

4. Broad-based Involvement

This plan was developed through a process of communication and cooperation that encouraged input from across the college community. Faculty, support staff, administrators, students, Board members, advisory committee members, and representatives from the local university and other state community colleges helped determine the focus, assessment, and institutional capability of this plan. The breadth of this participation encourages a shared sense of ownership among the college's constituency and stakeholders. This sense of ownership, in turn, will ensure the commitment of time, energy, and resources necessary for the successful implementation of this plan.

4.1 Selecting the Topic

As described in Section 1.1 (Background, Rationale, and Outcomes), selecting the topic for this plan grew out of the college's regular planning process in the fall of 2004. In November of that year, CFCC's Office of Institutional Development (now Institutional Effectiveness) held 17 focus group meetings to solicit suggestions for enhancement topics. These groups were organized by area of instruction or service and included: Humanities & Fine Arts Department

- Math, Science, & PE Department
- Public Information
- Business Department
- Learning Resource Center
- Institutional Development
- Vocational Department
- Continuing Education
- Business Services
- Engineering Department
- Printing Services
- Institutional Services
- English Department
- CFCC Foundation
- Social & Behavioral Sciences Department
- Allied Health Department
- Student Development
- Marine Technology Department

These groups consisted of 114 full time faculty (52%) and 121 full time staff (60%). Seven CFCC curriculum advisory committee members and five University of North Carolina Wilmington representatives also attended these meetings. Some of the ideas generated in these meetings are presented below:

From Marine Tech:

- Need to develop student critical thinking skills
- Need to provide students with real, live small group critical thinking educational experiences
- Instructors need exposure to teaching critical thinking through real life experiences.

From English:

- Require all students to take a Student Success course that would include
 - Study skills
 - Test taking
 - Work ethic
 - Behavioral consequences
- Incorporate critical thinking course into General Education Core. Maybe revamp Eng III to accomplish this
- Need college-wide reading program across the curriculum
- Reading deficiencies high
- Due to generational/society trends; TV, computers, video, 50% of CFCC students can't read/comprehend/think critically
- Comprehension/critical thinking lacking

- Need reading component in every program
- Focus first year of studies toward reading and critical thinking
- Add a global emphasis to each CFCC course.

From Humanities and Fine Arts:

- Faculty need course load and class size reductions for better instruction, especially in writing intensive courses, and for addressing critical thinking, reading and oral communication skills
- Should focus more on critical thinking, reading and writing
- Need a mandatory course on study skills, work ethics for students

From LRC:

- Some students never receive instruction on research skills or how to use the library
- Offer a 1 credit hour course in library skills combined with computer skills
- Trend – “Information Commons”, combines learning lab, library and computer services support/coordination for students in one area, brings together staff and services of all these departments; they share space and complement each other

From Math, Science, and Phys. Ed.:

- Assess and determine competencies needed by CFCC college transfer students for successful transfer
 - Knowledge
 - Expectations
- Focus group of former CFCC transfer students to get feedback

From North Campus Meeting (included Student Development, Business Services, LRC, Business Department Faculty):

- Have a mandatory one-hour course or freshman seminar on services, 'how to', etc.
- Offer during first 10 weeks of semester
- Combine orientation plus the one-hour course to cover note taking, study skills, test taking, career counseling and financial responsibility
- Students lack grammar skills and writing skills
- Students allege and appear to have been taught in high school to write with a “stream of consciousness” method
- We need to give feedback to the public school system on academic problems of high school graduates who enter CFCC

From Social and Behavioral Sciences:

- Students lack reading/writing skills, even some who took ENG 111/112
- Students lack good study skills/habits
- Have ACA 111 but need a mandatory orientation for all students
- We need to determine the skills we want students to have and identify specific student outcomes/competencies
- Need a course/program on how to use the library
- Should be teaching students research skills and avoidance of plagiarism
- Students are intimidated in the library
- Need an LRC ‘hands-on’ orientation for students
- Need more emphasis on teaching critical thinking and analysis
- Should be teaching grammar across the curriculum; reading and writing too
- Need more contact, collaboration across and among CFCC departments and instructors – have school-wide meetings
- We do not know what other departments are doing
- We could complement each other

- Students should have to pass basic competency exams in order to progress, but we first need to identify the competencies
- Students cannot express themselves in a coherent fashion
- Students enter CFCC with unrealistic expectations (too low) about college level work; expect to be 'spoon fed' information as in high school

From Student Development, Business Instructors, and Public Services:

- Require a mandatory, accelerated student orientation in the first semester
- 1 semester credit hour; cover college procedures and policies, attendance, test-taking, time management, library skills, technology such as Campus Cruiser, where to go, who to see, etc.
- Are we measuring graduate skills?
- What are the expected outcomes/competencies for our graduates? Have we identified these? We do not have an institution-wide measurement system.

