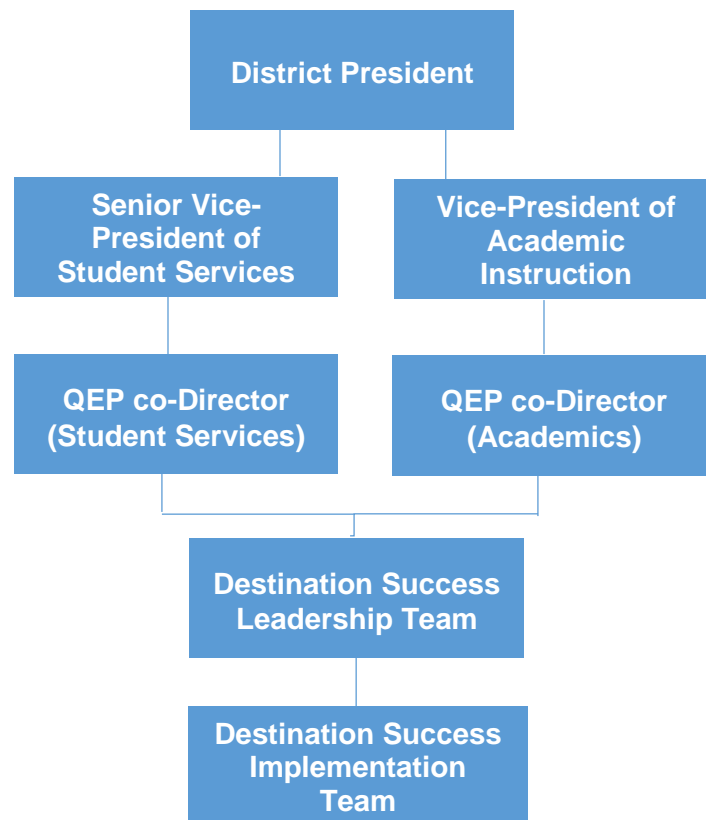
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100					
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Professional Development and training for faculty and staff directly related to implementation	Ongoing	50 faculty and staff completed training workshops		PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Faculty teaching linked academic courses					
Faculty and Staff teaching EDUC 0100	Collection of data learning communities cohorts and control groups	May 2019	Data collected on eighth cohort	SLO 1-6	
Support staff overseeing advising, etc.					
Leadership Team	Assessment of results and implementation of changes as needed	Summer 2019	Outcomes assessed	SLO 1-7, PO 1-6	



## PART VIII: Organizational Structure

As a part of the College's Success Network, Blinn College will create a **Destination Success Team** with a Leadership Team and an Implementation Team. The Leadership Team will consist of the QEP Co-Directors, the Director of Professional Development, one faculty member, one student services staff member, and a QEP assessment member from the IEEM office. The faculty member will receive a 20 percent course-load reduction (or a \$2200 stipend) each fall and spring semester he or she serves on the team. The staff member will have 20 percent of their duties designated to the QEP, much of which will be overseeing the faculty and staff mentoring program. The duties of the QEP Assessment member will include coordinating assessment related to the QEP and assisting faculty and staff with reporting QEP data. By creating the **Destination Success Team**, the College is ensuring longevity of the program and consistency within the program in case of turnover at the institution. One of the lessons learned from the College's first QEP was the challenge of maintaining consistency in implementation and reporting due to turnover in key positions. The College learned from the first QEP that turnover with positions directly working with the QEP causes problems with data reporting, understanding of the QEP, consistency among faculty and staff, and preparation of needed reports.

**Figure 15: Organizational Structure of the Destination Success Team**



The Destination Success Implementation Team will consist of faculty and staff representing all areas of the college specific to learning communities and student success. They will create the QEP structure during Year One in preparation for the pilot in Year Two. Subcommittees will be created within the QEP Implementation Team to assist with specific responsibilities: linked academic courses, EDUC 0100: Journey to Success, student support structure, professional development, assessment, and communications and marketing. Once the five year implementation plan is complete, the Implementation Team will become the Advisory Team.





## PART IX: Resources

The College is committed to student success as defined in its mission statement and strategic priorities. Part of the commitment to student success through the QEP is represented by the financial resources dedicated to the success of the program. Table 8 outlines the five-year QEP budget and allocates funding based on components of the program. This QEP is a labor-driven program relying on faculty and staff to train and work together to create linked courses and train to teach the EDUC 0100 course.

The QEP will be led by two Co-directors: one being from the Academic division and the other being from Student Services. The Academic Co-director will receive release time and stipend and the Dean of Student Success (Student Services) will devote 30 percent of the duty time to the QEP. Both will work together to lead the Leadership and Implementation Teams to set up the structure during year one and continue to direct the program throughout the remaining four years.

During year one, the Leadership and Implementation Teams will work to develop the structure to prepare for the pilot program in year two, including coordinating recruitment of faculty, assisting with development of learning community training modules, reviewing syllabi for linked courses, and participating in professional development opportunities related to learning communities. Once the linked course cohorts are developed for the pilot, the budget allocates pay for the instructors teaching the EDUC 0100 course as they begin teaching in year two. To help lead the efforts and provide quality feedback from the academic division, a faculty member will be selected to serve on the QEP Leadership Team and given a one course release (or equivalent stipend) to assist in completing those tasks.

