Executive Summary

QEP TOPICS > Communication Skills & Professionalism

QEP METHOD > Active learning and High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

QEP TITLE > “Communication for Professional Success”

QEP GOALS >
1. Favorable impact on students’ professional readiness/success. (program)
2. Favorable impact on students’ communication skills. (student learning)
3. Favorable impact on the campus learning environment. (implementation)

QEP DEVELOPMENT >
- October 2012 – November 2013: Topic Steering and Selection Teams sought input from stakeholders, developed a rubric to evaluate ideas, collected topic ideas/proposals, and topic proposals, reviewed extant data, and identified the topic.
- December 2013 – February 2014: Topic Development Team created rubrics to assess communication skills and project proposals and developed the written plan based on a comprehensive review of literature, data, and best practices related to communication skills, professional readiness, and HIPs.

QEP FOCUS > To accomplish the mission of UWF by enhancing upper-division students’ communication skills and professional readiness/success through developed, enhanced, or expanded HIPs delivered by faculty and staff mentors inside and outside the classroom.

DESIRED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES > Four broad aspects of communication will be addressed and improved. Embedded within these four aspects are 23 student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- a. Audience
- b. Central message
- c. Content development
- d. Mechanics of language

CONNECTING LEARNING TO PROFESSIONAL READINESS & SUCCESS > The 23 individual SLOs are also mapped to three levels of relative importance for professional success. The parenthetical is interpreted as, “…graduates should be able to demonstrate this skill.”
- a. Foundational (all/nearly all)
- b. Complementary (many/most)
- c. Supporting (the best, or certain disciplines)
QEP STRATEGIES >

1. Develop, expand, or enhance curricular and co-curricular projects that enhance students’ communication skills in a high-impact learning environment.
2. Disseminate a resource toolkit for faculty, staff, and students to be accessible online and contain ideas, materials, tips, and activities for teaching and enhancing communication skills.
3. Facilitate a quality professional development program that provides training for faculty, staff, and students that focuses on HIPs, communication skills, professional readiness, and their subsequent integration, instruction, and evaluation.
4. Establish an infrastructure that fosters effective processes and continuous improvement.

ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED > Over the next five years, the infusion of Communication for Professional Success at UWF will include

a. Credentialing and funding projects submitted by faculty and staff (“QEP-related HIPs”)
b. Developing and maintaining a website that showcases accomplishments and provides access to resources and tools
c. Sponsoring workshops, consultations, and invited speakers for faculty, staff, and students
d. Establishing faculty learning communities for QEP Fellows
e. Deploying relevant marketing to communicate pertinent information, and recognize accomplishments and participation.

Each action is assessed to measure effectiveness and demonstrated improvements.

QEP EVALUATION > Data will be evaluate using direct and indirect measures, and from internal and external sources. Some examples are:

- UWF Communication skills rubric utilized for students' written and verbal work.
- Project proposal rubric that determines credentialing and facilitates funding decisions.
- Surveys, such as the UWF Graduating Student Survey and NSSE
- Focus groups and periodic surveys of campus constituents and employers
- Professional development evaluation forms
- Scales adapted from published research (e.g., communication apprehension/anxiety)
- Metrics of participation in various QEP activities

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE QEP > Communication for Professional Success capitalizes on a number of resources at UWF that include, but are not limited to:

a. Infrastructure (University College, QEP Director, Implementation Team, and QEP Liaisons from each academic college)
b. Academic and student support services (CUTLA, ASPIRE, Career Services, Writing Lab, Writing Studio, University Libraries)
c. Ongoing marketing and communication
d. Advocating for participation to count for tenure, promotion, and annual evaluations
e. Dedicated resources (e.g., financial, time, physical space)

UWF is committed to providing existing and additional support and resources as needed to ensure a successful presence of the QEP.