

Title: “GPS (Goals-Planning-Success): Navigate Your Future”
Wallace State Community College – Hanceville
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How and why did we select the QEP topic?

Through ongoing conversations among students, faculty, administration, and staff, several possible topics for improving student learning at Wallace State emerged. Our most significant finding was that students need stronger preparation to succeed in college. Our QEP focuses on four specific areas: technology skills, academic pathways, career planning, and diversity.

What will we do?

The major strategic initiatives of our QEP include a) developing a Freshman Seminar to promote collegiate technology skills, academic pathways, career research, and diversity experiences; and b) capturing these explorations in GPS Portfolios, electronic portfolios that document students' learning experiences and personal growth. Our initiative aligns with WSCC's Mission Statement: "Wallace State Community College is committed to learning that transforms lives and communities."

What are the desired student learning objectives and goals?

We have designed the WSCC QEP to achieve the criteria set forth in Wallace State's 2012-2017 Strategic Plan: Readiness³ - "Ready for College. Ready for Work. Ready for Life." We will address the following aspects within "GPS: Goals, Planning, Success":

Goals: Students will emerge from GPS Seminar with a clear vision of where they want to go and with the technology skills to guide them down their educational and career paths.

Planning: By mapping out their goals and establishing early contact with their advisors, students will develop strong plans of study. They will learn to use Degree Works, an electronic planning tool found within their MyWallaceState accounts, to plan their future coursework with intentionality. Additionally, they will complete their GPS Portfolios, which will document their experiences along the way to their chosen destinations.

Success: When students reach the end of GPS Seminar, they will have explored potential careers, mapped out a plan to achieve their educational goals, and documented their learning through the GPS Portfolio.

The QEP is based upon the following GPS Learning Goals: 1. Students will demonstrate collegiate mastery of the technology associated with multimedia principles and techniques as a foundation for academic achievement and personal reflection; 2. Students will design goal-directed educational plans contextualized for the contemporary college milieu; 3. Students will analyze the interrelationship between career planning and learning through career explorations that reflect adaptive personal and professional opportunity and growth; and 4. Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically and transformationally about themselves and their place in the post-modern social and cultural environment.

In order to assess these outcomes, Wallace State will use a variety of methodologies. The WSCC QEP Advisory Council will oversee the progress of the QEP throughout the entire QEP process.

What impact will the QEP have?

As the first phase of the QEP begins, we will focus upon improving students' technology skills, offering them more structured advising experiences, and promoting learning experiences in which students will have the opportunity to explore career options. Students' GPS Portfolios will serve as significant records of their learning experiences. As the implementation progresses, we anticipate that students will be more prepared to navigate both traditional and online courses, as well as to make more informed decisions regarding their course selections and career pathways.