

## **GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE -- QEP FAQ's & INFO SHEET**

### **What is the QEP?**

The Quality Enhancement Plan is a course of action designed to improve student learning and/or student success. While it is a requirement of the reaffirmation of accreditation process, it affords GCSC an opportunity to focus on an area that will increase quality and effectiveness. The QEP must be grounded in the College's mission and be derived from the ongoing planning and evaluation process.

### **QEP Topic:**

#### ***Guided Pathways to Success (GPS)***

Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) is a five-year plan designed to enhance GCSC's learning environment and cultivate students' educational persistence and academic success. Guiding students to ensure they stay on track toward educational goals via a relationship-rich advising model, this project advances the College's mission to provide numerous learning opportunities and offer a range of programs and services to help students become well-educated, productive citizens.



Key components of these initiatives are:

- Establishing and defining pathways that offer students clear expectations for degree completion in commonly accepted general areas that share similar degree subject matter and occupational opportunities.
- Ensuring students choose pathways based on goals.
- Providing clear, intentional advising that keeps students on the degree path they choose.

### **How was GPS selected as GCSC's QEP Topic?**

In the spring of 2019, a QEP Steering Committee representing all academic divisions as well as major departments across campus, to include Student Affairs, Administration, Advising, Information Technology, Financial Aid, Enrollment Services, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning began its task of creating and implementing a QEP selection process that engaged the college community, leading to campus-wide survey and workshop (Achieving the Dream) and reviewing institutional data and national best practices. Narrowing of focus led to the selection of the QEP topic in spring 2019.

This five-year plan emerged through a broad-based institutional process involving students, faculty, staff, and the community. Student outcome data and the results of multiple QEP-related surveys and focus groups demonstrate both qualitative and quantitative consensus of stakeholders regarding the area of improvement upon which the QEP should focus: Academic Advising. Data also reinforced prior research that found students who were undecided, switched majors, and/or graduated with additional credits took longer to complete their degree or credential, putting them at potential risk of

encountering financial and/or external challenges as they strived to obtain their degree or credential (Straumsheim, 2016).

**QEP Purpose:** Guided Pathways Success will increase retention of 1<sup>st</sup> year students by providing a cohesive student experience focusing on degree pathways with intentional advising and student-centered processes and resources.

### **QEP/Guided Pathways to Success Initiatives:**

1. **Initiative 1: Implementation of Guided Pathways with Intentional Advising** – Provide clearly defined degree pathways which match students’ goals and intentional advising which supports completion of those pathways.
2. **Initiative 2: Creation of Student-Focused Processes and Resources** – Create an environment which focuses on student-centered processes and access to resources designed for student success.



### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Upon completion of an introductory advising session, each student will select a program of study that aligns with his/her career goals.
2. Each student will be aware of and utilize faculty advising to enhance timely progress toward goal completion.
3. Each student will achieve continued, measurable progress toward academic goals.
4. Each student will identify and use campus resources that fit his/her needs.
5. Each student will develop a roadmap and meet with his/her advisor during each academic year as required by the program of study.
6. Students eligible to take gateway courses will enroll and pass at least one gateway English course and at least one gateway math course within their first 24 credit hours required by their program of study.

### **What actually happens during the five years of the QEP?**

During the five-year period from 2021-2026, the GPS initiatives will be introduced, piloted, and gradually expanded. The success of the project will be measured by increased persistence and retention rates in designated gateway courses, enhanced engagement and academic perseverance among participating students, as well as improved completion rates.

- Programs of study will be embedded in pathways
- Pathway navigators and faculty advisors will advise students in specific pathways
- Application, website advising pages and orientation will be redesigned
- Student messaging and early alert system will be employed

### **Who is involved in the implementation of the plan?**

The oversight for, and implementation of, the plan is the responsibility of the GPS Implementation Committee (comprised of faculty and staff) and the QEP Director.