From Vocational:

- Offer general education courses tailored for vocational programs
- Emphasize real life and workplace situations and the application of math, oral and written communications in the vocational workplace
- Emphasis should be on communications and critical thinking/expressing thoughts coherently – less on grammar and punctuation
- Students may or may not know they need help. Some of them were ignored in public school. Some students are 'hands-on' learners. Teaching them organizational skills would be a big help.
- Turn out well-rounded students with a variety of skills. Expose them to more career options and other CFCC vocational and technical programs.

From Allied Health:

- Problems experienced in reading/writing skills of students, especially in early childhood
- Need and want faculty professional development on
 - 'How to Teach', test construction, conflict resolution
 - Using creative teaching methods in the classroom
 - How to make students more self-directed
 - How to teach teamwork to students
 - Should bring in "experts" to do the training
 - Utilize/develop real staff development programs
- Instructors/advisors need more training on the interpretation/use of placement test scores and developmental classes

From Continuing education:

- Need more emphasis on group connectivity for basic skills and curriculum students
- Form enhanced study groups/support groups for these students
- Literature confirms this is the trend; this will improve retention and student success
- Basic skills has better resources to handle such as the reading/math lab

From Engineering Technology:

- Create a campus-wide mentoring program
- Have this for new students as well as for new faculty and staff
- Experienced faculty could provide new faculty with peer evaluation of teaching and constructive feedback
- Pair first year students with second year students
- Maybe SGA could be involved
- Faculty needs on-going "Teach the Teacher" professional development
- We used to attend "Building Instructional Skills" workshops offered by NCCCS that were good

- Faculty are constantly being challenged by not knowing how to teach to different adult learning styles and to student's learning disabilities
- Students do not always make their disabilities known to faculty or they may not even know their disability
- Faculty need to be equipped with tools and skills
- All students should be required to attend a study skills course

These ideas were reviewed by the SACS Leadership Team in December of 2004. Several topics, including basic math skills, Student Success and orientation, reading skills, professional development, and sharing ideas across the curriculum were discussed. The Leadership Team considered the following questions as it reviewed the focus group ideas:

- Is the topic directly related to student learning?
- Would there be a clear path for measuring learning outcomes?
- Do we have existing data to support the need?
- Is the topic within our means and capabilities?
- Is the topic simple and not overly complicated?
- Is the topic too labor intensive or expensive?
- Can we articulate clear goals for determining success of the QEP?

At its December 14th, 2004 meeting, the Leadership Team used these questions to conclude that the QEP topic should address developmental instruction and/or students' preparedness in the general education core areas of reading, writing, grammar and critical thinking.

An advisory group was then formed at the beginning of 2005 to discuss these options. This group included the Vice President of Institutional Development, the Vice President of Student Development, the Assistant Vice President of Instruction Operations, the Chair of the English Department, and two English instructors. Representation from the English Department was appropriate as many of the focus group suggestions concerned reading and writing skills. During a discussion in this first meeting, the group decided to explore critical thinking as a possible topic since so many different departments had mentioned it as a student learning area that needed significant improvement. In deciding this, the group was mindful of eliciting broad-based participation across the college community. Critical thinking was a topic that not only reached across the college's diverse departments, but also related to many of the other ideas generated in the focus groups, like reading, writing, and research skills.

Once the advisory group had suggested critical thinking for the QEP topic, the Vice President of Institutional Development distributed an email to the entire college for its consideration. This email asked for the college's opinion on this topic, as well as any commentary the college might have on the definition and instruction of critical thinking. The email also encouraged any interested faculty and staff to consider being part of the QEP Committee. The responses to this email were overwhelmingly positive, with nearly 80 percent of respondents (30 out of 38) supporting Critical Thinking as a good choice for QEP topic.

With broad support confirmed, the advisory group moved forward by presenting a brief presentation on critical thinking as a QEP topic to College Council, a bimonthly meeting of the College's leadership. In attendance for the April 13, 2005 meeting were the College President, the Vice Presidents of Institutional Services, Student Development, Instruction, Business Services, and Institutional Development, and the Assistant Vice President for Instructional Operations. Also attending were the Deans of Arts and Sciences, Vocation/Technical Education, and Continuing Education, as well as the Director of the Learning Resource Center, Personnel Director, North Campus Provost, Faculty Association President, and Student Government

Association President. After the presentation, College Council approved critical thinking as CFCC's topic for quality enhancement. At its next meeting on April 27, 2005, College Council approved the initial membership of the QEP Committee.

