



## FAQ's ABOUT THE NW-SCC QEP

### What is the purpose of the NW-SCC QEP?

- *The purpose of the Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Strengthening Mathematical Foundations Through Innovative Teaching, is to increase student learning by creating a best practices environment of teaching and by equipping faculty with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage students in active learning.*

### What are the QEP's primary initiatives?

- *Goal 1: To increase student learning in developmental math courses by redesigning courses to include innovative and engaging teaching strategies.*
- *Goal 2: To improve faculty knowledge, skills, and use of innovative pedagogy as learning facilitators by providing additional professional development opportunities.*

### How did NW-SCC come up with the QEP focus?

- *Faculty, students, staff, alumni, and administration were involved with focus groups to discuss their ideas about how learning could be improved at NW-SCC. In addition, Dr. Lee, asked the entire college community for topic ideas to be submitted online. All the ideas were examined and categorized by members of the QEP team. A survey was conducted at the January 2007 in-service to allow the entire college community to vote on which topic was most important to the college. The topic with the most responses was innovative teaching. The QEP planning committee chose the developmental area to pilot innovative pedagogical techniques. As the entire developmental area was too broad for the QEP, the team chose to focus on improving learning in developmental math through innovative teaching.*

### Why focus on developmental mathematics?

- *About 70% of new students at NW-SCC are required to take a developmental math course.*
- *Students who begin in Math 090 have only a 1 in 5 chance of being successful in their first college level course.*
- *Students who begin in MTH 098 have only a 2 in 5 chance of being successful in their first college level course.*
- *Only about 1/2 of the students who begin in Math 090 or Math 098 continue with their program of study.*

### **How did the QEP Planning Team involve others and who were they?**

- *Faculty members participated in focus groups to discuss topic ideas to improve student learning at NWSCC. Faculty members also completed a survey regarding the most important topic for the QEP. Faculty will be responsible for the implementation of the QEP.*
- *Staff participated in focus groups to discuss topic ideas to improve student learning at NWSCC. Staff also completed a survey regarding the most important topic for the QEP.*
- *Students participated in focus groups to discuss topic ideas to improve student learning at NWSCC.*
- *Alumni participated in focus groups to discuss topic ideas to improve student learning at NWSCC.*
- *Business and industry leaders were surveyed regarding the importance of the QEP topic.*

### **How does the QEP improve the learning environment at NW-SCC?**

- *Students who take developmental math courses will be taught in redesigned courses which will be planned to engage students in more active learning strategies. The focus will shift from class seat time to content mastery which will afford students the time and assistance needed to achieve competency of the primary learning outcomes of the courses. As a result, students should not only be successful in developmental coursework but subsequent math as well as other courses which require math knowledge.*
- *Instructors from the math department as well as all areas of the college will receive training regarding innovative pedagogy as learning facilitators. In addition, faculty will receive training about active learning and student engagement techniques.*
- *An academic success center on each campus of NW-SCC will provide for tutoring services, computerized instruction, and additional learning resources.*

### **How will the developmental math courses be redesigned?**

- *Math 098, Math 100, and Math 090 are chosen for redesigned.*
- *Course redesigns will be based on five principles*
  - *Principle 1: The whole course will be redesigned to ensure consistent content coverage.*
  - *Principle 2: Courses will use active learning strategies to promote more student interactive engagement*
  - *Principle 3: Courses will focus on individualized assistance for students to receive help when needed.*
  - *Principle 4: Courses will be redesigned to increase the amount and frequency of feedback.*
  - *Principle 5: Courses will be redesigned to ensure sufficient time on task and consistent monitoring of student progress.*

### **How will the QEP be implemented?**

- *The QEP will be implemented in phases. The first phase will be to redesign Math 098. An implementation team will be chosen composed of the QEP director, a Math 098 course leader, math faculty, and others. That group will be responsible to redesign the course by following the five principles of redesign, to evaluate the course, provide feedback, and make adjustments as necessary. The second phase will be to redesign Math 100 following the same procedures as described for Math 098. The third phase will be to redesign Math 090, again following the same procedures as with Math 098. Math 098, Math 100, and Math 090 redesigns should be completed by the end of third year. In years four and five, other courses will be evaluated for course redesign.*

### **How will improvement in student learning be assessed?**

- *Students will take a common exam as a final for each of the redesigned courses which cover the pre-determined student learning outcomes of the course. Exam scores will increase by an average of 10 percentage points compared to baseline data established prior to course redesign.*
- *Students will take the COMPASS exam to determine if they have improved their math ability to advance to the next course level.*
- *Students who begin in Math 090 or Math 098 will be tracked throughout their stint at NW-SCC. The students who are successful in Math 100 or Math 116 will increase by 10 percentage points.*

### **How will the assessment results be used to improve student learning?**

- *Results of the student learning outcomes as evidenced by the exams and the COMPASS test will be closely monitored. Each semester the results of these measures will be evaluated as part of the formative evaluation for the project. The QEP Director, the course leader, and the implementation team will make decisions about the specifics of the project based on these evaluations and any necessary adjustments to the courses will be made. The goal will be to continuously improve the courses and the approach to instruction so that students have the best opportunity to learn math.*

### **What resources are available for NW-SCC to implement the QEP?**

- *In the planning and developing of the QEP, the design team identified the personnel, facilities, equipment, and financial resources necessary for the successful implementation of Strengthening Mathematical Foundations Through Innovative Teaching.*
- *NW-SCC has a sound financial base, demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services, including the QEP.*
- *About 60% of the required QEP funds will be reallocated from existing college expenditures. New expenses to fund the QEP are about 7% of the QEP projected budget. The remaining 33% will be funded by a recently awarded U.*

*S. Department of Education Title III grant that will commence on October 1, 2008. The Title III grant was written to closely parallel the QEP; however, the Title III grant has a broader scope than the QEP.*

- *The academic success center location on each campus has been identified. The Shoals Campus location is projected to be housed in the Larry McCoy Learning Resources Center. The Phil Campbell location will be in the area adjacent to the library.*
- *The QEP will be integrated into the College's organizational structure. There will be adequate personnel to implement and sustain the QEP. Among the personnel will be the QEP Director, course leaders and math faculty teams for Math 090, 098, and 100, lab managers and professional and peer tutors.*

### **How will the college community have involvement in the implementation of the QEP?**

- *Students who are enrolled in Math 090, 098, and 100 make up more than 20% of the student population in any given fall or spring semester. They will be the primary beneficiaries of Strengthening Mathematical Foundations. In addition, students will serve as peer tutors in the math academic success center.*
- *Math faculty will lead and participate in the course redesigns of Math 098, Math 100, and Math 090. They will receive specific training related to course software and teaching in the newly designed course delivery environment. A number of these math faculty members will also serve as mentors to one another in course redesign.*
- *All faculty will have opportunities to participate in professional development activities included in the QEP.*
- *Academic administrators will provide leadership, ensure funding for the project's activities, and establish the organizational support that will lead to success of the QEP.*
- *Administrators of other departments and their staffs will provide any necessary support for success of the QEP. These additional departments include, but are not limited to, Student Services, Human Resources, Management Information Systems, Technology Support, Advising Center, Maintenance, and the Business Office.*