Because of the labor-driven program, the College is allocating funding each year to provide professional development opportunities to its faculty. During year one, faculty and staff will have opportunities to travel for training in learning communities and training on curriculum for the EDUC 0100 course. Through the efforts the first year, a number of faculty and staff will be trained to be the trainer for internal professional development opportunities. The College also supports bringing speakers to campus each year to address faculty and staff about learning communities and student success.

Each semester, the QEP Leadership and Implementation Teams will develop an event for students enrolled in learning community cohorts. The College anticipates the cost to be providing a speaker for the event and refreshments for the students.

Finally, the College is committed to communicating the program to the faculty and staff, students, and external constituencies. A five year marketing and communication plan has been developed to ensure all constituents are aware of the program and what it means for student success at Blinn College.



**Table 8: Destination Success: First Year Focus Five-Year Budget**

<b>Items</b>	<b>AY2014-15</b>	<b>AY2015-16</b>	<b>AY2016-17</b>	<b>AY2017-18</b>	<b>AY2018-19</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
QEP Co-Director Salaries	\$56,934.00	\$56,934.00	\$56,934.00	\$56,934.00	\$56,934.00	\$284,670.00
Summer Compensation	\$9,816.00	\$9,816.00	\$9,816.00	\$9,816.00	\$9,816.00	\$49,080.00
Instructor pay for EDUC 0100	\$0.00	\$18,325.00	\$36,650.00	\$69,635.00	\$106,295.00	\$230,905.00
Course releases	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$22,000.00
Conference attendance and Training	\$34,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$78,000.00
Refreshments and outside speaker for student events 1/semester	\$180.00	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$50,180.00
Intercampus travel	\$720.00	\$720.00	\$720.00	\$720.00	\$720.00	\$3,600.00
Marketing	\$9,015.00	\$10,425.00	\$12,832.00	\$13,520.00	\$8,800.00	\$54,592.00
Telephone	\$240.00	\$240.00	\$240.00	\$240.00	\$240.00	\$1,200.00
Speakers honoraria & expenses	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$20,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$115,305.00</b>	<b>\$118,860.00</b>	<b>\$146,592.00</b>	<b>\$187,265.00</b>	<b>\$226,205.00</b>	<b>\$794,227.00</b>



## PART X: ASSESSMENT

“...the single most important thing one can do to successfully assess a program is to know what the program is meant to accomplish” (Brower and Inkelas, 2007:1).

### Overview of Assessment Plan

To provide focus to the assessment development, a QEP goal was established and refined throughout the development process:

The goal of **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** at Blinn College is to enhance the learning experiences of first-time-in-college students and help them establish and achieve their educational goals.

As previously mentioned, the College’s mission statement states that “Blinn College is a comprehensive community college committed to educational excellence and to individual and community enhancement.” By developing learning communities for students, the College is committed to the enhancement of learning experiences and educational excellence for the students. The College is dedicated to improving the student experience with support services, enhancing academic skills through the EDUC 0100: Journey to Success course, and fostering responsibility and teamwork among participants in the learning community. Therefore, the end result of the QEP is to have a positive impact on student learning at our institution defined by students’ ability demonstrate the core skills of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, personal responsibility, social responsibility, and teamwork, and their ability to establish and achieve their educational goals. The learning communities program will provide the College a new opportunity to achieve these goals

The QEP Development Team engaged in a number of brainstorming sessions with faculty and staff to design an assessment plan that incorporates a number of measures of success. Part of the brainstorming process was asking simple questions to assist the team in identifying the learning objectives. For example:

1. What does the College hope students are able to achieve after participating in the learning communities program?
2. What does the College want faculty and staff to achieve as a result of participating in learning communities?
3. Overall, how does the College want to change or grow as a result of the learning communities program?

The results of the sessions indicated faculty and staff want students to identify their career goals, understand and utilize the support services provided for them at the College, enhance their level of personal responsibility, and be able to understand the relevance of their coursework. The EDUC 0100 course could aid students in achieving a number of these outcomes and can also provide another level of assessment for measuring the success of the QEP by measuring success in the course. Finally, the

team identified the need for the program outcomes for the College in an effort to make sure the QEP took the intended holistic approach but also included faculty and staff in the process. The team believed that measuring success of the program included faculty and staff learning communities' training, utilization of an electronic gradebook, and student knowledge of resources and persistence, for example.

Therefore, the objective of the assessment plan is to measure success for FTIC students, helping these students establish and achieve their educational goals, and for the College in order to achieve their overall goal to enhance the learning experiences of FTIC students. The assessment team developed three approaches to the assessment plan to measure success in achieving the QEP goal:

1. QEP Student Learning Outcomes
2. EDUC 0100 Student Learning Outcomes
3. QEP Program Outcomes

The assessment plan has clearly defined outcomes and involves criteria for success in order to monitor progress and achieve the goal of **Destination Success: First-Year Focus**. An important piece to any analysis is to have control and intervention groups to allow data comparison to determine whether success is being achieved and the outcomes are being met. FTIC students (with undeclared majors during the pilot year) will be randomly placed into either the intervention group (learning community cohort) or the control group (same courses, but not learning community cohorts).

Assessment of the program includes the three approaches explained in the following sections. In addition, it is important for the College to review the progress of the plan itself. At the end of each academic year after data are collected for the QEP SLOs, EDUC SLOs and QEP program outcomes, the QEP Leadership Team will review the results and implement changes as needed to make modifications to the rollout of the plan in the next year.

