Gaston College

Learning is a Journey – Come SAIL With Us:

Strengthening Academic Internet Learning

Quality Enhancement Plan
Submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
On-Site Review - September 20–22, 2011
(Revised QEP Document)

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Executive Summary

In support of the Gaston College mission to promote student success and lifelong learning through high caliber, affordable, and comprehensive educational programs and services, Gaston College has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) called Strengthening Academic Internet Learning (SAIL). ***The goal of SAIL is to provide a high quality learning experience for students in online courses.*** This will be accomplished by creating and implementing standards for online course design and delivery based on best practices in distance education. Gaston College will measure the success of SAIL by comparing the achievement of course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in selected online courses to their traditional seated counterparts using a uniformly-delivered course assessment of SLOs as a gauge.

During the last ten years, Gaston College has seen unprecedented growth in student demand for more flexible course offerings. Online courses help community colleges serve students whose job and family situations compete with their ability to attend traditional classes. Gaston College first offered courses via the Internet during academic year 1999-2000. Eight Internet courses were offered. Last year (2010-2011), the College delivered 443 online course sections, serving 4,760 students, representing 53% of the total curriculum student population. Over the years, the College has guided online instruction by maintaining an Online Instruction Committee (OIC) charged with identifying and implementing established best practices in online course delivery. In 2007, this committee established a voluntary pilot project, Gaston College Online Quality Initiative, certifying online courses which utilized these best practices.

Over 100 courses were evaluated for quality during the pilot project. Expansion of this pilot project seemed to be a natural fit for a strong QEP. Faculty indicated that a more positive learning experience for online students resulted from strengthening online course quality. Faculty suggested that improvements still needed to be made to the quality standards and more reliable data collected to accurately evaluate the project's success. A QEP Implementation Team was created by the College president to further evaluate the project, glean stakeholder input, and refine the direction of SAIL.

Many important issues related to online learning surfaced during the project evaluation, but the consensus among faculty, staff, students, and the community was that a focus on improved course quality would provide the greatest impact on student learning. A review of best practices in distance education and a thorough literature review supported this decision.

The College uses assessment of SLOs to measure student learning. Further investigation of the pilot project revealed that SLOs were not being consistently measured between online and seated traditional courses, rendering the previous comparative data unreliable. The standardization of course level SLOs assessment became an important part of the project.

Over the life of SAIL, designated online courses will be required to create an ideal online environment for student learning and measure the achievement of course level SLOs. Data indicating student performance on course level SLOs will be compared between each online course and its seated traditional counterpart to determine if students are experiencing the same level of learning in both modalities. SAIL is a five-year project involving three waves of five courses each for a total of 15 courses. Each year assessment results will be used to make improvements. A review of SAIL and its impact will be conducted during year five.

The benefit of Gaston College's QEP, SAIL, is threefold. It supports the College's mission to promote student learning, responds to the increased demand in distance education, and expands the College's commitment to online course excellence and to distance education as a viable method of course delivery.

College Profile

Gaston College serves the communities within Gaston and Lincoln counties. The College currently enrolls over 6,000 students each term in curriculum programs and averages over 23,000 students annually in Continuing Education programs. Sixty-three percent of Gaston College students are from Gaston County, and 20% are from Lincoln County, 51% are male and 49% are female. Seventy-five percent are Caucasian, 15% are African-American, and 4% are Hispanic. Fifty-three percent attend day classes. While 38% of curriculum students are in college transfer programs, Gaston College offers over 100 academic programs including two year associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Technical and vocational programs prepare students to immediately enter the workforce with up-to-date skills and knowledge. To view a list of all academic programs see Appendix A.

Gaston College was chartered in 1963 and has been in continuous operation since it began its first classes in temporary headquarters in Dallas in September 1964. Gaston College was initially accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1967. The College is granted authority to award degrees, diplomas, and certificates by the State of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges as one of 58 public community colleges in North Carolina. Gaston College employs approximately 400 full-time faculty and staff, making it one of the leading employers in the area. Since academic year 1999-2000, annual curriculum enrollment has increased 55%.

Gaston College is comprised of three campuses. The main campus is located in Gaston County in the town of Dallas. The Lincoln Campus is located in Lincolnton in Lincoln County. Gaston College's first presence in Lincoln County was in 1969. In 1998, the College moved to the current location at 511 South Aspen Street. Curriculum programs, as well as other credit and continuing education classes, are offered at this location. The newest campus, the Kimbrell Campus and Textile Technology Center, is located in the eastern part of Gaston County in Belmont. Originally the North Carolina Vocational and Textile School, it began operation in 1943. It was later renamed the North Carolina Center for Applied Textile Technology. In 2005, the Center was transferred to Gaston College, and named the East Campus. In 2010, it was renamed the Kimbrell Campus and Textile Technology Center. The Textile Technology Center provides new and sample product development, product testing, training, and consulting for the textile industry. Curriculum and continuing education classes are also offered at this location.

The Gaston College mission statement reflects the Institution's commitment to student learning:

> *Gaston College is an open-door public community college, located in Gaston and Lincoln counties, that promotes student success and lifelong learning through high caliber, affordable, and comprehensive educational programs and services responding to economic and workforce development needs.*

The average age of Gaston College students is 29, compared to age 27 throughout the North Carolina Community College system ("Get the Facts," 2011). O'Neil (2006) explains that adult students are much more likely to take distance education classes than students attending college directly from high school. These students tend to have personal obligations that compete with seated traditional class time. The open-door, open admissions policy of the community college provides individuals who may not otherwise have access to higher education an opportunity to attend college.

Gaston College is dedicated to providing high quality, accessible programs and course offerings. Based on student demand and needs, distance education has become a standard method of course delivery for the College.

Process Used to Identify and Develop QEP

QEP Topic Selection

In September 2007, Gaston College formed a SACS Leadership Team with the responsibility of overseeing the upcoming reaffirmation process. Knowing that the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) was essential to the process, this team established a QEP Identification Team (ID Team) in the Summer of 2008. The ID Team was charged with developing a process for identifying potential QEP topics. The team included representatives from both full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and a student. A complete roster of all team members can be found in Appendix B. The team first met on July 7, 2008 to discuss responsibilities and a timeline for action. In order to begin the search for an appropriate topic for the QEP, the ID Team researched broad-based trends in higher education to identify important issues related to the enhancement of student learning. With the College mission statement in mind, the ID Team analyzed Gaston College's Long Range Plan (developed by campus and community representatives), Gaston College's Strategic Plan, American College Testing (ACT) Outcomes Survey results, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results, and employer feedback surveys. Emerging from this institutional research were 17 major topics:

- Active Learning
- Collaborative Learning
- Retention
- Critical Thinking
- Career Development
- Social/Soft Skills
- Math
- Writing
- Professional Development
- Assessment
- Advising
- Distance Education/Technology
- Diversity
- Developmental Education
- Reading
- Hiring/Retaining Qualified Faculty
- Teaching Techniques

The team gathered input from College and community stakeholders on these topics by conducting an Internet survey (Appendix C). The Board of Trustees, full- and part-time faculty, College staff, community members, and students were asked to complete the survey. Posters, fliers, radio announcements, and QEP buttons were distributed College-wide to promote the survey to ensure broad-based involvement of College constituents. A total of 491 participants completed the survey, including: 98 faculty, 92 staff, 290 students, and 11 community members. The ratings from all groups were pooled. In decreasing order of importance, they were ranked as follows: hiring/retaining qualified faculty, teaching techniques, professional development, career development, distance education/ technology, social/soft skills, assessment, critical thinking, retention, reading, advising, math, diversity, developmental education, writing, collaborative learning, and active learning. The QEP ID Team also analyzed the survey results from each group to look for trends. Based on the analyzed data, the team recommended to the SACS Leadership Team the top seven areas for consideration in rank order:

1. Professional Development/Teaching Techniques
2. Career Development
3. Distance Education/Technology
4. Social/Soft Skills
5. Critical Thinking
6. Advising
7. Lifelong Learning (collaborative/active)

During the Fall of 2008, the SACS Leadership Team established a QEP Topic Feasibility Team to narrow the QEP topics recommended by the QEP ID Team. This team was comprised of faculty, staff, and a student (Appendix B). The QEP Topic Feasibility Team met on September 11, 2008. They

analyzed the data from Gaston College's Long Range Plan, Gaston College's Strategic Plan, ACT College Outcomes Survey results, CCSSE results, employer feedback, and the QEP Topic survey results. Four broad areas were identified for further consideration:

- Career Development
- Distance Education/Technology
- Professional Development
- Transfer and General Advising

The Topic Feasibility Team conducted an open forum to discuss these topics and receive input from the College constituencies. In November 2008, both an online and on-campus forum was held to brainstorm and to help narrow the scope to a specific topic. Thirty-four stakeholders participated in these discussions. Using the input gathered during the forums, the Topic Feasibility Team formed subcommittees for each of these potential topic areas. Each subcommittee was responsible for developing a summary, vision, goals, and assessment plan for its assigned topic. The subcommittees presented their work to the group for discussion and each of the potential topics was assessed using a rubric (Appendix D). Based on assessment results, the team ranked the four topics in order of importance:

1. Transfer Advising Center
2. Distance Education/Technology
3. Professional Development
4. General Advising

Ranked topics were presented to the SACS Leadership Team in December 2008, where strengths and weaknesses of each topic were discussed. The SACS Leadership Team reviewed these presentations, considering each topic and its impact on student learning. Based on these deliberations they selected Distance Education as the primary focus of the QEP. Distance Education was seen to have the greatest potential impact on both student learning and the College environment given the growth of online courses over the last 10 years. In the 1999-2000 academic year, eight online classes were offered. At the time topics were being considered, this number had increased to over 400 classes. Additionally, many traditional classes also had an online resource site for students. While the transfer advising center was initially ranked higher, this center would have affected less than half of the College's student enrollment. A focus on distance education had the potential to affect nearly every student on campus.

The decision to pursue Distance Education as the topic of the QEP was sent forward to the College's Executive Council (consisting of the President and Vice-Presidents) for approval. This group approved Distance Education as the QEP topic in Spring 2009. A cross-divisional QEP Implementation Team consisting of both faculty and administrators was formed to plan and develop the QEP (Appendix B).

Planning and development of the QEP meant that the Implementation Team would:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the College's 10+ year history with distance education,
2. Evaluate an on-going pilot project and its focus on online course quality,
3. Glean input from students, faculty, and community stakeholders,
4. Focus the QEP topic on local College needs and overall best practices through a thorough literature review.

Key Terms

Many of the terms used in this document are common to community college and distance education settings; however, several terms are defined here to add clarity.

Assessment Specialist—The person assigned to assist the online instructors participating in the QEP in the development of course level Student Learning Outcomes and standardizing the process for assessment in their high quality online courses.

Distance Education/Online Learning—The separation of teacher and learning with the majority of the instructional process using educational media to unite teacher and learner and deliver course content (Clark and Verduin, 1989).

Faculty Resource Center (FRC)—The training center containing eight high-end workstations equipped with the latest software used in online course development and delivery. Faculty are encouraged to utilize the FRC and small group training is being conducted regularly. The FRC will continually be upgraded with the latest technology throughout the life of the QEP.

Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS)—The person serving as the QEP Director and providing technology training for online instructors.

Learning Management System (LMS)—A web-based system used to deliver online courses. The College currently uses Blackboard as its LMS.

North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH)—The NCIH provides data services such as access to the Internet and to state computer systems and video conferencing for Distance Learning.

Online Instruction Committee (OIC)—The College committee charged with identifying and implementing established best practices in online course design and delivery.

Quality Matters (QM)—A peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses, which has received national recognition for fostering continuous improvement in online education and student learning (http://www.qmprogram.org).

Rubric—A set of criteria and standards linked to learning objectives that is used to assess a student's performance on papers, projects, essays, and other assignments.

Seated Traditional Course—A course that meets in a classroom on scheduled days and times.

Student Learning Outcomes (course level)—Statements that specify what a student will know, will be able to do, or will be able to demonstrate upon completion of a course (Scagliola, 2007).

Student Success (course level)—The achievement of course Student Learning Outcomes.

Virtual Learning Community (VLC)—A collaborative effort of all of North Carolina’s Community Colleges to increase the quality and availability of online learning and support services.

Profile of Distance Education at Gaston College

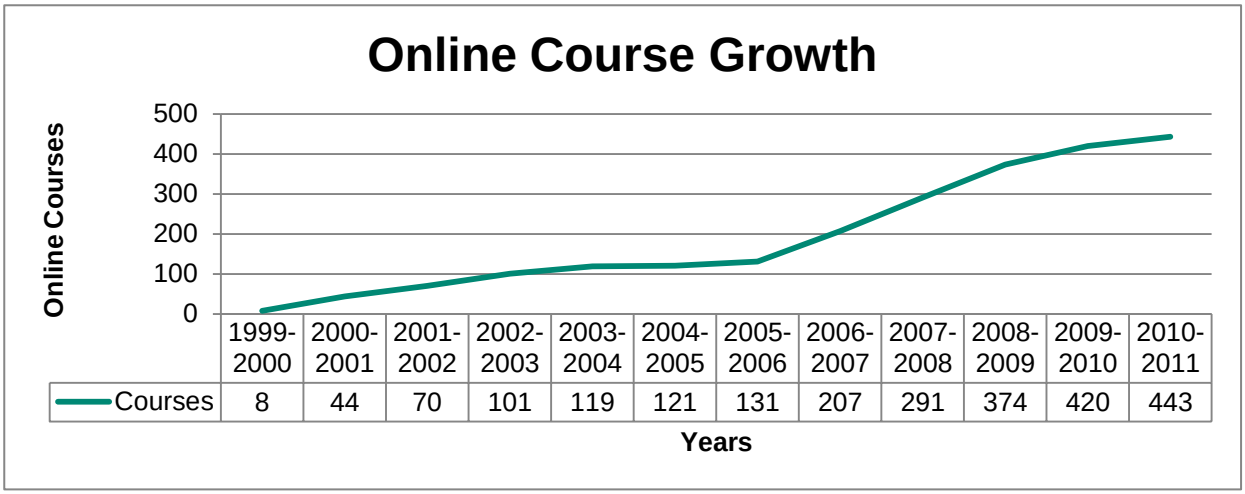
Gaston College is dedicated to providing high quality, accessible programs and course offerings. Distance Education was selected as the focus of the QEP based on broad institutional assessment along with student need and demand. Local, regional, and national data support the importance of distance learning as a viable method of course delivery. Based on Gaston College's enrollment growth in online courses over the last 10 years, distance education has become a standard method of course delivery for the College. Local growth has exceeded national growth rates, providing stronger evidence that distance education is a key issue for the College.

Gaston College first offered courses via distance education in the late 1980's. The first technologies utilized included telecourses by videocassettes and two-way interactive video through the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH). Web-based courses were initially offered in the late 1990's. A new position, Director of Distance Education, was created to manage the integration of technology into curriculum courses.

Gaston College was initially approved to offer distance education by SACS in its 2000 reaffirmation. During that academic year, eight Internet courses were offered. The following year, the College implemented the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) and delivered 44 online courses, serving 768 students. Gaston College continues to use Blackboard and is an active member of the North Carolina Community College System's Virtual Learning Community (VLC). Many Gaston College faculty members have actively participated in the creation and maintenance of VLC courses that are shared by all of the 58 community colleges in North Carolina.

The demand for online learning at Gaston College has continued to increase. In academic year 2010-2011, the College delivered 443 online course sections, serving 4,760 students, representing 53% of the total curriculum enrollment. Figure 1 illustrates the growth in online course sections offered since the 1999-2000 academic year.

Figure 1: Growth of online course sections offered since 1999-2000 academic year.



The Instructional Technology Council is an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges and is a national leader in advancing distance education. It represents higher education institutions in the United States and Canada. In the March 2010 distance education survey "Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges" (Lokken, 2010), the Council reported that from Fall 2007 to Fall 2008, community colleges nationwide had a 22% increase in distance education enrollments. The Sloan Foundation noted in its 2009 study by Allen & Seaman, "Learning on Demand:

Online Education in the United States," that during Fall 2008 distance education enrollments increased 17% over the previous year. The total student population in higher education increased by less than 2% during the same time frame. While the national increase in distance education enrollment during this time was unprecedented, Gaston College experienced an even greater increase of 34.42% in the number of students enrolled in courses delivered totally online.

The increase in popularity of online education in the community college system reflects the diversity of the community college student population. In his August 2010 President's Report, North Carolina Community College System President Dr. R. Scott Ralls commented that distance education allows a diverse, untapped group of students the opportunity to attend their local North Carolina community college. He believes that the key to providing a sound distance education program is to offer high quality online courses.