4.2 Developing the Plan

The QEP Committee was formed with broad-based representation and the college's diversity in mind. The members of this team came together over the summer of 2005 to begin work on the QEP. This initial team included faculty and support staff from the following areas:

- Student Development (Counseling)
- Allied Health (Pharmacy Tech)
- English Department
- Public Services (Hotel & Restaurant Management)
- Allied Health (Radiography)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (History)
- Public Services (Criminal Justice Technology)
- Student Development (Career and Testing Services)
- Humanities & Fine Arts (Communication/Speech)
- Math, Science, & PE (Math)
- Business (Administration)
- Marine Technology
- Advanced Technologies (Engineering/Machining Technology)
- Institutional Development (Research)
- Vocational (Industrial Systems Tech)
- Continuing Education (Basic Skills)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (Sociology)
- Advanced technologies (Interior Design)

In the months that followed, additional QEP Committee participants came from Public Services (Early Childhood Education); Student Government Association (Senator); CFCC Foundation (Student Ambassador); Humanities & Fine Arts (Philosophy/Religion); the Learning Lab; and the Learning Resource Center.

The QEP Committee sought the input from, and distributed information to the college community throughout the developmental stages of this plan. A variety of methods were used to this end, including email updates, newsletters, an interactive website, in-service presentations, departmental meetings, College Council updates, Board of Trustees updates, Student Government Association updates, Faculty Association updates, on-line surveys, and requests for lesson ideas. The QEP Committee also solicited title ideas from all faculty and staff and sponsored a cover art contest for students.

The QEP Committee began its work by reviewing pertinent literature on the facilitation and assessment of students' critical thinking skills in higher education (see Focus of Plan), as well as the focus group comments listed above and the email feedback Institutional Development received on critical thinking as a topic for enhancement. The Team moved forward by establishing a statement on student learning, a working definition of critical thinking, and a tentative sense of how critical thinking as a learning outcome could be enhanced at CFCC. From this point, the Team began working in smaller groups that focused on specific elements of the QEP: professional development, Student Success, English composition, and general education. The work of these groups included additional internal and external research, as well as getting

input from appropriate college leaders. Representatives from each group would report their progress to the other groups at full QEP Committee meetings, held approximately every other week throughout the 2005/2006 academic year. The QEP Chair, in turn, reported on the overall progress of the QEP Committee to College Council, the Leadership Team, the Faculty Association, the Student Government Association, and the Board of Trustees. This is the process that developed CFCC's QEP and is also the blueprint for managing the implementation of this plan. All meetings and correspondences relating to the development of the QEP have been properly archived.

Specific input was received from the college community on each component of the QEP. The impetus for the Student Success initiative came directly from the initial focus group meetings held in November of 2004. Similar support for this type of initiative was indicated by responses to a faculty in-service survey in August of 2005. The General Education initiative developed in part from the formation of the General Education Assessment Committee during the summer of 2005. As this committee discussed the existing general education competencies and assessment strategies, the need to define and assess critical thinking emerged. The General Education Committee provided valuable input to the QEP Committee throughout the development of the General Education initiative. Like the Student Success initiative, the Professional Development initiative developed from initial focus group comments. More input on this initiative was received during in-service activities in August of 2005 and from an online faculty and staff survey conducted in the spring of 2006. This survey presented the various professional development strategies the QEP Committee was considering and sought suggestions on other potential activities. This survey generated over 120 responses and its results were used to select the professional development activities described in this plan.

Additional input came from external sources. These included the Commission on College's Summer Institute for Quality Enhancement; Cape Fear Academy (a local private school that emphasizes critical thinking throughout its curriculum); and the Critical Thinking Colloquium, a day-long workshop sponsored by Surry and Wilkes Community Colleges (North Carolina) in December of 2005. These proved to be valuable resources for the development of this plan, particularly the Institutional Portfolio assessment advice provided at the Colloquium.

4.3 Summary

The broad-based involvement of faculty, administration, and support staff in developing this plan represents the shared commitment at CFCC to providing students with quality educational opportunities that promote professional success and life-long learning. The breadth and diversity of this involvement is also an acknowledgement that student learning is ultimately the responsibility of everyone at CFCC. At all stages of the QEP's development every effort was made to encourage participation and generate input from the entire college community. As a result, this document and the plan it describes are the products of authentic collaboration across disciplines and areas of service. This type of collaboration will also drive the implementation of the QEP and further CFCC's commitment to the enhancement of student learning.