

## Executive Summary

### **Title: *Learning to Persist: A Quality Enhancement Plan for Chipola College (Marianna, FL)***

Chipola College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Learning to Persist*, was developed to increase student learning and success by (1) implementing Supplemental Instruction (SI) in high-risk courses and (2) developing a required, one-semester-hour First-Year Learning Experience (FYLE) course/seminar. Both components are designed to help students become more engaged and persistent in college.

**Development of the Plan:** *Learning to Persist* resulted from a participatory process led by an eight-member QEP Development Team. QEP development began in January of 2006 and extended through August of 2007. The team studied institutional data, reviewed scholarly literature, and surveyed and interviewed faculty and students. They identified four serious issues to be addressed: (1) a high percentage of under-prepared and at-risk students enroll at Chipola, but the college's "open door" must remain open; (2) too many students fail to complete their programs of study; (3) specific high-risk courses present barriers for many students; and (4) many students will continue to drop or stop out unless the college changes current practices.

Analysis of a variety of data identified the college's focus, which is failure of most of its Associate degree-seeking students to persist until they graduate. In fact, one study showed that 69% of Chipola's most under-prepared students leave the college within the first year and do not return. After much consideration the QEP Development Team defined *student learning* in the context of the QEP as follows: "The change in students' knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, attitudes, and values attributable to SI and FYLE groups." They then narrowed the focus of the QEP to how SI and FYLE could be implemented at Chipola.

**Design of the Plan:** After months of study, Chipola designed a QEP with two new initiatives and the supporting faculty development required for implementation. The purpose of these components is to achieve ambitious goals and objectives, among which are reducing the number of Ds, Fs, and Ws in high-risk courses and increasing fall-to-fall persistence rates. The QEP will be fully implemented in Spring 2009.

- **Component I: Supplemental Instruction (SI)** will be based on the University of Missouri-Kansas City model. SI, a peer-assisted academic support service, will provide help in courses that traditionally have a 30% or higher rate of Ds, Fs, or Ws. The SI Leader, a student who previously earned an A in the course with the same professor, will offer regular study sessions and share specific strategies for completing the course. A pilot study of SI was conducted in two high-risk courses in Spring 2007 and will continue with two additional high-risk courses in Fall 2007.
- **Component II: First Year Learning Experience (FYLE)** will be based on the *OnCourse* model. FYLE will increase student persistence by providing entering Associate degree-seeking students a set of well-defined learning opportunities designed to teach students to persist. The one-semester-hour course, led by FYLE mentors and consisting of 15-20 students, will expand the existing one-semester-hour Orientation (SLS 1101) course. Four FYLE mentors will develop the course during Fall 2007 and conduct the first pilot study in Spring 2008. After assessing the first pilot study, a second will be conducted in Fall 2008 in preparation for full implementation in Spring 2009.
- **Faculty Development** will provide opportunities for novice and seasoned faculty to gain the latest academic and professional knowledge to support the QEP. Summer workshops, guest speakers, and travel to professional meetings will be based on five themes identified by faculty.

Chipola College has the capacity and commitment required to implement the QEP as planned. The college has identified the human and financial resources, facilities, and logistical requirements for a successful QEP. In October 2006 Chipola was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Title III-Strengthening Institutions grant for \$1,750,000 which will cover costs for the first two years of planning and pilot studies and the first three years of implementation. Increases in student fees and FTE funding will provide ample financial resources to continue indefinitely the components of the Title III project and the QEP. Separate projected budgets have also been developed for SI, FYLE, and the overall QEP. Budget plans include how these funds will be generated and expended. Qualified and responsible personnel will implement the QEP.

**Contact: Gail Hartzog, Associate Dean of Development and Planning/ SACS Liaison ([hartzogg@chipola.edu](mailto:hartzogg@chipola.edu))**