### **Measuring Success: QEP Student Learning Outcomes**

For the purpose of measuring success in the learning communities program for the student, seven learning outcomes were developed:

- SLO 1: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills
- SLO 2: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills
- SLO 3: Students will demonstrate quantitative reasoning skills
- SLO 4: Students will demonstrate personal responsibility
- SLO 5: Students will demonstrate social responsibility
- SLO 6: Students will demonstrate teamwork skills
- SLO 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to develop and education pathway to achieve a focused exit goal

For all student learning outcomes, data will be collected for those students participating in the learning community (intervention group) and compared to students not participating in learning communities (control group). A subcommittee of the implementation team will share the responsibility of data collection and review with the QEP Leadership Team. The means of assessment and criteria for success are outlined in the table below.

<b>TABLE 9: QEP Student Learning Outcomes Assessment</b>		
<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Means of Assessment</b>	<b>Criteria for Success</b>
SLO 1: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills	Rubric score on common assignment in ENGL 1301	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
	Rubric score on common assignment in HIST 1301	
	Rubric score on common assignment in BIOL 1406	
	Rubric score on common assignment in MATH 1324	
SLO 2: Students will demonstrate effective communication skills	Rubric score on common assignment in ENGL 1301	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
	Rubric score on common assignment in HIST 1301	
	Rubric score on common assignment in BIOL 1406	
	Rubric score on common assignment in MATH 1324	
SLO 3: Students will demonstrate quantitative reasoning skills	Rubric score on common assignment in BIOL 1406	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
	Rubric score on common assignment in MATH 1324	
SLO 4: Students will demonstrate personal responsibility	Rubric score on common assignment in ENGL 1301	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
	Rubric score on common assignment in HIST 1301	
	Rubric score on common assignment in EDUC 1100	

SLO 5: Students will demonstrate social responsibility	Rubric score on common assignment in HIST 1301	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
SLO 6: Students will demonstrate teamwork skills	Rubric score on common assignment in ENGL 1301	At least 70% of students will attain a score of “acceptable” on the rubric; Students in the learning communities cohort will out-perform those in traditional classes
	Rubric score on common assignment in BIOL 1406	
SLO 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to develop an educational pathway to achieve a focused exit goal	Student completion of a degree plan	70% of students who begin as undeclared will have a degree plan on file prior to the end of their first year
	Student persistence to second year	60% of students in the learning communities cohort will persist to the second fall term
	Student persistence with chosen major	70% of students who declared a major in first year will retain that major in their second year
	Student transfer rate	60% of students in QEP cohort will transfer to a four-year institution within three years
	Student graduation rate	25% of students in QEP cohort will receive a degree or certificate within three years

Note: Rubrics will be developed during the first year of implementation to score QEP and core curriculum assessment.

As explained previously, the College adopts the following definitions to clarify the expectations of student learning as explained in Table 10:

- Critical Thinking: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- Personal Responsibility - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

- Social Responsibility - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- Teamwork - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

These outcomes will be made more concrete and specific following the development of the scoring rubrics in fall 2014.

### Measuring Success: EDUC 0100: Journey to Success Outcomes

To determine whether the EDUC 0100: Journey to Success course positively affects the participating students' academic success, data will be collected and analyzed for the QEP Learning Outcomes, course student learning outcomes (SLOs), and QEP program outcomes. The team recognized that success in one course is not an indicator of overall success in college. However, the EDUC 0100 course is designed to provide students with the resources they need to enhance their learning experiences, inform them of the support services available to them, and help them achieve their educational goals. Data will be collected to measure each SLO and reviewed by the course instructor and a subcommittee of the implementation team.

**TABLE 10: EDUC 0100 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

Student Learning Outcome	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success
SLO 1: Demonstrate an understanding of characteristics of successful learners, factors that impact learning, and study and learning skills	Rubric score Personal Responsibility Essay	At least 70% of students will successfully identify challenge and success strategy to overcome obstacle
	Learning Styles Activity: On Course Assessment, VARK, Career Inventory, etc.	At least 70% of FTIC students will identify their personal learning styles, related study strategies, and career interest
SLO 2: Identify academic, career and/or personal support resources to foster student success	Passport to Success: One component of assignment requires utilization of various campus resources/activities	1. At least 70% of students will attend prescribed workshops and attain an "acceptable" score on common writing assignment
		2. At least 70% of students will utilize support services and successfully complete student services quiz
SLO 3: Develop and Use an Academic Action Plan	Passport to Success: One component of assignment requires two visits to advisor during semester	At least 70% of students will successfully complete a degree plan

Note: Rubrics will be developed during the first year of implementation to score EDUC 0100 assessment.

## Measuring Success: Program Outcomes

While the goal of the QEP is to help students achieve success, a number of factors contribute to the overall success of a program outside of the student learning outcomes. Faculty, staff, and administrative support and buy-in are critical to the ongoing success of any educational program. Further, student success in their linked courses cohort and achievement of education milestones are important to the overall success of the QEP. In the beginning stages of the QEP Development Team, the focus was on developing a QEP that would become part of what Blinn College does to help students achieve success. The team will ensure that this program will be a sustainable effort. Therefore, the team developed a number of program outcomes to ensure the lasting effect of the program.

To have a successful program, faculty and staff need an understanding of the learning communities. Learning communities training modules will be created along with on-campus seminars, workshops, and professional development conferences centered on learning communities and first-year experience courses like EDUC 0100. Data collected will include attendance among faculty and staff at these workshops to determine how much participation the College generates. To successfully upscale the program, the College needs the appropriate number of faculty teaching the academic courses and the appropriate number of staff understanding the student support program. Further, faculty and staff are needed to teach the EDUC 0100 course, so data will be collected on the percentage completing the training in order to be credentialed to teach the course.