Four of the six initiatives within the 2008-2013 Gaston College Strategic Plan (Appendix E) are centered on student learning, demonstrating that Gaston College is committed to serving the needs and demands of the local population. As seen by the unprecedented growth in online course enrollment, students are demanding courses offered in this modality. In order to provide online students with a quality education and to be true to the College mission and strategic plan, a process to ensure online course quality is crucial.

The following section describes the Gaston College Quality Initiative, a voluntary pilot project the College's Online Instruction Committee (OIC) established during Fall 2007 and continued through Fall 2010. This project provided a foundation for the selection of online course quality as the topic for the College's QEP.

Development of Online Course Standards

The Distance Education Advisory Committee was formed in Fall 1999 in response to the demand for more online offerings and a College commitment to online course quality. This committee subsequently became the Online Instruction Committee (OIC) in 2005. The purpose of the OIC is to recommend best practices in online course delivery to improve student learning. Before that time no standardized mechanisms were in place to ensure that all online course offerings followed best practices in distance education. The demand for distance education resulted in College faculty creating and offering many online courses without receiving formal training. Subsequently, in academic year 2006-2007 the OIC began the Gaston College Online Quality Initiative pilot project in response to the student demand for more online offerings.

The Gaston College Quality Initiative pilot project consisted of standards developed on nationally-recognized best practices, including Quality Matters. Quality Matters is a peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and has received national recognition for fostering continuous improvement in online education and student learning (http://www.qmprogram.org). The locally-developed standards consisted of five areas of focus: 1) The Student Experience, 2) Course Materials, 3) Assessment, 4) Learner Engagement and Support, and 5) Course Technology. The standards included three levels of certification consisting of 35 review standards—(17) Level I, (12) Level II, and (6) Level III— thus enabling faculty to design quality online courses in stages, to not be overwhelmed, and to voluntarily submit their courses for evaluation (Appendix VI).

The pilot project's quality standards were introduced to faculty in Fall 2007. Stipends were approved by the Gaston College Executive Council for voluntary faculty participation in the pilot project. Faculty with courses meeting Level I standards received a $200 stipend. Faculty with courses meeting Level II standards received $600, and faculty with courses meeting Level III standards received $800. A review team was formed to evaluate each submitted course and was comprised of three members: one as the subject matter expert, one from the same academic division, and one from a different academic

division. A member was designated as the chair of the team to coordinate each review. Course reviewers were given a stipend of $500 for every eight courses reviewed. The Director of Distance Education and OIC members provided training to interested faculty on the quality standards and the procedures for becoming a course reviewer. Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2010, a total investment of $114,500 was distributed to faculty who volunteered to participate in the pilot project.

Table 1: Represents a summary of courses meeting the quality standards by academic year

Academic Year	No. Courses	Level I	Level II	Level III
2007-08	20	8	3	9
2008-09	31	2	5	24
2009-10	30	2	4	24
Fall 2010	28	3	2	23
Totals	**109**	**15**	**14**	**80**

A survey of faculty involved in the pilot project indicated that a more positive learning experience was created as a result of strengthening online course quality. Faculty stated the following:

- “The standards helped facilitate a better learning experience and a more efficient learning environment.”
- “The courses are now more in compliance with our accreditation and best teaching practices.”
- “I was able to see gaps in information provided to the students to meet the learning objectives.”
- “Clarification of standards...more training and consistent interpretation of the rubric needed.”

The OIC identified that a flaw of the pilot project was that it focused more on course structure rather than student engagement and effective design of learner-content interaction. Interpretation of the standards created ambiguity and disparity during the review process

Through the process of planning and development of the QEP, refinement of the existing pilot project became a primary topic of discussion. Participating faculty agreed that the standards needed to be updated, the evaluation process should be refined, student and other stakeholder input must be obtained, and a formal assessment process implemented to measure the project’s success.

Planning and Development of the QEP

Upon recommendation from the SACS Leadership Team, Gaston College president, Dr. Patricia Skinner, selected Dr. Betsy Jones, Dean of Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education Officer, and Tonia Broome, Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor, as co-chairs of the QEP Implementation Team. The initial eight member team included faculty representatives from various academic disciplines and staff involved in distance education.

The QEP Implementation Team had its opening meeting on May 11, 2009. The eight members reviewed the pilot project rubric and brainstormed the gap between the current and desired condition of distance education at the College. Ideas were generated and divided into five primary categories including: 1) online course quality, 2) student preparedness for online learning, 3) student services to support online learning, 4) technology and support for online courses and services, and 5) faculty training. At the next meeting on July 21, 2009, members of the group were charged with forming a subcommittee to begin work on these five areas. Additional subcommittees were formed to oversee QEP assessment, writing, and marketing. Two additional members were added to the Implementation Team to assist with the process. Subcommittee chairperson job descriptions and duties were distributed; the literature review for the related topic was included among those duties. Subcommittee work began during Fall 2009 and continued through Spring 2010. Ultimately, over 70 students, faculty, and staff were included in the planning and implementation subcommittee membership (Appendix B).

On November 23, 2009, the QEP Implementation Team reconvened to report on subcommittee progress and to discuss the timeline for QEP development and implementation. Members also discussed the team's relationship with the Online Instruction Committee (OIC) which has the responsibility to recommend best practices in online course delivery to improve student learning. It was decided that the OIC would be responsible for updating the quality standards and refining the evaluation process. On January 26, 2010, the group met again to report on subcommittee work and to brainstorm QEP objectives under each of the five categories.

The QEP Implementation Team next met on March 9, 2010 to refine the objectives and to schedule brainstorming sessions for faculty, staff, and students. Sessions were held throughout the months of March and April and were led by key faculty and staff members.

Over 30 students participated in the student session and offered their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the distance education program. The following are representative of student suggestions:

- More online course offerings
- More standardization and consistency in course design
- Improved course content
- Improved faculty response
- More interactivity with faculty
- Required student preparation for the online environment

For details of the questions and responses from the student session, see Appendix G.

Eighty-four faculty and staff members participated in brainstorming sessions, providing valuable input for each topic. A blog was also created to allow faculty and staff who could not attend the brainstorming sessions to comment on each of the topics. The ideas from the sessions were also posted on the blog for further conversation at http://gastonqep.wordpress.com. Three central themes emerged from the

brainstorming sessions and blog entries. These themes cited below aligned with the ideas generated by the Implementation Team during its opening meeting.

Quality Standards. An updated quality standards rubric needs to be developed, using the pilot project as a launching point. A template should be created to standardize the course format, making course development easier for faculty and improving the student's learning experience. Course content should be more comprehensive and student/teacher collaboration increased. Additionally the team agreed an emphasis needs to be placed on compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Technology and Training. Appropriate technology, and faculty training is needed to deliver quality online learning. Collaboration technology is necessary to increase student engagement.

Student Preparedness. Students should be aware of the skills necessary to succeed in the online environment. At the very least, students should be familiar with the Blackboard Learning Management System and have a basic knowledge of technology.

Table 2: Represents a summary of the brainstorming session topics and participants

Date	Topic	Number of Participants
March 29, 2010	Student Services in the Online Environment	28
March 31, 2010	General Student Question and Answer Session	32
April 13, 2010	Technology to Support Quality Online Instruction	20
April 22, 2010	Student Preparedness for Online Learning	13
April 27, 2010	Faculty Training	23

The ideas from the brainstorming sessions were distributed at the QEP Implementation Team's final meeting of the 2009-2010 academic year held on May 6, 2010. Final reports and literature review findings from the subcommittees were presented. Assessment of the QEP was also a major topic of this meeting. Based on the recommendation of the assessment subcommittee and current practices and literature, the decision was made to use course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as a direct measure of the QEP. Although the QEP would impact all online courses, the committee decided to track and assess a limited number of courses in order to remain within a manageable framework.

As a result of the subcommittee work and recommendations, it was determined that proper implementation and assessment of the QEP would require significant leadership beyond the QEP Implementation Team. A request was made to hire a full-time Instructional Technology Specialist to serve as the QEP Director and provide technology training for online instructors. The job description for this position is located in Appendix H. The position was filled on July 1, 2010 with an internal candidate, Karen Duncan, who was familiar with the project and dedicated to Gaston College and the goals of the QEP. Karen Duncan was formerly the chair of both the Business and Office Administration departments, a member of the OIC, and a model online instructor. She was added to the Implementation Team.

During the Summer 2010, the QEP Implementation Team co-chairs met weekly to finalize the timeline, create action plans based on input from the subcommittee work and the brainstorming sessions, and finalize the assessment plan. At the July 13, 2010 QEP Implementation Team meeting, the members approved the timeline and the action and assessment plans presented.

The QEP Marketing subcommittee held a contest to find an appropriate slogan for the QEP. Students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to participate. Through a College-wide vote, the winner was Strengthening Academic Internet Learning (SAIL) which inspired a nautical theme.

The Implementation Team kicked off the QEP planning and development year with a meeting on August 31, 2010. At this meeting the planning and implementation phase committees (see Appendix B) were established and given their respective charges to create a proposed action plan and budget for each of their areas. On September 8, 2010, the co-chairs updated the SACS Leadership Team on the progress of the planning and development for the QEP and presented draft documents of the planning year timeline for their approval.

During September 2010, the planning and implementation phase committee co-chairs established their committee membership and met to create a timeline for attaining the goals of the planning year (2010-2011). On October 4, 2010, they presented their committee membership roster and timeline to the Implementation Team, and on November 22, 2010, the group met for committee updates. Also during this time, the Student Learning Outcomes and QEP Assessment committees were creating an assessment plan for each of the five years of the QEP, and the Marketing Team held a QEP logo contest. A professional firm took ideas from each of 14 submitted entries and designed a logo that reflects the spirit of the slogan, the focus of the project, and the College brand. Students, faculty, and staff who participated in the contest received a gift card to the College Café along with a certificate of participation.

Using the results of the literature review, best practices, and College community input, the QEP planning and implementation committees made the following recommendations in support of the QEP in December 2010:

- Create a new quality online course rubric that not only addresses course structure, but requires quality course content and student/teacher collaboration
- Purchase an online collaboration tool to support and connect the distance learner to the College community
- Create a companion guide to assist faculty in the interpretation of the rubric
- Create incentives for faculty participation in SAIL
- Create incentives for review teams for SAIL
- Create a review team structure that supports SAIL
- Create a course template that supports students' desires that online course structure be standardized
- Continue to upgrade the College technology infrastructure
- Provide necessary equipment to faculty for the creation of quality online courses
- Provide necessary software to faculty for the creation of quality online courses
- Provide training to faculty to assist in the development and delivery of quality online courses

- Continue offsite managed hosting with Blackboard, Inc.

- Provide a readiness tool to help students determine their level of proficiency in prerequisite skills for online learning

- Offer online tutoring software to provide online students with virtual learning assistance

The QEP Implementation Team discussed the scope of the project and its potential assessment plan. After meeting with several QEP and distance education experts, including Dr. Barry Goldstein, SACSCOC staff member, and Dr. Nancy Cooley, President of Florida State College in Jacksonville's Open College, several concerns emerged:

- While all of the distance education issues raised by the QEP planning and implementation teams were important, the focus was too broad. It was agreed that a focus of improved course quality would provide the greatest impact on student learning.

- Using course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to measure student learning is appropriate; however, investigation into the pilot project revealed that course level SLOs were not being measured consistently between online and seated traditional courses, deeming the comparative data unreliable. Since course level SLOs would be the direct assessment measure of the QEP, SAIL needed to be modified to include the standardization of course level SLOs assessment.

- The scope of the project needed to be refined. In order to effectively measure its success, an instructor participating in SAIL would have to:

  Step 1. Standardize course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

  Step 2. Standardize SLOs assessment and process for administration of assessment

  Step 3. Teach the course and collect baseline data during a semester for the online and all seated, traditional course sections

  Step 4. Collect and submit baseline data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis

  Step 5. Collect student survey data in online course

  Step 6. Use baseline data to establish targets for success comparing online course to seated, traditional course

  Step 7. Apply SAIL standards according to the process

  Step 8. Teach the newly-developed course

  Step 9. Collect and submit data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis

  Step 10. Collect student survey data in online course

  Step 11. Analyze course assessment data and compare to previously established targets

  Step 12. Report findings to the QEP Implementation Team

Step 13. Report findings to the SACS Leadership Team

Step 14. Report lessons learned to next wave, if appropriate

- The commitment on an already busy faculty member would be substantial. Therefore, a select group of committed faculty members would be offered release time from teaching duties to participate in the project.

- Within the five years of the QEP, the timeline would necessitate phases of course development and data collection in order to refine the quality standards and the course SLOs data evaluation. Lessons learned could be incorporated into the next phase.

- Year 5 of the QEP would be reserved for reviewing its impact.

The QEP Implementation Team held a retreat on February 21, 2011 to discuss refining the project. A new goal, timeline, and assessment plan were approved. The changes were presented to the SACS Leadership Team on February 24, 2011. As a result of these changes the following goal for the SAIL project was presented to the faculty and staff on March 7, 2011:

> *The goal of SAIL is to provide a high quality learning experience for students in online courses. This will be accomplished by creating and implementing standards for online course design and delivery based on best practices in distance education. Success of SAIL will be measured by comparing the achievement of course level Student Learning Outcomes in selected online courses to their seated traditional counterparts.*

Individuals of the Implementation Team were assigned tasks relating to planning and assessment, with a due date of March 25, 2011. The implementation and assessment plan was finalized and approved in early spring through a combined effort of the Implementation Team and the OIC.

An Assessment Specialist was hired in June 2011 to assist the online instructors participating in SAIL in the development of course level SLOs and standardizing the process for assessment in their online courses. The Assessment Specialist, Mary Gourley, is a full-time psychology faculty member with experience in effective creation and measurement of Student Learning Outcomes. She will receive release time to oversee the development and assessment of course level SLOs for the courses involved in SAIL. She was added to the Implementation Team. The job description for this position is located in Appendix I.

A crucial step in the process was to develop and refine the SAIL course standards. This task was assigned to the OIC which is responsible for identifying and implementing established local best practices in online course design and delivery to enhance student learning. The following section describes the development of the SAIL course standards, including the rubric for compliance.

Development of SAIL Course Standards and Rubric

Quality assurance of online courses is of prime importance to all the stakeholders in higher education: students, faculty, administrators, institutions, and accrediting agencies all benefit from a thorough process of quality assurance and control. In Spring 2010, the Online Instruction Committee (OIC) identified a need for continuous improvement due to unprecedented growth in online course offerings. In preparation for the 2011 update of the Online Course Standards, distance education research literature was reviewed and the quality standards of accredited colleges and universities were researched. Focus groups, comprised of students and faculty, were held to assist in the development of the 2011 Gaston College SAIL Course Standards.

Feedback from faculty and students was instrumental in the development of the SAIL standards. The statements below reflect the concerns addressed in the creation of the SAIL standards.

- new standards need to require consistency in course interface
- pilot project rubric is too subjective
- simplify evaluation format of standards
- different learning styles should be accommodated within the course design
- Blackboard or online certification training should be required for instructors teaching online
- links should be added for access to support services

Learning outcomes, instructional materials, interaction, and accessibility were areas of concern that were re-evaluated. Addressing these concerns, the new SAIL standards include eight sections which combined the previous 3-level certification from the pilot project into one exemplary course to better align with the 2008-2010 Quality Matters rubric. Additional resources to assist faculty in creating courses will be included in companion documents, along with a Blackboard course template for designing online courses.

SAIL standards will require that learning outcomes will be clearly stated, explained, and designed to assist students in focusing their efforts in the course. Instructional materials will be sufficiently comprehensive to achieve stated course learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons. Meaningful interaction between the instructor and students will be standard in all online courses. Course materials will be employed to motivate students and foster intellectual commitment and personal development. The seated traditional and online course components will be accessible to all students according to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Faculty will be eligible to submit courses for certification by completing the SAIL Quality Review application (Appendix J). The application process will require the instructor to obtain departmental and divisional signatures, attend training on the rubric, complete a self-assessment of the course based on the standards, and prepare for a question and answer session with a team of reviewers.

Gaston College SAIL Standards

The following SAIL rubric includes standards for quality online courses at Gaston College.

Course Introduction

The overall design of the course is made clear to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
1.1 Instructions make clear to the student how to get started and where to find various course components, including a welcome message on the front page.		
1.2 A statement introduces the student to the purpose of the course and to its components, and how best to approach the online learning environment.		
1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.		
1.4 A self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online. This includes an instructor “bio” with a photo, along with multiple forms of communication (for example, email, phone, chat, etc.), office hours and clear instructions on how best to contact the instructor.		
1.5. Minimum technical skills of the student are clearly stated.		
1.6 An approved syllabus as determined by the divisional dean is present.		
1.7 A course calendar/timeline detailing all due dates for assignments is present.		

