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**Quality Enhancement Plan:  
Be Ready for Online Classes**

Prepared for  
Commission on Colleges  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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## Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
SELECTION OF QEP .....	5
History and Overview of Online Education at BRCC .....	5
Overview of Written Materials .....	8
Constituencies Involved in Selection of QEP Topic.....	9
BRCC Staff .....	14
Students.....	18
BRCC Governance.....	24
Information from READI .....	27
Grade comparisons between seated and online sections.....	29
Literature Review.....	34
Importance of QEP to College.....	42
Conclusions.....	43
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE QEP.....	46
STUDENT LEARNING AND THE QEP OBJECTIVES .....	48
IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN .....	50
QEP ASSESSMENT .....	57
Direct Measures .....	58
Indirect Measures.....	58
Assessing the Objectives.....	59
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE QEP.....	64
Table 3: BRCC’s QEQ Objective Assessment Matrix .....	65
Table 4: Five Year Timeline For QEP.....	70
Table 5: Estimated Costs And Budget Assumptions Of The QEP .....	76
APPENDICES .....	82
Appendix A: Glossary.....	82
Appendix B: IEPs from 2005 – 2006.....	85
Appendix C: Grade Comparisons of Seated and Online Sections .....	90
Appendix D: References .....	97
Appendix E: QEP Administrator Job Description .....	101
Appendix F: Choice of Assessment Instrument for Computer/Technical Skills.....	104
Appendix G: Draft Agenda for Faculty Workshops on Computer Skills Assessment .....	106

Appendix H: Draft Agenda for Workshop on Computer Skills Assessment Cut-off  
Score and Implications..... 107

Appendix I: Course Requirement Outline Template ..... 108

Appendix J: Draft Agenda for Faculty Workshops on Course Requirement Outlines  
(CROs) ..... 111

Appendix K: Draft Agenda for Workshop on re-designed ACA 115 ..... 112

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1998, Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) offered its first Internet course to 14 students. By Spring 2008, the course offerings had increased to 51 and enrollment was 816. That increase in courses and students has been accompanied with a mixture of success and frustration. While some students are successfully completing their online courses, many faculty have seen other students struggle with the technical competencies and course demands of an online format. Student surveys and focus groups have corroborated the need for students to possess both computer literacy and accurate information about the unique demands of an online course.

In addition, faculty advisers who have never taught online are unfamiliar with the rigor of an online course. Even those who have taught online are often uninformed of the specific requirements of a course outside their discipline. Therefore, academic advising may be inaccurate or incomplete.

To this end, the BRCC QEP proposes to ensure that no student will enroll in an online course who does not possess the basic computer skills deemed necessary for learning to occur in that course. Additionally, students and faculty will be provided general information regarding the requirements and capabilities necessary for success in an online format and will receive detailed information regarding the technical and time requirements of every online course being offered in a given semester.

To achieve these goals, several strategies will be used. First, BRCC will require incoming students to take a placement test in computer and technical skills. Those students who do not demonstrate competency will be required to complete a developmental computer skills course for remediation. Upon completion, the students

will be retested. Once a student has demonstrated the requisite skills, he/she will be allowed to register for online courses. Second, a detailed information sheet will be developed for every online course. This sheet will provide both students and faculty advisers the necessary information to determine whether a student is a good candidate to take a specific online course. Additionally, ACA 115, the basic study skills course required for all incoming students, will be redesigned to include a section orienting students to the personal characteristics as well as the technical competencies and requirements needed for success in an online learning format.

The effectiveness of these strategies will be measured by comparing pre-test and post-test data as well as student learning outcome data. Indirect measures of effectiveness will include survey data, retention data, and student grades. The College's plan will be evaluated every semester and will be revised if needed.

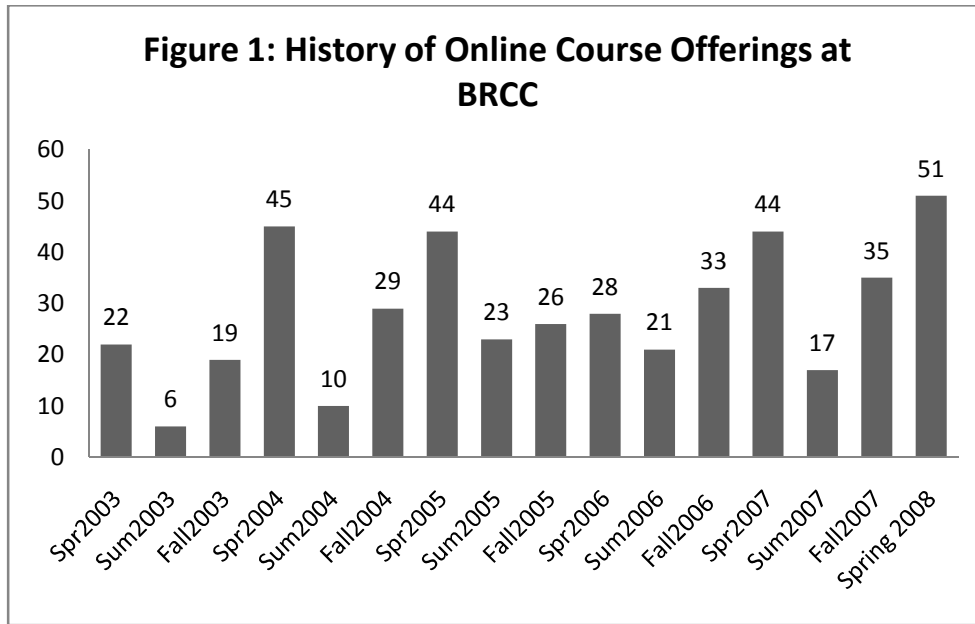
## **SELECTION OF QEP**

### **History and Overview of Online Education at BRCC**

BRCC first offered courses via distance learning in the late 1980s. The College's distance learning activities between the years 1987 to 1994 were telecourses. BRCC offered its first Internet curriculum course in the fall 1998 semester. Fourteen students registered for this first course. During the following year, three courses were offered. By the year 2000, twelve courses enrolling 367 students were operating. The number of total enrollments has shown a continued increase, except for the fall 2005 term. Just considering fall semesters, the numbers are as follows: 384 in 2003, 564 in 2004, 469 in 2005, 644 in 2006, and 740 in 2007.

By Spring 2003, the number of course offerings had almost doubled, and the grades awarded in those courses constituted 7.46% of all grades issued. Ensuing years have continued to see an increase both in the number of available courses and the number of enrolled students (only Fall 2003 and Fall 2005 showed decreases). One year later in Spring 2004, the number of courses had increased to 44 and the overall percentage of grades issued by the College for online courses in relation to all grades issued was up to 11.88%. During the Fall 2005 – Spring 2006 academic year, the number of online courses decreased. However in the Fall 2006 term, the number of courses was back to 33 and by Spring 2007, that number had increased to 44. One year later, the total was 51 (see Figure 1). The percentage of online grades awarded by the College has also, except for that one year from Fall 2005 – Spring 2006, shown a steady increase. By Spring 2007, out of all the grades awarded for curriculum courses, 15.3% represented online courses.

By Spring 2008, all of the two-year degree programs included some core courses (such as ENG 111, ACA 115, MAT 140/A, social science and humanities electives) that were available online (see Appendix A for explanations of all abbreviations). In addition, 74% of those two-year degree programs also offered at least one of their major courses online.



This increasing emphasis in online education filtered throughout the College’s planning. In 2001 the Planning Council’s Goals for Programs and Technology included the goal to “Extend the programs of the college through distance.” By Spring 2003, the dean of instruction, through examining course enrollment reports, noted that online courses had indeed been growing in popularity since 2001. During the weekly curriculum director meetings, discussions about the popularity and the expansion of course offerings were continual topics. More classes were being offered online each year to handle the growth. The dean also noted that most online courses filled up quickly during the school’s early registration period. These closures sparked the need to expand online courses even more. Courses initially taught online were handled only by full time instructors, but in order to keep up with the increased demand, some adjunct instructors were added to the online teaching staff in 2003. During this same time period, the IT department was also beginning to deal with increased needs for instructor training and

service issues for both faculty and students in online course. Clearly, administrative, faculty, and student involvement with online instruction has increased.

### **Overview of Written Materials**

Consideration of online education is apparent in many of the College's written documents. The IEPs written in 2005 and 2006 indicate that virtually every aspect of the College has recognized the need to address the challenges of online education (see Appendix B).

The 2007- 2010 IEP recognizes the faculty's commitment to providing a quality education, a college-wide commitment to the use of technology in distance learning, and a desire to expand distance learning opportunities as strengths of the College.

Opportunities for the College continue to include a desire for better student retention and growth in the distance learning population. Four of the College's stated goals (as numbered in the IEP) pertain to distance learning: (1) to infuse technology into all areas of education, (2) to promote instructional excellence, (4) to extend the College's programs through distance learning, and (8) to increase retention and student success. All four major curriculum areas list mid-level goals pertaining to these College goals. Both Allied Health and Business and Service Industries list goals for 1, 2, and 8. Applied Technology lists goals for 1, 2 and 4. And Arts and Sciences lists goals pertaining to 1 and 4.

The Policies and Procedures manual for the College contains several references to distance learning. Section 8.1.8 of the 2006 Policies and Procedures Manual is entirely devoted to distance learning. Sub-section A states that a faculty member may request to develop an online course or may be asked by the College to develop a course. This sub-

section covers the approval process for requests. Technical assistance in course development is also addressed in this sub-section. Sub-section B addresses the use, approval, and downloading of “free works,” such as graphics, photographs, and video clips. Sub-section C covers copyright law for distance and online courses and addresses the TEACH Act. The BRCC Policies and Procedures Manual also has an entire section (8.1.9) titled “Copyright Issues,” which addresses copyright policy and defines intellectual property ownership and fair use.

### **Constituencies Involved in Selection of QEP Topic**

The BRCC faculty was canvassed in a number of different formats. Fifty-seven faculty members completed surveys during the December 2005 Faculty Council meeting. Of the respondents, 33 faculty members had taught online courses while 24 had no online teaching experience. Thirty faculty members had actually taken an online course (credit or non-credit).

Among those who had taught online, a majority (78%) feel online classes are more time-consuming for the instructor as well as for the student, and a majority (77%) believe online course content is more extensive. A majority (76%) feel online is equally or more rigorous than seated. Slightly more than half (54%) believe that an online course is more time-consuming for the student.

Online faculty identified four primary reasons faced by online students that would result in their dropping an online course before completion:

- 84% identified procrastination
- 75 % identified weak computer skills
- 75% identified an inability to read and follow directions

- 72 % identified a learning style that was incompatible with online instruction

Those problems identified with a substantially lower percentage were technical problems (41%), desire for more personal interaction with the instructor (41%), inadequate time (34%), inappropriate advising (25%), lack of interest in subject (9%), lack of access to reliable computer (3%), and the difficulty of the course (3%).

The online instructors also identified the main reasons students do not pass online courses with a “C” or higher. A majority of these instructors identified procrastination (identified by 94%), inability to read and follow directions (identified by 69%), inappropriate learning style (identified by 59%), and inadequate computer skills (identified by 53%). Eighty percent agreed that a computer placement test or introduction class should be required of online students.

Other areas of concern about students included inadequate time (28%), inappropriate advising (22%), technical problems (16%), lack of interest in subject (16%), and desire for more interaction with instructor (6%). Those challenges mentioned by 3% of the responses included a desire for more interaction with other students, a general weakness in the subject area, a need for a course designed to provide more visuals and more interaction, the amount of time needed to complete the course, and the difficulty of the quizzes.

Of the 32 respondents in the faculty survey, sixty-five percent (65%) had received a written evaluation done by students for their online course. However, an overwhelming eighty-one percent (81%) of online instructors said the College should pursue course evaluations by students who have dropped online courses. Clearly, there is a desire for a

clearer identification of the causes of poor performance in these courses. Almost as many online faculty (80%) agreed that a student's successful completion of CIS 110 or a computer competency placement test should be required for students wanting to take an online course. Obviously there was concern about which students are registering for these courses.

The BRCC faculty has evidenced a concern about advisement and placement of online students for several years. In March 2004, a faculty ad hoc committee had developed a questionnaire for faculty advisers to use when discussing an online course with a student. The questionnaire explored both the technical competence and the learning style of the student. Advisers were encouraged to discuss the items with each online registrant and to have the student sign the form after it had been discussed. Follow up after the explanation of this worksheet has been ineffective. New faculty members have not been informed about its existence, and no procedure for assessing its usefulness has been implemented. The use of the worksheet is not mandatory, and it's unclear how much it is actually used with advisees.

Professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about technology have been ongoing. In 2006, sessions were offered on the following topics: instructional blogging, e-portfolios, READI assessment, Blackboard learning units, online course development, Taskstreaming, using wikis, online course design (two different sessions), support tactics for online students, developing rubrics to improve assessment, introduction to Blackboard, Blackboard features (course options, course content, question pools, gradebook, end of semester activities, discussions, syllabus, learning units, developing the course, online exams), Quality Matters, quality assurance, identifying at-

risk students, Moodle, student outcomes, and writing distance learning plans. Twenty-two different faculty members participated in these opportunities. A total of 115.5 hours of professional development instruction was completed in 2006.

In October 2007, Dr. Ed Neal, Director of Faculty Development in the UNC Center for Teaching and Learning, presented a two-day workshop entitled *Course Design, Teaching, and Assessment of Learning* to twenty-five faculty members. The faculty represented the Applied Technology, Arts and Sciences, and Business and Service Careers divisions. The main areas covered during the workshop were the writing of student learning outcomes and the assessment of those outcomes. Some particular attention was also paid to online courses. Clear and measurable learning outcomes will be necessary in the QEP proposal. Seminar evaluation forms indicated that participating faculty experienced a 1.0 – 1.5 greater increase in ability on a Likert scale measurement in the following areas: developing measurable goals and objectives, designing instruction plans, developing learning outcomes, designing effective assessments of learning, and using non-traditional assessment tools. An increase of greater than a 1.5 increment was noted in the following areas: aligning learning outcomes with teaching approaches, aligning learning outcomes with assessments of learning, and using rubrics and grading matrices.

In November 2007, fifteen faculty members who taught online participated in two faculty focus group discussions. The faculty represented both full and part time instructors. Members of the Applied Technology, Arts and Science, and Business and Service Careers divisions participated. The topics of discussions centered on suggested changes in the placement and advisement of online students. In discussions focusing on

what BRCC can do to increase successful completion of online courses, faculty emphasized several points:

- Students must have realistic expectations of the time necessary to succeed in an online format.
- Time management skills, self-discipline, reading and writing competency, and computer skills were critical.
- Some type of required orientation would be helpful. Although faculty members recognized the delivery format would need to be flexible, they felt it could be done.
- Some type of placement test was needed to assess readiness to succeed online.
- More effective advising was needed. Advisers themselves need to have both accurate understandings of the demands of different online courses and accurate information about their advisees' competencies.

Advisers requested screening tests to provide data on computer literacy, attitude, self-discipline, and time management. Advisers also requested training for these areas. They felt they needed to know about the software requirements, time needed, reading and writing requirements, and the level of technical computer knowledge needed for each online course. Faculty wanted to have some type of guideline available to everyone on the intranet which would provide this kind of overview for every online course.

Faculty had mixed opinions on using a minimum GPA as one of the criteria to predict success. Some faculty mentioned using ACA 115 as a gateway course for online courses. Others wanted to see more hybrids.

BRCC Staff offered a different perspective. During the Fall 2006 term, QEP members conducted interviews with staff members representing Student Services (Registrar, Counselors, Reception, Financial Aid, Disability Services, and Liaison with dual enrolled high school students), the Business Office, Public Information, and Technology and Development in order to gauge perceptions about online courses.

The following conclusions can be drawn from responses by the Business Office and Student Services personnel:

- 89% feel that online course content is equivalent to or more extensive than a seated section.
- 78% support online education for developmental courses.
- 63% of the staff believes that students should be able to complete an entire degree online.
- 56% of the staff believes that the future of education depends on online education.