Since the goal of the QEP is to increase student success, program outcomes were developed to measure success in linked courses, student awareness of support services available to them, and student achievement of credit hours during their first year in college. Data revealed students concern about timely feedback from faculty, so outcome 5 was developed to ensure faculty are trained and use D2L to record student grades. Student survey data (conducted each long semester) will be reviewed to determine if this remains a concern for students.

Finally, a QEP survey will be administered at the end of each academic year to gather feedback about the general satisfaction with the learning communities program among faculty and staff. All these data will be collected and reviewed by member of the Implementation Leadership Teams to ensure ongoing success of **Destination Success: First-Year Focus**.

TABLE 11: QEP Program Outcomes		
Program Outcome	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success
PO1: Students will be engaged in the linked courses	Course success rate in linked classes	75% of students in QEP cohort will earn a grade of C or better in their linked classes

PO2: Students will demonstrate awareness of support services	Student utilization of support services (e.g., tutoring, library services, academic advising, career and personal counseling)	Students in the QEP cohort will utilize support services at a greater rate than the control group
PO3: Students will achieve educational milestones	Student attainment of 15 credit hours in first year Student attainment of 30 credit hours in first year	Students in the QEP cohort will reach milestones at a greater rate than the control group
PO4: Faculty and staff will be trained in learning communities	Percentage of faculty completing training module	30% of faculty will complete the training module in year one, 50% in year two, 70% in year three, 90% in year four, and 100% in year five
	Percentage of staff completing training module	30% of faculty will complete the training module in year one, 50% in year two, 70% in year three, 90% in year four, and 100% in year five
	Number of faculty and staff attending conferences related to learning communities or first year experience	10 faculty/staff will attend relevant conferences in year one, 15 in year two, 20 in year three, 30 in year four, and 40 in year five
PO5: Students will receive timely feedback on their progress in classes	Percentage of sections of linked classes using electronic gradebook	100% of sections of linked courses will use electronic gradebook by Fall 2015
	Percentage of all sections using electronic gradebook	100% of sections will use electronic gradebook by Fall 2015
PO6: Faculty and staff will be involved in and satisfied with the learning communities program	Percentage of faculty and staff rating themselves "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on survey related to learning communities program	75% of survey respondents will indicate they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with learning communities program
	Percentage of faculty and staff rating themselves familiar with the learning communities program on survey	30% of survey respondents will indicate they are familiar with the learning communities program in year one; 50% in year two; 70% in year three; 80% in year four; 90% in year five

## Concluding remarks

Blinn College's mission, vision, and strategic plan reveal its dedication to student success in the first year achieved through the students' experience in learning communities. The goal of **Destination Success: First-Year Focus** is to enhance the



learning experiences of FTIC students and help them establish and achieve their educational goals. It is the hope that student involvement in the learning community will aid them in their journey to reach their destination: Success.





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## Appendix A: QEP Planning Team

QEP Planning Team		
MEMBER	TITLE	DEPARTMENT
Joe Baumann	Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management (IEEM)	IEEM
Dennis Crowson	Senior Vice President, Student Services	Student Services
Mordecai Brownlee	Dean of Student Life	Student Services
John Beaver	Dean of Academic Affairs <sup>9</sup>	Academic Affairs
Tony Adam	Director of Institutional Assessment	IEEM
David Sommer	Member of Blinn College Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees



<sup>9</sup> Dr. Beaver's title changed due to Blinn College's Implementation of a revised organizational structure.

## Appendix B: QEP Development Team

QEP Development Team		
MEMBER	TITLE	DEPARTMENT
Kathy Anzivino, Co-Director	Dean of Student Success	Student Services
Mary Barnes-Tilley, Co-Director	Social Science Division Chair/Government Professor	Instruction
Tony Adam	Director, Institutional Assessment	IEEM
Mack Bean	Professor, History	Instruction
Kris Beckendorf	Director, Budgets and Insurance	Administration and Finance
Roxanne Brown	Professor, Biology	Instruction
Richard Bray	Associate Director, Marketing and Communications	Public Affairs
Mordecai Brownlee	Dean of Student Life	Student Services
Andra Buxkemper	Professor, Mathematics	Instruction
Daniel Byars	Assistant Director, Housing	Student Services
Samuel Chen	Professor, Mathematics	Mathematics
Essie Childers	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Sandra Chumchal	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Patrick Cole	Director, Learning Center	Instruction
Carrie Coston	Professor, History	Instruction
Ken Dupre	Director, Workforce Education	Instruction
Linda Flynn	Dean Library Services	Instruction
Harley Hausmann	Professor, History	Instruction
Rachel Landolt	Academic Advisor	Student Services
Joyce Langenegger	Professor, Government	Government
Janice Lapaglia	Director, Library	Instruction
Miranda Livingston	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Bob Lovelidge	Director, Academic Advising	Student Services
Diane Lovell	Dean of Social Sciences	Instruction
Michelle McGehee	Professor, Biology	Instruction
Jayson Naiser	Manager, TEAM Program	Student Services
Deborah Noe	Grant and Resource Developer	Instruction
John Purcell	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Kristi Reddoch	Graduation Coordinator	Student Services
Samuel Poffenberger	Student	Brenham
Ross Schroeder	Director, Purchasing/Transportation	Administration and Finance
Sajida Shaikh	Director, Learning Center	Instruction
Kristen Stoley	Professor, Mathematics	Instruction
Tina Till	Student	Bryan
Pat Westergaard	Dean of Humanities	Instruction
Audrey Wick	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Amy Winningham	Professor, Humanities	Instruction
Connie Youngblood	Professor, Humanities	Instruction