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are clearly stated and explained. They assist students in focusing their efforts in the course.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
2.1 The course learning outcomes are clearly stated and measurable.		
2.2 The module/unit learning outcomes are clearly stated and measurable, and are consistent with the course level outcomes.		

Assessment Strategies

Established methods are used to measure effective learning, evaluate student progress by reference to stated learning outcomes, and are designed to be integral to the learning process.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
3.1 Varied assessments measure all of the stated learning outcomes and are consistent with course activities and resources.		
3.2 A variety of types of assignments are used to assess student learning (i.e., quizzes, discussion forums, projects, papers, exams, surveys, etc.) and to accommodate different learning styles; activities occur frequently throughout the duration of the course.		
3.3 The course grading policy is stated clearly, detailing the method by which assignments will be graded and including how the grades will be made available.		
3.4 Grades are made available to students online in a secure environment and posted within 1 week of due date (some assignments may require more grading time; details of extended times must be clarified by instructor.)		
3.5 "Self-check" or practice assignments are provided, with timely feedback to students.		

Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve stated course learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
4.1 The relationship between the instructional materials and the assignments is clearly explained to the student.		
4.2 The instructional materials have sufficient depth for the student to master the required outcomes.		
4.3 The instructional materials provide activities that help students develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills and are explained with examples or models; individualized instruction, remedial activities, or resources for advanced learning activities are provided.		
4.4 Clear instructions are provided for completing and submitting course assignments, activities, and assessments.		
4.5 Course content has been evaluated by a content expert and adequately reflects potential mastery of the course student learning outcomes.		

Interaction

Meaningful interaction between the instructor and students, among students, and between students and course materials is employed to motivate students and foster intellectual commitment and personal development.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
5.1 Learning activities require instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to the course, student-student interaction.		
5.2 Clear standards are set for instructor responsiveness or availability. Instructor's methods of collecting and returning work are clearly explained. Turn-around time for response is two (2) business days and grades should be posted within one (1) week.		
5.3 The requirements for student interaction are clearly articulated.		
5.4 Learning activities use a variety of technology tools/teaching methods to facilitate communication, enhance learning, and interactively engage students.		
5.5 The instructor must provide five (5) opportunities for synchronous communication events throughout the semester.		

Course Navigation and Technology

Course navigation and the technology employed in the course foster student engagement and ensure access to instructional materials and resources.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
6.1 Navigation follows the College standard and is logical, consistent, and efficient. Content is made available or "chunked" in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules).		
6.2 Students have ready access to the technologies required in the course.		
6.3 Course materials use standard formats to ensure accessibility.		

Student Support

The course facilitates student access to institutional services essential to student success.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.		
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the Institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.		
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the Institution's student support services can help students reach their educational goals.		
7.4 Course instructions answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc., or link to tutorials or other resources that provide the information.		

Accessibility

The seated traditional and online course components are accessible to all students.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO
8.1 The course incorporates ADA standards and reflects conformance with Institutional policy regarding accessibility in all courses.		
8.2 Course pages and course materials provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content. (For example: providing text for podcasts or converting PowerPoint files to PDF.)		
8.3 Course pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful.		
8.4 The course ensures screen readability. (Fonts are easy to read and consistent throughout the course.)		

Significance of the QEP

The overall goal of SAIL is to provide a high quality learning experience for students in online courses. Enhancing the quality of distance education has the potential to be significant to all students at Gaston College. This section will emphasize the continuing importance of distance education as a learning modality and outline the impact the project will have on students and faculty.

During the last ten years, Gaston College has seen an unprecedented growth in the student demand for more flexible course offerings. As previously stated, Gaston College first offered courses via the Internet during academic year 1999-2000, when eight Internet courses were offered. Last year (2010-2011), the College delivered 443 online course sections, serving 4,760 students, representing 53% of the total curriculum student population. Additionally, input from faculty, staff, and students during the planning and development of the QEP confirms that a focus on distance education is timely.

Over 100 courses were evaluated for quality during the pilot project. Expansion of this pilot project seemed to be a natural fit for a strong QEP. A survey of faculty involved in the project indicated that a more positive learning experience for online students has been created as a result of strengthening online course quality, but improvements are still needed and more reliable data collected to accurately evaluate its success.

The survey reflected the following faculty conclusions about online courses at Gaston College:

- The demand for online course offerings will continue to grow.
- Strong standards in online courses are important to students and result in a better learning experience.
- Standards help to communicate best teaching practices.
- Standards ensure that course content is available to help students meet the course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).
- Faculty access to the appropriate technology for teaching effectively online is essential.
- Faculty needs to be trained in the use of appropriate technology.
- Faculty supports collaboration technology as a way to increase student engagement.
- Delivery of course content should address multiple learning styles.

Input from students revealed the following conclusions:

- More online course offerings are needed.
- A more uniform online course design will help students be successful.
- High quality course content, quick faculty response, and more interactivity are essential to a successful online learning experience.
- Preparation for the online experience is important to student success.
- The online course content should address multiple learning styles.

The Online Instruction Committee (OIC) identifies and implements established local best practices in online course design and delivery. The OIC strongly supports standards as a means to improve student learning outcomes in distance education. The Gaston College SAIL standards were created to ensure a high quality learning experience based on lessons learned from the pilot project, faculty and student input, and a review of national best practices in distance education.

Over the life of SAIL, selected online courses will be required to meet quality standards that accurately measure student learning. Information on course level SLOs will be compared with seated traditional courses to determine if students in online classes are experiencing the same level of learning as their counterparts. It is expected that as the quality standards of SAIL are implemented, student learning will be effected in a positive way.

In order to remain within a manageable framework, 15 courses were chosen to be the focus of SAIL. During the life of the QEP, three waves of five courses each will apply the SAIL standards and collect and analyze the assessment of course level SLOs to determine the impact on student learning. The courses were selected because of their high enrollment or because they belong within programs which have a large number of online course offerings. By creating a “master online instructor” in these areas, all online courses in the programs will benefit. Additionally, selection was based on the ability of the courses to be compared to their seated traditional counterparts and the commitment of faculty to participate.

Table 3: Represents direct impact of SAIL on student learning

Wave	Course	Potential Enrollment
1	ART 111	75
1	CIS 110	30
1	ENG 111	27
1	MAT 161	60
1	SOC 210	90
2	ACC 120*	30
2	BIO 140	30
2	CJC 112*	30
2	HIS 112	30
2	OST 137*	30
3	ACA 122	60
3	GEL 111	30
3	HEA 110	60
3	LOG 110*	30
3	REL 110	30
*belongs in a program with large number of online course offerings		

Although 15 courses will be part of the formal QEP, the SAIL standards will be made available to all faculty, thereby enabling all online courses to benefit from the project. Monetary stipends will be available to participating faculty.

Since the course level SLOs will be applied and measured in comparable seated traditional courses, the success of the students in these courses will provide insight into the quality of traditional courses. This will positively affect student learning in these seated classes as well.

Technology training is important to online course development and delivery (Pankowski, 2004). An integral part of SAIL is technology training. A full-time Instructional Technology Specialist was hired in July 2010 to serve as the QEP Director and provide technology training for online instructors. The subsequent training has been, and will continue to be, open to the College population at large and not confined to online faculty or faculty participating in SAIL. Involvement in this training could potentially impact all College faculty, and consequently, all students.

In summary, the SAIL project at Gaston College is significant because of the following:

- Implementation of the SAIL standards will have a positive impact on students by creating a high quality learning experience.
- An increased student demand for online offerings has forced Gaston College to re-evaluate design and delivery in distance education.
- Faculty strongly recommends quality online course design, development, and delivery while recognizing its direct impact on students.
- Students demand consistent online course design and high quality course delivery.
- The project will have a positive impact on the 15 Wave faculty through their participation in SAIL.
- All faculty could benefit by implementing the SAIL standards.
- Training will be offered to the entire College community and could ultimately impact all faculty, staff, and students.

Desired Student Learning Outcomes

Since 2005, the Instructional Technology Council (ITC) has administered a national distance education survey to its member representatives at more than 400 institutions and to the 1,200 members of the American Association of Community Colleges. The 2010 results of the ITC survey, "Trends in eLearning: Tracking the Impact of eLearning at Community Colleges," represent six years of national data collection related to online learning in community colleges. The 2010 report cites online course assessment to be among the three greatest challenges for distance education administrators in community colleges across America. "Nearly all of the respondents reported a seemingly endless supply of students interested in taking classes online. They see a need to increase the number of course offerings—and to streamline and appropriately support course development, design, assessment and overall quality—to respond to increasing demand" (Lokken, p. 11).

Local opinion is congruent with the national results and supports the goal of SAIL, to provide a high quality learning experience for students in online courses. Locally, this will be accomplished by creating and implementing standards for online course design and delivery based on best practices in distance education.

Fittingly, Gaston College will measure the success of SAIL by comparing the achievement of course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in selected online courses to their traditional seated counterparts using a uniformly-delivered course assessment of course level SLOs as a gauge. Course level SLOs specify what a student will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate upon completion of a course (Scagliola, 2007). Therefore, course level SLOs are appropriate to directly measure the impact that SAIL will have on the achievement of students in online courses.

To remain within a manageable framework, the SAIL assessment plan will track the mastery of course level SLOs for five courses during years one and two (Wave 1), five courses during years one, two, and three (Wave 2), and five courses during years two, three, and four (Wave 3). To guarantee valid data for comparison, the process for assessing the course level SLOs will be standardized in both the online section of the course being measured and the seated traditional counterparts. The expectation is that with an increased focus on online course quality, student learning will improve.

Current literature and best practices support conclusions held by Gaston College faculty, staff, and students that quality course development and design are crucial to achievement of course level SLOs in online courses.

Literature Review and Best Practices

As computers and Internet technology have become more popular and accessible in the United States, usage has increased. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007) reported 61.8% of American households owned a computer and 54.7% of households had Internet access during 2003. In 2007, the number of American households with access to the Internet increased to 61.7%. During the Bureau's 2007 survey, respondents were not asked about computer ownership. In March 2009, 63% of American households were connected to the Internet using high-speed Internet connections, up from 55% in March 2008. This growth is attributed to an increase in access of older adults and low income Americans ("U.S. Broadband Penetration Grows", 2009). The increase in home computer usage and the accessibility of Internet services has offered America's community colleges greater opportunities to serve a diverse range of students.

Community colleges are open-door institutions whose mission is to serve all segments of the population (Vaughn, 1999). Allen and Seaman (2005) explain that the students who attend community colleges come from a variety of educational backgrounds and represent a multitude of ages, ethnic, and cultural heritages. Many are first-generation college students or are from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Horn & Nevill, 2006). These students often have life and time conflicts, and many have jobs and other responsibilities (Liu, Gomez, Khan, & Yen, 2007). The open-door, open admissions policy of the community college provides individuals who may not otherwise have access to higher education an opportunity to attend college.

The diversity and life challenges of community college students have made the flexibility of online courses very popular. The innovation of online courses has helped community colleges to better serve students whose job and family situations compete with their abilities to attend seated traditional classes (Muse, 2003; Summers, 2003). Allen and Seaman (2005) define an online course as having at least 80% of the content delivered via the Internet, generally without seated traditional meetings. Online learners make up nearly 22% of the students in higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that during the academic year 2000-2001, community colleges had the largest percentage of online enrollment of any other higher education institution with 1,472,000 out of 3,077,000 students (48%) choosing to take courses within the online environment (Wirt, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen, & Tobin, 2004). During Fall 2007, the reported percentage was 51% (Allen & Seaman, 2008). During 2007, 97% of all community colleges offered online courses (Parsad & Lewis, 2008). According to Lokken (2010), in a nationwide survey of the American Association of Community Colleges conducted by the Instructional Technology Council (ITC), responding institutions reported a 22% increase in online enrollment from 2007 to 2008 compared to only a 2% increase in enrollment overall.

Because distance education has become so popular with the community college student, institutions must respond to this demand by increasing online course offerings. In addition, colleges must maintain the quality of these classes to provide a high quality learning experience for these students. The following literature review examines some of the reasons distance education has become so important to community college students and the factors local institutions need to consider to make online course offerings the best they can be to serve a diverse student population. Section one focuses on the demographics of students while section two addresses many factors that influence the quality of distance education in community colleges.

Demographics of Community College Students

Nationally, community colleges serve students that are older, working adults. Sixty percent are first-generation college students and 51% are single parents reporting an annual income of below $20,000 (Phillipe & Valiga, 2000). The NCES reports that during the 2003-04 academic year, 40% of the nation's community college students were under 24 years of age, 18% were 25–29 years of age, and

35% were age 30 or older. Two-thirds of community college students attend part time, and more than 80% work either full or part time. Thirteen percent come from homes where English is not the primary language, and more than half of community college students come from homes where neither parent attended college. Fifty-nine percent are women. Fifteen percent are Black and 14% are Hispanic (Horn & Nevill, 2006).

Statewide during 2006-07, over 51% of degree-seeking students in the North Carolina Community College system were 25 years of age or older. Sixty-eight percent were employed either full or part time. Sixty-three percent were male. Sixty-two percent were white. Only 20% were enrolled in school full time, taking 12 credit hours or more (NCCCS Fact Book, 2008). Locally, 52% of the students attending Fall 2009 were 25 years of age or older, 38% were male, and 75% were white. Due to the state of the economy and recent layoffs in the area, 56% of students were attending school full time and were currently unemployed or underemployed. The average age of degree-seeking students is 32 years.

In addition to national statistics previously stated, the latest data from the North Carolina Community College System indicated an increase of 32% in online curriculum course registrations in 2005-06 and an increase of over 25% in 2006-07 (NCCCS Fact Book, 2008). Locally, Gaston College is following this trend, reporting an increase of 31% in online enrollment in both 2008 and 2009. During academic year 2010-11, 53% of students took at least one online course.

Online Course Quality

A variety of research supports the importance of online course quality. Quality Matters, a peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses, has received national recognition for fostering continuous improvement in online education and student learning (http://www.qmprogram.org).

Zhang (2005) contends that taking a traditional course and making it available on the Internet will not lead to effective learning. An online course must have an appropriate design and clear expectations in order to guarantee a successful student learning experience. Technology must be available and supported (Bielec & Iadarola, 2007). The institution must offer quality online instruction (Shea et al., 2002).

Importance of Course Design and Clear Expectations

Intelligent design is a major indicator of the success of an online course. A course must be well organized in order to get students off to a good start with online learning (Conrad, 2002). Students need clear directions or they can become confused (Murphy, Mahoney, & Harvell, 2000). In a 2001 study, Swan determined that clear and consistent course structure is one of the three factors which significantly contributes to the success of students in online courses. Janicki and Liegle conducted a literature review in 2001 and found course navigation to be one of the top ten Web-based design concepts within an online course. Likewise, Swan, Shea, Frederickson, Pickett, and Pelz (2000) found consistency in course design is one of the key factors contributing to student success.

An important aspect of course design is the orientation. Whether orientations are seated or online, they are essential tools for student success in online classes. Nash (2005) contends that orientations assist in determining the abilities of students to use the required technology and to dispel the belief that some students have about online classes being easier than traditional classes. Horwath and Williamson (2009) add that instructors may erroneously assume that traditional students, who have been raised in a technologically savvy society, may be adequately prepared for the technology demanded in an online class. An effective orientation can introduce students to new technology while teaching them how to successfully use it in the online environment.

Another essential element in successful online course design is clearly written expectations. When expectations are clear in an online course, students are more satisfied and learn more (Shea et al., 2002). Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, and Chang (2003) stress the importance of clear participant requirements. In a 2001 study, Youngblood, Trede, and DeCorpo found that students were more satisfied with the online experience when course expectations and grading were clarified.

Importance of Collaboration

Frequent, meaningful feedback from the instructor goes hand-in-hand with clear expectations. Shea et al. (2002) and Thurmond, Wambach, Connors, and Frey (2002) found that when students believe that they are receiving timely instructor feedback, they were more satisfied in the online environment. To ensure that the needs of these students are adequately met, online instructors must be available for students. In some cases, traditional office hours for nearby students may be needed. This sort of personal contact seems particularly important for those students who are less comfortable with technology, have little experience learning online, or are having particular trouble mastering the subject matter of the course (Mupinga, Nora, & Yaw, 2006). In other circumstances, it may be sufficient for instructors to make themselves available in a "virtual" sense (Ragan, 2007). Students prefer, and more and more are coming to expect, prompt replies to electronic communications, such as email inquiries or discussion postings. One of the consequences of offering "always available" educational opportunities for students is that the faculty teaching these courses must also be "always available," at least in a virtual sense, if the course is to be a successful learning experience (Stone, 2006). With the adoption of electronic communication tools, such as text messaging, which allow for nearly instantaneous communication, the need for immediate feedback and guidance from online faculty is likely to become even more critical going forward.