The differences between faculty (who teach online) and staff (who are less familiar with online education) are striking.

Accommodations for the online student have been made for most services provided by Student Services. General inquiries for information about BRCC or disability services are sent by the receptionist to one of the counselors who will respond either through email or telephone. Information is given to area high school students by an employee who goes to the high schools and speaks to the students directly and administers the placement tests.

Applications to the College can be submitted online, and the Registrar's Office uses email and telephone to communicate with online students. Requests for transcripts can be handled if the student mails in a signature card. Drop/Add requests can be processed by phone, and changes in majors can be submitted online. Faculty advisers are assigned by program areas. Financial aid requests are, for the most part, handled the same for online and seated students since the majority of students submit their FAFSA applications online. Applications for scholarships are accessible online. Counseling for Federal Subsidized loans can be done at another school. Graduation applications can be done online.

Since all these college-related components can now be completed online, a student's competency in computer and technical areas is now more important than ever to a student's overall success in college.

Some challenges identified by Student Services personnel are that (1) links for the information on the web page are difficult to find and the information is sometimes incorrect and outdated; (2) there are no provisions for students to complete pre-enrollment tests online (although appropriate tests can be sent to the testing center at the college closest to the applicant or the applicant can submit SAT scores); (3) there are no online options for remediating low placement test scores; (4) personal counseling cannot be conducted effectively online; (5) students enrolled in the online ACA 115 may not be receiving the same information about student services; (6) questions about the application process are more difficult to answer, online registration is not yet functioning (special credit students and deaf interpreter students can be registered online by the Registrar); (7) as the number of online students increases, it's become more difficult for the Registrar's

Office to handle the emails and telephone calls; (8) answering emails from online students is difficult during registration times since personnel in the Registrar's Office is very busy; (9) work study opportunities are not available to online students; (10) students who take all of their courses online are not eligible for childcare reimbursements; and (11) confidential information often requires that a student come to campus to sign a signature card.

For the most part, the College web site is considered accessibility compliant. According to the W3C and WAI organizations, there are three priority levels for accessibility compliance. Priority 1 is considered a "must satisfy" level. Priority 2 is a "should satisfy" level and Priority 3 is a "may satisfy" level. The College web site has completed Priority 1 level. Items placed on the streaming video server are not configured for accessibility since most of them are audio or video files. Faculty who place course content on their web sites may not be making those items accessible by assigning needed accessibility codes.

The majority of the Technology and Development staff members believe that technical support for the delivery and development of online courses is adequate, that the College should offer some technical support for Blackboard, ISP, and desktop support outside normal hours of operation, and that adjuncts (including nationwide resources) should be allowed to teach online. The need for additional funding for maintenance and support of online courses (particularly on weekends and evenings) was noted. The tech staff also believes that successful completion of CIS 110 or a computer placement test should be required before a student can take an online course and that successful

completion of online delivery training should be required of all instructors before they are allowed to teach online.

SACS criteria require an assessment of the library services to compare use of the library services by seated and online students; 104 online students completed the Library Survey that was available in the Spring 2006 term. The curriculum areas with the largest number of respondents were nursing, early childhood, business administration, and office systems technology. This survey was assigned by online instructors to ensure better participation. Announcements in Blackboard also advertised the survey and urged participation.

Online classes do not seem to require frequent use of the library. Only 14% of the students said they had been required to do library research many times; 37% reported needing to do research a few times, but 49% have not been required to use the library at all. If the library was used, 63% of the respondents felt the library web site was easy to use.

The NCLive resources (a subscription electronic database) are also not used frequently. Only 9% of the respondents said they had used NCLive frequently; 34% indicated use a few times, but 56% had not used NCLive at all. Students seem to be mixed in their response to how easily NCLive can be used. Only 34% have used the tutorials.

The library staff is not consulted for assistance very often. Eleven percent of the students responding indicated many requests for assistance; 31% indicated only a few requests, and 57% had never asked for help. Of the students who had an opinion on the ability of the library staff to be helpful, a large majority rated the support given as

helpful. Student comments indicated that their experiences with the library staff had been positive and they had been helped efficiently and effectively. Even those who had never asked for help voiced confidence that help would be there if they needed it.

Student comments about the library indicated two problem areas which were mentioned three times each: the need to have weekend hours and the need to have a more rapid response to the request for an NCLive password. The need to be able to reserve a book online was mentioned by one student.

Students' perceptions of online courses differ. In the Spring 2006 semester, 151 online students completed a survey prepared by the QEP Committee. The survey was repeated during the Fall 2006 semester. The online instructors were asked to assign the completion of the survey. As each student submitted a completed survey, an email was sent to the instructor. In this way, although the content of the survey remained confidential, the instructor knew who had completed the assignment. Many instructors gave extra credit for the completion of the survey. A third survey of online students was conducted in March 2008. This version of the questionnaire solicited feedback on some of the possible QEP focuses which had emerged through the research. This survey yielded 148 responses.

A series of student focus groups was also held. The first was in December 2007. Using a randomly generated number, 33 names of online students were chosen from the database. Dr. Parkhill, President of Blue Ridge Community College, sent out letters to these students requesting their involvement in these discussion groups. A second series of student focus groups was conducted in February 2008 on both the Flat Rock and the Transylvania campuses. Students from online courses were asked to volunteer to be part

of the focus groups. These discussions also included consideration of suggested changes in the placement and advisement of online students.

The responses from the overall student online population taking the survey in Spring 2006, not surprisingly, indicated a positive perception of online education. Students ranking their overall experience as “very positive” made up 41.5% of the respondents; those indicating that the experience had been “good” made up 40.8%. A large percentage (87%) said they would recommend the course to a friend. 60% thought that the future of higher education depends on online education while 68.9% thought that even developmental courses should be available online. In the March 2008 survey, only 35% endorsed online courses to friends unequivocally. 49% recommended taking an online course; however, the responses also cautioned that a lot of time would be needed .

Only one third of the enrolled students (35%) were taking the course for convenience. The other reason cited for taking the course online was scheduling conflicts with either jobs or other courses. A vast majority of the students (86%) completed their work from their homes. Responses to questions in the Spring 2007 online instructor evaluations also indicated that students take online courses for better work schedule flexibility (22.4%), the ability to learn on the student’s own time (21.7%), reduction in travel to BRCC (21.2%), ability to spend more time at home (18.2%), and a preference for online learning style (16.4%). Students participating in the February student focus groups also indicated that flexibility was a key factor in their decision. 62% of the respondents in the March 2008 survey cited flexibility as their top reason for choosing an online course.

Not surprisingly, the Spring 2007 Distance Learning Course Evaluation revealed that 84% of the surveyed students used a computer at home to access the course. Satisfaction with the online experience seemed acceptable: 84% of those respondents would recommend the course to others and 94.1% indicated that access to the course was adequate. Slightly over half (52%) felt that the content of an online section was equivalent to a seated section; however, 42.2% felt that the online format was more time consuming (44.8% did not). Slightly more than half (53%) felt that an online course was more rigorous. In the Spring 2006 Online Student Survey, only 38% felt the course was equally as rigorous. In the Fall 2006 student surveys, some of these statistics showed interesting changes. Only 39% of these students felt the online course was more rigorous while 52% felt the course formats were equally rigorous. A similar percentage (38%) of the March 2008 respondents expected their online courses to be easier than seated sections.

The students in the surveys identified their greatest difficulties as computer problems and mismanagement of time. In the Spring 2006 results, computer problems accounted for 19.05%; however, that percentage decreased to 12.5% in the Fall 2006 statistics. However, difficulties with instructions, due dates, and reading increased. Problems with instructions increased from 6.8% to 22.5%; problems with due dates increased from 0.0% to 16.25%, and problems with reading increased from 7.48% to 27.5% . In Spring 2006 students also voiced a need for online tutoring, videos and live chats. More than half (56%) wanted a contact number to call on weekends and evenings to deal with problems with the BRCC server. When the students did have technical problems, the instructor was the most common contact (39.2%). A quarter of these

students never needed any technical support. Most students did not use any technical service available on line; only 24.4% indicated that they had used and were satisfied with the available service. Those students who needed help seemed more likely to find a knowledgeable person to speak with; 88.2% of the students responding to the online faculty evaluation had found someone with whom to consult. In March 2008, computer problems and time management were identified as the two biggest challenges. Time management (44%) was chosen twice as often as computer problems (22%).

In the student focus groups, the greatest challenges identified in the online courses were software problems, navigating in Moodle, scheduling time on the computer, and keeping up with the assignments. Students also voiced frustration with communications with both other students and the instructor.

The students' concerns about technical support were initially addressed by the hiring of a tech support person in the Fall 2006 term. This person was available for twenty hours a week. In the Spring 2007 term, a 24/7 online helpline was initiated.

Many of the surveyed students (47%) figured out on their own how to use Blackboard while 25% attended a face-to-face introduction and 14% learned what was needed in CIS 110. The students were evenly split on whether they thought a CIS 110 course or placement test for computer literacy should precede a student's enrolling in an online course (44% agreeing with the requirement and 46.6% against it). In the student focus group discussions, participants felt that CIS 110, ACA 115, and READI were all valid pre-requisites. All the students in the February focus groups felt that computer skills were a necessary pre-requisite to an online course.

One hundred nineteen students completed the online instructor evaluation for Spring 2007. Student responses to questions about preparedness for their courses indicate that the majority of students opted not to participate in online orientations, face-to-face orientations or the READI assessment. Of those who chose to participate in an orientation, 86.4% found it helpful. Of those who chose to take the READI assessment, 74% found it helpful; 94.1% of the online students felt technically prepared for online courses.

In the focus groups, students who attended the Moodle orientation found the session helpful and one student said she had not attended but in retrospect, she wished that she had. Over half of the March 2008 survey responses indicated that students would be willing to attend a one-time orientation with a particular instructor for a particular course. Sixty-nine percent of these students were interested in obtaining information about navigating around the course site. In the March 2008 survey, 40% of the respondents indicated that they were already familiar with Moodle when they started this course. In fact, 70% of the students completing the March 2008 student survey of online courses had completed online courses in previous terms.

Students' expectations about online courses were not always accurate. The focus group discussions revealed that students often registered for the courses with inadequate information about the nature of the assignments, the time commitment, the requisite computer skills, or the structure of the courses. They often expected the course to take less time than a seated section, to be easier than a seated section, to require just one sign-in a week, and to allow them to proceed at their own pace. Only one of the students in the February focus groups felt that he had received adequate information during registration.

They all felt that students must have strong time management skills, appropriate computer skills, and self-motivation if they were to be successful online. All focus group participants felt that having course specific information would have been very helpful.

Only 20% of the March 2008 respondents felt that their overall perceptions of online courses were very accurate. According to the March 2008 survey results, 69% of the respondents expected that they would be able to progress through the course requirements at their own pace and 38% believed that the online course would be easier than the seated version. Although 61% of these students had been given a handout about online courses during registration, 36% of the advisers said nothing about online courses and 20% of the students did receive information but found that information to be different from what actually occurred in the course. Specifically these students felt that they needed more information about the time and the technical competence required to be successful in the course.

In addition, the March 2008 survey solicited input on what prerequisites might be appropriate for an online course. Sixty-four percent of the March 2008 surveys agreed that students should satisfy certain prerequisites before enrolling in an online course. About 43 % agreed that a computer skills course and a computer skills test would be appropriate prerequisites.

In addition to the overall analysis of the QEP online student survey, several customized analyses were completed in attempts to isolate factors which might be influencing students' successes in their online courses. Comparisons were completed between first year (BUS 110) and second year courses (ECM 230) and also between

reading intensive (HUM 123 and PSY 241) and more technical courses (MAT 140, CIS 110, and ACC 120). No contributing factors were identified in the data.

Recognizing that no student enrolls in a course with the intention to fail and responding to the faculty's desire to follow up on students who had not been successful in their online courses, the QEP Committee wanted to hear directly from students about the reasons for their failures to successfully complete their online courses. After the Spring 2007 term, faculty teaching online provided the names of the students who had withdrawn from their online courses. Sixty-six students were identified from a variety of courses. College personnel conducted telephone surveys with 26 of these online students. The following results are noteworthy:

- 42% had dropped a course because they felt the work load was overwhelming.
- 11% realized that they preferred face-to-face courses.
- 53% may have had unrealistic expectations for the work required by an online course.
- Of the remaining 11 students, 4 dropped for personal reasons related to family situations or illness, 3 discovered that they did not need the course, 1 felt there was a problem with the course structure, and the last 3 simply said that they had been dropped by their instructor but did not specify any reasons for being dropped.

BRCC Governance was also consulted. In the fall of 2005 the importance of online education to BRCC was presented to the Planning Council so that the administration could understand the growing demand for online education and the impact

online education was having on the school. The Report for Technology Needs for Distance Learning submitted at that time identified the technological needs for online courses (web development, learning objects repository, streaming video server, improved student email, streamlined BlackBoard registration, and software management). A brief summary of the overall purpose of the QEP was also given to the Planning Council at that time along with the need for the study to cover some area of concern that would impact the entire College. The idea of using some facet of online education as the focus of the upcoming QEP was discussed at that meeting of the Planning Council since online education was beginning to impact all parts of the school including the IT department for delivery, student services for registration, the business office for payment, the book store for purchases, library access, and course development for both continuing education and curriculum.

It was also noted at this meeting that several of BRCC's full time curriculum instructors were being approached by other NC Community Colleges to teach online courses for them as adjuncts. The ensuing conversation by the Planning Council cemented the importance that online education was beginning to have on BRCC and emphasized the critical need to study online education.

On Wednesday, January 31, 2007, the QEP Committee met with the President of BRCC to discuss the focus of the committee. On February 19, 2007, the Chair of the QEP Committee met with the BRCC Management Team. On March 14, 2007, the BRCC Board of Trustees heard a presentation on the QEP proposal. In December 2007, the BRCC Board heard an update on the QEP at its retreat. All these

meetings provided both a way to keep BRCC Governance informed about the QEP proposal and an opportunity for questions and comments to be offered.

The QEP Committee also requested data about online students from other North Carolina community colleges that were comparable to BRCC in size and locality. Stanly, Haywood, and Southwestern Community Colleges comparisons indicate that retention rates in online courses are a challenge at all three colleges. Haywood reported that retention rates are usually lower for online courses, and although exact figures were not available, the estimates were that the retention rates were, in some courses, as low as 50%. Similarly Stanly reported that retention was about 60%. Southwestern said that initially the retention rates for online courses had been lower, but they had stabilized over the last 2-3 years.

These colleges do not handle advising of online students much differently than they work with seated students. Stanly reported that advising was done the same way for seated and online students; most advising for online students was handled by email. Haywood indicated that advising for online students is supposed to include a discussion of online course requirements but also admitted that those topics were not always discussed. Advisers at Haywood encourage but do not require their online students to attend a face-to-face orientation.

Once enrolled in a course, the online students at Haywood must complete an assignment that assesses their technical competency. This assignment must be completed during the first week of the course. Southwestern offers several self-assessment instruments to its students; however, completing them is not mandatory. Stanly does not have any specific tools for assessing the skills of the online students.

All three colleges maintain that the learning outcomes for the online courses are identical to the seated sections. At Stanly, about 10% of the instructors require that at least one exam be taken in a proctored environment in a testing center. One way that most online Stanly instructors compare their online and seated students' outcomes is by choosing several exam questions that are common to both the seated and online courses. A minimum benchmark of correct answers is established and the success rates for those particular questions can be calculated. Some instructors also use pre/post tests. Haywood and Southwestern simply indicated that the same measurements (tests, projects, papers, etc) are used in both online and seated sections of the same course.

### **Information from READI**

SACS' Policy Statement on Distance Education (December 2006) requires that "[s]tudents enrolled in online courses are able to use the technology employed" in their online courses. Furthermore, this policy statement requires that colleges must consider "the capability of students to succeed in distance education programs." Much of the input from faculty, staff, and students had also indicated that student preparedness for online courses was one of the problems. Previous attempts to use a faculty checklist and a student online self-assessment had proven inadequate.