## Appendix C: QEP Co-Directors' Biography

### **Mary Barnes-Tilley, Ph.D.**

As Assistant Academic Dean for Social Science, Barnes-Tilley supervises department heads, faculty and students in eight academic programs. Barnes-Tilley previously served in a similar role at the College as Social Sciences Division Chair for eleven years. She has nineteen years' experience in higher education and eleven years in an administrative role. Her experience includes classroom instruction in both Government and Study Strategies, academic advising, curriculum development, student activities, assessment and program review, service learning, strategic planning and distance learning. In 2003-2005, Barnes-Tilley served on the STAR Committee (Students Take Active Roles) and assisted in preparing the College's Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan identified 17 high-risk courses with lower student success rates than reported in other courses and focused on course-based faculty teams developing field-based student learning outcomes, enhanced academic support, and course-based assessments within high-risk core curriculum courses in an effort to increase student engagement to improve student success. Barnes-Tilley earned her associate's degree in general studies from Blinn College, bachelor's degree in government from The University of Texas at Austin, master's degree in political science from Sam Houston State University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Texas A&M University.

### **Jeremy Thomas**

As Dean of Student Success, Thomas supervises directors and management personnel for student success units, including academic advising and counseling, the Blinn TEAM Program, disability services and the health clinics, and serves as co-director of Blind's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Thomas previously worked at Angelina College, College of the Mainland, and Northwestern State University. He has fifteen years of various higher education experience including: academic advising, admissions, enrollment services, grant funded programs, student activities, partnership programs with other institutions, and recruiting. While working at Northwestern State University, Thomas coordinated the EXCEL program for underprepared students. In this program, students with multiple developmental courses were placed in learning communities that required students to take pre-determined paired courses. In 2002 the program was recognized by the National Academic Advising Association with the Outstanding Advising Program – Certificate of Merit. Thomas earned his bachelor's degree and Master of Education in Educational Technology from Northwestern State University. He holds a graduate certificate in academic advising from Kansas State University and is currently completing his dissertation for a Doctor of Education in Developmental Education with a concentration in student development from Grambling State University.



## Appendix D: Sample Syllabus for Linked Course ENGL 1301

### ENGL 1301: Composition I

#### MEETING TIMES

TR 9:10-10:25

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Amy Winningham

Office: Academic Building, Office 4 (Brenham campus)

Phone: 979-830-4445

Email: [amy.winningham@blinn.edu](mailto:amy.winningham@blinn.edu)

#### DESCRIPTION

This writing-intensive first semester freshman composition course includes (1) study of and practice in all phases of the writing process, both individually and collaboratively, and (2) study of and practice in the strategies and techniques for developing research-based expository and persuasive texts. Emphasis on effective and ethical rhetorical inquiry, including primary and secondary research methods; critical reading of verbal, visual, and multimedia texts; systematic evaluation, synthesis, and documentation of information sources; and critical thinking about evidence and conclusions. Essays, including a 1500-word documented library research-based paper, are required. Credit: Three semester hours.

#### Requisites

For writing: ENGL 0321 with a “C” or better, or ESOL 0336 with a “C” or better, or DIRW 0326 with a “C” or better, or ENGL 0121 (NCBO) with a grade of “pass,” or ESOL 0237 (NCBO) with a grade of “pass”; **and** for reading: READ 0306 with a “C” or better, or READ 0307 with a “C” or better, or ESOL 0325 with a “C” or better, or READ 0208 (NCBO) with a grade of “pass,” or ESOL 0226 (NCBO) with a grade of “pass,” or “college ready” placement test score or alternative test score, or with approval of division chair. Three class hours per week. Credit: Three semester hours.

#### CORE CURRICULUM STATEMENT

This is a Core Course in the 42-Hour Core Curriculum of Blinn College. As such, students will develop proficiency in the appropriate Intellectual Competencies, Exemplary Educational Objectives, and Perspectives.

#### OUTCOMES

Students who succeed in this course will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative research and writing processes.



2. Develop ideas and synthesize primary and secondary sources within focused academic arguments, including one or more research-based essays.
3. Analyze, interpret, evaluate, and respond to the ethical and logical uses of evidence in a variety of texts.
4. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose, credibly and persuasively.
5. Use edited American English in academic essays.
6. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution, applying the conventions of style manuals for specific academic disciplines (APA, CMS, and MLA, et al).

## MATERIALS

Greene, Stuart and April Lidinsky. *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and Reader*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Print.

Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer with Exercises*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013. Print.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in this course will complete the following assignments:

**Essays:** three essays, each 500-words minimum, a research paper proposal, and an annotated bibliography associated with the research paper

Essay 1 will be an analysis of *Finding Your Roots*. Specific details for this assignment will appear on the separate handout.

Essay 2 will be an analysis of several letters written by John and Abigail Adams. Specific details for this assignment will appear on the separate handout.

Essay 3 will be an analysis of "Dying of Breast Cancer" by Robert Shadle and James S. Olson. Specific details for this assignment will appear on the separate handout.

Essay 4 will be a research paper proposal. Specific details for this assignment will appear on the separate handout.

Essay 5 will be an annotated bibliography associated with the research paper. Specific details for this assignment will appear on the separate handout.