Importance of Technology and Support

Quality online instruction requires a commitment from the community college to support technology for both the courses offered and the student services provided. If distance learning is to succeed, administrators must support technology and ensure that the infrastructure is there to support it. Not only do new buildings need the ability to support the latest technology, but older buildings have to be retrofitted to support technological activities, including the seated traditional portion of distance learning classes (Lorenzetti, 2004). Reliable infrastructure such as servers, robust platforms for delivering online content, and innovative technologies for both classes and support services are essential components of quality online instruction.

Technology is the foundation of extending the classroom beyond the campus by bringing courses to students who may not have the ability or the means to attend traditional campus-based classes because of physical disabilities, lack of transportation, or the demands of family and work. Faculty must have access to these learning technologies, be competent in their use, and put these new competencies to work in the online classroom (Floyd, 2003). Students must have access to these technologies and the ability to use them (Jones, 2010). The expectations of distance learning are reasonable, but they are not inexpensive services to implement (Bielec & Iadarola, 2007).

Growth in online learning requires administrative support. It is imperative to understand that ''institutions with successful distance learning programs will exhibit a level of commitment to distance education from the highest levels of the institution'' (Gross, Muscarella, and Pirkl, 1994, p. 14). If a college intends to provide services and programs from a distance, it must continually upgrade technology. This will require a significant investment of resources (Dare, Zapata, & Thomas, 2005). Amid economic pressures, institutions face the challenge to respond to the demands of distance education by upgrading administrative systems, supporting course-management systems, and offering as many online services as possible (Bielec & Iadarola, 2007). For example, legacy networks are feeling the impact of new technologies, such as streaming audio and video, and increased network traffic. These

networks will require an increased investment to keep up with the demand. Infrastructures will have to be upgraded to accommodate increased student Internet usage. The challenge of increased services, support issues, and cost considerations is something colleges have to face (Reconsidering Campus, 2004). Colleges must realize that technological advances are an integral part of the future (Stumpf, McCrimmon, & Davis, 2005).

Importance of Quality Online Instructors

A final component for a successful online program is well-trained and motivated instructors. Kim and Bonk (2006) agree that an instructor's ability to teach online is critical to the quality of online education. Teaching online brings inherent changes that challenge old assumptions regarding effective teaching and learning (Ellsworth, 1997). Instructors have to prepare and present content differently and communicate, connect, and engage with their students in different ways.

Kim and Bonk (2006) found that the most important skill for an online instructor is to be able to moderate and facilitate learning. Pankowski (2004) recommends four components to faculty training: 1) technical training, 2) pedagogical training, 3) mentoring, and 4) online coursework. Unfortunately, she found that over one half of faculty that received training contend that it was inadequate to prepare them for the online environment.

Thoms (2005) notes five reasons that faculty are resistant to online teaching: 1) they doubt their own technical skills, 2) they doubt the reliability of the institution's technology framework, 3) they question the adaptability of certain courses to the online format, 4) they negate the entire online concept, and 5) they are suspect of the administration's motive for encouraging online learning. Thoms concludes that although teaching online is difficult, effective training in developing and teaching an online course can provide faculty with the confidence they need to make it work so that the institution can reach students who are unable to attend seated traditional classes.

Conclusion

As previously stated, the diversity and life challenges of community college students have made the flexibility of online courses very popular. Muse (2003) and Summers (2003) agree that the innovation of online courses has helped community colleges better serve students who have life and family obligations that can stand in the way of them attending seated traditional college classes. Community colleges must create and enforce standards for online course design and delivery that supports the mission of the college and creates an environment in which students can learn.

Assumptions and Limitations of QEP

The SAIL project is subject to the following assumptions and limitations:

1. The course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for both the online and seated traditional courses are the same; therefore, the results will assume that students in the online and seated traditional classes have been exposed to the same material during the course of their studies.

2. The results will assume that all online and seated traditional course sections are taught using content that addresses standard course objectives, learning outcomes, and standard course level SLOs assessment.

3. Students self-select into online courses, regardless of their preparation for this modality.

4. SAIL uses a limited number of courses for assessment which may limit generalizability.

5. Since all faculty may participate in SAIL at any time, students may experience a higher quality online course prior to their participation in a Wave course. This may increase their success in the project and may skew the results. Student learning would be positively affected.

6. Due to normal faculty attrition, Wave faculty may change during the five years of the project.

Implementation Plan

SAIL is a five-year project involving three waves of five courses each for a total of 15 courses. Wave 1 will begin in year one and will continue through year two, Wave 2 will begin in year one and continue through year three, and Wave 3 will begin in year two and continue through year four. Each Wave will report lessons learned to the succeeding Wave. The following table summarizes the courses in each Wave, the participating faculty member, and the potential total impact to student learning based on enrollment in academic year 2010-11.

Table 4: Wave Courses and Faculty

Wave	Course	Participating Faculty Member	QEP Year	Online Enrollment (2010-2011)	Total Enrollment (2010-2011)
1	ART 111: Art Appreciation CIS 110: Introduction to Computers ENG 111: Expository Writing MAT 161: College Algebra SOC 210: Introduction to Sociology	Gary Freeman Kelly Hinson Dr. Joe Argent Tonia Broome Dr. Eric Miller	1-2 (Fall 2011-Spring 2013)	296 883 118 89 156	626 1559 1477 431 548
2	ACC 120: Prin. of Financial Accounting BIO 140: Environmental Biology CJC 112: Criminology HIS 112: World Civilizations II OST 137: Office Software Applications	Elaine Ferguson Shannon Landrum Calvin Shaw Brian Bookout Leslie Martin	1-3 (Fall 2011-Spring 2014)	87 131 105 46 55	244 229 105 193 265
3	ACA 122: College Transfer Success GEL 111: Introductory Geology HEA 110: Personal Health/Wellness LOG 110: Introduction to Logistics REL 110: World Religions	Sherry Sharpe Brian Dibartolo Jacob Surratt James Sisk Dr. Mary Morton	2-4 (Fall 2012-Spring 2015)	100 45 241 24 27	214 125 381 63 301

SAIL officially begins Fall 2011. Instructional Technology Specialist, Karen Duncan, will serve as the QEP Director. Preparations were made during the planning year (2010-11) including the selection of participating instructors. The courses for each Wave were selected through a process of identifying courses with high enrollment or belong within programs which have a large number of online course offerings. Identifying courses that were taught in both modalities for assessment comparison and identifying a commitment from online faculty to participate in SAIL were important in the selection process. Participants in each Wave of SAIL will complete the following steps:

Step 1. Standardize course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Step 2. Standardize SLOs assessment and process for administration of assessment

Step 3. Teach the course and collect baseline data during a semester for the online and all seated, traditional course sections

Step 4. Collect and submit baseline data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis

Step 5. Collect student survey data in online course

Step 6. Use baseline data to establish targets for success comparing online course to seated, traditional course

Step 7. Apply SAIL standards according to the process

Step 8. Teach the newly-developed course

Step 9. Collect and submit data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis

Step 10. Collect student survey data in online course

Step 11. Analyze course assessment data and compare to previously established targets

Step 12. Report findings to the QEP Implementation Team

Step 13. Report findings to the SACS Leadership Team

Step 14. Report lessons learned to next wave, if appropriate

Wave 1 Implementation Process

During Summer 2011, the five faculty members participating in Wave 1 will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs, the SLOs assessments, and the process by which they are measured. The courses will be taught during Fall 2011 using the standardized assessments, and Wave 1 faculty will collect baseline data for course level SLOs. During the Spring 2012 semester, baseline data will be used to establish targets for success, comparing the online Wave course to all seated, traditional courses. Also during this time, Wave 1 instructors will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. The courses in Wave 1 will be verified as having met the standards by the end of Summer 2012. During Fall 2012, the courses will be taught and course level SLOs assessment data will be collected. The data will be analyzed during Spring 2013 and findings will be reported to the QEP Implementation Team, the SACS Leadership Team and lessons learned to Wave 2 faculty. (Note: Wave 1 will progress through the process at an accelerated pace compared to Waves 2 and 3, due to the advanced level of expertise of faculty participating in this Wave.)

Wave 2 Implementation Process

The five faculty members participating in Wave 2 will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs, the SLOs assessments, and the process by which they are measured by the end of Fall 2011. The courses will be taught during Spring 2012 using the standardized assessments, and Wave 2 faculty will collect baseline data for course level SLOs. During the Fall 2012 semester, baseline data will be used to establish targets for success, comparing the online Wave course to all seated, traditional courses. Also during this time, Wave 2 instructors will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. Courses in Wave 2 will be verified as having met the standards by the end of Fall 2013. During Spring 2014, the courses will be taught, and course level SLOs assessment data will be collected. The data will be analyzed during Fall 2014 and findings will be reported to the QEP Implementation Team, the SACS Leadership Team and lessons learned to Wave 3 faculty.

Wave 3 Implementation Process

The five faculty members participating in Wave 3 faculty will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs, the SLOs assessments, and the process by which they are measured by the end of Fall 2012. The courses will be taught during Spring 2013 using the standardized

assessments, and Wave 3 faculty will collect baseline data for course level SLOs. During the Fall 2013 semester, baseline data will be used to establish targets for success, comparing the online Wave course to all seated, traditional courses. Also during this time, Wave 3 instructors will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. The courses in Wave 3 will be verified as having met the standards by the end of Fall 2014. During Spring 2015, the courses will be taught, and course level SLOs assessment data will be collected. The data will be analyzed during Fall 2015 and findings will be reported to the QEP Implementation Team and the SACS Leadership Team. Lessons learned from this wave and the SAIL project may be used to apply the SAIL course standards College wide.

Year five of the QEP will be reserved for a review of the SAIL project and its impact. See Table 5 for a timeline of the events described above.

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Table 5: Wave Timeline

	Planning Year 2011	Year 1 2011-2012		Year 2 2012-2013	
	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING	FALL	SPRING
Wave 1 5 Courses	Work with Assessment Specialist to Standardize Course Level SLOs, SLOs Assessments and Process	Teach Course Using Standardized Assessments and Collect Baseline Data for Course Level SLOs	Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Apply SAIL Standards by the End of Summer Semester (2012)	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data and Report Lessons Learned to Next Wave
Wave 2 5 Courses		Work with Assessment Specialist to Standardize Course Level SLOs, SLOs Assessments and Process	Teach Course Using Standardized Assessments and Collect Baseline Data for Course Level SLOs	Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Develop Course with SAIL Standards	Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Develop Course with SAIL Standards
Wave 3 5 Courses				Work with Assessment Specialist to Standardize Course Level SLOs, SLOs Assessments and Process	Teach Course Using Standardized Assessments and Collect Baseline Data for Course Level SLOs

Table 5: Wave Timeline

Year 3 2013-2014		Year 4 2014-2015		Year 5 2015-2016	
FALL	**SPRING**	**FALL**	**SPRING**	**FALL**	**SPRING**
Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data
Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Apply SAIL Standards by the End of Semester	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data and Report Lessons Learned to Next Wave	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data	
Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Develop Course with SAIL Standards	Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Develop Course with SAIL Standards	Work with Instructional Technology Specialist to Apply SAIL Standards by the End of Semester	Teach Course and Collect Data	Analyze Data and Report Lessons Learned	

As delineated in Tables 6-8, roles, activities, and timelines for the implementation process are as follows:

Wave 1: ART 111, CIS 110, ENG 111, MAT 161, SOC 210

Table 6: Implementation Plan Details

Implementation Process (Activities)	Responsible Party (Roles)	Event Timeline
Standardize course level SLOs	Wave 1 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Summer 2011-Fall 2011
Standardize SLOs assessment and process for administration of assessment	Wave 1 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Summer 2011-Fall 2011
Teach the course and collect baseline data during a semester for the online and all seated, traditional course sections	Wave 1 Faculty Seated, traditional Instructors	Fall 2011
Collect and submit baseline data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2011
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2011
Use baseline data to establish targets for success comparing online course to seated, traditional course	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2011
Apply SAIL standards according to the process	Wave 1 Faculty ITS	Spring 2012-Summer 2012
Teach the newly-developed course	Wave 1 Faculty	Fall 2012
Collect and submit data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2012
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2012
Analyze course assessment data and compare to previously established targets	Wave 1 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2013
Report findings to the QEP Implementation Team	QEP Director	Spring 2013
Report findings to the SACS Leadership Team	QEP Director	Spring 2013
Report lessons learned to next Wave, if appropriate	QEP Director QEP Implementation Team	Spring 2013

Wave 2: ACC 120, BIO 140, CJC 112, HIS 112, OST 137

Table 7: Implementation Plan Details

Implementation Process (Activities)	Responsible Party (Roles)	Event Timeline
Standardize course level SLOs	Wave 2 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Fall 2011-Spring 2012
Standardize SLOs assessment and process for administration of assessment	Wave 2 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Fall 2011-Spring 2012
Teach the course and collect baseline data during a semester for the online and all seated, traditional course sections	Wave 2 Faculty Seated, traditional Instructors	Spring 2012
Collect and submit baseline data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2012
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2012
Use baseline data to establish targets for success comparing online course to seated, traditional course	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2012
Apply SAIL standards according to the process	Wave 2 Faculty ITS	Fall 2012-Fall 2013
Teach the newly-developed course	Wave 2 Faculty	Spring 2014
Collect and submit data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2014
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2014
Analyze course assessment data and compare to previously established targets	Wave 2 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2014
Report findings to the QEP Implementation Team	QEP Director	Fall 2014
Report findings to the SACS Leadership Team	QEP Director	Fall 2014
Report lessons learned to next Wave, if appropriate	QEP Director QEP Implementation Team	Fall 2014

Wave 3: ACA 122, GEL 111, HEA 110, LOG 110, REL 110

Table 8: Implementation Plan Details

Implementation Process (Activities)	Responsible Party (Roles)	Event Timeline
Standardize course level SLOs	Wave 3 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Fall 2011-Fall 2012
Standardize SLOs assessment and process for administration of assessment	Wave 3 Faculty Assessment Specialist	Fall 2011-Fall 2012
Teach the course and collect baseline data during a semester for the online and all seated, traditional course sections	Wave 3 Faculty Seated, traditional Instructors	Spring 2013
Collect and submit baseline data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2013
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2013
Use baseline data to establish targets for success comparing online course to seated, traditional course	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2013
Apply SAIL standards according to the process	Wave 3 Faculty ITS	Fall 2013-Fall 2014
Teach the newly-developed course	Wave 3 Faculty	Spring 2015
Collect and submit data for both direct and indirect assessments to Assessment Committee for analysis	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2015
Collect student survey data in online course	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Spring 2015
Analyze course assessment data and compare to previously established targets	Wave 3 Faculty QEP Director Assessment Committee	Fall 2015
Report findings to the QEP Implementation Team	QEP Director	Fall 2015
Report findings to the SACS Leadership Team	QEP Director	Fall 2015
Report lessons learned to next Wave, if appropriate	QEP Director QEP Implementation Team	Fall 2015

Comprehensive Assessment Plan

Direct Measures of Assessment

Gaston College uses assessment of course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to measure student learning. SLOs are statements that specify what a student will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate upon completion of the course (Scagliola, 2007). Since the success of SAIL is tied directly to student learning, the project's success will be measured by course level SLOs in each of the participating courses.

Each course assesses SLOs differently. Some courses use a final exam to assess course level SLOs, while others use projects or other assignments. The type of assessment of SLOs for the courses tracked in SAIL will not be dictated; this decision will be made at the departmental level.

In order to compare the achievement of SLOs in different sections of the same course, it is important for all classes offered to assess them in the same manner. For example, if an instructor in one course administers a final exam that measures SLOs, an instructor in another section of that same course must use the same final exam so that the assessments can be compared. In addition, the final exam must be administered in the same manner. If an instructor in one section of a course allows students to use the book to take the final exam, so must the instructors in comparable sections of that same course.

In order to have reliable data for comparison, the first task of SAIL will be to standardize the online course level SLOs, the SLOs assessments, and processes with sections of the same class taught in the seated, traditional format. In a subsequent semester, the faculty member will teach the online course and collect baseline data. Data will also be collected from seated, traditional courses during this time frame. The course level SLOs data from the online class can be compared to the SLOs data from the classes taught in a seated, traditional modality since the data is being collected in the same manner. Analysis of the baseline data will be used to answer the following formative evaluation questions for each Wave course:

- What is the baseline quantitative performance on SLOs for students in the online courses? (What percentage of online students successfully completed the questions related to SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3, etc.?)

- What is the baseline quantitative performance on SLOs for students in seated, traditional courses? (What percentage of seated, traditional students successfully completed the questions related to SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3, etc.?)

- How does baseline data for students' performance compare? (Were the percentages for the online course lower, higher, etc.?)