As a result, during the Spring 2006 semester, QEP committee members tried the Readiness for Education At a Distance Indicator, an electronic diagnostic instrument, as an additional method for identifying those online students who were mostly likely to be successful. READI includes an actual typing test, an actual reading on screen comprehension test, assessments of personal learning styles, motivations and work ethic, and a quiz for technology understanding.

Online students in ACA 115, CIS 110, EDU 119, EDU 153, EDU 221, EDU 235, EDU 271, and MAT 140 completed the READI assessment during the Summer 2006 term. The committee decided to use the numbers for the technical competence, technical knowledge, typing wpm, typing accuracy, and reading comprehension for the comparison with readiness and grades earned in the courses. Using the data available at the end of the summer 2006 term, a regression analysis resulted in only a weak correlation.

The READI scores for both the Summer and Fall 2006 terms were then combined to provide an analysis of grades and scores on the individual components of the READI assessment. The scores for both technical competence and reading comprehension showed a steady decline as the grades progressed from A to D. However, all the students who did not successfully complete the course (either with an F or a withdrawal) also had technical scores and reading comprehension scores comparable to those students who earned A's in the course. Reading and technical competence appear to be two factors which influence a student's potential for success in an online course for those students who remain in their courses.

An additional analysis of the READI scores information on learning styles was also completed but was also inconclusive. Among all online students (those who were and were not successful in completing the course), the social learning style was most often identified.

The most helpful information obtained from READI came from studying the history of withdrawing from courses and GPAs. Those students who have histories of withdrawing from two or more courses and/or who have GPAs of lower than 2.0 seem to be at the highest risk for not completing their online courses.

## **Grade comparisons between seated and online sections of the same courses**

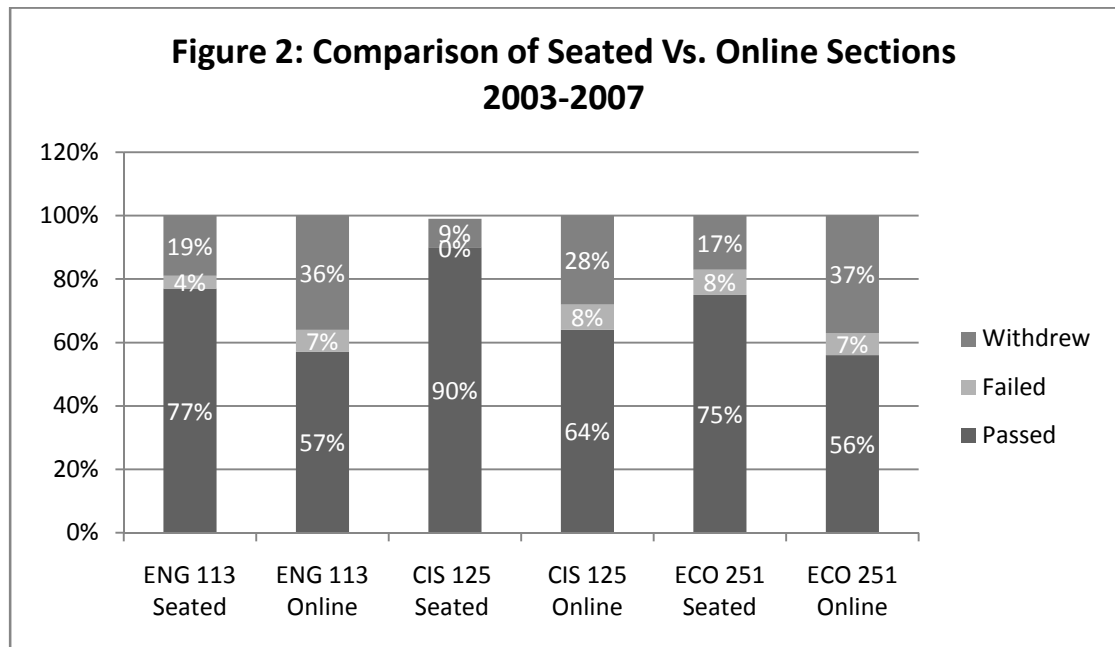
In an effort to compare the success of online students and seated students in the same courses, data on grade distribution and course completion were collected for all sections of a course that was offered in both formats from Spring 2003 through Spring 2007 (see Appendix C). Data were collected from the fall and spring semesters. The summer courses were not included because the numbers of enrollments were so much lower and because during the Summer 2006 and 2007 terms, no online English courses were offered. Typically three online English courses are offered each fall and spring term.

In addition, for the online courses which required an online lab, the data collected considered the course and its lab as one enrollment. Therefore, a course like MAT 140 with the MAT 140A lab was counted as only one course. Another course approached this way would be ASL 111 and ASL 181. If part of a course was online and part of it was seated, it was considered a hybrid and was not included in this research. The traditional classes were counted as a total without regard to full-time or adjunct instructor, day or night classes, or which campus offered the course.

In comparing the relative successful completion of either an online or a seated section, the analysis considers the grades earned for A, B, and C because these are the grades that would transfer to another institution. Although D's do not transfer, they are technically considering a passing grade. Unsuccessful completion of a course was considered a grade of F or a withdrawal (either WP or WF).

Overall, for all College students enrolled in a course which offered both seated and online sections, 70% of seated students completed their courses with grades of A – C

while 65% of online students did so. Inclusion of the Fall 2007 numbers maintains these percentages: 64% of online students earned grades of A,B, or C while 69.8 of seated students fell into this range. While 20% of all the College’s seated students withdrew from their courses during this timeframe, 23% of the online students withdrew. Factoring in the Fall 2007 statistics, 24.9% of online students received grades of WP or WF while 19.8% of seated students received those grades. In the seated sections of these courses, 5% of the students received F’s. In the online section, the percentage of students receiving F’s was 7%. By Fall 2007, 7.1% of online students received Fs while 5.5% of seated students failed their courses. For a comparison of the statistics for three specific courses, see Figure 2.



From Spring 2003 – Spring 2007, the course prefixes with the highest percentages of withdrawals in seated sections were ACC (28%), SOC (27%), BUS (25%), ENG (22%), ACA (20%), and MAT (20%). For online sections, the prefixes with the highest

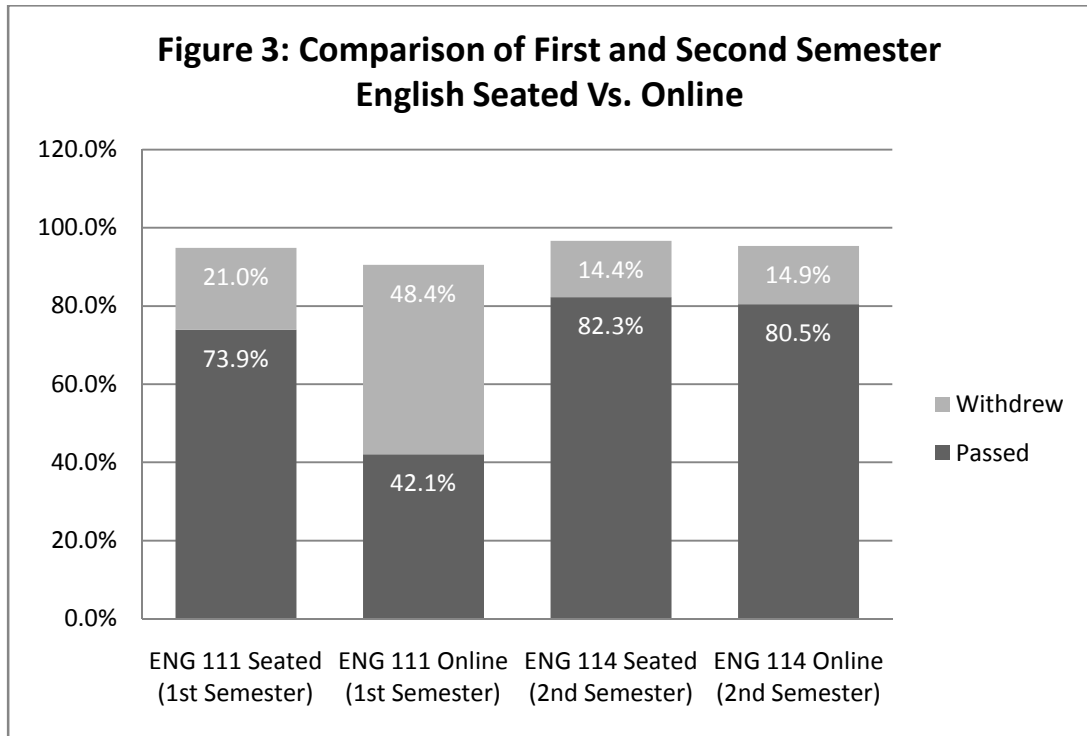
withdrawal rates were SOC (68%), ENG (34%), ECO (33%), TAT (32%), ACC (32%), CSC (30%), ECM (29%), DBA (26%), ACA (26%), BUS (25%), CTS (25%), PSY (23%), MKT (23%), CIS (22%), MAT (22%), and POL (22%). The two prefixes showing an identical withdrawal rates for both seated and online sections of the same course were HIS and BUS. The only prefix not having a higher percentage of withdrawals in online sections was HUM.

Comparing divisional numbers, from Spring 2003 – Spring 2007, seated and online courses in the Business and Service Careers were comparable for the percentage of students earning grades of A- C and for those withdrawing. However, the Arts and Sciences division indicated a greater difference between seated and online sections. In Arts and Sciences, 70% also earned grades of A – C and 20% withdrew in seated sections. In online sections, however, 63% completed the courses with grades of A – C and 26% dropped the course before completion.

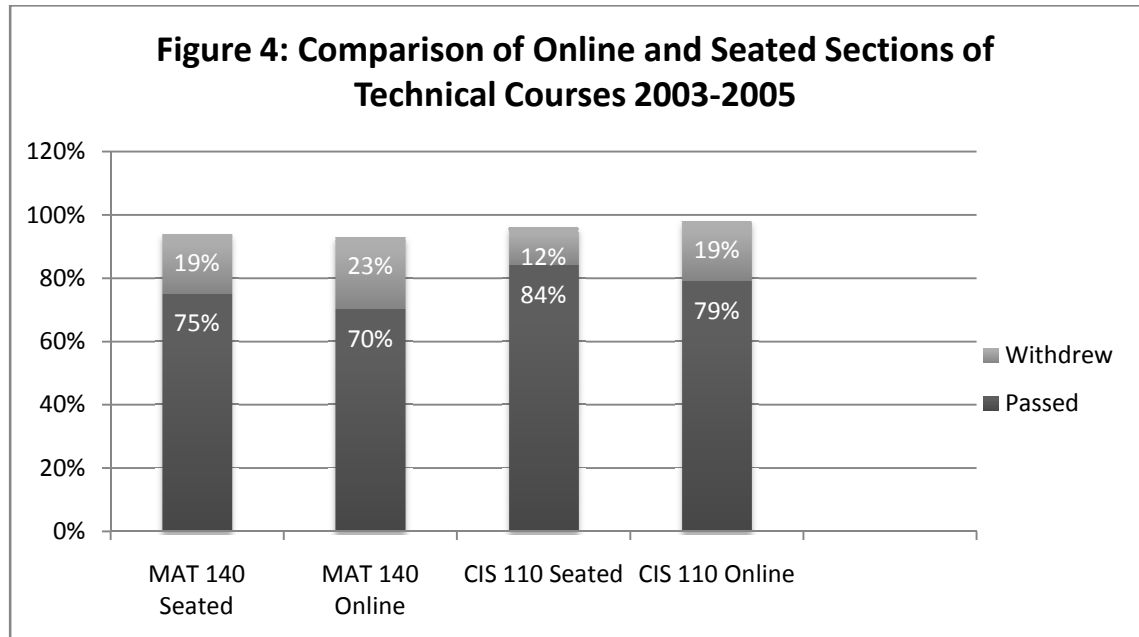
An analysis of the grades from Spring 2003 – Spring 2005 was completed to ascertain whether differences in successful completion rates could be explained by considering other parameters. First, a comparison of first and second year courses was considered to see if experience was a factor. The comparison of the first and second year business courses showed better success in the seated sections for both the first and second year courses. In the seated BUS 110, 72.4% received a grade between A – D while 23% withdrew. In the online 65.9% received a grade of A – D and 28.3% withdrew. In BUS 260, 88.4% of the seated students earned grades of A-D and 9.3% withdrew with a grade of WP or WF. In the online version of BUS 260, 72.7% earned grades of A-D while 18.2% withdrew and received a WP or a WF. The students in another second semester

course (BUS 239) also indicated also that they felt the online course was more rigorous than the seated version. Although experience with online business courses did not seem to improve students' outcomes, clearly the students in the seated sections were more successful.

The online English courses indicated an interesting difference between first and second semester courses and between two courses which varied in the intensity and content of the reading assignments. In ENG 111 seated sections, 73.9% of the students received grades of A-D while 21% withdrew from the course. In the online section, 42.1% completed the course with grades of A-D and 48.4% withdrew. During this first semester course, the students clearly had more success in the seated sections. However, when the second semester grade distributions are studied, the intensity of the reading assignments probably becomes a contributing factor. In ENG 114, 82.3% of the seated students completed the course with grades of A-D; in the online section, the completion rate was 80.5%. In the seated section, 14.4% withdrew; in the online section, 14.9%. The statistics are very comparable. However in ENG 113, the seated students completed the course with grades of A-D at a rate of 76.6%; 19.3% withdrew. In the online ENG 113, 54.3% successfully completed the course and 38% withdrew. Although ENG 113 and ENG 114 are both second semester courses, the reading assignments are quite different both in content and intensity (See Figure 3).



In the more technical courses (MAT 140, CIS 110, and ACC 120), students in the online sections of MAT 140 and CIS 110 showed similar differences between seated and online sections. Although 84.1% of the traditional CIS 110 students received grades of A – D, only 78.7% of the online students had those grades. While 12.2% of the seated CIS 110 students withdrew, 18.9% of the online students did not complete the course. In MAT 140, 75% of the students received grades of A – D but only 70.3% did so in the online sections. Although 19% of the seated students withdrew from MAT 140, 23.4% withdrew from the online sections (See Figure 4).



In the more reading intensive courses, the statistics for seated and online section of HUM 123 are very comparable. The PSY 241 statistics showed a dramatic difference in the different formats. In seated sections 78.9% of the students received grades of A – D and 14.9% withdrew. In the online section, 45% received grades of A – D and 50% withdrew; however, this term was the first time that that course was offered online and changes in the course design have been made.

**Literature Review (see Appendix D for References)**

The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that in the 2000-2001 academic year, there were approximately “2,876,000 enrollments in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses” (as cited in Hillstock, 2005, para. 1). According to a study by Allen and Seaman (2003), during the fall 2002 semester, 11 percent of all college students in the United States, or over 1.6 million students, took at least one of their courses online. More than 578,000 students registered only for online courses (as cited in Yang & Cornelius, 2004).

Many studies have reported that attrition in online courses has continued to be more of a problem in online courses than in seated sections (Diaz, 2002; Nash, 2005). Withdrawal rates from online courses have been reported from 25-30% (Diaz, 2002). Hyllegard and Burke (2002) reported that online students have had double the attrition rates. Some researchers reported drop-out rates approaching 50% (Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003; Diaz, 2002). Drop-out rates nationwide in online courses have been 10% - 20% higher than in traditional settings (Hillstock, 2005; Carr, 2000). Students who do complete their online courses also exhibit a different grade distribution; the largest percentages of grades are either A's or F's (Hyllegard & Burke, 2002). In the comparative study completed by Hyllegard and Burke (2002), 47.3% of the earned grades were A's and 20.5% were B's in contrast to the more normal distribution generally seen in seated sections. Clearly most of the students who completed the course had been quite successful. Research by Diaz (2002) suggests that those students who persevere in online courses will do as well as those students who enroll in seated sections.

