The Quality Enhancement of Online Learning at Germanna Community College: Ready, Set Go Online

Institutional Contact:
Yanyan Yong, Ph. D.
Dean of Distance Learning and Academic Services
10000 Germanna Point Drive
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
(540) 891-3084
yyong@germanna.edu

The overall goal of Germanna Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to improve student learning in online courses by increasing student, faculty and institution readiness for such a learning environment. Specifically, Germanna Community College will achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Increase student readiness for online learning
    - Formally assess student readiness for online learning
    - Utilize student development courses to prepare students for online learning
    - Provide remediation opportunity for students not ready for online learning
- Increase faculty and course readiness for online learning
    - Provide quality and consistency in the structure of online course
    - Provide quality and consistency in teaching of online courses
    - Improve assessment of course/instructor effectiveness for online course
- Increase institutional Readiness for Online Learning
    - Enhance student services for online students
    - Enhance learning resources for online students
    - Create more cohesion and collaboration between students and faculty in online courses
    - Make information about online learning and services readily available and accessible

The College has hired and designated the Dean of Distance Learning and Academic Support to direct and oversee this process. The Dean will lead the QEP Implementation Committee in its work of executing the Plan. The committee will articulate annual implementation priorities and make funding recommendations for QEP initiatives. Broadly representative of the subject areas offered via distance learning, the Distance Learning Faculty Advisory Committee will assist with implementation of individual components of the QEP initiatives.

To date, Germanna has implemented an online tutoring program – Smarthinking, and READI assessment (Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator). The College also completed the College Success Skills course (SVD 101) for online students.

We have identified 11 initial actions designed to improve online student and faculty readiness at GermannaThese include:

Action 1: Conduct face-to-face and online student orientations for online students
Action 2: Review and analyze data from READI tests
Action 3: Pilot College Success Skills (SVD 101) course
Action 4: Create certification course for faculty members teaching online
Action 5: Review and modify the current online course assessment
Action 6: Establish online faculty mentoring procedures and process
Action 7: Establish procedures for faculty peer review of online courses
Action 8: Conduct and evaluate workshops /training of related technologies, such as Blackboard, and e-Communication.
Action 9: Redesign the college website to make online learning information identifiable
Action 10: Provide professional development opportunities—new online faculty meet with experienced online faculty, Quality Matters training, "mini e-learning conference"
Action 11: Implement use of SightMax for online counseling and advising

Each action initiative supports the QEP goals and objectives. In assessing and documenting results, evaluation and outcomes assessment processes will be utilized. The QEP Implementation Committee will oversee an annual reflective assessment of the progress. The QEP coordinator will draw up and submit an annual review and plan assessment.

As a community college, it is important to prepare our students with skills and abilities for online programs demanded by the communities. Students will learn and understand their needs in the preparation of taking online courses. The College strives to empower students with opportunities to undertake personal growth as part of their education.