Results from the analysis questions will be used to establish targets for success for each Wave course. Targets for success will also be established within the online environment comparing the course to itself before the SAIL standards are applied and after.

The SAIL standards will then be applied to the online class and verified according to the SAIL Quality Review process (Appendix J). The course will then be taught during a following semester. The course level SLOs data from the online class will again be compared to the SLOs data from the classes taught in the seated, traditional format, and the same questions will be answered for each Wave:

- What is the quantitative performance of SLOs for students in the online courses after SAIL standards were applied? (What percentage of students successfully completed the questions related to SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3, etc.?)
- What is the quantitative performance of SLOs for students in seated, traditional courses after SAIL standards were applied? (What percentage of students successfully completed the questions related to SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3, etc.?)
- How does the data compare after SAIL standards were applied? (Were the percentages for the online course lower, higher, etc.?)

Determination of Success

Targets for the improvement of students' performance once the SAIL standards have been applied to each Wave course will be evaluated during the analysis phase of the project. If targets are met, then the SAIL quality standards had a successful impact and provided a high quality learning experience for students enrolled in the Wave courses. If targets are not met, action plans will be established including a review of the SAIL standards, changes in the delivery and instruction of the course, and modification of the course-level assessments. Lessons learned from the assessment process will be passed to each successive Wave. Wave courses will continue to be assessed throughout the life of the QEP.

This assessment process is detailed in tables 9-11. Each table includes the questions to inform the formative evaluation of the process and the timeline for review for each of Waves 1 through 3.

Wave 1: ART 111, CIS 110, ENG 111, MAT 161, SOC 210

Table 9: Direct Assessment Plan Details

Direct Assessment Question	Assessment Results Collected	Data Analysis Performed
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 1 online courses?	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 1 seated, traditional courses?	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
How does baseline data for Wave 1 students' performance compare?	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
What targets for success are established?	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 1 online courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 1 seated, traditional courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
How does the data compare after SAIL standards were applied?	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
Was the target for success met?	Fall 2012	Spring 2013

Wave 2: ACC 120, BIO 140, CJC 112, HIS 112, OST 137

Table 10: Direct Assessment Plan Details

Direct Assessment Question	Assessment Results Collected	Data Analysis Performed
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 2 online courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 2 seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012
How does baseline data for Wave 2 students' performance compare?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012
What targets for success are established?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 2 online courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 2 seated, traditional courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
How does the data compare after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
Was the target for success met?	Spring 2014	Fall 2014

Wave 3: ACA 122, GEL 111, HEA 110, LOG 110, REL 110

Table 11: Direct Assessment Plan Details

Direct Assessment Question	Assessment Results Collected	Data Analysis Performed
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 3 online courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
What is the baseline quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 3 seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
How does baseline data for Wave 3 students' performance compare?	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
What targets for success are established?	Spring 2013	Fall 2013
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in the Wave 3 online courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2015	Fall 2015
What is the quantitative performance of course level SLOs for students in Wave 3 seated, traditional courses after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2015	Fall 2015
How does the data compare after SAIL standards were applied?	Spring 2015	Fall 2015
Was the target for success met?	Spring 2015	Fall 2015

Indirect Measures of Assessment

Various indirect measures of assessment will be used to determine the effectiveness of SAIL. The following questions will be answered each time data is collected during the three Waves, both for baseline data and data collected after the SAIL standards have been applied. Targets for success will be established for the indirect measures of assessment along with the direct measures of assessment. [*(4) A clear description of the planned use of course-level assessment data and indirect measures was not included.]*

- What is the failure rate for students in the online courses?
- What is the failure rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?
- What is the retention rate for students in the online courses?
- What is the retention rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?
- How does this data compare each time it is collected?

Each semester Gaston College asks students to evaluate the instruction in the courses in which they are enrolled. In addition to the standard course evaluation items, SAIL students will be asked questions relating to the new standards in the form of a survey (Appendix K). The responses will be analyzed to determine how the SAIL standards improved the student experience.

An integral part of SAIL is technology training. Professional development will be offered regularly throughout the life of the QEP. Upon completion of each training session, faculty will provide feedback via an evaluation form (Appendix L). The evaluations will be analyzed to determine how the experience enhances faculty development. Since the training will be available to the entire College community, its impact will extend beyond the SAIL project to all College faculty, staff, and consequently, all students.

Conclusion

During the final data analysis in the fifth year, the following questions will be addressed for each of the 15 Wave courses:

- Does student mastery of course level SLOs increase when the SAIL standards are applied?
- What is the effect of the application of the SAIL standards on course failure rates?
- What is the effect of the application of the SAIL standards on course retention rates?

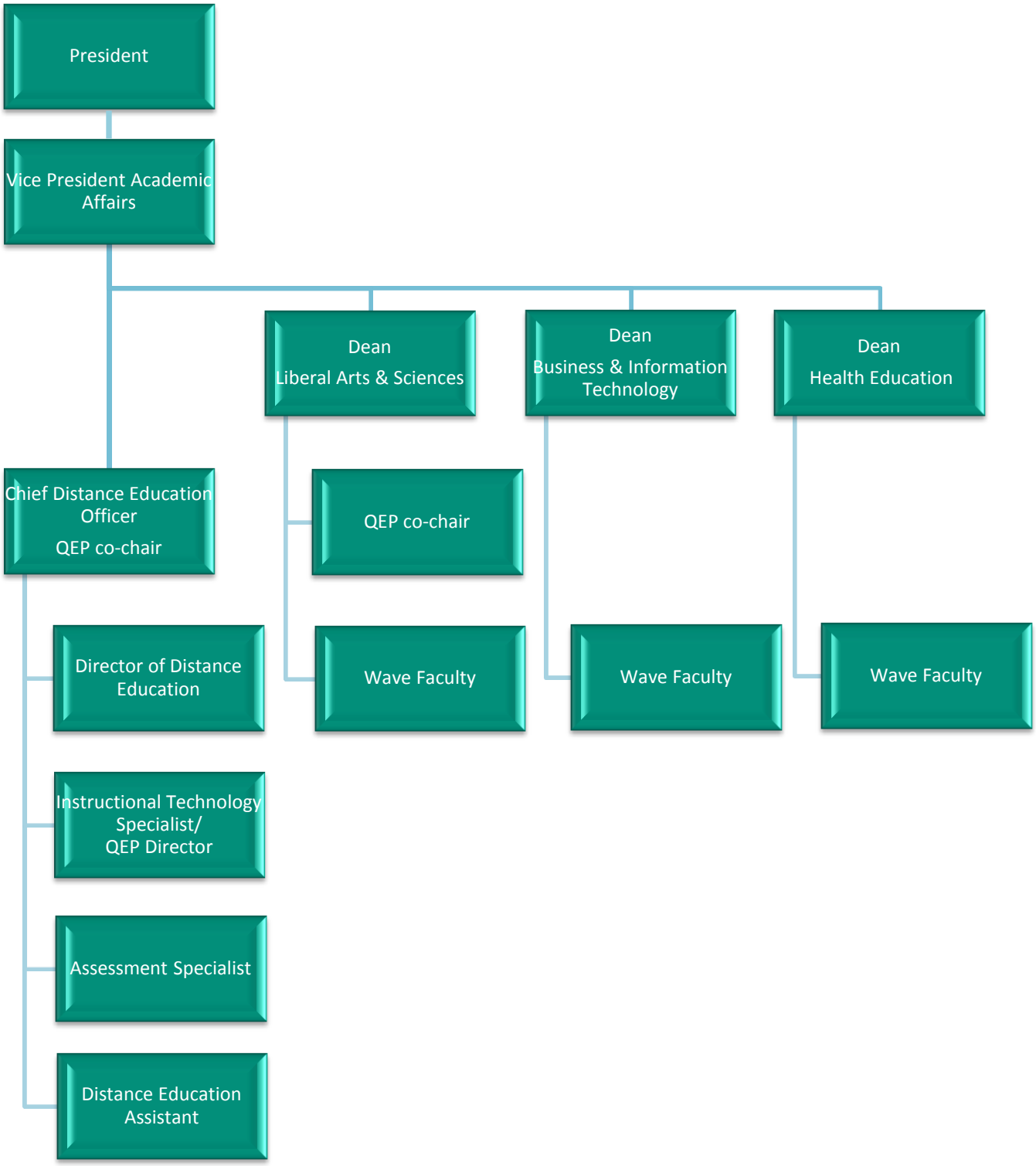
See Table 12 for a summary of the indirect assessment plan details for each Wave.

Table 12: Indirect Assessment Plan Details

Indirect Assessment Question	Wave 1 Data Analysis Performed	Wave 2 Data Analysis Performed	Wave 3 Data Analysis Performed
Based on the baseline data collected, what is the failure rate for students in the online courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Based on the baseline data collected, what is the failure rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Based on the baseline data collected, what is the retention rate for students in the online courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Based on the baseline data collected, what is the retention rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Based on the baseline data collected, how does the failure rate and retention rate data compare?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Targets for success related to the indirect assessment questions will be established.	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Based on the baseline data collected, how do students rate their experience in the online course?	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, what is the failure rate for students in the online courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, what is the failure rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, what is the retention rate for students in the online courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, what is the retention rate for students in the seated, traditional courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, how does the failure rate and retention rate data compare?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Were the targets for success related to the indirect assessment questions met?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Once the SAIL standards have been applied, how do students rate their experience in the online course?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
How many technology-related professional development opportunities were offered?	Each semester	Each semester	Each semester
How many participated in technology-related professional development opportunities?	Each semester	Each semester	Each semester
What was the feedback from the technology-related professional development opportunities?	Each semester	Each semester	Each semester
Does student mastery of SLOs increase in the Wave courses when the SAIL standards are applied?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
What is the effect of the application of the SAIL standards on course failure rates for the Wave courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
What is the effect of the application of the SAIL standards on course retention rates for the Wave courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
How did the new SAIL standards improve the student experience in the Wave courses?	Spring 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015

Organizational Structure for QEP Implementation

Figure 2: Organizational Structure for QEP Implementation



SAIL Resources and Budget

The College has approved a total of $4,876,218 to implement, support, and assess SAIL. The funding for SAIL will be provided by a combination of State and local money. To the extent possible, costs will be incurred by equipment and operational funds provided by the State of North Carolina's budget allotment. In the event the QEP needs exceed allocated State funds, an unrestricted gift of $3 million is available from the Gaston College Foundation to support the project.

Current budget figures contain costs that are necessary to implement the QEP project and sustain distance learning for the Institution at large. A significant amount of in-kind dollars toward online course quality and enhancing the technology infrastructure have already been invested, through the normal budget process. This investment has provided a strong foundation for a successful launch of the QEP in 2011-2012. The total project costs of $4,876,218 represent $2,866,987 from existing budgetary resources (in-kind) and $2,009,231 new monies, representing true direct QEP costs.

The tables below delineate the in-kind money associated with the implementation of the QEP as well as the actual new money necessary for a successful project.

Table 13: Represents In-Kind Costs Summary for SAIL

	Planning and Development	Year 1 2011-2012	Year 2 2012-2013	Year 3 2013-2014	Year 4 2014-2015	Year 5 2015-2016	Total
Human Resources	$115,583	$119,050	$122,622	$126,300	$130,090	$133,992	$747,637
Major Equipment	$502,750	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$1,502,750
Minor Equipment	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Operational	$91,600	$87,000	$87,000	$117,000	$117,000	$117,000	$616,600
Total	$709,933	$406,050	$409,622	$443,300	$447,090	$450,992	$2,866,987

Table 14: Represents Direct QEP Costs Summary for SAIL

	Planning and Development	Year 1 2011-2012	Year 2 2012-2013	Year 3 2013-2014	Year 4 2014-2015	Year 5 2015-2016	Total
Human Resources	$179,636	$235,022	$230,253	$222,649	$218,787	$216,438	$1,302,785
Major Equipment	$12,637	$6,000	$6,000	$14,000	$12,000	$6,000	$56,637
Minor Equipment	$4,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$39,000
Operational	$78,623	$126,490	$119,424	$95,424	$95,424	$95,424	$610,809
Total	$274,896	$374,512	$362,677	$339,073	$333,211	$324,862	$2,009,231
*$476,573 of this amount is dedicated to the purchase of software, instructional supplies, and other technologies							

The financial allocation of human resources, operational funding, and equipment dollars confirms Gaston College's commitment to online learning and the SAIL project.

TOTAL SAIL COST **$4,876,218**

The following information clarifies the QEP budget indicating the in-kind money as well as the true direct cost for the QEP project.

Human Resources

A significant investment has been allotted to human resources. A project of this magnitude cannot succeed without the proper leadership and sufficient faculty and staff resources. The College's commitment to SAIL is apparent due to its willingness to provide funding for adequate personnel. A total of $747,637 in-kind and $1,302,785 new money has been allocated to human resources for SAIL for a total of $2,050,422.

Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS)/QEP Director. The ITS is a full-time, twelve-month faculty member who will dedicate 100% effort towards the implementation and management of the QEP as well as technology training for online instructors. The estimated salary, including benefits, for this position is $84,000. The salary for the second through the fifth years of the project includes a 3% salary increase. This is a new position; therefore, all monies related to this position are direct QEP costs.

Director of Distance Education. The Director of Distance Education is a full-time, twelve- month staff member who will dedicate 100% effort towards supporting all distance education faculty and course needs. The estimated salary, including benefits, for this position is $86,200. The salary for the second through the fifth years of the project includes a 3% salary increase. This is an established position at the college; therefore, represents an in-kind cost in the budget.

Distance Education Assistant. The Distance Education Assistant is a part-time (30 hours per week), twelve-month staff member who will dedicate 100% effort providing technical support to all distance education faculty and students. The estimated salary for this position is $31,536. The salary for the second through the fifth years of the project includes a 3% salary increase. This is a new position; therefore, all monies related to this position are direct QEP costs.

Chief Distance Education Officer/QEP Implementation Team Co-Chair. The Chief Distance Education Officer is a full-time, twelve- month staff position who will dedicate 25% effort towards providing administrative support of distance education, including the SAIL project. The estimated percent salary, including benefits, for this position is $29,383. The salary for the second through the fifth years of the project includes a 3% salary increase. This is an established position at the College; therefore, represents an in-kind cost in the budget.

QEP Implementation Team Co-Chair. This position is a full-time, twelve-month faculty member who received five hours of release time during QEP planning and development including Fall 2010, Spring 2011, and Summer 2011 semesters. The release time was paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which is $2,400 per semester for a total of $7,200. This is a new position; therefore, all monies related to this position are direct QEP costs.

Assessment Specialist. The Assessment Specialist is a full-time faculty member who will receive release from teaching responsibilities from Summer 2011 through Spring 2013. The specialist will assist the Wave faculty with developing course level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and standardizing the process for assessment in his or her online courses. During Summer 2011 the specialist will devote full-time efforts to SAIL and will be paid a full-time salary of $11,000. Subsequent release time of three hours per semester for five semesters will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, equaling $1,440 per semester for a total of $7,200. This is a new position; therefore, all monies related to this position are direct QEP costs.

Wave 1 Faculty. During the Summer 2011 semester, the five faculty members participating in Wave 1 will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs assessments and the

process by which they are measured. The courses will be taught during Fall 2011 using the standardized assessments, and Wave 1 faculty will collect baseline data for SLOs. The five Wave 1 faculty will receive six hours of release time. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $2,880 per instructor for a total of $14,400.

During the Spring 2012 semester, Wave 1faculty will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. The five Wave 1 faculty will receive six hours of release time. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $2,880 per instructor for a total of $14,400.

The courses in Wave 1 will be verified as having met the SAIL standards by the end of Summer 2012 semester. A review team will evaluate each of the Wave 1 courses against the SAIL standards. The review team will consist of three faculty/staff members who will each receive a stipend of $100. The total costs for the Wave 1 course reviews will be $300 per course for a total of $1,500.

Each Wave 1 faculty member will receive a stipend for meeting the SAIL standards. The stipend will vary based on the instructor's participation in the online quality pilot project. Stipends will be paid as follows for a total expenditure of $4,000:

Course	Amount
ART 111	$750
CIS 110	$1,000
ENG 111	$750
MAT 161	$750
SOC 210	$750

All monies paid to Wave 1 faculty represent direct QEP costs.

Wave 2 Faculty. The five faculty members participating in Wave 2 will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs assessments and the process by which they are measured by the end of Fall 2011. The courses will be taught during Spring 2012 using the standardized assessments, and Wave 2 faculty will collect baseline data for SLOs. The five Wave 2 faculty will receive three hours of release time during the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $1,440 per instructor, per semester for a total of $14,400.

During the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, Wave 2 faculty will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. The five Wave 2 faculty will receive three hours of release time during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $1,440 per instructor, per semester for a total of $14,400.