“Indeed, distance learning experts have repeatedly stated that online courses are not for everyone” (Hyllegard & Burke, 2002, pp. 30-31). Many explanations have been presented for the challenges faced by online students and for the higher attrition rates. These explanations can be categorized in three major areas: student factors, situational factors, and educational system factors (Diaz, 2002). These elements varied in their ability to predict either success or challenge in an online course.

Some student factors are demographic in nature. Several researchers have noted that older students have the maturity needed for more successful experiences with online courses (Diaz, 2002). Lim, Morris and Moon (2006a; 2006b) found that greater

satisfaction and higher scores in learning outcomes were reported by learners between the ages of 20-29. Gaide ( 2004) reported that students under the age of 25 had more attrition. Although many researchers discovered no differences related to gender (Perez-Prad & Thirunarayanan, 2002), Stokes (2003) indicated that females were more satisfied with online learning formats.

Students' perceptions and expectations about online courses appeared to be strong predictors of success. Online students who dropped or failed an online course often had expected that course to be easier than a seated section (Nash, 2005). They expected to work at their own pace and to have a lighter workload (Hillstock, 2005). Twenty-four percent of online students in one study reported this misperception (Attitudes and opinions, 2002). "Research indicates that the greater the fit between expectations and reality, the greater the likelihood for persistence, student success, and stability" (National online learners, p.3).

Successful online students exhibited competence in very specific areas. These students had reading and writing skills that were commensurate with a collegiate level (Gaide,2004; Grant MacEwan College, 2000; & Nash, 2005). They were also technologically savvy. Although computers have certainly become more prevalent, assuming that students have the abilities to benefit from this technology may be misguided. In particular, nontraditional college students may not be as competent (Miller & Lu, 2002). Many researchers cited computer literacy as a prerequisite skill (Lynch, 2001; Nash, 2005; & Gaide, 2004). Having access to current hardware and software capabilities, internet access, and familiarity with emails and the internet were essential (Greer, Hudson, & Paugh, 1998; Grant MacEwan College, 2000). In Miller and Lu's

(2002) study, seven of the fourteen identified barriers to being successful in an online course were related to technology. Others, however, found that computer skills were not a predictive variable (Perez-Prad & Thirunarayanan, 2002) since students presented tremendous variability in their computer skills. Students who had completed several online courses understandably felt more comfortable in this area (Greer, Hudson, & Paugh, 1998).

One significant source of difficulty was a student's time management skills. Many students cited demands in their life that interfered with their time for their courses. However, Garland discovered that often those situations were compounded by poor time management skills (as cited in Nash, 2005). The ability to manage time effectively was another predictive variable (Greer, Hudson, & Paugh, 1998). "Learners with procrastination tendency showed significantly lower mean scores for course satisfaction, posttest, learning increase, learning motivation, and learning involvement" (Lim, Morris, & Yoon, 2006b, p. 974).

The effect of learning style on success in online courses remained undecided. Phipps and Merisotis (2000) found that the three benchmarks in their research that were addressing learning style did not correlate highly with course performance. They concluded that any criteria relating to learning style were not essential to developing effective online courses. Later research by Halsne (2002) confirmed that "the results indicated that learning styles do not affect students' interaction with the media and the methods of instruction" (pp. 31 – 32). Even among students who were 19-26, no correlation could be found between learning style and success in online courses (Stokes, 2003).

Other researchers disagree. They believed that “a significant trait of the successful online student was a strong independent learning style” (Diaz, 2002, para. 6). Researchers who have demonstrated a relationship between an independent learning style and success in online courses include Smith (2005); Smith, Murphy and Mahoney (2003); Diaz & Cartnal (1999); Yang and Cornelius (2004); and Halsne (2002).

Diaz and Cartnal (1999) speculated that this independence could also cause problems if the preference for autonomy resulted in the rejection of any guidance from instructors. Thompson and Knox noted that these students could also interact less with the instructor and other students in the course (as cited in Halsne, 2002). This willingness to interact with other students, however, has been identified as a significant predictor of success in online learning (Smith, 2005; Diaz & Cartnal, 1999).

A preference for learning in an electronic format correlated strongly with both academic success in and satisfaction with online courses (Lim, Morris & Yoon, 2006b; Stokes, 2003). Warner identified this preference as one of the key elements for readiness for electronic learning (as cited in Smith, Murphy, & Mahoney, 2003). “[T]he online learners’ preference of online learning method compared to classroom instruction was [sic] appeared to be an important learner variable making significant differences” (Lim, Morris, & Yoon, 2006a, p. 264).

Prior experience with online courses was one of the strongest predictors of success. For one thing, these students were more comfortable using computers (Lim, Morris, & Yoon, 2006b). In addition, comfort in using the internet was an important prerequisite for success (Stokes, 2003). Gaide (2004) found that retention was impacted by whether an online student was a first-time or an experienced participant. A study of

course satisfaction of first-time online students revealed that 56% of them were less satisfied (Stokes, 2003). “The online learners’ prior experience with distance learning was identified as [a] more influential variable explaining meaningful differences in learning support and learning motivation” (Lim, Morris, & Yoon, 2006a, p. 264 ).

In addition to prior experience with online courses, previous success in any collegiate work also predicted better results in online courses (Gaide, 2004). Of particular significance was the student’s cumulative GPA. The average GPA for a successful online student was 3.2 while the average GPA for the unsuccessful online student was 2.25 (Diaz, 2002). The research conducted by Bernard, Brauer, Abrami, and Surkes considered four factors, but the study suggested that GPA was the best predictor of course grade. In fact, GPA’s correlation with success in the course was so strong that the researchers excluded it from correlations with the other factors because it would most likely overshadow their effect. “[T]heir [the other factors] overall importance pales in light of the high correlation between GPA and Course Grade. Put succinctly, prior achievement is still the best predictor of future achievement (Bernard, Brauer, Abrami, & Surkes, 2004, p. 44).”

The research has clearly identified factors affecting student success in online courses: some demographics, student expectations, communication skills, computer skills, effective time management abilities, an independent self-directed learning style, a preference for electronic learning, GPA, and prior experience with online courses. However, the research has also identified several approaches which could help students who would be more challenged to make better choices and be more successful in their online courses.

First, students must receive appropriate academic advising about online courses. Among the identified benchmarks considered critical for ensuring the quality of an online course were that “[b]efore starting an online program, students are advised about the program to determine (1) if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn at a distance and (2) if they have access to the minimal technology required by the course design” (Phipps & Merisotis, 2000, p. 26). During this advising, students should be able to view the course learning outcomes and concepts (Phipps & Merisotis, 2000). An intake interview with a trained adviser can identify whether a student is an appropriate candidate for an online course. The importance of one-on-one advising was noted by many researchers (Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003).

Second, the importance of assessing a student’s readiness for online courses was discussed in many articles. Surveys need to explore students’ readiness in multiple areas if they are to be helpful in identifying potential difficulties (Diaz, 2002; Major & Levenburg, 1999). Students’ problems with courses taking up more time than expected may actually be problems in reading and writing (Nash, 2005). Research suggests surveys can be predictive of how a student will perform in an online course. The survey developed by Bernard, Brauer, Abrami, and Surkes (2004) considered online skills as well as time management, beliefs about online learning, and desire for interaction with others. Students’ opinions about “their self-management, self-direction, and initiative as learners are the best set of items for predicting success in an online course” (Bernard, Brauer, Abrami, & Surkes, 2004, p. 41). This student preference for self-directed learning and time management was also noted in research completed by Wang and Newlin (as cited in Smith, 2005). This research also supported the influence of students’

interest in communicating with others online, a willingness that could indicate a preference and comfort with online instruction (Smith, 2005). Warner et al approached assessment of readiness from three perspectives: student preference for online format, student confidence in using electronic communication, and student ability to be an independent learner (as cited in Smith, Murphy, & Mahoney, 2003). Many of these studies were assessing the validity of the Readiness for Online-Learning Questionnaire developed by McVay (Smith, 2005; Smith, Murphy, & Mahoney, 2003). Studies of this questionnaire concluded that “it is a promising instrument for research and for practice” (Smith, Murphy, & Mahoney, 2003, p. 60). Western Governors University requires all students to complete a self-assessment comparing their perceived competencies with the program’s learning outcomes (Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003).

Computer skills were one assessment area that generated a lot of interest (Smith, 2005). Computer access, for example, dramatically affected students’ attitudes towards online courses (Peters, 2001). Baab (1999) believed that “the very first thing to do in student preparation is to assess the skill levels of the students as they pertain to the technology” (p.4). Less experienced internet users might need some remediation (Stokes, 2003). When deficiencies are identified in any area, they can then be addressed. Martyn (2003) described an approach that familiarized students with all the activities they would use in the course delivery system. This approach “has resulted in a near 100-percent completion rate” (p. 19). Madden (1999) recommended “pre-course basic training in how to navigate the course, use e-mail, and participate in class discussions” (para. 3). In surveys, students themselves requested specific hands-on training during orientation

(Greer, Hudson, & Paugh, 1998). Phipps and Merisotis (2000) labeled this hands-on training as one of their student support benchmarks.

Baab's presentation to the Community Colleges Online Conference noted that "online learning is a challenge for the most organized and motivated students" (Baab, 1999, p. 3). But he also noted Schlosser and Anderson's observation that as more students register for online courses, they "may not be the motivated, organized, autonomous students who can handle the online experience well" (Baab, 1999, p.3). Students choose to enroll in online courses for a multitude of reasons. But students do not sign up for courses expecting to drop or fail. The literature clearly shows that although students may be underprepared for online courses, colleges have ways to identify and remediate these deficiencies so that the online students can have a satisfying and successful experience in their courses.

### **Importance of QEP to College**

The increasing number of online course offerings and the corresponding increase in the number of grades earned for online courses reveal sustained and growing interest in online courses by administrators, faculty, and students. Clearly, online instruction is an integral and expanding component of the College's course offerings.

Online courses have also been an integral component of the college's IEP for many years. Planning at all levels within the college always considers online as well as seated courses.

Online education correlates closely with several of the vision statements in the college's Mission Statement. Specifically, these online courses will assist the college in "promoting instructional excellence in all program areas, expanding and enhancing

programs to meet the evolving needs of our community, enhancing customer service, increasing the retention and success of our students, infusing appropriate technologies for problem solving and enhanced program delivery, and developing responsive and effective education programs.”

The Values Statement adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 14, 2007, promises to be candid and supportive with students in the assessment of their skills and their progress on their journey toward knowledge. Helping students understand the skills, strategies and attitudes which best support success in an online course certainly fulfills this vision. Similarly, the Values Statement promises that the college will be vigilant in seeking opportunities to improve the delivery and quality of instruction through changes in technology and education research. The internal research at Blue Ridge Community College and the literature search of professional journals have suggested several useful ideas to effect these improvements.

## **Conclusions**

1. Identifying which students would be the most successful in an online course is of paramount importance. It is also listed in the SACS Policy Statement on Distance Education (December 2006) as follows: “Admission and recruitment policies and decisions [should] take into account the capability of students to succeed in distance education programs (CS 3.4.3).” Students register for online courses with optimistic expectations. However, larger percentages of students withdraw from these courses. Of those that do remain, the grade spread appears comparable. Analyses of our data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups along with professional articles suggest factors

such as computer skills, reading comprehension, preference for online learning, independent learning style, time management skills, realistic expectations about demands of an online course, a required orientation, minimum GPA, and consideration of the history of withdrawing from courses are predictors for success in an online course.

In particular, many aspects of this study point to assessing computer skills. All of the faculty input supported this assessment. Eighty percent of the online instructors indicated in their survey that they felt a computer placement test or introductory level course should be required for online students. The technical competence of the students comprised a large number of the discussion points on the advising checklist developed by the faculty in 2004. The faculty focus groups also identified computer skills as a critical component for online success. Faculty were not, however, the only group voicing this concern.

In the 2006 – 2009 IEP, the Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Support Division listed the objective for the college to acquire specialized software to assess a student's readiness to take an online course. The IT staff, in their interviews, again indicated that the successful completion of CIS 110 or a computer placement test should be required before a student could enroll in an online course. One obvious problem posed by identifying CIS 110 as a pre-requisite course is that CIS 110 itself is offered in an online format.

Students participating in the student focus groups also identified computer/technical knowledge as a necessary pre-requisite skill. In addition, the literature review includes many articles that state that the critical importance of computer skills to a

student's being successful in an online course strongly suggests the need to assess those skills before a student attempts an online format.

Finally, the SACS Policy Statement on Distance Education also requires that “[c]omparability of distance education programs to campus-based programs and courses is ensured by the evaluation of education effectiveness, including assessments of student outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction” (CS 3.3.1).

Once BRCC can identify which students are less prepared for online courses, processes could be implemented to address the specific needs of these students. Those students who are identified as being prepared to register for online courses would not need this additional instruction. Therefore, one component of the QEP will focus on the assessment of the technical/computer skills of students before they are allowed to register for an online course.

2. Faculty and students also need to know and be able to assess the competencies required to be successful in any particular online course. The SACS Policy Statement on Distance Education (December 2006) identifies the need to clearly communicate the technological expectations for any course to the students. Therefore, specific information about this aspect and all other expectations concerning each individual online course should be readily available so that informed decisions can be made about registering for online courses. The literature review also endorses this access to specific course information. During the faculty focus groups, faculty expressed their belief in the importance of advising for online courses being done more effectively. They requested information about individual course requirements. Advisers also requested additional training. Finally, students in the focus groups repeatedly mentioned that this kind of

information about course structure, requirements, time commitment, and required computer skills would have helped them make more informed decisions about the courses in which they could succeed. Students often did not have accurate expectations about online courses, and yet the literature review identifies that kind of information as one of the strongest predictors of success. Therefore, the second component of the QEP will be to develop course requirement outlines for every online course. These outlines will provide faculty advisers and students with the specific information needed to make an informed decision on which courses a student should take online.

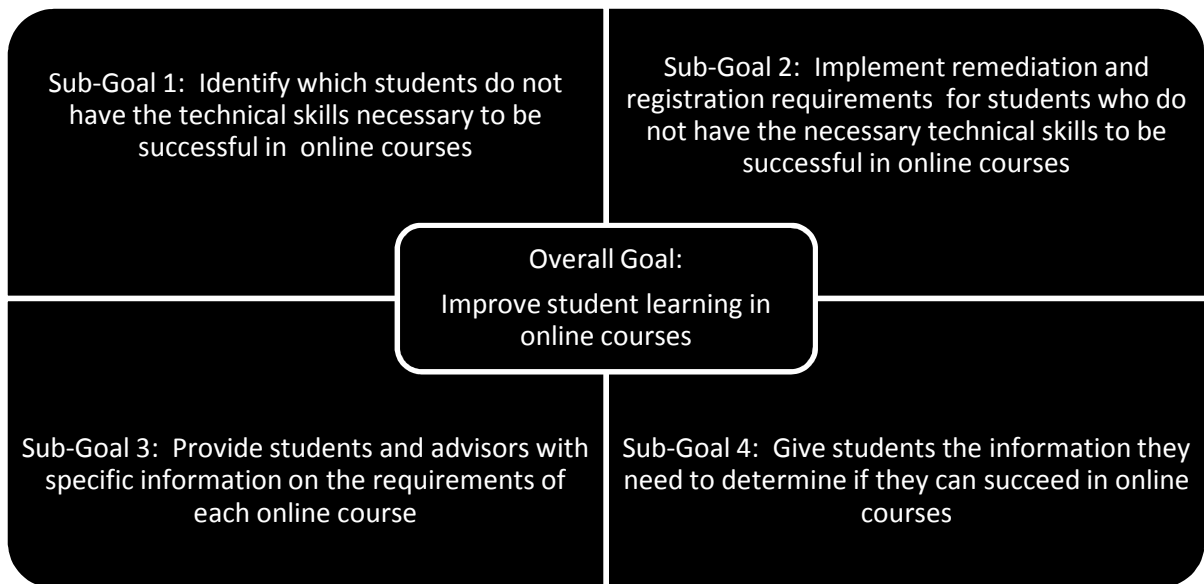
3. BRCC surveys also revealed that students and academic advisers both need to better understand which factors identify students who will most likely be successful in online courses. Many of the actual reasons identified for students' experiencing difficulties and failure in online courses are topics which could be addressed during ACA 115, the basic study skills course required of all incoming BRCC students. The re-designed course will include a section on online courses which will provide students concrete information regarding learning styles, reading skills, time management skills, procrastination, as well as other factors proven to be related to success in online courses. All faculty and faculty advisers will be trained to teach ACA 115, including this new section on distance learning.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE QEP**

The overall goal of the College's QEP is to improve student learning in online courses. As demonstrated in the figure below (Figure 5), attaining this goal will involve

implementing four sub-goals: (1) identify via a computer skills assessment which students do not have the technical skills necessary to be successful in online courses, (2) implement remediation requirements for those students who do not pass the placement test (requiring enrollment in CIS 70, a basic computer skills course) and, in addition, require that those students register only for seated courses, (3) provide students with specific information regarding the technical and time requirements of each individual online course via the newly developed Course Requirement Outlines (CROs), and (4) give students the information they need to determine if they can succeed in online courses, accomplished through a revision of ACA 115, a basic study skills course required for all incoming students.