**Research paper:** the research paper is a shared assignment with the co-enrolled HIST 1301 course. For the research paper, students will select their own argument focused on the nature of history and historical writing. Each student must conference with both the ENGL and the HIST instructors before a topic will be decided. **Two mandatory conferences required.** Permission to write about a specific topic must be agreed upon by both instructors and the student.

**Exam:** comprehensive final exam

**Daily work:** class participation, oral presentations and quizzes as assigned

## EVALUATION

### Criteria:

Type	Weight	Notes
Essays	40%	Minimum of two 750-word or three 500-word essays (percentage to be determined by individual instructor).
Daily Work	25%	Includes but is not limited to class participation, oral presentations, and quizzes. Ten percent is a minimum weight
Research Paper	20%	Students will write a 1500-2000 word argument paper based on documented primary and secondary research
Final Exam	15%	Comprehensive Final Exam (including Course Inventory, the weight of which is determined by individual instructor, at least 10%)

Note: All writing for this course must be original to this class this semester. Each student will produce a minimum of 4000 graded words for the course. All manuscript drafts must adhere to the Modern Language Association's formatting and documentation guidelines. Refer to page 502 in *The Everyday Writer* for more information regarding MLA document format. As an activity that engages and develops the burgeoning writer, peer-editing will occur from time to time and at various stages of development; students should expect to share their work with fellow classmates.

### Grading System:

A 90-100% Excellent

B 80-89% Good

C 70-79% Average

D 60-69% Poor

F Below 60% Failure

I Incomplete

Q Dropped

QF Dropped Failing

W Dropped For Good Cause or Withdrew from College

## BLINN COLLEGE POLICIES

*All Policies will be included in the final syllabus*

## COURSE POLICIES

*To be determined by instructor*

## SCHEDULE

*EW = The Everyday Writer with Exercises*

*FITAW = From Inquiry to Academic Writing*

Unit 1:

August 28: first day of class

September 2-4: the writing process, Chapter 1 and additional readings from *FITAW*, Essay 1, MLA format for an essay, and “Identify an argument’s basic appeals” on pages 145-150 in *EW*.

September 9-11: readings from *FITAW*, ethical, logical, and emotional appeals (14d-14g) on pages 165-174 in *EW*, developing a thesis, developing paragraphs, and audience.

September 16: **Rough draft of Essay 1 due.** Peer response workshop for the rough draft.

September 18: **Essay 1 due**

Unit 2:

September 23-25: research paper assignment (this will be presented early in the semester so students have a good amount of time to establish a topic, conference with both instructors, research, etc.), Chapter 2 and additional readings from *FITAW*, Essay 2, reading critically, how to annotate a text, and fallacies on pages 151-155 in *EW*.

September 30-October 2: analyzing arguments, fallacies, Chapter 7 in *FITAW* (pay careful attention to the information about summary, paraphrase, and quotation), plagiarism, and MLA format for in-text and end-of-text citations.

October 7: **Rough draft of Essay 2 due.** Peer response workshop for the rough draft.

October 9: **Essay 2 due**

Unit 3:

October 14-16: research paper, research paper proposal, and annotated bibliography assignments. Library Week—students are to meet in the library this week for a research demonstration. **Note: Students must conference with both instructors at scheduled times. This is the first of the two mandatory conferences.**

October 16: **Research paper proposal due**

October 21-23: Chapter 15 (pages 187-192) in *EW*, Chapter 6 in *FITAW*, reading and evaluating sources, ethos, pathos, logos, and Essay 3.

October 28: **Rough draft of Essay 3 due.** Peer response workshop for the rough draft.

October 30: **Essay 3 due.**

Unit 4:

November 4-6: Library Week—students are to meet in the library this week to conduct research. **Note: Students must conference with both instructors at scheduled times. This is the second of the two mandatory conferences.**

November 11: evaluating sources, citing sources, and workshop for the annotated bibliography assignment.

November 13: **Annotated bibliography due**

November 18-20: research paper development, constructing an argument, and readings from *FITAW* and *EW*.

November 25: **Rough draft 1 of research paper due.** Peer response workshop for the rough draft.

December 2: **Rough draft 2 (a fine-tuned version of the first rough draft you brought to class) of research paper due.** Peer response workshop for the rough draft.

December 4: **Research paper due**

December 9: discuss final exam essay

## Appendix E: Sample Syllabus for Linked Course HIST 1301

### HIST 1301: United States History I

#### MEETING TIMES:

TR 10:35-11:50

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Carrie Coston

Email: [carrie.coston@blinn.edu](mailto:carrie.coston@blinn.edu)

Office: Old Main 410

Phone: 979-830-4074

#### DESCRIPTION

A survey of United States history that begins with the migrations of people to the western hemisphere and continues through the Civil War and Reconstruction period. The course focuses on the periods of discovery, colonization, revolution, and nation building. Material presented covers a wide variety of topics encompassing social, cultural, intellectual, military and political history.

##### Requisites

Student must be college reading ready according to Texas Success Initiatives Standards. Please see the Catalog section under Texas Success Initiative.

#### CORE CURRICULUM STATEMENT

This is a Core Course in the 42-Hour Core Curriculum of Blinn College. As such, students will develop proficiency in the appropriate Intellectual Competencies, Exemplary Educational Objectives, and Perspectives.

#### OUTCOMES

Create an argument through the use of historical evidence.

Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources.

Analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural and global forces on this period of United States history.