The courses in Wave 2 will be verified as having met the SAIL standards by the end of Fall 2013 semester. A review team will evaluate each of the Wave 2 courses against the SAIL standards. The review team will consist of three faculty/staff members who will each receive a stipend of $100. The total costs for the Wave 2 course reviews will be $300 per course for a total of $1,500.

Each Wave 2 faculty member will receive a stipend for meeting the SAIL standards. The stipend will vary based on the instructor's participation in the online quality pilot project. Stipends will be paid as follows for a total expenditure of $4,500:

Course	Amount
ACC 120	$1,000
BIO 140	$1,000
CJC 112	$1,000
HIS 112	$750
OST 137	$750

All monies paid to Wave 2 faculty represent direct QEP costs.

Wave 3 Faculty. The five faculty members participating in Wave 3 will work with the Assessment Specialist to standardize course level SLOs assessments and the process by which they are measured by the end of Fall 2012 semester. The courses will be taught during Spring 2013 semester using the standardized assessments, and Wave 3 faculty will collect baseline data for SLOs. The five Wave 3 faculty will receive three hours of release time during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $1,440 per instructor, per semester for a total of $14,400.

During the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters, Wave 3 faculty will begin working with the Instructional Technology Specialist applying the new SAIL course standards. The five Wave 3 faculty will receive three hours of release time during the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters. The release time will be paid at a rate of $30 per hour, which will be $1,440 per instructor, per semester for a total of $14,400.

The courses in Wave 3 will be verified as having met the SAIL standards by the end of Fall 2014 semester. A review team will evaluate each of the Wave 3 courses against the SAIL standards. The review team will consist of three faculty/staff members who will each receive a stipend of $100. The total costs for the Wave 3 course reviews will be $300 per course for a total of $1,500.

Each Wave 3 faculty member will receive a stipend for meeting the SAIL standards. The stipend will vary based on the instructor's participation in the online quality pilot project. Stipends will be paid as follows for a total expenditure of $4,750:

Course	Amount
ACA 122	$1,000
GEL 111	$1,000
HEA 110	$750
LOG 110	$1,000
REL 110	$1,000

All monies paid to Wave 3 faculty represent direct QEP costs.

Other Online Courses. Online course faculty members who are not participating in a Wave are still encouraged to meet the SAIL standards. Budget estimates are based on the following number of estimated courses meeting the SAIL quality standards during each of the next five years, for a total of 100 estimated courses over the life of the QEP. The total quality incentives equal $100,000 and the total for course reviews equals $30,000 for a total investment of $130,000. All monies related to the SAIL standards represent direct QEP costs.

Year 1	10 Courses	Quality Incentive	$10,000
		Course Reviewers	$3,000
Year 2	20 Courses	Quality Incentive	$20,000
		Course Reviewers	$6,000
Year 3	20 Courses	Quality Incentive	$20,000
		Course Reviewers	$6,000
Year 4	25 Courses	Quality Incentive	$25,000
		Course Reviewers	$7,500
Year 5	25 Courses	Quality Incentive	$25,000
		Course Reviewers	$7,500

Faculty Training. A total of $120,000 is allocated to support on-campus faculty training workshops related to the QEP. This money represents $20,000 spent during planning and development and for each of years one through five of the QEP. These training monies represent direct QEP costs. Not included in the QEP budget, additional money from divisional and College budgets is available for discipline- specific and other professional development costs.

QEP Consultant. The QEP Implementation Team utilized the expertise of Dr. Nancy Cooley, president of Florida State College in Jacksonville's Open College. While Dr. Cooley graciously donated her time, Gaston College paid her expenses for a total of $900. This expenditure represents a direct QEP cost.

Technology Consultant Fee. Recognizing the importance of having and maintaining a state of the art technology infrastructure to support the SAIL initiative, Gaston College has secured funds to acquire consultation services as needed. The consultation services will be used to assist the College in maintaining, designing, and aligning the current infrastructure which is used to deliver and manage online courses. This technology is essential to adequately support the equipment and software necessary for the QEP. During the planning and development phase for the QEP, consultation services

were $25,000. The SAIL budget will also fund consultation fees during years one through five of the QEP to maintain a secure and functioning network. The cost will be $30,000 per year for a total cost of $175,000. This expenditure represents a direct QEP cost.

Equipment

The SAIL project requires the proper equipment to be successful. Adequate equipment will be provided to faculty and students to meet the project's requirements. A total of $1,502,750 in-kind and $95,637 direct QEP money has been allocated to equipment for SAIL for a total of $1,598,387.

College Technology/Infrastructure. The College has made a commitment to support a strong network infrastructure to support new technologies including distance education. This in-kind funding of $1,502,750 will support the implementation and use of technologies over the life of the QEP, representing $502,750 during the planning and development of SAIL, and an additional $200,000 for each of years one through five.

Faculty Resource Center. The Faculty Resource Center was established during the planning and development of SAIL. This center houses eight computers and other supporting technology. It is used for small group training sessions and other activities to foster excellence in teaching. It is also used to encourage the exploration and integration of technology in the classroom. This new money, a direct QEP cost totaling $42,637, consists of $24,637 dedicated to major equipment purchases and $18,000 to minor equipment purchases. These funds will support the Center throughout the life of the QEP. During the planning and development of SAIL, $10,637 was spent for major equipment and $3,000 for minor equipment to outfit the Center. An additional $14,000 is allocated for major equipment replacement during years three and four of the QEP. During each of years one through five, an additional $3,000 is allocated for new and replacement minor equipment. All monies related to the Faculty Resource Center are direct QEP costs.

Student/Faculty Resources. New technologies will be purchased for use by students and faculty in both major and minor equipment areas for a total of $53,000 over the life of the QEP. This figure represents $2,000 in major equipment and $1,000 in minor equipment spent during the planning and development of SAIL. During each of years one through five, an additional $6,000 in major equipment and $4,000 in minor equipment is allocated for student and faculty resources. All monies related to student and faculty resources are direct QEP costs.

Operational

A substantial operational budget is allocated for the SAIL project. A total of $616,600 in-kind and $610,809 direct QEP money has been allocated to SAIL operational needs for a total of $1,227,409.

Blackboard Hosting Fee. Gaston College uses Blackboard as its Learning Management System and will continue to do so throughout the life of the QEP. During the planning and development year and for the next two years, the North Carolina Community College System will pay the cost of licensing the software. During years three through five, Gaston College expects to pay these fees. The College also contracts with Blackboard, Inc. for hosting services. The total investment in Blackboard over the life of the QEP will be $510,000 in-kind money.

Faculty Resource Center. The Faculty Resource Center will require operational funding, including annual upgrades to software and the purchasing of other supplies and new software. The total amount of direct QEP money allocated for SAIL is $15,398 which represents $2,898 spent during planning and development, and $2,500 each of years one through five of the QEP.

Marketing. The success of SAIL depends on a strong marketing effort to the College community. While many faculty, staff, students, and community members have been involved in elements of the planning and development of the QEP, they need to be made aware of the importance of the project and its impact on the College as a whole. A total amount of $63,736 has been allocated for the marketing of SAIL. This new money represents $25,800 spent during planning and development, $13,240 during year one, and $6,174 each of years two through five. All monies related to the marketing the QEP represent direct costs.

Printing. The photocopying and reproduction of training materials and other SAIL needs are represented by an allocation of $6,000, representing $1,000 spent during planning and development and each of years one through five. All printing costs associated with the QEP are direct costs.

Conferences, Training, Travel. The SAIL project requires that participants and members of the QEP leadership remain abreast of the latest technologies and best practices in distance education. A total of $60,000 has been allocated to fund the cost of attending conferences, workshops, etc., representing $10,000 spent during planning and development and each of years one through five. This represents direct QEP costs.

Online Tutoring Software. A one-year trial for Smarthinking, an online tutoring service, was purchased for use campus wide during the planning and development year at a cost of $24,000. The College plans to continue the contract during years one and two of the QEP while the value of a local online tutoring service is investigated. The cost during years one and two of SAIL will be $48,000 for a total investment of $72,000. All monies related to online tutoring software represent direct QEP costs.

Collaboration Software. A high quality online course requires meaningful interaction be established between the instructor and students. Gaston College will require the use of collaborative software to accomplish this goal. During the planning and development year, $4,600 was spent on two virtual classrooms to test the use of collaboration software to engage students in the online environment, these courses were provided with in-kind monies. As a result, Blackboard Collaborate was selected by the Technology Tools committee to be used for collaboration purposes campus wide at a cost of $31,000 per year. Total costs of collaboration software will be $155,000, representing direct QEP costs. Over the life of the QEP $159,600 will be invested in this area.

Software. The QEP software budget includes both in-kind and direct QEP money representing a total of $263,175. This includes $17,000 for the Microsoft Office Suite annual license for campus computers, including faculty and staff offices, as well as computer labs available for student use. This amount is in-kind and is allocated during the planning and development year and each of years one through five of the QEP. A total of $161,175 is allocated for the purchase of new software such as Camtasia, Photoshop, SoftChalk, etc. which will be used by faculty to create high-quality online classes and to meet the SAIL standards. During the planning and development year, $11,175 was spent on software and $30,000 is allotted for each of years one through five. All new software purchases represent direct QEP costs.

Instructional Supplies. Instructional supplies include operational items that support instruction in distance education as it relates to the QEP. The total allocation for instructional supplies is $73,000. This new money represents $3,000 for the planning and development year and $14,000 for each of years one through five.

Office Supplies. Office supplies include operational items that support the administration of SAIL. The total allocation for office supplies is $4,500. This new money represents $750 in the planning and development year and for each of years one through five.

Tables 15-17 provide an outline of the SAIL budget beginning with the planning and development year for human resources, equipment, and operational expenses. The tables indicate the allocation of in-kind and new monies in each category. The shaded amounts in the tables reflect the actual direct costs associated with the implementation of the QEP.

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Table 15: Represents the QEP Costs for Human Resources

Human Resources	QEP Costs by Year		
		Planning and Development	Year 1 2011-2012
	Human Resources		
	Instructional Technology Specialist Salary and Benefits	$84,000	$86,520
	Director of Distance Education Salary and Benefits	$86,200	$88,786
	Distance Education Assistant Salary and Benefits Part-time 30 hours per week	$31,536	$32,482
	Chief Distance Education Officer 25% Salary and Benefits	$29,383	$30,264
	QEP IT Co-Chair – Release Time 5 contact hours for 3 semesters at $30/hour	$7,200	
	Assessment Specialist – Release Time 3 contact hours for 5 semesters at $30/hour	$11,000	$4,320
	Wave 1		
	Faculty Incentives (release time)		$28,800
	SAIL Quality Course Development		$4,000
	SAIL Quality Course Reviewer		$1,500
	Wave 2		
	Faculty Incentives (release time)		$14,400
	SAIL Quality Course Development		
	SAIL Quality Course Reviewer		
	Wave 3		
	Faculty Incentives (release time)		
	SAIL Quality Course Development		
	SAIL Quality Course Reviewer		
	Faculty Incentives		
	SAIL Quality Course Development		$10,000
	SAIL Quality Course Reviewer		$3,000
	Faculty Training	$20,000	$20,000
	QEP Consultants	$900	
	Technology Consultant Fees	$25,000	$30,000
	TOTAL	$295,219	$354,072

Year 2 2012-2013	Year 3 2013-2014	Year 4 2014-2015	Year 5 2015-2016	Total Project Cost
$89,116	$91,789	$94,543	$97,379	$543,347
$91,450	$94,193	$97,019	$99,929	$557,577
$33,457	$34,460	$35,494	$36,559	$203,988
$31,172	$32,107	$33,071	$34,063	$190,060
				$7,200
$2,880				$18,200
				$28,800
				$4,000
				$1,500
$14,400				$28,800
	$4,500			$4,500
	$1,500			$1,500
$14,400	$14,400			$28,800
		$4,750		$4,750
		$1,500		$1,500
$20,000	$20,000	$25,000	$25,000	$100,000
$6,000	$6,000	$7,500	$7,500	$30,000
$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$120,000
				$900
$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$175,000
$352,875	$348,949	$348,877	$350,430	$2,050,422

Table 16: Represents the QEP Costs for Equipment

	QEP Costs by Year		
		Planning and Development	Year 1 2011-2012
Equipment	**Major Equipment**		
	College Technology/Infrastructure	$502,750	$200,000
	Faculty Resource Center (FRC)	$10,637	
	Student/Faculty resources	$2,000	$6,000
	TOTAL	$515,387	$206,000
	Minor Equipment		
	Faculty Resource Center (FRC)	$3,000	$3,000
	Student/Faculty resources	$1,000	$4,000
	TOTAL	$4,000	$7,000

Table 17: Represents the QEP Costs for Operations

	QEP Costs by Year		
		Planning and Development	Year 1 2011-2012
Operational	**Operational**		
	Blackboard Hosting Fee	$70,000	$70,000
	Faculty Resource Center (FRC)	$2,898	$2,500
	Marketing	$25,800	$13,240
	Printing	$1,000	$1,000
	Conferences, Training, Travel	$10,000	$10,000
	Online Tutoring Software	$24,000	$24,000
	Blackboard Collaborate Software	$4,600	
			$31,000
	Software	$17,000	$17,000
	New Money	$11,175	$30,000
	Instructional Supplies	$3,000	$14,000
	Office Supplies	$750	$750
	TOTAL	$170,223	$213,490

Year 2 2012-2013	Year 3 2013-2014	Year 4 2014-2015	Year 5 2015-2016	Total Project Cost
$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$1,502,750
	$8,000	$6,000		$24,637
$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$6,000	$32,000
$206,000	$214,000	$212,000	$206,000	$1,559,387
$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$18,000
$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$21,000
$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$39,000

Year 2 2012-2013	Year 3 2013-2014	Year 4 2014-2015	Year 5 2015-2016	Total Project Cost
$70,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$510,000
$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$15,398
$6,174	$6,174	$6,174	$6,174	$63,736
$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$6,000
$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$60,000
$24,000				$72,000
				$4,600
$31,000	$31,000	$31,000	$31,000	$155,000
$17,000	$17,000	$17,000	$17,000	$102,000
$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$161,175
$14,000	$14,000	$14,000	$14,000	$73,000
$750	$750	$750	$750	$4,500
$206,424	$212,424	$212,424	$212,424	$1,227,409

The financial allocation of human resources, operational funding, and equipment dollars confirms Gaston College's commitment to online learning and the SAIL Project.