**Figure 5: Goals of the QEP**



Each of the four sub-goals stated above, has one or more related objectives. The chart below (Table 1) states the formal goals and objectives for the college’s QEP.

**Table 1: BRCC’s QEP Goals and Objectives**

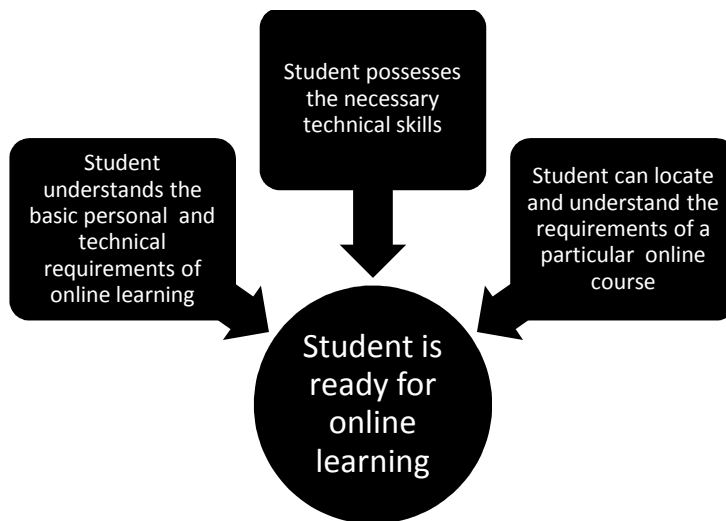
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
OVERALL GOAL: To improve student learning in online courses	
1. To improve student learning in online courses by identifying which students do not have the technical skills necessary to be successful in online courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Students will be tested on their technical skills.</li> <li>B. Students and advisers will benefit by knowing the student’s level of technical skills based on a score report sheet and an accurate cut-off score.</li> </ul>
2. To improve student learning in online courses by implementing requirements for those students who do not have the necessary technical skills to be successful in online courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Students identified as weak in computer skills will be required to register for seated courses only until they complete remediation and pass the computer skills assessment retest.</li> <li>D. Students wishing to take online courses will be able to perform basic computer skills including file transfer, downloading files, emails, etc.</li> </ul>
3. To improve student learning in online courses by providing students with specific information on each individual online course being offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. Students and advisers will have access to all necessary information on each online course so they can make an informed decision on the students’ ability to meet all the requirements of that course prior to registration.</li> </ul>
4. To improve student learning in online courses by giving students the information they need to determine if they can succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>F. Students will be able to recognize if their personal characteristics, technical skills and computer capabilities are sufficient for success in an online learning environment.</li> </ul>

**STUDENT LEARNING AND THE QEP OBJECTIVES**

As a result of the QEP’s stated goals and the attainment of the related objectives, BRCC students will be better prepared, and therefore, ready to learn in online courses. Based on the experiences of BRCC online faculty, student focus groups, and the available research, the conclusion of the QEP committee is that students who are not ready for

online courses will find learning the course content to be difficult. Readiness, in this sense, is defined as a combination of a student's having the basic technical skills determined to be necessary for success in online courses as well as a realistic expectation of what is required in taking and completing an online course. As depicted in the figure below (Figure 6) a student is considered ready for online learning when the student can (1) demonstrate competency in the technical skills needed for learning to occur in an online course, such as file management and emailing, (2) demonstrate an understanding of the personal characteristics and technical requirements needed for learning to occur in an online course, such as time management, organization, and computer capabilities, and (3) demonstrate the ability to locate and understand the technical and time requirements necessary in a particular online course, such as when a specific computer program is needed for a particular course.

**Figure 6: Readiness for Online Learning**



## **IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN**

The implementation plan for BRCC's QEP spans over the course of five years; however, the first year has been designated to be a year for collecting baseline data on student learning outcomes, developing surveys, educating faculty on the computer skills assessment, creating new policies and procedures where necessary, and readying the student handbook and course catalogs with the appropriate QEP related changes. The second year will be the beginning of the implementation of the strategies outlined below (see Table 2 at the end of this section for the Strategy Implementation Timeline).

The implementation plan includes four goals (numbered 1-4), six objectives (lettered A-F), and ten strategies which will be implemented to meet those objectives. The plan is outlined below with a brief explanation of how each strategy will be implemented.

### **Goal 1: Improve student learning in online courses by identifying which students do not have the computer skills necessary to be successful in online courses**

**Objective A: Students will be tested on their technical skills.**

#### **Strategy: Require a computer skills placement test**

In Fall 2010 the implementation of a computer skills assessment test will begin. The College has selected Accuplacer as the testing software (see Appendix A: Choice of Assessment). All incoming students who are not waived from placement testing will complete the computer skills assessment in the College's STAR Learning Center. For the first year, all students, regardless of their scores, will be allowed to register for online courses and remediation will not be required. These scores will provide baseline data to be used in future statistical comparisons.

**Objective B: Students and advisers will benefit by knowing the student's level of technical skills based on a score report sheet and an accurate cut-off score.**

- **Strategy: Create support and understanding for the new computer skills assessment and its implications on student learning**

A faculty workshop will be held in Spring 2010 (see Appendix G for a draft agenda) to inform faculty of the new computer skills assessment that will be required of all incoming students. The goal of the workshop will be two-fold. First, the QEP committee will convey to faculty the impact the placement test will have on student learning, thereby gaining support and understanding for the need for the assessment. Second, the testing process will be explained, specifically the logistics, timeline and responsibilities of each department and each member of faculty and staff.

- **Strategy: Determine the appropriate cut-off score for the placement test**

Determining the appropriate cut-off score for the computer skills placement test is critical to the QEP as the research strongly indicates that for learning to occur in an online course, students must have demonstrated at least the minimum technical skills deemed necessary. Determining that minimum for BRCC is an important piece of the QEP. At the end of Spring 2011, a comparison of the first year's baseline Accuplacer data with student learning outcomes in designated online courses, combined with the validity and reliability information provided by Accuplacer, will be used to determine the appropriate computer skills placement test cut-off score for the College.

- **Strategy: Train faculty on the interpretation of the computer skills assessment score report sheets in a faculty workshop**

Once a cut-off score for the computer skills assessment has been determined, score report sheets will be put into use and registration and remediation requirements will

be enforced. During a faculty workshop held in Spring 2011 (see Appendix H) for a draft agenda), the derivation of the cut-off score and the score report sheets will be explained to faculty as well as the importance of the correct interpretation and use of these report sheets when advising students. The registration and remediation requirements for those students scoring below the cut-off that will go into effect in Fall 2011 (see Goal 2 below) will also be thoroughly explained and discussed.

**Goal 2: Improve student learning in online courses by implementing requirements for those students who do not have the necessary technical skills to be successful in online courses**

**Objective C: Students identified as weak in technical skills will be required to register for seated courses only until they have completed remediation.**

- **Strategy: Prohibit students who score below the cut-off from registering for online courses**

Beginning in Fall 2011, students falling below the computer skills assessment cut-off score will be allowed to register for seated courses only. Research completed by BRCC's QEP committee, in combination with BRCC's online faculty's own experience, has shown that students who are unequipped and unprepared for learning in an online environment, if given the opportunity, will often enroll in online courses without realizing that they may be unprepared to succeed. This strategy is designed to ensure that no student who is technically unprepared to learn, and therefore, unlikely to be successful in an online class will be enrolled. Once a student has completed CIS 70 with a grade of C or better (see Objective D) and passed the Accuplacer retest, that student will be allowed to enroll in online courses.

**Objective D: Students enrolling in online courses will be able to perform basic computer skills including file management, email, etc.**

- **Strategy: Remediation in the form of CIS 70, a basic skills computer course, will be required for all students falling below the computer skills assessment cut-off score**

Beginning in Fall 2011, the remediation component of the QEP will be implemented. All incoming students who take Accuplacer and do not score above the pre-determined cut-off score will be required to take CIS 70, a basic computer skills course, as a means of remediation. The CIS 70 curriculum includes the identification of computer components, an overview of operating systems, operating computers, accessing files, printing documents and performing basic applications operations. At the end of CIS 70, students will retake Accuplacer. Those students who do not score above the cut-off on the Accuplacer retest and receive a grade of “C” or better in the class will be referred to the STAR Learning Center for further remediation.

**Goal 3: Improve student learning in online courses by providing students with specific information on each individual online course being offered**

**Objective F: Students and advisers will have easy access to all necessary information on a particular online course so they can make an informed decision on the student’s ability to meet all the requirements of that course prior to registration**

- **Strategy: Provide students and advisers with Course Requirement Outlines (CROs) for every online course being offered**

Beginning in late Spring 2012, Course Requirement Outlines (CROs) will be available for every online course being offered in Fall 2012. The purpose of the CRO is to identify, for each online course, exactly what a student should expect in that course including specific information about technical skills, special software, time commitments, types of assignments, and policies for a course. Access to this information will enable the student and the advisor to make a more informed decision about that student’s potential for learning in that particular course (See Appendix I for a sample CRO).

- **Strategy: Train all faculty on how to complete the new CROs, how to access the CROs when advising, and how the CROs relate to student learning**

A faculty workshop will be held in early Spring 2012 focused primarily on the new CROs. The workshop agenda (see Appendix J for a draft agenda) will begin with an explanation of the research and reasoning behind the creation and development of the new outlines, particularly the QEP Committee's strong belief that the CROs will directly impact student learning. The workshop will then move toward training on the proper way to complete a CRO for each individual course, how and where to submit a completed CRO, the various locations the CROs will be accessible, as well as, the important role the CROs will play in advising students who are considering registering for an online course.

**Goal 4: Improve student learning in online courses by giving students the information they need to determine if they can succeed in an online learning environment**

**Objective E: Students will be able to recognize if their personal characteristics, technical skills and computer capabilities are sufficient for success in an online learning environment.**

- **Strategy: Redesign ACA 115, the basic study skills class required for all incoming students, to include a standardized section titled "R U Ready for Online Courses"**

Beginning in Fall 2013, the newly redesigned ACA 115 class will be implemented as it is introduced to all incoming students. ACA 115, BRCC's two-hour mandatory basic study skills course, was determined to be the best opportunity the College has to inform every incoming student of the realities of online learning. The course will be re-designed by the QEP committee, the Technology and Distance Learning Coordinator, and selected faculty as part of the QEP. The goal of this re-design is not so much to ensure student success in online courses, as it is to help students determine if

they are good candidates for online courses. The online unit will include information on the personal characteristics which correlate to success in online courses, the necessary access to and time required on a computer in a typical online course, the basic computer hardware and software requirements for most online courses, the technical skills needed for learning to occur in an online environment, and the location and interpretation of the Course Requirement Outlines.

- **Strategy: Train faculty to teach the newly redesigned ACA 115**

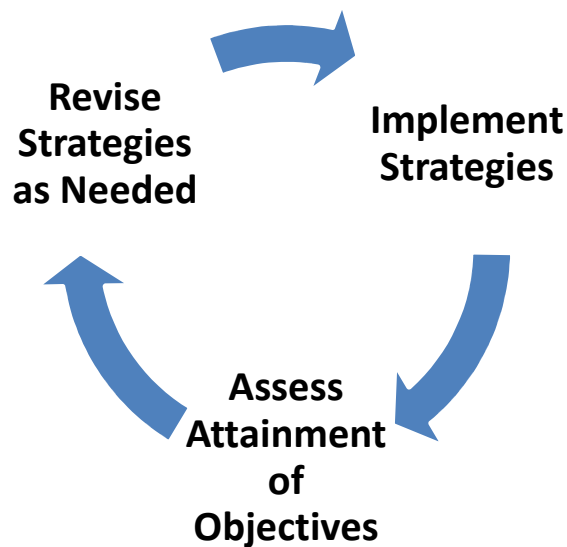
In Spring of 2013, a faculty workshop and training day will be held (see Appendix K for a draft agenda) which will be focused on training faculty to teach the newly redesigned ACA 115 course. Current practice at BRCC is that any faculty member may be called upon to teach ACA 115. Thus, it is imperative to the validity of the QEP, that all faculty are trained on the re-design of ACA 115. The course curriculum, syllabus and student learning outcomes will be standardized to ensure that all students at BRCC are receiving the same information and to add validity to future statistical comparisons based on the student learning outcomes for this course. The implications of the new unit to student learning will be emphasized throughout the workshop.

**Table 2: Timeline for Implementation of Strategies**

Strategy	Fall 2009	Spr 2010	Fall 2010	Spr 2011	Fall 2011	Spr 2012	Fall 2012	Spr 2013	Fall 2013	Spr 2014
Gather baseline data, develop surveys, and complete other preparatory work										
Faculty workshop on new computer skills assessment										
Require computer skills assessment for all incoming students										
Determine appropriate cutoff score for placement test										
Faculty workshop on computer skills assessment score report sheets and remediation requirements										
Remediation in the form of CIS 70 for students scoring below cutoff										
Prohibit enrollment in online classes for students scoring below cutoff										
Faculty workshop on CROs										
Course Requirement Outlines available										
Faculty workshop and training day on ACA 115 redesign										
ACA 115 redesign implementation										

## QEP ASSESSMENT

The assessment methods described in the following section will be used to determine if the QEP is properly structured to allow the College to achieve its stated goal of improving student learning in online courses. The QEP committee has put into place minimum performance standards that will serve as the desired outcomes for this plan. These performance standards must be achieved as evidence that the strategies being implemented are positively affecting student learning in online courses. Both direct and indirect measures will be used to determine the effectiveness of the strategies and the attainment of the stated objectives. Should at any time the assessments provide evidence that these minimum performance standards are not being met, the committee will review and re-evaluate the selected strategies and make revisions as necessary. As demonstrated in Figure 7 below, the QEP administrator will continue to monitor these direct and indirect measures of success throughout the five-year plan and make the necessary revisions in order to meet the objectives of the QEP.



**Figure 7: Cycle of Implementation, Assessment, and Revision**

## **Direct Measures**

Direct measures of assessment are those which are focused directly on student learning. Student learning will be measured based on pretest posttest data obtained from the computer skills assessment and the student learning outcomes set forth for each particular online course. In order to ensure the validity of the results of these assessments of student learning, the QEP committee focused on six online courses which will develop student learning outcomes to be used for the five year implementation of the QEP. The committee chose six courses that are offered every semester and are usually taught by the same instructor. This selection will allow comparisons to be made of student learning outcomes in these courses both prior to and after the implementation of the strategies with minimal confounding effects. The selected courses are Physical Education 110, Accounting 120, English 111, Sociology 210, Introduction to Computers 110, and Early Childhood Education 119.