#### MATERIALS

*America's History*, 7th edition, Vol. 1 by Henretta, Edwards, and Self. Bedford/St. Martin's.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Exams:** Exams will test information covered in the textbook, on quizzes and in assignments per unit.

**Final Exam:** The final exam is comprehensive.

**Chapter Quizzes:** Quizzes are textbook-based.

**Participation:** The participation grade includes graded assignments (not including quizzes) and attendance.

**Research Paper:** The research paper is a shared assignment with the co-enrolled ENGL 1301 course. Students will select their own argument focused on the nature of history and historical writing. Each student must conference with both the ENGL and the HIST instructors before a topic is selected. Two mandatory conferences are required. Permission to write about a specific topic must be agreed upon by both instructors and the student.

## **EVALUATION**

Course objectives will be assessed by evaluating the student's knowledge and understanding of course material. This information will be obtained from student performance on a minimum of four major grades, including three major exams, a comprehensive final (worth 10-30% of the course grade), written or other assignments, and quizzes. As per Blinn College policy, participation in class will amount to at least 10% of the student's final grade. An average of at least 60% on all means of assessment is required for successful completion of the course.

### **Criteria:**

Exams 1 and 2: 25%  
Final exam: 15%  
Chapter quizzes: 15%  
Participation: 25%  
Research paper: 20%

## **BLINN COLLEGE POLICIES**

*All Policies will be included in the final syllabus*

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*To be determined by instructor*

## **SCHEDULE**

### **UNIT 1: CHAPTERS 1-4**

**August 28, 2014:** 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Class

**September 2-4, 2014:**

Pre-Columbian America, Chapter 1

Europe and the Invasion and Settlement of America 1200-1700 CE, Chps 1 and 2

**September 9-11, 2014:**

The English in America and the Southern Colonies, Chps 1-3

Indentured Servitude and Slavery in the English Colonies, Chps 1-3

*Finding Your Roots assignment due.*

**September 16-18, 2014:**

The Settlement of New England and the Middle Colonies, Chps 2-4

**September 23-25, 2014:**

The British Imperial System and Economy, Chap 3

Research paper: Introduction of research paper, including general topic area, technical requirements and mandatory conferences with both HIST and ENGL instructors.

Religious, Intellectual and Political Transformation, Chps 3 and 4

Wars of Empire and Colonial Revolt, Chp 4

**September 29 @ 9PM: Exam 1 (Chapters 1-4) due**

**UNIT II: CHAPTERS 5-9 and 11 (assigned pgs. only)**

**September 30 – October 2, 2014:**

Toward American Independence, 1763-1776, Chp 5

*Declaration of Independence assignment due*

**October 7-9, 2014:**

Making War and Republican Governments, Chp 6

Selected readings from *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams*

*My Dearest Friend* assignment due.

**October 14-16, 2014:**

The New Republic, Chp 7

**Research paper:** 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 mandatory conferences with HIST and ENGL instructors

**October 21-23, 2014:**

Creating a Capitalist Commonwealth, Chps 8 and 9

Creating a Democratic Republican Culture and the Rise of the Middle Class, Chps 8, 9, 11

**October 27, 2014 @ 9PM: Exam 2 (Chapters 5-9 and 11 [assigned pgs. only]) due**

**UNIT III: CHAPTERS 10-11 (assigned pages only), 12-15**

**October 28-30, 2014:**

The Southern Slave Economy and Abolitionism, Chps 8, 11-12

*Dying of Breast Cancer* assignment due

**November 4-6, 2014:**

A Democratic Revolution, Chp 10

**Research paper:** 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 mandatory conferences with HIST and ENGL instructors

Research proposal due

**November 11-13, 2014:**

Western Expansion, Sectional Crisis and War, Chps 12 and 13

Annotated bibliography for research paper due

**November 18 – December 2, 2014:**

The Civil War, Chp 14

**November 25, 2014:**

Rough draft 1 due

**December 2, 2014:**

Rough draft 2 due

**December 4, 2014:**

Research paper due

**December 4-9, 2014:**

Reconstruction, 1865-1877, Chp 15

*Murders and Outrages* assignment due

**December 11-16, 2014: Final exam (Chapters 1-15) and extra credit due.**

**December 18, 2014: Final grades due to registrar.**

\*The above schedule is tentative and may be altered as necessary during the semester at my discretion. Due notice will be provided to students should any changes occur.





## Appendix F: Sample syllabi for EDUC 0100: Journey to Success\*

### EDUC 0100: Journey to Success

#### Meeting Times:

TR 12:00-12:50

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Mary E. Barnes-Tilley  
Old Main 310 (Brenham campus)  
Office Hours: TR 1:00-2:00 p.m.  
979-830-4210  
mbarnes@blinn.edu

#### DESCRIPTION

A study of the: research and theory in the psychology of learning, cognition, and motivation; factors that impact learning, and application of learning strategies. Theoretical models of strategic learning, cognition, and motivation serve as the conceptual basis for the introduction of college-level student academic strategies. Students use assessment instruments (e.g., learning inventories) to help them identify their own strengths and weaknesses as strategic learners. Students are ultimately expected to integrate and apply the learning skills discussed across their own academic programs and become effective and efficient learners. Students developing these skills should be able to continually draw from the theoretical models they have learned.

#### Requisites

Prerequisites: Students must be “college ready” in reading and writing. (Refer to “Admissions Testing Requirements” in the *Blinn College Catalog*.)

#### OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate an understanding of characteristics of successful learners, factors that impact learning, and study and learning skills
- Identify academic, career and/or personal support resources to foster student success
- Develop and use an Academic Action Plan

#### MATERIALS

Downing, Skip. *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### Major Exams

Two exams (midterm and final exam). The exams will be multiple choice, matching, true/false and short answer. The exams will test your recall and comprehension from the assigned readings, class lectures, and activities (in class and online). It is important to read all of the assignments and do all of the assigned journal reflections to prepare for your exams.

### **Passport to Success**

An important part of being successful at college involves being willing to take responsibility to seek out resources on campus. College systems, policies, and departments are very different from high school. Yet at the same time you are expected to know college-wide deadlines, systems, and where to find the resources. The PASSPORT TO SUCCESS is your opportunity to learn the college rhythm and develop contacts in multiple departments. You will be required to complete activities in 5 categories: Academic Support, Career Support, Academic Enhancement, College Life, and Academic & Life Choices. This activity will assist you in developing the tools needed for reaching your long term academic goals beyond this class. A detailed chart listing guidelines and mandatory activities will be provided.

### **Personal Responsibility Essay**

All students will be required to write a personal essay to critically reflect upon their biggest obstacle that challenged their success in college. The essay must address a specific strategy or strategies engaged to help you overcome this challenge. This will be your Capstone project in which you will want to do your very best. Detailed instructions with guidelines for your essay will be provided.

### **Success Journals**

Your Success Journals provide you with an opportunity to explore your thoughts and feelings as you experiment with the success strategies presented in our text, *On Course*. You will have journal questions to allow you to reflect on the major themes of our course. You will critically analyze your thoughts and feelings related to your skills, behaviors, and attitudes as a college student as well as on the course content. Reflecting on course content is a vital step in the learning process. Detailed instructions on how to submit your journals will be provided.

### **Quizzes/Participation**

Quizzes will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

One of the most important factors of success in any class is consistent and active participation. Come prepared to contribute your ideas and experience. There is a strong correlation between class attendance and college success. Your class involvement enables you to learn more actively and effectively; therefore attendance in class and online is essential.

## **EVALUATION**

Exams	30%	Mid-term and final exam
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Passport to Success	30%	College Resources/Engagement
Essay	20%	Personal Responsibility Essay
Journals	10%	Journal
Quizzes	10%	Participation/quizzes

**Grading Scale:**

A	90-100%	Excellent
B	80-89%	Good
C	70-79%	Average
D	60-69%	Poor
F	Below 60%	Failure
I	Incomplete	
Q	Dropped	
QF	Dropped Failing	
W	Dropped For Good Cause or Withdrew from College	

**BLINN COLLEGE POLICIES**

*All Policies will be included in the final syllabus*

**COURSE POLICIES**

*To be determined by instructor*

**Contract for Academic Success:**

Please e-mail the "Contract for Academic Success," (below) to your instructor from your Blinn e-mail account (no attachments) to complete your enrollment for this class.

**Subject: First and Last Name, EDUC 0100**

**Contract for Academic Success**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am enrolled in EDUC 0100, Section \_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ semester. "I" understand that "I" create the grade. "I" am responsible for exhibiting successful behaviors in class and showing respect to others. "I" understand that in order to achieve success, "I" must be in attendance (in class and online), participate (in class and online), study and make wise choices. "I" also understand that if "I" am having any questions or concerns, "I" must contact the instructor immediately to seek help.

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Homework/Activities</b>
Week 1	Who am I? Who are you? Human Bingo Ice-breaker Course Introduction/Syllabus	On Course Self-Assessment Email course contract to instructor "Me" Collage Buy books and supplies Read Chapter 1

Week 2	D2L Overview Mind Tap Training	Assessments Academic Action Plan Read Chapter 2
Week 3	Chapter 1 Getting on Course Chapter 2 Accepting Personal Responsibility Knowledge Checks (Chps 1 &2) Discuss Assessment Video-Homeless to Harvard	Passport Activity or Journal Read Chapter 3
Week 4	Chapter 3 Discovering Self-Motivation Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal Read Chapter 4
Week 5	Chapter 4 Mastering Self-Management Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal Read Chapter 5
Week 6	Chapter 5 Employing Interdependence Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal Prepare for Mid-Term Exam
Week 7	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
Week 8	<b>Mid-Term Conferences</b>	Mandatory Conference. Sign-up sheet with be available for you to select your time. You will be counted absent if you do not attend. Bring your Academic Action Plan with you. Read Chapter 6
Week 9	Chapter 6 Gaining Self-Awareness Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal Read Chapter 7
Week 10	Chapter 7 Adopting Lifelong Learning Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal Read Chapter 8
Week 11	Chapter 8 Developing Emotional Intelligence Knowledge Check	Passport Activity or Journal
Week 12	Guest Speaker TBD	Read Chapter 9

Taking Tests – Avoiding Test  
Anxiety

Week 13	Chapter 9 Staying On Course To Your Success	Passport Activity or Journal Prepare Spring 2016 schedule
Week 14	Student Presentations <b>Final Exam review</b>	
Week 15	Student Presentations	
Week 16	<b>Final Exam</b>	

This is a tentative schedule. Assignments and their order may be changed at the instructor's discretion and will be announced during class. It is the student's responsibility to know of any changes even if they are absent.

\*The following faculty and staff contributed to the preparation of the EDUC 0100 syllabus: Joe Baumann, Roxanne Brown, Essie Childers, Rachel Landolt, and Mary Barnes-Tilley.