TOTAL SAIL COST $4,876,218

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Appendix

Appendix A: Gaston College Academic Programs

Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs

Accounting
Architectural Technology
Automotive Systems Technology
Biomedical Equipment Technology (Collaborative Program with Caldwell CC&TI)
Biotechnology
Broadcasting and Production Technology
Business Administration
Business Administration Human Resources Management
Business Administration Logistics Management
Civil Engineering Technology
Computer Engineering Technology
Computer Information Technology
Computer Programming
Criminal Justice Technology
Criminal Justice Technology—Latent Evidence
Dietetic Technician
Early Childhood Education
Electronics Engineering Technology
Emergency Medical Science—Bridging Program
Emergency Medical Science—Paramedic
Emergency Preparedness Technology
Fire Protection Technology
General Occupational Technology
Human Services Technology
Information Systems Security
Machining Technology
Mechanical Engineering Technology—Mechatronics Option
Mechanical Engineering Technology—Standard Option
Medical Assisting
Medical Office Administration
Networking Technology
Nursing
Nursing LPN-ADN Track
Office Administration
Office Administration—Legal
Paralegal Technology
Therapeutic Massage
Veterinary Medical Technology
Web Technologies

College Transfer Degree Programs

Associate in Arts
Associate in Fine Arts
Associate in General Education (non-transfer degree)
Associate in Science

Diploma Programs

Accounting
Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology
Automotive Systems Technology
Broadcasting and Production Technology
Civil Engineering Technology
Cosmetology
Early Childhood Education
Electrical/Electronics Technology
Electronics Engineering Technology
Industrial Systems Technology
Machining Technology
Mechanical Engineering Technology
Medical Transcription
Office Administration
Practical Nursing
Science
Therapeutic Massage
Welding Technology

Certificate Programs

Accounting—Computerized Accounting
Accounting—Federal Income Tax
Accounting—Financial Accounting
Accounting—Managerial Accounting
Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology—Cooling
Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology—Heat Pump
Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology—Heating
Architectural Technology/CAD
Automotive Systems Technology—Engines & Power Trains
Automotive Systems Technology—Fuel & Electrical Systems
Basic Law Enforcement Training
Broadcasting and Production Technology
Business Administration Human Resources Management
Business Administration Logistics Management
Business Administration Logistics Management, Export Operations
Business Administration Retail Management
Business Administration Small Bus Management
Civil Engineering Technology
Computer Information Technology
Computer Programming
Dietary Manager
Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Education—Administration
Early Childhood—Infants/Toddler
Early Childhood—Special Needs
Early Childhood—Lateral Entry
Early Childhood—School Age
Electrical/Electronics Technology
Electronics Engineering Technology
Industrial Systems Technology
Industrial Systems Technology—Industrial Safety
Information Systems Security
Information Technology—Computer Programming
Information Technology—Core
Information Technology—Network
Information Technology—Web
Machining Technology—Machine Operation
Machining Technology—(CNC) Turning and Milling
Machining Technology—(CNC) Computer Numerical Control /(CAM) Computer Aided Man
Mechanical Engineering Technology
Mechanical Engineering Technology—Mechatronics Option
Medical Office Administration—Basic
Medical Office Administration—Intermediate
Medical Office Administration—Medical Billing and Coding
Networking
Nursing Assistant
Office Administration—Basic
Office Administration—Intermediate
Office Administration—Basic Legal
Office Administration—Intermediate Legal
Phlebotomy
Truck Driver Training (Collaborative Program with Caldwell CC&TI)
Web Technologies
Welding Technology—Level I
Welding Technology—Level II

Appendix B: Committee Membership Rosters

SACS Leadership Team

Chair: Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Don Ammons, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Rex Clay, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Dr. Harry Cooke, Director of Library Services
George Hendricks, Department Chair Computer Engineering Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, and Electrical/Electronics Technology/Instructor
Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios-Husain, Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management
Dr. Patricia Skinner, President
Ralph Huddin, Vice President of Finance, Operations, and Facilities

QEP Identification Team

Chair: Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios-Husain, Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management
Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Zack Bryson, Gaston College Student
Harve Byrd, Adjunct Information Technology Instructor
Dr. Harry Cooke, Director of Library Services
Beverly Davis, Department Chair Practical Nursing Program/Instructor
Gerri Dobbins, English Instructor
Donna English, Architectural Technology Instructor
Tim Mode, Adjunct Mathematics Instructor
Rhonda Wood, Director Student Registration and Records

QEP Topic Feasibility Team Members

Chair: Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Zack Bryson, Gaston College Student
Dr. Rex Clay, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Dr. Harry Cooke, Director of Library Services
Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Mike Horvath, Grounds Personnel
Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios-Husain, Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management
John McHugh, Department Chair Developmental Education/Mathematics Instructor
Audrey Sherrill, Director Counseling
Dr. Peggy Trueman, Nursing Instructor
Karen Williams, Webmaster/Training Specialist/Help Desk
Wanda Wyont, Director of Persistence and Retention

QEP Implementation Team Members

Co-Chair: Betsy Jones, Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education Officer
Co-Chair: Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Dr. Joe Argent, English Department Chair/English Instructor
Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Kim Gelsinger, Director Distance Education
Mary Gourley, Assessment Specialist/Psychology Instructor
Juanita Gunnell, Department Chair Health Promotion/Dietetic Technician Instructor
Dr. Eric Miller, Sociology Instructor
Mark Shellman, Department Chair Information Technology/Instructor

Wanda Wyont, Director of Persistence and Retention
Heather Woodson, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences

Planning Year 2009-2010 Subcommittees

Student Readiness Subcommittee

Chair: Wanda Wyont, Director of Persistence and Retention
Dr. Terry Brasier, Director Enrollment Management/Admissions
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Mike Cloninger, Department Chair Automotive Technology/Instructor
Gerri Dobbins, English Instructor
Joseph Helms, Gaston College Student
Dr. Karen Less, Dean, Continuing Education and Public Safety
Donna Love, Office Systems Technology Instructor
Audrey Sherrill, Director Counseling
Dr. Sharon Starr, Dean, Health Education
Amy Weisgerber, Assistant/Coordinator Educational Partnerships
Karen Williams, Webmaster/Training Specialist/Help Desk
Kimberly Wyont, Director Educational Partnerships
Eileen Yantz, Early Childhood Program Coordinator/Instructor

Marketing Subcommittee

Chair: Heather Woodson, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences
Jamie Conrad, Business Administration Instructor
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial; Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Gerri Dobbins, English Instructor
Ashley Hagler, Biology Instructor
Dr. Betsy Jones, Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education Officer
Lynn King, Nursing Instructor
Dean Llewellyn, Gaston College Student
Ginger McGinnis, Student Services Specialist
Stephanie Michael-Pickett, Director, Marketing and Public Relations
Brad Rivers, Director, Small Business Center
Brian Shook, Admissions Specialist
Jim Sisk, Business Administration Instructor

Technology Tools Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Eric Miller, Sociology/History Instructor
Brian Bookout, History Instructor;
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Calvin Craig, Information Access Librarian
Gerri Dobbins, English Instructor
Karen Duncan, Department Chair Office Systems Technology/Instructor
Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Dr. Deborah Hudson, Department Chair Accounting/Instructor
Savonne McNeill, Chief Technology Services Officer
Marilyn Platt, Developmental Mathematics Instructor

Professional Development Subcommittee

Chair: Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Dr. Kristine Blankenship, Department Chair Veterinary Technology Program/Instructor
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Shane Caughey, Qualified Assistant Criminal Justice Academy/Basic Law Enforcement Training
Calvin Craig, Information Access Librarian
Paula Dedmon, Biology Instructor
Karen Duncan, Department Chair Office Systems Technology/Instructor
Lori Metcalf, Department Chair, Applied Social Sciences/ Psychology Instructor
Syvana Monroe, Student Registration and Records Specialist
Deborah Neuman, Spanish Instructor
Diane Ward, Technology Specialist

Technology Plan Subcommittee

Chair: Mark Shellman, Department Chair Information Technology/Instructor
James Cantrell, Director Network Services
George Hendricks, Department Chair Computer Engineering Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, and Electrical/Electronics Technology/Instructor
Beth Hollars, Director Community Education
Michelle Sullivan, Enrollment Services Associate-Career and Technical Education
Jimmy Warren, Information Technology Instructor

Student Services Subcommittee

Chair: Juanita Gunnell, Department Chair Health Promotion/Dietetic Technician Instructor
Kristen Blackburn, Technology Services Systems Administrator
Dr. Terry Brasier, Director Enrollment Management/Admissions
Michelle Bryd, Associate Dean Business & Information Technology/Office Systems Technology Instructor
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Jill Coy, Counseling, Coordinator of Health Programs
Susan Goforth, Adjunct Education Instructor
Dr. Karen Less, Dean, Continuing Education and Public Safety
Leslie Pressley, Practical Nursing Instructor
Michelle Sullivan, Enrollment Services Associate-Career and Technical Education
Rosalind Welder, Dean, Lincoln Campus

Student Learning Outcomes Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Harry Cooke, Director Library Services
Karen Duncan, Department Chair Office Systems Technology/Instructor
Mary Gourley, Assessment Specialist/Psychology Instructor
George Hendricks, Department Chair Computer Engineering Technology, Electronics Engineering Technology, and Electrical/Electronics Technology/Instructor
Dr. Sharon Starr, Dean, Health Education
Eileen Yantz, Early Childhood Program Coordinator/Instructor

QEP Writing Team Members

Dr. Joe Argent, Department Chair English/English Instructor
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Karen Duncan, Department Chair Office Systems Technology/Instructor
Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Mary Gourley, Assessment Specialist/Psychology Instructor
Dr. Betsy Jones, Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education

QEP Assessment Committee

Co-Chair: Dr. Rex Clay, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Co-Chair: Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Mary Gourley, Assessment Specialist/Psychology Instructor
Dr. Betsy Jones, Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education

Development and Implementation Phase 2010-2016 Committees

Quality Online Courses Subcommittee (Online Instruction Committee)

Chair: Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Dr. Joe Argent, Department Chair English/English Instructor
Dr. Melissa Armstrong, Department Chair Science/Chemistry Instructor
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Gary Freeman, Department Chair Art and Music/Art Instructor
Juanita Gunnell, Department Chair Health Promotion/Dietetic Technician Instructor
Dr. Betsy Jones, Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education Officer
Dan McClellan, E-Learning Coordinator BioNetwork BioEd Center
Savonne McNeill, Chief Technology Services Officer
Dr. Eric Miller, Sociology/History Instructor
Beverly Murphy, Distance Education Assistant
Mark Shellman, Department Chair Information Technology/Instructor
Vernon Shoaf, Manager BioNetwork BioEd Center
Dr. Sharon Starr, Dean, Health Education
Heather Woodson, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences
Wanda Wyont, Director of Persistence and Retention

Student Preparedness Committee

Co-Chair: Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Co-Chair: Wanda Wyont, Director of Persistence and Retention
Lynn Dellinger, Assistant Registrar
Adele Earls, Student Success Counselor
CJ Kruse, Gaston College Student
Donna Love, Office Systems Technology Instructor
Beth McCall, Developmental English Instructor
Sherry Sharpe, ACA Faculty Member/Advisor Persistence and Retention
Dr. Sharon Starr, Dean, Health Education
Amy Weisberger, Assistant/Coordinator Educational Partnerships
Eileen Yantz, Early Childhood Program Coordinator/Instructor
Kimberly Young, Gaston College Student

Online Student Services Committee

Co-Chair, Juanita Gunnell
Co-Chair, Michelle Byrd
Kristen Blackburn, Technology Services Systems Administrator
Dr. Terry Brasier, Director Enrollment Management/Admissions
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Jill Coy, Counseling, Coordinator of Health Programs
Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Susan Goforth, Adjunct Education Instructor
Dr. Karen Less, Dean, Continuing Education and Public Safety
Kandy Penley, Secretary, Medical Assisting/Phlebotomy, and Health Promotion
Leslie Pressley, Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Instructor
Michelle Sullivan, Enrollment Services Associate-Career and Technical Education
Rosalind Welder, Dean, Lincoln Campus

Technology and Training Committee

Co-Chair, Mark Shellman, Department Chair Information Technology/Instructor
Co-Chair, Dr. Eric Miller, Sociology/History Instructor
James Cantrell, Director Network Services
Calvin Craig, Information Access Librarian
Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Kim Gelsinger, Director of Distance Education
Dr. Joe Keith, Dean, Kimbrell Campus

Student Learning Outcomes Committee

Co-Chair: Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Co-Chair: Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Dr. Joe Argent, Department Chair English/English Instructor
Tonia Broome, Associate Dean Liberal Arts and Sciences/Mathematics Instructor
Gary Freeman, Department Chair Art and Music/Art Instructor
Kelly Hinson, Information Technology Instructor
Dr. Eric Miller, Sociology/History Instructor
Heather Woodson, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences
Nathan Woodson, Adjunct Reading Instructor

Marketing Subcommittee

Co-Chair: Heather Woodson, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences
Co- Chair: Dr. Betsy Jones¸ Dean, Business and Information Technology/Chief Distance Education Officer
Jamie Conrad, Business Administration Instructor
Virgil Cox, Dean, Engineering and Industrial Technologies/Chief Educational Technology Officer
Gerri Dobbins, English Instructor
Karen Duncan, Instructional Technology Specialist
Ashley Hagler, Biology Instructor
Lynn King, Nursing Instructor
Ginger McGinnis, Student Services Specialist
Stephanie Michael-Pickett, Director, Marketing and Public Relations
Brad Rivers, Director, Small Business Center
Brian Shook, Admissions Specialist
Jim Sisk, Business Administration Instructor

Appendix C: QEP Topic Identification Survey

Gaston College is in the process of identifying a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic. The QEP is an initiative for institutional improvement crucial to enhancing educational quality and is directly related to student learning. The QEP is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Through preliminary research, the College has identified several potential topics for the plan. As a valuable member of the Gaston College community, we would like your input as to which topic we should select for the QEP. Thank you for your participation.

Select the category that best describes your classification status with Gaston College.

Student
Faculty
Staff/Administrator
Board of Trustees Member
Community Member

Directions: Rate each QEP idea listed below as to how important it is for improving the area, with 1 being the least important to 10 being the most important.

AREA 1: LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

1. **Active Learning – Rather than a teacher-centered classroom or passive learning environment where students listen to lectures, the responsibility for learning shifts to the students.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

2. **Assessment – Observation of student performance and frequent feedback to students in order to produce a higher quality of learning.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

3. **Collaborative Learning – Learning that occurs when students interact with other students to construct meaning/knowledge and accomplish shared learning outcomes.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

4. **Critical Thinking – Improve students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking involves evaluating ideas, constructing plans, and deciding on desired outcomes.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

AREA 2: ACADEMIC SUPPORT

5. **Advising – Strengthen the Institution's ability to provide advising.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

6. **Retention – Improve student retention and persistence until academic goals are achieved.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

7. **Using Technology – Use technology to enhance student learning.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

AREA 3: LIFE SKILLS PREPARATION

8. **Career Development – Develop job-seeking skills and learn about career options.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

9. **Diversity – Create a campus culture that promotes and appreciation and understanding of differences.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Least Importance Most Importance

10. **Social/Soft Skills – Improve students' social/soft skills. These skills may include: listening carefully and responding; working in a team; working well with people from different backgrounds; improving self-management and time management; and accepting responsibility.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

AREA 4: CONTENT AREAS

11. **Developmental Education – Strengthen the processes and resources of developmental education.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

12. **Math – Improve the mathematical reasoning and quantitative literacy skills of students.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

13. **Reading – Improve student performance through critical reading strategies.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

14. **Writing – Integrate writing across the curriculum.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

AREA 5: FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT

15. **Hiring/retaining qualified faculty – Develop a process to hire and retain qualified faculty.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

16. **Professional Development – Improve student performance by enhancing the ability of faculty to provide instruction and the ability of academic support staff to provide services to students.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

17. **Teaching Techniques – Improve student performance by enhancing the ability of instructors to provide instruction.**
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    Least Importance Most Importance

AREA 6: OTHER

Other – Ideas that were not mentioned above. Please write your topic idea in the space provided.

Appendix D: QEP Topic Assessment Rubric Summary

Topic identified/ supported by which areas (e.g., focus groups, surveys, etc.)	Related to student learning and/or the environment supporting student learning	Level of interest	Related to accomplishing the mission?	Feasible at Gaston College?
Distance Education/ Technology	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.6$ $s = 0.73$	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.2$ $s = 0.92$
Transfer Advising Center and Advisor Training	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.3$ $s = 1.12$	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.7$ $s = 0.5$
General Advising	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.3$ $s = 1.12$	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.7$ $s = 0.71$
Professional Development	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.0$ $s = 0.71$	YES NO	1-2-3-4-5 $\bar{x} = 4.3$ $s = 0.71$

Capable of being evaluated?	Strengths	Weaknesses	Rating of idea (Rank 1 is highest, Rating: 1=low 5=high)
1-2-3-4-5 _ x = 4.6 s = 0.70	Future of education. Impacts the entire campus. Involves curriculum development. Would spill over into seated classes. High demand for online classes (over 8,000 duplicated headcount). Curriculum improvement. Clear goals. Improvement of online courses.	Involves a limited # of instructors. Resources needed (financial, human, hardware). Start date may be too early for QEP.	1-2-3-4-5 Rank = 2 Rating = 3.9
1-2-3-4-5 _ x = 4.4 s = 0.88	Needed for advisors. Would eliminate 3 advisors for transfer. Would begin to resolve the issue of advising. Would benefit lots of students. Would establish a centralized process for students. Would aid in retention.	The decision involves no input from the new A&S Dean. May be difficult to evaluate. Faculty willingness to be involved. Space.	1-2-3-4-5 Rank = 1 Rating = 4.3
1-2-3-4-5 _ x = 4.3 s = 1.00	Helps students overall. Needed for advisors. Would set advising standards. Helpful for retention.	Difficult to assess. Faculty resistance. Might be difficult due to different divisions. Might be difficult to relate directly to student learning.	1-2-3-4-5 Rank = 4 Rating = 3.7
1-2-3-4-5 _ x = 4.6 s = 0.88	Makes faculty reflect. Incorporates prof. dev and provides growth. Use of results for faculty evaluations. Could make use of Pacific Crest. It would include other topics like credentials for online teaching and advising training.	Difficult to get faculty “buy in.” Very broad—would need to narrow. Resources needed. How does student learning tie in with faculty portfolios?	1-2-3-4-5 Rank = 3 Rating = 3.9

Appendix E: Gaston College Strategic Plan (2008-2013)

Strategic Initiatives, Goals and Objectives

Strategic Initiative I: SERVE THE LIFELONG LEARNING NEEDS OF A DIVERSE POPULATION AND WORKFORCE

GOAL 1: Increase accessibility, availability, and delivery of educational programs to meet the diverse needs of our students, businesses, and industries.
GOAL 2: Develop new programs to meet the changing employment needs of the region.
GOAL 3: Increase student enrollment and retention to meet the growing needs of our community.
GOAL 4: Proactively increase, understand, and celebrate diversity of our region, students, faculty, and staff.
GOAL 5: Promote the development of "soft skills" necessary for students to function successfully in the workplace and community.