## **Indirect Measures**

Various indirect measures will also be used to assess the effectiveness of the QEP strategies and the attainment of the stated objectives. Some indirect assessments will be based on an analysis of the reported perceptions of faculty, staff and students through the use of surveys. Additionally, surveys will be used to measure the success of faculty workshops. Attrition data and failure rates will also be used as indirect measures of the success of the strategies being implemented and, therefore, the attainment of the stated objectives of the QEP.

## **Assessing the Objectives**

### **Objective A: Students will be tested on their technical skills.**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) By Spring 2010, a policy regarding students' requirement to take the Computer Skills Assessment will be included in the Policies and Procedures Manual and in the Student Handbook.
- 2) By Fall 2010, 100% of all incoming students who are not waived from placement testing will take the Accuplacer Computer Skills Assessment.
- 3) By Spring 2011, a positive correlation coefficient of at least 0.75 comparing student learning outcomes in online courses and Accuplacer scores will show that Accuplacer is indeed a valid test of the computer skills necessary for online learning to occur.

### **Objective B: Students and advisers will benefit by knowing the student's level of technical skills based on a score report sheet and an accurate cut-off score.**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) In Spring 2010, a faculty workshop will be held and attended by at least 90% of full-time faculty. During that event, faculty will be informed of the QEP committee's decision to implement a new computer skills assessment, how that decision was made, and the computer skills testing procedures.
- 2) In Spring 2010 a survey given at the completion of the faculty workshop, will show that at least 80% of the faculty surveyed understand the need for the new computer skills placement test and its implications on student learning.

- 3) By Spring 2011, a comparison of student learning outcomes in online courses and their Accuplacer scores will provide the QEP team valuable data regarding the appropriate cut off score for the Accuplacer test.
- 4) In Spring 2011, a faculty workshop will be held and attended by at least 90% of full-time faculty. During that event, faculty will be informed of the new computer skills assessment cut-off score, how that score was determined, how to interpret the score report sheets, and how to advise students accordingly.
- 5) In Spring 2011, a survey given at the end of the faculty workshop will show that at least 80% of faculty surveyed can correctly interpret the new score report shows, know the cut-off score the assessment and understand how to advise students according to their scores.

**Objective C: Students identified as weak in computer skills will be required to register for seated courses only until they complete remediation and pass the computer skills assessment retest.**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) By Fall 2011, 100% of students who do not meet the cut-off score for the computer skills assessment will be prohibited from enrolling in online courses.
- 2) By Spring 2011, attrition rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%.
- 3) By Spring 2011, failure rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%.
- 4) A statistical comparison computed at the end of the Fall 2011 semester and again at the end of the Spring 2012 will show a significant difference (based on an alpha level of .05) between student learning outcomes prior to and after registration requirements and remediation.

**Objective D: Students enrolling in online courses will be able to perform basic computer skills including file transfer, downloading files, emails, etc.**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) By Fall 2011, 100% of students who do not meet the cut-off score for the computer skills assessment will be required to take CIS 70 as remediation.
- 2) By Spring 2012, pretest and posttest comparisons of Accuplacer scores will show an increase of at least 10% in 80% of students receiving remediation.
- 3) By Spring 2012, 80% of students required to take CIS 70 will show mastery of 70% of the student learning outcomes associated with that course by the end of the semester.

**Objective E: Students, faculty and advisers will have access to all necessary information on a particular online course so they can make an informed decision on the student's ability to meet all the requirements of that course prior to registration via the new Course Requirement Outlines (CRO).**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) By early Spring 2012, a faculty workshop and training day will be held and attended by at least 90% of all full-time faculty. The training will pertain to completing and accessing the new course requirement outlines as well as their benefit to advising students and the impact on student learning.
- 2) By Spring 2012, a survey distributed at the conclusion of the faculty training will show that at least 80% of full-time faculty surveyed can demonstrate complete understanding of the location of and the need for the CRO's as well as demonstrate the ability to produce a CRO.
- 3) By late Spring 2012, a CRO will be accessible for every online course being offered in the Fall 2012 Semester.

- 4) By Fall 2012, 80% of faculty advisers surveyed will have referred to the Course Requirement Outlines when advising a student interested in taking one or more online courses.
- 5) By Fall 2012, 80% of students surveyed will know the location of the Course Requirements Outlines and will agree that if they did use them, they have found them to be helpful in determining if they could succeed in a particular online course.
- 6) By Fall 2012, 80% of online students surveyed will demonstrate an increase in their understanding of the requirements for their online course over previous semesters.

**Objective F: Students will be able to recognize if their personal characteristics, technical skills and computer capabilities are sufficient for success in an online learning environment via a redesign of the required basic study skills course, ACA 115.**

The attainment of this objective will be measured as follows:

- 1) By Spring 2013, a faculty workshop will be held and attended by at least 90% of full-time faculty where faculty will be trained to teach the newly redesigned ACA 115.
- 2) By Spring 2013, a survey given at the end of the faculty workshop will show that 80% of faculty surveyed know the key components of the new “Online” unit in ACA 115.
- 3) By Fall 2013, 80% of ACA 115 students surveyed will agree upon the basic course content and topics that were covered during their semester of ACA 115 and will be able to identify the skills and qualifications one must possess in order to be successful in an online learning environment.

- 4) By Spring 2014, ACA 115 pre-test and post-test data relating to the new online unit will show an average increase in scores of at least 20% over the course of the semester.
- 5) By Summer 2014, a statistical comparison of student learning outcomes in selected online courses prior to the redesign of ACA 115 and after will show a significant difference (at a .05 alpha level) and, therefore, indicate that there has been an effect on student learning.
- 6) By Spring 2014, failure rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%.
- 7) By Spring 2014, attrition rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE QEP**

All direct measures of assessment in the QEP will be based on pretest posttest data and the mastery of student learning outcomes. Six online courses will be assessed throughout the five years of the QEP using student learning outcomes. These six courses represent a variety of disciplines and include those courses that, based upon BRCC's research, have been the most challenging to online students. The courses that will be followed are Physical Education 110, Accounting 120, English 111, Sociology 210, Introduction to Computers 110, and Early Childhood Education 119. All of these courses are offered online in both the Fall and Spring semesters and are taught by the same instructors both semesters.

Each of the chosen courses will develop specific student learning outcomes which will be evaluated using such things as course embedded assignments and tasks, course activities, portfolios, rubrics and pretest and posttest data. Student learning outcome data will be collected for all six courses throughout the implementation of the QEP, including one year of baseline data prior to the implementation of any strategies.

The QEP Administrator will, at the end of every semester, compute a statistical comparison of student learning outcomes in the six chosen online courses, comparing outcomes prior to the implementation of strategies and after. This will enable the QEP team to determine the effectiveness of each selected strategy. If the minimum performance standards set by the QEP team are met, the conclusion will be made that strategies being implemented are in fact having a positive impact on student learning in online courses.

**Table 3: BRCC’s QEQ Objective Assessment Matrix**

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	ASSESSMENTS	OUTCOMES
OVERALL GOAL: To improve student learning in online courses.				
<p>1. To improve student learning in online courses by identifying which students do not have the technical skills necessary to be successful in online courses</p>	<p>G. Students will be tested on their technical skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Require a computer skills assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuplacer</li> <li>▪ Correlation Computation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of all incoming students who are not waived from placement testing will take the computer skills placement test</li> <li>• A positive correlation coefficient of at least 0.75 comparing student learning outcomes in online courses and Accuplacer scores will show that Accuplacer is indeed a valid test of the computer skills necessary for online learning to occur</li> </ul>
	<p>H. Students and advisers will benefit by knowing the student’s level of technical skills based on a score report sheet and an accurate cut-off score.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create support and understanding of the new computer skills assessment and its implications on student learning in a faculty workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faculty Survey given at completion of the workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty workshop will be held and attended by at least 90% of full-time faculty</li> <li>• 80% of all faculty present will respond knowledgably regarding the need for the new computer skills placement test and its implications on student learning</li> </ul>

<p>1.(Continued) To improve student learning in online courses by identifying which students do not have the technical skills necessary to be successful in online courses</p>	<p>B. (Continued) Students and advisers will benefit by knowing the student's level of technical skills based on a score report sheet and an accurate cut-off score.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine the appropriate cut-off score for the computer skills assessment based on first year scores and research garnered from Accuplacer</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In a faculty workshop, train faculty on the interpretation of the computer skills assessment score report sheets and how to advise students based on their scores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A statistical comparison of Accuplacer scores and student learning outcomes (SLOs)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faculty Survey given at the completion of the Workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical comparisons between Accuplacer scores and SLOs in online courses will be used to determine the appropriate cut-off score for the computer skills assessment</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of all faculty present will correctly interpret a sample score report sheet and will advise the student correctly according to the student's score</li> </ul>
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GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	ASSESSMENTS	OUTCOMES
<b>OVERALL GOAL:</b> To improve student learning in online courses.				
<p>2. To improve student learning in online courses by implementing requirements for those students who do not have the necessary technical skills to be successful in online courses.</p>	<p>C. Students identified as weak in computer skills will be required to register for seated courses only until they complete remediation and pass the computer skills assessment retest.</p> <hr/> <p>D. Students enrolling in online courses will be able to perform basic computer skills including file transfer, downloading files, emails, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prohibit students who fall below the cutoff score from enrolling in online courses</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remediation in the form of required registration of CIS 70, a basic computer skills course, for students falling below the assessment cut-off score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A statistical comparison of SLOs online courses, prior to prohibition of online registration and after</li> <li>▪ Pass-fail rate</li> <li>▪ Attrition rates</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CIS 70 pre and post test comparison</li> <li>▪ Accuplacer test/re-test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statistical comparison will show a significant difference between the groups at an alpha level of .05</li> <li>• The failure rate for online courses will decrease by at least 5%</li> <li>• Attrition rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of those students required to take CIS 70 will show mastery of 80% of CIS 70'S student learning outcomes by the end of the semester.</li> <li>• Pre-test/post-test comparison of Accuplacer scores will show an increase of at least 10 points in 80% of students receiving remediation</li> </ul>

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	ASSESSMENTS	OUTCOMES
<b>OVERALL GOAL:</b> To improve student learning in online courses.				
<p>3. To improve student learning in online courses by providing students with specific information on each individual online course being offered</p>	<p>E. Students and advisers will have access to all necessary information on a particular online course so they can make an informed decision on the student's ability to meet all the requirements of that course prior to registration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide students and advisers with Course Requirement Outlines (CROs) for every online course being offered</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train faculty on the process of completing CROs, accessing the CROs when advising, and how the CROs relate to student learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student Survey</li> <li>▪ Online Student Survey</li> <li>▪ Online Faculty Survey</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faculty Survey given at the completion of Workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of all BRCC students surveyed will know the location of the CROs and will agree that if they did use them, they have found them to be helpful in determining if they can succeed in a particular online course.</li> <li>• 80% of all online students surveyed will know the location of the CROs and 80% of those that accessed the CROs prior to enrollment will report having had correct expectations of the requirements of that course.</li> <li>• 80% of online faculty surveyed will report an increase in their student's knowledge of the requirements for that course</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of faculty present will know the pertinent information regarding the CROs, including how to fill them out, where to find them, how to use them in advising students and how they relate to student learning</li> </ul>

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	ASSESSMENTS	OUTCOMES
<b>OVERALL GOAL:</b> To improve student learning in online courses.				
<p>4. To improve student learning in online courses by giving students the information they need to determine if they can succeed in online courses</p>	<p>F. Students will be able to recognize if their personal characteristics, technical skills and computer capabilities are sufficient for success in an online learning environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Redesign ACA 115, the basic study skills class required for all incoming students, to include a standardized section, "R U Ready for Online Courses."</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train faculty to teach the newly redesigned ACA 115 during a faculty workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ACA 115 Pretest/Post-test on new section, "R U Ready for Online Courses"</li> <li>▪ Statistical comparison of SLOs in selected online courses prior to the redesign of ACA 115 and after</li> <li>▪ Pass-fail Rates</li> <li>▪ Attrition rates</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faculty Survey given at the completion of Workshop</li> <li>▪ Student Survey at completion of ACA 115</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comparison of pre-test/post-test scores given at the beginning and end of ACA 115 will show an average increase in scores of at least 20%</li> <li>• A statistical comparison will show a significant difference between the groups at an alpha level of .05</li> <li>• Failure rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%</li> <li>• Attrition rates for online courses will decrease by at least 5%</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of faculty present will know the key components of the new "Online" unit in ACA 115</li> <li>• 80% of students surveyed in all sections of ACA 115 will report having been taught the same material regarding online courses</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Five Year Timeline For QEP**