Strategic Initiative II: PROVIDE SEAMLESS AND EFFECTIVE STUDENT FOCUSED SERVICES

GOAL 6: Ensure advising and registration processes are effective and student focused.
GOAL 7: Ensure continuous review of a comprehensive enrollment management plan.
GOAL 8: Increase campus activities and services to improve student life and community connections.

Strategic Initiative III: EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL 9: Increase partnerships with regional schools, other community colleges, and four-year institutions to provide opportunities for students to achieve their educational goals.
GOAL 10: Strengthen regional partnerships with businesses, industries, and the community to enhance educational programs and economic and workforce development.

Strategic Initiative IV: ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

GOAL 11: Provide faculty and staff opportunities for professional development.
GOAL 12: Ensure excellence in teaching and learning.
GOAL 13: Develop strategies to ensure quality staff and faculty for the future.
GOAL 14: Comply with all standards of regulatory bodies that govern the quality of educational programs at Gaston College.

Strategic Initiative V: PROVIDE THE ESSENTIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GOAL 15: Secure the financial, facility, material, and personnel resources needed to sustain support services, educational needs, and training requirements of the community.
GOAL 16: Develop and implement a facilities master plan to guide the construction and renovation of facilities to meet the changing program needs of the region's economy.
GOAL 17: Strengthen the College's safety and security plan to meet changing needs.
GOAL 18: Upgrade technology to provide quality academic experiences and efficient administrative and student support services.
GOAL 19: Foster innovation throughout the institution.
GOAL 20: Secure the financial, facility, material, and personnel resources needed to support the statewide programs of the BioNetwork/BioEd Center and the Textile Technology Center.

Strategic Initiative VI: ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

GOAL 21: Develop a proactive, multidimensional marketing approach to enhance public awareness about programs and services.
GOAL 22: Enhance internal and external communication.

Appendix F: Pilot Project Checklist

COURSE QUALITY CHECKLIST

LEVEL I

☐ Yes ☐ No A welcome message to the student on the front page of the course with clear instructions concerning what to do next is present.

☐ Yes ☐ No A course calendar/timeline detailing all due dates for assignments (and individual/group meetings, if applicable) is present.

☐ Yes ☐ No Students should be able to access all course materials using no more than 3 clicks from the course homepage.

☐ Yes ☐ No All course instructions should be consistent, clear, logical – particularly with regards to assignments, due dates, and grading/assessment policies.

☐ Yes ☐ No All parts of the course are ADA compliant.*

☐ Yes ☐ No A syllabus (or electronic equivalent) detailing the content of the course, and the procedures and conventions to be used by the instructor.

☐ Yes ☐ No Instructional materials are of sufficient depth to allow students to master required content.**

☐ Yes ☐ No A listing of course outcomes is present.

☐ Yes ☐ No At least one measurement designed to accurately assess student learning of course materials.

☐ Yes ☐ No A grading policy detailing the method by which assignments will be graded, how long students need to allow for grading, and how their grades will be made available to them is included.

☐ Yes ☐ No Clear instructions concerning how best to contact the instructor(s) are available (such as e-mail).

☐ Yes ☐ No A statement concerning the maximum time students can expect to wait for a reply when the instructor is contacted in included (two business days or less).

☐ Yes ☐ No Links to support services for online students at Gaston (library, bookstore, student services, etc.).

☐ Yes ☐ No The course should be hosted on an approved secure learning management system (such as Blackboard) to safeguard student information.

☐ Yes ☐ No A statement regarding the expected technical expertise required of students, as well as any specific hardware/software requirements for the course is included.

☐ Yes ☐ No Any software required of students is made available, or is included in the “required materials” for the course if a purchase is necessary.

☐ Yes ☐ No All course materials should be accessible to users running all 3 major operating systems and should be compatible with all major browsing software to the extent possible.

LEVEL II

- ☐ Yes ☐ No The course has an original and unified visual design, which I consistent throughout the course.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No The syllabus is customized for the online format, including at least three (3) hyperlinks to relevant supplementary material.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least one (1) multimedia component is included in instructional materials.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Course outcomes are present and clear.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least five (5) assessments required.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least two (2) different types of assessments required.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Grades should be available to students online in a secure environment, and should be posted within 1 week of the submission of assignments.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No An online gradebook, informing students of their current average to date in the course, should be utilized (grades should be weighted appropriately to match the grading policy).
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Statement concerning the amount of time students can expect for a reply at 1 business day.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No The course contains an instructor “bio” which includes a photo, along with contact information and office hours.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No A complete introduction to the course and how best to approach the online learning environment is included.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No All multimedia enhancements should be available in standardized formats (jpeg, mp3, swf, etc.).

LEVEL III

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Course contains custom graphics designed to set the course apart visually.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least five (5) multimedia components (one in each module/instructional area).
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least one (1) of the elements should be made for mobile devices (mp3, iPOD).
- ☐ Yes ☐ No At least three (3) different types of assessments used.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Un-graded self-assessments are available to students in multiple modules/sections of the course (at least 5 total) – feedback is provided either automatically or by instructor.
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Mobile technology should conform to current standards for small-screen resolution and bit rate. (See DL staff if necessary.)

Appendix G: Student Brainstorming Session—Questions and Responses

32 students attended the session in the Myers Center on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. Here are the comments:

QEP Student Forum

1. What could Gaston College do to improve the quality of online courses? What would make our online courses better?
   - Online course assignments are due at same time and there is no one to "contact" in person
   - Timely response from teacher is imperative
   - Need more courses online offered in summer especially and also in fall/spring semesters
   - Want standards or consistency in course design: where to find syllabus, tests, etc.
   - Faculty needs to update their content, add media-rich content to enhance the courses
   - Require students to attend a Blackboard orientation or test out of it
   - Want to use email other than Gaston College provided address
   - Confusion between Blackboard messages, Blackboard email, and Gaston College email
   - Faculty needs to be more responsive in grading written assignments or those not graded by the system
   - Which browser to use: Mozilla, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome
   - Discussion boards are a "joke", not a true discussion, no interaction usually
   - Broken links in courses (need to update)

2. What could Gaston College do to better prepare students for online learning?
   - Orientation to Blackboard navigation (required or strongly suggested)
   - Majority think they do not get as much learning from online course
   - ACA online is too much work for 1-hour credit, no transfer
   - Chapters versus modules: modules are too long to wait for test or review, need smaller chunks of information
   - Read & Test: not as effective, need discussion components
   - Students want to understand/know their learning styles, content of course should reflect different styles
   - Use other social media to discuss course content (Facebook)
   - Discussion board should be more interactive
   - Why do I have to purchase a text book when it is available in online format?
   - More specific on due dates (date and time) Midnight is a problem
   - Too many new instructors teaching online without Blackboard or online certification
   - If seated class is MWF, then instructor should be "online" three (3) days in week
   - Assignments should not be due during spring break

3. How could Gaston College do a better job of providing online services to students?
   - WebAdvisor should be more stable (crashing morning of registration)
   - Offer more classes
   - E-books or online text books
   - College website too compacted, cannot find things, i.e., Dean's List or Calendar
   - Pell Grant students should be able to buy books online (not have to come to campus to hand a piece of paper)
   - Should be able to reserve book upon registration
   - More access to bookstore
   - Faculty need to order appropriate number of books
   - Price of books is too high
   - Suggestion to use "rental" textbooks

4. How can we do a better job providing technology?
   - If course requires technology, links should be provided (Adobe, Media Player, etc)
   - Work more deals for students like the Ultimate Steal
   - Need shared drive for both campuses (being able to retrieve from both campuses)

Appendix H: Instructional Technology Specialist Job Description

The Instructional Technology Specialist is a faculty member with release time to assume the responsibility for the effective integration of technology into the online instructional areas of Gaston College, including both curriculum and continuing education. The responsibilities of the position will be to:

- Serve as an academic instructor according to job description for Gaston College full-time instructor;
- Serve as QEP Director from Fall 2011 through Spring 2016;
- Provide leadership in the areas of distance learning and instructional technology to foster effective teaching and learning;
- Maintain a working knowledge of current and emerging technologies which can be applied to instructional and academic activities;
- Research and implement current best practices in distance education and the use of instructional technology;
- Recommend new instructional delivery systems and hardware/software applications;
- Promote the use of information technology to enhance instruction and learning;
- Identify the training needs and provide appropriate development opportunities for faculty in the application of technology in instruction through one-on-one sessions, workshops, or electronic delivery;
- Collaborate with faculty in integrating technology into their curricular areas;
- Collaborate with information technology staff regarding the implementation and maintenance of distance learning and instructional technology.

Qualifications:

- SACS qualified to teach in an instructional area at the College;
- 3 years of teaching experience at the College level required, preferably at the community college level;
- 3 years of online teaching experience;
- Broad knowledge and competence in integrating innovative technology into the online learning environment;
- Experience with faculty development in an academic setting;
- Excellent communication, documentation, and project management skills.

Appendix I: Assessment Specialist Job Description

The Assessment Specialist is a full-time faculty member with release time to oversee the development and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for the 15 courses involved in the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) for SACS. The Assessment Specialist will assist the online instructors in the three waves of the QEP in the development of course Student Learning Outcomes and standardizing the process for assessment of their high quality online classes.

The Assessment Specialist will receive full release time during Summer 2011 and three hours release time during Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013.

Qualifications:

- SACS qualified to teach in an instructional area at the College;
- Excellent communication, documentation, and project management skills;
- Experience developing and assessing course level Student Learning Outcomes.

Appendix J: SAIL Quality Review Process and Application

SAIL Quality Review Process and Application

_____ _____

Course Number and Name Instructor

_____

Date

Payment

- ☐ New course $1,000
- ☐ Pilot Level I course $1,000
- ☐ Pilot Level II course $750
- ☐ Pilot Level III course $750

Division

- ☐ Arts & Sciences
- ☐ Business Information & Technology
- ☐ Engineering & Industrial Technology
- ☐ Health Education
- ☐ Public Safety (EMS/Fire)

SAIL QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS AND APPLICATION

Deadlines for submission: February 28, May 31, and September 30
Dates for Q & A Sessions: April 1-15, July 1-15, and November 1-15
Contract submission dates for payment: April 30, July 30, and November 30
Payment dates: May, August, and December Payroll
(NOTE: Dates are subject to change as needed.)

1. **Attend SAIL Quality Standards Training Session.**
2. Complete application with appropriate signatures.
3. Complete included self-assessment of online course. (GC Best Practices companion document and the Bb Course Shell may be used as guidelines.)
4. Instructor provides day and time of availability for Q & A session to be scheduled. (For example: Monday 1-3 p.m., Tuesday, 11-2 p.m., etc.)
5. A review team will evaluate the course within the 30 days following submission deadlines using the instructor's self-assessment of their course.
6. Instructor will meet with the review team for Q & A session within two weeks of the evaluation based on times provided above, may be earlier depending on number of courses submitted for review. Plan on approximately 30-40 minutes, leaving time for discussion with team to fill one hour.
7. If minimal exceptions are noted during the Q & A session, the instructor will have seven (7) days to make changes to meet the SAIL Quality Standards and be awarded certification. A final review will then be completed by the team within seven (7) days of noted changes. (NOTE: If major exceptions are noted, course will need to be resubmitted for one of the future deadline dates.)
8. Request for payment will be forwarded to appropriate personnel.

Instructor Name: _____ Date: _____

Email Address: _____ Contact Number: _____

Course Name: _____ Course Number: _____
(Introduction to Computers) (CIS 110-DC62, WIP)

Date attended SAIL Quality Standard Training Session: _____

Is course being offered this semester? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, when will course be offered? _____
(Note: Course must be on the class schedule within two semesters of certification.)

_____ _____
Instructor Date

_____ _____
Department Chair Date

_____ _____
Divisional Dean/VP Date

Course Assessment Using the Rubric for SAIL Quality Standards

Using the “self-assessment” describe how this course addresses each of the eight rubric categories. For clarification of specific review standards, provide comments below as necessary to assist the review team as to eliminate questions that may arise. For example: explain where items are found if not obvious. If you have additional question in reference to the rubric, contact Kim Gelsinger and/or Karen Duncan.

Rubric Category

1. Course Introduction
   - 1.1. _____
   - 1.2. _____
   - 1.3. _____
   - 1.4. _____
   - 1.5. _____
   - 1.6. _____
   - 1.7. _____

2. Learning Outcomes
   - 2.1. _____
   - 2.2. _____

3. Assessment Strategies
   - 3.1. _____
   - 3.2. _____
   - 3.3. _____
   - 3.4. _____
   - 3.5. _____

4. Instructional Materials

   4.1. _____

   4.2. _____

   4.3. _____

   4.4. _____

   4.5. Course content has been reviewed by a content expert and adequately reflects potential mastery of the course student learning outcomes.

_____ _____

Content Expert Signature

5. Interaction

   5.1. _____

   5.2. _____

   5.3. _____

   5.4. _____

   5.5. _____

6. Course Navigation and Technology

   6.1. _____

   6.2. _____

   6.3. _____

7. Student Support

   7.1. _____

   7.2. _____

   7.3. _____

   7.4. _____

8. Student Support

8.1. _____

_____

8.2. _____

_____

8.3. _____

_____

8.4. _____

_____

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

By signing below I acknowledge that I have completed the self-assessment of this course, addressed each standard as needed, and the course is ready for certification.

_____ _____

Instructor Date

List several dates, in the appropriate two week timeframe of submission date, you will be available for Q & A sessions to be scheduled with review team.

Dates for Q & A Sessions: April 1-15, July 1-15, and November 1-15

Date	**Time**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

REVIEW TEAM
All signatures must be obtained at the conclusion of the Q & A meeting.

Team Members: _____ _____

_____

Q & A Date: _____

Course certified: ☐ Yes ☐ No, exceptions listed Date: _____

_____ _____
Instructor Signature

_____ _____
Reviewer Signature

_____ _____
Reviewer Signature

_____ _____
Subject Matter Reviewer Signature

If minimal exceptions are listed, instructor will have seven (7) days from Q & A date to make changes. A copy of this page will be given to the instructor at the Q & A meeting.

Exceptions listed below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exceptions to be completed by: Date: _____

Course certified: ☐ Yes ☐ No Date: _____

_____ _____
Instructor Signature

_____ _____
Reviewer Signature

_____ _____
Reviewer Signature

_____ _____
Subject Matter Reviewer Signature

SAIL COMPENSATION AWARD
Contract submission dates for payment: April 30, July 30, and November 30
Payment dates: May, August, and December Payroll
(NOTE: Dates are subject to change as needed.)

The following course has been reviewed and approved for SAIL Certification and payment:

Course Name	Instructor
Date	

Payment Amount

- ☐ New course $1,000
- ☐ Pilot Level I course $1,000
- ☐ Pilot Level II course $750
- ☐ Pilot Level III course $750

Instructor	Signature
Director of Distance Education	Signature
Chief Distance Education Officer	Signature
Divisional Dean/VP	Signature

Once all signatures have been obtained and contract processed for payment, this original form must be returned to Distance Education Box 102.

Appendix K: SAIL Student Course Survey

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Instructions were clear on how to get started and where to find course components.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The purpose of the course was clearly stated.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The instructor introduced himself/herself and gave clear contact instructions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. An electronic copy of the course syllabus was provided.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. A course calendar with due dates for assignments was available.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The course learning outcomes were clearly stated.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The course grading policy was clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The instructions were clear for completing and submitting course assignments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Course navigation was logical and consistent.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I had access to the technologies required in this course.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Necessary technical skills for success in this course were clearly stated.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The method for obtaining technical support was clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. There was a variation of assessments throughout the course to measure my learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The instructor responded to my questions within two working days.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Grades were made available to me within one week of the due date.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. There were at least five opportunities during the semester for the class to meet with the instructor.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The instructional materials were sufficient for me to master the course outcomes and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I was made aware of College services that helped my learning experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix L: Professional Development Assessment/Evaluation Form

Activity _____ Date_____

Quantitative Evaluation (scale 1 to 10, 10 being the most positive)

The Professional Development Activity was valuable.	_____
The degree to which your goals and expectations for the activity were met.	_____
What I learned about the topic or about teaching/learning processes.	_____
The effectiveness of the facilitator.	_____
The effectiveness of the activity materials.	_____

Assessment questions.

Please identify several strengths from the activity.

Please suggest several improvements that can be made to make the activity better.

Comment on any insights or ideas that resulted from the activity or special requests for materials/follow-up. (Use the back side if necessary.)

Are there any additional topics you would like to see presented as a professional development activity? (Use the back side if necessary.)