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>I.SACS approves BRCC QEP proposal</b>	Spring 2009	Onsite visit will occur October 27 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> with SACS team.	By Spring 2009 SACS accreditation will be announced and the QEP will be approved.
<b>II.Position staff to administer the QEP</b>	Spring 2009	A salary will be budgeted and interviews will be conducted in search of a part-time person to administer the QEP.	By the end of January 2009 a part-time person will be on BRCC staff in the position of QEP Administrator.
<b>III. Preparation for implementation of a new computer skills placement test</b>	Spring 2009	Using the selection of the QEP committee, the QEP team will set up testing logistics, amend the procedure, inform advisers of the changes and prepare to begin implementation of the testing in Spring 2009.	Have in place a computer skills assessment and a corresponding policy and procedure.
A. Order chosen computer skills assessment	Late Fall 2009	Assessment will be ordered by QEP Administrator.	Agreed upon assessment will arrive ready to be installed by early Spring 2010.
B. Have STAR Center Computers ready to use chosen assessment	Early Spring 2010	IT Department will make any necessary system adjustments for using computer skills assessment test on determined number of computers in the STAR Center	Several Star Center computers will be ready to be used by early Spring 2010.
C. Set up testing logistics with the STAR Center	Early Spring 2010	Student Services and the STAR Center will coordinate the timing and delivery of placement tests and the appropriate places to publicize this information.	A schedule will be in place and will be coordinated by the STAR Center staff. This schedule will be publicized in various yet to be determined ways.
D. Amend procedures regarding the computer placement test	Early Spring 2010	The QEP team will amend the procedure regarding the newly adopted computer placement test. It will then be reviewed by the Management Team and the President for their approval.	BRCC will have an amended procedure on the newly adopted computer skills assessment and placement test.
E. Update faculty on new computer placement test	Spring 2010	Determine the best way to inform all faculty of the new computer skills assessments for fall 2010 incoming students and the logistics relating to assessments.	All faculty will have complete and accurate information regarding the computer skills assessment for incoming students.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>IV.Skills Assessment</b>	Fall 2010- Spring 2010	Begin the assessment of all incoming students' computer skills.	Incoming students for the Fall 2010 semester will have their computer and technical skills assessed by BRCC.
A. Implement the placement test of computer skills for all incoming students	Fall 2010	Have all incoming students for Fall 2010 take the computer skills assessment test at the STAR Center. All students will be allowed to take online courses regardless of their score on the placement test.	All incoming students will take the computer skills assessment test in the STAR Center. Testing will take place and scores will be kept on file by the QEP team with no further action necessary by this group of incoming students.
B.Track all students' performance in selected online courses.	Fall 2010	Student Learning Outcomes will be recorded for the six chosen online courses from Fall 2009-Spring 2014. The QEP Administrator will run a statistical comparison of SLO's, grades and retention rates compared to computer skills assessment scores.	The QEP Administrator and the QEP team will produce and review data correlating online course grades with computer skills assessment scores for the Fall of 2010.
<b>V. Determine cutoff score for placement test and design results sheets</b>	Early Spring 2011	A cutoff score will be determined based on research by the QEP team and a results sheet will be created to effectively communicate a student's score and any subsequent action that must be taken.	A cutoff score will be determined and a results sheet will be created which clearly reports a student's score on the computer skills assessment and advises them of any necessary action.
A. Determine cutoff scores for computer placement test	Early Spring 2011	The QEP team, the Director of ITDLS, computer and online instructors will determine the appropriate cutoff score based on data gathered from Fall 2009 to Fall 2010 which compare placement test scores and success in online courses.	By spring 2011 there will have been determined a "passing" score for the computer placement test.
B. Redesign placement test results sheet given to students	Early Spring 2011	Based on the determined cutoff score, a results sheet will be designed by the Registrar and Student Services that will effectively communicate to students their score on the placement test and what further action needs to be taken, if any.	A results sheet will be provided to all students taking the computer skills assessment test and their advisers, which will clearly communicate to them their results, as well advise them of any further action they must take.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>VI. Online Course Requirements</b>	Summer 2010	The QEP team and faculty will work together to ensure readily available information on online courses which will benefit all students considering taking an online course.	An online FAQ and readily accessible course information sheet will disseminate pertinent information to students so that they can determine their ability to achieve success in a particular online course.
A. Develop a course requirement outline for online courses which will be available to students prior to registration for Fall 2012	Fall 2011	Selected faculty & QEP team will produce a template which will incorporate all pertinent technical information about an online course as well as the course requirements to help students determine their ability to succeed in that course. This template could be used by any online instructor.	Selected faculty will have developed a proposed template and provided this template to the QEP team by a yet to be determined date.
B. Approve the final course requirement outline.	Early Spring 2012	Faculty council will approve the master template, and it will be implemented for all online courses.	The final template will include all information students need to determine their ability to succeed in a particular online class, and the template will be implemented for the chosen online courses.
C. Determine the best place/places to post course information.	Early Spring 2012	The QEP team, select faculty, IT, the Director of ITDLS and the BRCC Web Master will decide the best place/places to post the online course information so it is available for viewing by students	The destination of the posting of online course requirement outlines will have been determined and all involved parties will be informed of the decision to post, the location of the posting and the date posting will begin.
D. Use of course requirement outlines	Spring 2012	Full-time faculty will be shown examples of course requirement outlines for online courses. The blank templates will be handed out and discussed until everyone has full understanding of the need for and the ability to produce the course requirement outlines.	All full time faculty will be able to fill out course requirement outlines for their online courses and have a complete understanding of the need for such a sheet, where the sheets will be located, and how the sheets will benefit their students.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
E.Post course requirement outlines for online courses	Prior to Fall 2012 registration	The BRCC webmaster will be provided course requirement outlines for every online course to be posted on the BRCC web site as well as any other locations deemed necessary (i.e., Moodle).	Course requirement outlines for all online courses will be readily available to and easily accessible by all students enrolling for the Fall 2012 semester.
<b>VII. Redesign ACA 115</b>	Fall 2012	The QEP team, the Director of ITDLS and several selected faculty members will begin to redesign ACA 115, the required one-hour Study Skills class taken by all incoming students.	ACA 115 will continue to be a 1 credit hour required Study Skills class for all incoming students; however, it will now contain a unit to prepare students for online learning.
A.Develop a unit on online learning preparation	Fall 2012	The QEP team, Director of ITDLS, and several selected faculty members will develop a unit which focuses on preparing students for online learning for inclusion in the ACA 115 class.	By the end of spring semester 2013 a new unit which focuses on preparing students for online learning will have been developed for ACA 115.
B.Standardize course content	Fall 2012	The QEP team, with the selected faculty, will standardize the course content for ACA 115 ensuring that all ACA 115 instructors will be teaching the same study skills, and students will be taught the same content regardless of the section they sign up for.	By the end of spring 2013, ACA 115 will have been standardized ensuring that all faculty are teaching the same material in all sections of ACA 115.
C.Develop course overview	Spring 2013	The QEP team with selected faculty members will develop a new course overview for ACA 115 to reflect all changes, including the standardization of course content, and including a new unit on preparation for online learning.	By the end of Spring 2013 a new course overview of ACA 115 will be in place which accurately describes the newly designed course.
D. Faculty Training on the newly designed ACA 115.	Spring 2013	A meeting will be set up for mandatory attendance by all full-time faculty and all adjuncts who will be teaching ACA 115. The training will be led by the selected faculty who redesigned ACA 115. The format of the training will be determined by the selected faculty.	The faculty will be oriented to the new ACA 115 and how it relates to the QEP. The importance of the new unit on technical skills and having consistency across all sections will be understood and embraced by all faculty.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
E.Additional faculty training on considerations for online courses	Spring 2013	All faculty will be briefed on the QEP research and the conclusions made about variables students should consider to determine their ability to be successful in an online course.	Faculty will be knowledgeable of student characteristics and other pertinent factors which impact success in online learning.
<b>VIII. Identify any improvements through data analysis</b>	Fall 2011 – Spring 2014	Data will be gathered by the QEP Administrator from the six chosen online courses.	Success will be measured and comparisons will be made in regard to the QEP initiatives and success in online courses.
A. Identify students who demonstrated adequate improvement of their computer/technical skills after completion of CIS 70	Fall 2011 – Spring 2014	All students who do not pass their initial computer skills placement test and are required to take CIS 70 and will be re-assessed at the end of that semester. Those who pass the computer skills re-assessment will be identified.	All students who took seated CIS 70 and showed adequate computer skills improvement upon re-assessment will have been identified.
B. Track those students to ascertain their success in online courses	Fall 2011-Spring 2014	Data will be gathered from the six pilot courses and comparisons will be made	A comparison of student learning outcomes in online courses prior to and after our strategies will be made
D. Assess data and identify suggestions for improvement	Fall 2011-Spring 2014	The data gathered will be assessed, statistical analysis will be run, and the results will be discussed by the QEP team and other selected members of faculty. Revisions will be made based upon the review of this data.	The effectiveness of the strategies will be determined and necessary revisions will be discussed.
<b>XIII. Identify improvements through surveys</b>	Fall 2012-Spring 2014	Survey students and teachers to ascertain the usefulness of the new course requirement outlines and revise as necessary.	Opinions, suggestions and comments will be gathered regarding the new course requirement outlines and changes will be made to sheets as deemed necessary.
A.Create surveys to determine students' and advisers' satisfaction with the new course requirement outlines	Summer 2012	The QEP Administrator will create surveys which assess both students' and advisers' satisfaction with the new course requirement outlines while also gathering helpful comments and suggestions from both groups.	Surveys will be created which will gauge student and advisor satisfaction with the new course requirement outlines.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
B. Survey students to assess their satisfaction with course requirement outlines	Fall 2012-Spring 2014	Students' satisfaction with the new course requirement outlines will be ascertained through survey questioning. Comments and suggestions will be requested and the results will be tabulated by the QEP Administrator and discussed by selected faculty.	Student satisfaction of the new course requirement outlines will be determined and their comments gathered and discussed.
C. Survey advisers to assess their satisfaction with course requirement outlines	Fall 2012-Spring 2014	Advisers' satisfaction with the new course requirement outlines will be ascertained through survey questioning. Comments and suggestions will be requested and the results will be tabulated by the QEP Administrator and discussed by selected faculty.	Advisor satisfaction of the new course requirement outlines will be determined and their comments gathered and discussed.
C. Revise course requirement outlines as needed	Spring 2011-Fall 2011	The QEP team will review all survey data, comments, and suggestions and then make any necessary changes to the course requirement outlines.	Course requirement outlines will be revised based on input from students and advisers.
<b>XIV. Continuation of Skills Assessment</b>	Fall 2011 – Spring 2014	All incoming students will continue to have their computer/technical skills assessed by a placement test, restrictions will be placed on their ability to take online courses accordingly, and computer skills will be re-assessed upon completion of CIS 70	The assessment of computer skills will continue, as well as the placement into seated ACA 115 and a re-assessment.
A. Continue to administer placement test to all incoming students	Fall 2011 – Spring 2014	All incoming students will be directed to the STAR Center for the computer skills assessment test. They, as well as their advisers, will receive a report of their score.	Incoming student's computer skills will be assessed and their scores will be reported.
B. Students/Advisers receive recommendations for those students needing to take CIS 70	Fall 2011 – Spring 2014	Advisers will receive score reports from the STAR Center and will inform students who will need to take CIS 70.	Students who do not pass the computer skills assessment will be informed of their need to enroll in a seated section of CIS 70.
<b>XX. Evaluate QEP</b>	Spring 2014	QEP Administrator will prepare final report for SACS	Final assessment of the QEP will be reported to SACS during Fall 2014.
A. Prepare final report	Summer 2014-Fall 2014	QEP Administrator will write the final report, concluding the effectiveness of the QEP.	During Fall 2014, a comprehensive evaluation of the QEP will be sent to SACS.

**Table 5: Estimated Costs And Budget Assumptions Of The QEP**

**BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**As of July 1, 2008**

<b>Expense Objects</b>	<b>FY 2008-09</b>	<b>FY 2009-10</b>	<b>FY 2010-11</b>	<b>FY 2011-12</b>	<b>FY 2012-13</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>
<b><u>Instructional Design</u></b>	\$ 4,322.48	\$ 2,326.34	\$ 7,631.46	\$ 778.15	\$ -	\$ 15,058.43
<b><u>Training</u></b>	\$ -	\$ 22,737.47	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,737.47
<b><u>Institutional Support</u></b>	\$ 12,094.60	\$ 29,430.32	\$ 33,909.57	\$ 32,366.98	\$ 28,853.89	\$ 136,655.36
<b><u>Other</u></b>	\$ -	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 64,000.00
	<u>\$ 16,417.08</u>	<u>\$ 70,494.13</u>	<u>\$ 57,541.03</u>	<u>\$ 49,145.13</u>	<u>\$ 44,853.89</u>	<u>\$ 238,451.26</u>

**BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**COMBINED ESTIMATED COSTS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE QEP**  
**AS OF JULY 1, 2008**

	Combined In-Kind and Additional Cost by Year					Total Project Cost	In-Kind/Additional Cost to the College		
	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13		In-Kind Cost	Additional Cost	Total Project Cost
<b><u>Instructional Design</u></b>									
Amend procedures regarding the computer placement test	\$ 361.26					\$ 361.26	\$ 361.26		\$ 361.26
Update advisors on new computer placement test	\$ 60.21					\$ 60.21	\$ 60.21		\$ 60.21
Determine eighteen online courses	\$ 1,775.38					\$ 1,775.38	\$ 1,775.38		\$ 1,775.38
Develop course information template for online courses	\$ 353.02					\$ 353.02	\$ 353.02		\$ 353.02
Complete final course template for six chosen online courses	\$ 1,712.40					\$ 1,712.40	\$ 1,712.40		\$ 1,712.40
Determine the best place/places to post course info.	\$ 60.21					\$ 60.21	\$ 60.21		\$ 60.21
Redesign ACA 115		\$ 2,326.34				\$ 2,326.34	\$ 2,326.34		\$ 2,326.34
Determine cutoff score for placement test and design results sheets			\$ 330.58			\$ 330.58	\$ 330.58		\$ 330.58
Develop an online FAQ			\$ 4,997.46			\$ 4,997.46	\$ 4,997.46		\$ 4,997.46
Develop a course information sheet for every online course			\$ 2,303.42			\$ 2,303.42	\$ 2,303.42		\$ 2,303.42
Identify students still deficient in computer/technical skills - ACA 115				\$ 203.00		\$ 203.00	\$ 203.00		\$ 203.00
Remediation for students who have taken a seated ACA 115				\$ 575.15		\$ 575.15	\$ 575.15		\$ 575.15
	\$ 4,322.48	\$ 2,326.34	\$ 7,631.46	\$ 778.15	\$ -	\$ 15,058.43	\$ 15,058.43	\$ -	\$ 15,058.43
<b><u>Training</u></b>									
Adjunct Training - ACA 115		\$ 600.00				\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
Faculty Training for all full-time faculty regarding advising students		\$ 15,096.83				\$ 15,096.83	\$ 15,096.83		\$ 15,096.83
Training for all full-time faculty - ACA 115		\$ 7,040.64				\$ 7,040.64	\$ 7,040.64		\$ 7,040.64
		\$ 22,737.47	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,737.47	\$ 22,137.47	\$ 600.00	\$ 22,737.47
<b><u>Institutional Support</u></b>									
QEP Administrator	\$ 10,540.00	\$ 21,798.00	\$ 22,523.00	\$ 23,292.00	\$ 24,091.00	\$ 102,244.00		\$ 102,244.00	\$ 102,244.00
Set up testing logistics with the STAR Center	\$ 385.98					\$ 385.98	\$ 385.98		\$ 385.98
Amend procedures regarding the computer placement test	\$ 312.90					\$ 312.90	\$ 312.90		\$ 312.90
Update advisors on new computer placement test	\$ 52.15					\$ 52.15	\$ 52.15		\$ 52.15
Web master to determine the best place/places to post course info.	\$ 751.42					\$ 751.42	\$ 751.42		\$ 751.42
Determine the best place/places to post course info.	\$ 52.15					\$ 52.15	\$ 52.15		\$ 52.15
Administer placement test to all incoming students		\$ 6,964.40	\$ 7,158.93	\$ 7,358.09	\$ 3,781.81	\$ 25,263.23	\$ 25,263.23		\$ 25,263.23
Redesign ACA 115		\$ 667.92				\$ 667.92	\$ 667.92		\$ 667.92
Determine cutoff score for placement test and design results sheets			\$ 242.75			\$ 242.75	\$ 242.75		\$ 242.75
Redesign Placement test results sheet given to students			\$ 458.13			\$ 458.13	\$ 458.13		\$ 458.13
Develop an online FAQ			\$ 2,545.68			\$ 2,545.68	\$ 2,545.68		\$ 2,545.68
ID students who demonstrated adequate improvement - ACA 115			\$ 981.08	\$ 981.08	\$ 981.08	\$ 2,943.24	\$ 2,943.24		\$ 2,943.24
Reassess students at completion of additional training				\$ 735.81		\$ 735.81	\$ 735.81		\$ 735.81
	\$ 12,094.60	\$ 29,430.32	\$ 33,909.57	\$ 32,366.98	\$ 28,853.89	\$ 136,655.36	\$ 34,411.36	\$ 102,244.00	\$ 136,655.36
<b><u>Other</u></b>									
Computer Skills Assessment Software		\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 64,000.00	\$ -	\$ 64,000.00	\$ 64,000.00
	\$ -	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 64,000.00	\$ -	\$ 64,000.00	\$ 64,000.00
	\$ 16,417.08	\$ 70,494.13	\$ 57,541.03	\$ 49,145.13	\$ 44,853.89	\$ 238,451.26	\$ 71,607.26	\$ 166,844.00	\$ 238,451.26

	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	Total
<b><u>Instructional Design</u></b>						
Amend procedures regarding the computer placement test (Full-time faculty compensation (2 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 6 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 361.26					\$ 361.26
Update advisors on new computer placement test (Full-time faculty compensation (2 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 60.21					\$ 60.21
Determine eighteen online courses (Full-time faculty compensation (4 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 15 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 1,775.38					\$ 1,775.38
Develop course information template for online courses (Full-time faculty compensation (6 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 2 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 353.02					\$ 353.02
Complete final course template for six chosen online courses (Full-time faculty compensation (55 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 1,712.40					\$ 1,712.40
Determine the best place/places to post course info. (Full-time faculty compensation (2 faculty @ \$25.11/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))	\$ 60.21					\$ 60.21
Redesign ACA 115 (Full-time faculty compensation (3 faculty @ \$25.86/hr for 25 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))		\$ 2,326.34				\$ 2,326.34
Determine cutoff score for placement test and design results sheets (Full-time faculty compensation (2 faculty @ \$25.86/hr for 5 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))			\$ 330.58			\$ 330.58
Develop an online FAQ (Full-time faculty compensation (2 faculty @ \$26.64/hr for 50 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)) (Full-time faculty compensation (55 faculty @ \$26.64/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))			\$ 4,997.46			\$ 4,997.46
Develop a course information sheet for every online course (Full-time faculty compensation (35 faculty @ \$26.64/hr for 2 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))			\$ 2,303.42			\$ 2,303.42
Identify students still deficient in computer/technical skills - ACA 115 (Full-time faculty compensation (12 faculty @ \$27.44/hr for .5 hours each, including Fringe Benefits))				\$ 203.00		\$ 203.00
Remediation for students who have taken a seated ACA 115 (Full-time faculty compensation (1 faculty @ \$27.44/hr for 17 hours, including Fringe Benefits))				\$ 575.15		\$ 575.15
	\$ 4,322.48	\$ 2,326.34	\$ 7,631.46	\$ 778.15	\$ -	\$ 15,058.43

**Training**

	<u>FY 2008-09</u>	<u>FY 2009-10</u>	<u>FY 2010-11</u>	<u>FY 2011-12</u>	<u>FY 2012-13</u>	<u>Total</u>
Adjunct Training (Adjunct training in Spring 2010 for changes in ACA 115)		\$ 600.00				\$ 600.00
Faculty Training for all full-time faculty regarding advising students 1. (Plan training for 3 faculty for 5 hours each) (Full-time faculty compensation (3 faculty @ \$25.86/hr for 5 hours each, including Fringe Benefits) 2. (Plan training for all 55 faculty for and 8 hour session. ) (Full-time faculty compensation (55 faculty @ \$25.86/hr for 8 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)		\$ 15,096.83				\$ 15,096.83
Training for all full-time faculty - ACA 115 (Training for all faculty for 4 hours) (Full-time faculty compensation (55 faculty @ \$25.86/hr for 4 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)		\$ 7,040.64				\$ 7,040.64
		\$ 22,737.47	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,737.47

	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	Total
<b><i>Institutional Support</i></b>						
QEP Administrator ((\$15.00 per hour for 20 hours per week plus related fringe benefits)	\$ 10,540.00	\$ 21,798.00	\$ 22,523.00	\$ 23,292.00	\$ 24,091.00	\$ 102,244.00
Set up testing logistics with the STAR Center (Full-time staff compensation (3 staff @ \$21.63/hr for 5 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)	\$ 385.98					\$ 385.98
Amend procedures regarding the computer placement test (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$21.63/hr for 6 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)	\$ 312.90					\$ 312.90
Update advisors on new computer placement test (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$21.63/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)	\$ 52.15					\$ 52.15
Web master to determine the best place/places to post course info. (Full-time Web Master compensation (1 staff @\$63,792/yr for 20 hours, including Fringe Benefits)	\$ 751.42					\$ 751.42
Determine the best place/places to post course info. (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$21.63/hr for 1 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)	\$ 52.15					\$ 52.15
Administer placement test to all incoming students (Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$22.28/hr for 250 hours, including Fringe Benefits)		\$ 6,964.40				\$ 6,964.40
(Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$23.64/hr for 250 hours, including Fringe Benefits)			\$ 7,158.93			\$ 7,158.93
(Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$24.35/hr for 250 hours, including Fringe Benefits)				\$ 7,358.09		\$ 7,358.09
					\$ 3,781.81	\$ 3,781.81
Redesign ACA 115 (Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$22.28/hr for 25 hours, including Fringe Benefits)		\$ 667.92				\$ 667.92
Determine cutoff score for placement test and design results sheets (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$22.95/hr for 5 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)			\$ 242.75			\$ 242.75
Redesign Placement test results sheet given to students (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$22.95/hr for 8 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)			\$ 458.13			\$ 458.13
Develop an online FAQ (Full-time staff compensation (2 staff @ \$22.95/hr for 50 hours each, including Fringe Benefits)			\$ 2,545.68			\$ 2,545.68
ID students who demonstrated adequate improvement - ACA 115 (Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$23.64/hr for 100 hours, over a 3 year period, including Fringe Benefits)			\$ 981.08	\$ 981.08	\$ 981.08	\$ 2,943.24
Reassess students at completion of additional training (Full-time staff compensation (1 staff @ \$23.64/hr for 25 hours, including Fringe Benefits)				\$ 735.81		\$ 735.81
	\$ 12,094.60	\$ 29,430.32	\$ 33,909.57	\$ 32,366.98	\$ 28,853.89	\$ 136,655.36

	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	Total
<b><i>Other Expense</i></b>						
Computer Skills Assessment Software (Estimated purchase price for the placement test in computer/technical skills)	\$ -	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 64,000.00
Total	\$ -	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 64,000.00

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Glossary

A-B Tech—Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

ACA 115—Success & Study Skills

ACC 120—Principles of Financial Accounting

ASL 111—Elementary American Sign Language

ASL 181—American Sign Language Lab

BUS 110—Introduction to Business

BUS 239—Business Applications Seminar

BUS 260 – Business Communication

CIS 110—Introduction to Computers

CSC—designates Computer Science Courses

CTS—designates Computer Information Technology courses

DBA—designates Database Management Technology courses

ECM 230--Capstone Project—

ECO—designates Economics courses

EDU 119—Introduction to Early Child

EDU 153—Health, Safety, & Nutrition

EDU 221—Children with Exceptional

EDU 235—School-Age Dev & Program

EDU 271—Educational Technology

ENG 111—Expository Writing

ENG 113—Literature-Based Research

ENG 114—Professional Research and Reporting

FAFSA—Free Application for Federal Student Aid

HUM 123—Appalachian Culture

IEP—Institutional Effectiveness Plan—the document that sets the course for the college’s activities by assessing strengths, weaknesses, and goals

IT—Information Technology—a department within our Technology and Development division

MAT 140A—Survey of Mathematics Lab

MAT 140—Survey of Mathematics

MKT—designates Marketing courses

NC Live—North Carolina Live—a database provided by the state of North Carolina used for research in a wide variety of fields

POL—designates Political Science courses

PSY 241—Developmental Psychology

READI—Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator—an assessment tool available for purchase that purports to measure the extent to which a student is prepared for distance education classes through determining the level to which a student possesses certain skills and attitudes

SOC—designates Sociology courses

TAT—designates Travel and Tourism courses

TEACH Act—a law, passed in 2002, that broadened educator’s abilities to provide copies of printed, audio, and video materials in a distance education format, more closely aligning those guidelines with the guidelines for face-to-face classes

TRC—Transylvania Center—BRCC’s extension in Transylvania County

W3C—the World Wide Web Consortium, an organization that works to develop guidelines, specifications, software, and applications to enhance the web for all users

WAI—the Web Accessibility Initiative, a group that works to help make the web more accessible to people with disabilities

WebEx—software that allows synchronous communication, both audio and video, as well as document exchange and modification, via the internet

WF—withdraw fail—grade designates that a student withdrew or was withdrawn from a course and, at the point of withdrawal, was failing the course

WP—withdraw pass—grade designates that a student withdrew or was withdrawn from a course and, at the point of withdrawal, was passing the course

## **Appendix B: IEPs from 2005 – 2006**

The overall introduction to the Blue Ridge Community College Institutional Effectiveness Plan (2005 – 2008) identifies several aspects that relate to the College's interest in and commitment to providing quality online courses. The strengths of the College mention the commitment of the faculty to both quality and meaningful technology while the opportunities listed include non-traditional education delivery and new technologies for the digital age. At the same time, however, the same introductory list recognizes that the weaknesses of the College include internal communications, limited resources, student retention, the challenge of staying current with technology, and the threats posed to the College by unpredictable resources and changing technology.

Most of the 22 subdivisions in the 2001 IEP included ideas which dealt with these initial focuses. Information was divided among the following categories: accomplishments, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The accomplishments associated with curriculum courses include an increase from 1433 to 2082 students involved with interactive television, Blackboard, and hybrid methods; a major upgrade to Blackboard just prior to spring 2005 semester; and training on teaching online courses provided to curriculum and continuing education faculty. Distance learning components have been implemented in most programs, and BRCC offers the only Interpreter Training program in the state using distance learning.

Several specific weaknesses relating to distance learning include the absence of online registration, high attrition in online courses, outdated computer systems in faculty offices, inadequate computer resources, lack of resources to purchase distance learning faculty software (such as a content management version of Blackboard), no redundancy for Blackboard server (so

students do not have continual service to online classes), and College network breakdowns that result in lost time for students taking online courses.

The IEP also acknowledges that online courses offer specific opportunities including new chances for growth and innovation, reaching students that are beyond the usual service area, and the promotion of distance learning with county schools. In order to maximize these opportunities, however, the library needs to develop services for distance education students, Counseling Services needs to provide student support services for distance learners, and the College needs to consider the competition from online institutions such as University of Phoenix as well as the challenge of keeping current with rapidly changing technology.

Mid-level goals throughout the College address these concerns as they relate to curriculum courses offered completely online (Sections 201-202) including the following:

(1) Arts and Science wants to increase online course offerings, have 50% of its faculty members teaching at least one online course per year by spring 2006, and decrease attrition in online Arts and Science courses so that it is comparable with traditional courses.

2) Business and Service Careers plans additional courses available to TRC students by spring 2006 and will offer online most of the required course work for the certificate in Basic Accounting by Fall 2007.

(3) The online section of ACA 115 will have tutorials on NCLive and other databases by fall 2005.

(4) Student Support Services will make online registration available by fall 2006. (5)

Information Technology plans to improve technology infrastructure of the

College, create a technological environment for faculty and students that will provide a superior educational experience, act as a resource to the College's faculty and staff to make IT available to all users, and provide quality and timely customer service to those supported by IT.

(6) Instructional Technology Services plans to write a manual to explain distance learning policies and procedures and to enable students to register and pay online by Spring 2006.

Instructional Technology Services wants to increase faculty's exposure to national best practices with audio conferences.

(7) Administrative Services will enable students to pay online with a credit card by spring 2006.

In the 2006 – 2009 Blue Ridge Community College Institutional Effectiveness Plan, one of the goals of the North Carolina Community College System's 2007 – 2009 Strategic Plan's goals is referenced. This goal is to establish a Regional Technology Resource Center to promote student learning using distance learning among other methods of curriculum course delivery.

Updates on the online topics from the earlier IEP follow:

(1) In the 2006 – 2009 IEP, Arts and Sciences again voiced concern over high attrition in online courses and hoped to reduce attrition in online courses to a percentage no greater than that for traditional courses. Moreover, the Division recognized additional threats concerning competition for students from A-B Tech and online institutions, such as the University of Phoenix. The goal to have 50% of the faculty teaching at least one online course per year was reiterated.

(2) In the Business and Service Careers division, the 2006 – 2009 IEP notes that most of the required courses for the Basic Accounting certificate are now available online. A stated Division objective in the 2006 – 2009 IEP is to introduce students enrolled in online courses to

synchronous interaction with instructors and to conduct pre- and post-testing of all online courses to improve student retention. WebEx has been selected and purchased as the synchronous software. Online Interpreter Education classes will offer more visual support materials.

(3) The online introduction tutorial to NCLive was completed in fall 2006, but the instructional portion dealing with specific databases is not yet complete.

(4) Student Services reports that 2006 – 2009 Outcome Results for the IEP indicate that web adviser could not be implemented because of incomplete conversions.

(5) In the stated goals for the Division of Information Technologies in 2006 – 2009, there is a reference to developing a support system for faculty who teach online courses and to improving registration for online students.

(6) The Instructional Technology and Distance Learning Support Division lists the following two accomplishments: helping Continuing Education faculty teach online courses and adding video components to online classes. The Division lists several weaknesses including a lack of technical support for online classes and lists a stated objective for the College to acquire specialized software which will assess a student's preparedness to take an online class. During the 2006 – 07 year, fourteen faculty development workshops were offered. The Faculty survey completed in Fall 2005 indicated that 56% of the online instructors were aware of the identified best practices for online education.

Other objectives include establishing a faculty peer review process to evaluate online courses, adding "help desk" technical support during evening and weekend hours for online classes, offering online faculty professional development via audio conferences, and using *Moodle* software to stream video for online courses. In the Fall 2006 semester, a person was

available twenty hours a week to assist online students with technical questions about Blackboard. These hours were spaced over evening and weekend times. An online helpline, which is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, was initiated in the Spring 2007 term.

The 2006 – 2009 IEP also indicated that until a better advising program is implemented, the addition of new online courses will be reduced.

### Appendix C: Grade Comparisons of Seated and Online Sections

Summary of Online Courses													
<u>Term</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Total Enrollments</u>	<u>Total Courses</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>	<u>Percent Grade A-C</u>	<u>Percent WP WF</u>
Spr2003	150	99	37	28	24	0	90	4	432	22		66.2%	21.8%
Sum2003	46	26	8	8	5	0	13	0	106	6		75.5%	12.3%
Fall2003	145	88	34	12	23	0	81	1	384	19	-11.1%	69.5%	21.4%
Spr2004	227	98	69	21	34	0	127	8	584	45	52.1%	67.5%	23.1%
Sum2004	145	57	23	4	21	0	55	7	312	10		72.1%	19.9%
Fall2004	222	96	56	22	24	0	114	30	564	29	-3.4%	66.3%	25.5%
Spr2005	258	148	64	28	52	0	116	23	689	44	22.2%	68.2%	20.2%
Sum2005	106	70	40	8	15	0	58	2	299	23		72.2%	20.1%
Fall2005	143	89	59	28	20	0	125	5	469	26	-31.9%	62.0%	27.7%
Spr2006	294	108	59	22	37	0	146	10	529	28	12.8%	87.1%	29.5%
Sum2006	118	63	32	5	13	0	49	12	292	21		72.9%	20.9%
Fall2006	188	135	65	27	79	0	144	6	644	33	21.7%	60.2%	23.3%
Spr2007	200	114	72	31	85	0	156	30	688	44	6.4%	56.1%	27.0%
Sum2007	107	52	25	9	14	0	57	2	266	17		69.2%	22.2%
Fall2007	184	139	77	25	53	2	221	39	740	35	7.6%	54.1%	35.1%
Spr2008	222	191	82	43	72	1	179	26	816	51	10.3%	60.7%	25.1%

**ANALYSIS BY COURSE PREFIX**

Online Sections										Seated Sections									
Course	A	B	C	D	F	I	WP	WF	Tot	Course	A	B	C	D	F	I	WP	WF	Tot
<b>ARTS &amp; SCIENCES</b>																			
ACA	41%	16%	6%	2%	6%	0%	26%	4%	464	ACA	48%	22%	10%	3%	3%	0%	21%	2%	2269
ART	43%	13%	4%	0%	21%	0%	19%	0%	47	ART	26%	21%	17%	7%	8%	0%	21%	0%	168
ENG	24%	20%	10%	6%	5%	0%	32%	2%	964	ENG	21%	27%	17%	6%	7%	0%	19%	3%	3289
HIS	16%	24%	9%	5%	19%	2%	23%	2%	122	HIS	11%	26%	23%	11%	13%	0%	16%	0%	268
HUM	37%	34%	8%	3%	9%	0%	9%	1%	270	HUM	24%	52%	6%	3%	3%	0%	13%	0%	151
MAT	20%	29%	18%	6%	6%	0%	19%	1%	369	MAT	20%	26%	20%	8%	6%	0%	18%	2%	762
PED	52%	15%	9%	3%	8%	0%	10%	2%	662	PED	62%	15%	5%	2%	7%	0%	8%	0%	263
PHI	13%	20%	0%	7%	13%	0%	47%	0%	15										
POL	59%	9%	5%	3%	3%	0%	20%	0%	88	POL	22%	56%	11%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	9
PSY	31%	31%	10%	0%	5%	0%	21%	3%	78	PSY	39%	30%	14%	5%	2%	0%	8%	3%	132
REL	14%	25%	14%	2%	6%	0%	40%	0%	88	REL	54%	14%	10%	4%	4%	0%	3%	10%	69
SOC	5%	5%	4%	5%	13%	0%	54%	13%	237	SOC	32%	19%	12%	5%	7%	0%	23%	3%	237
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3404</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7617</b>
<b>BUSINESS &amp; SERVICE CAREERS</b>																			
ACC	22%	18%	14%	4%	9%	0%	33%	0%	346	ACC	27%	19%	18%	7%	5%	0%	22%	2%	312
BUS	18%	26%	18%	5%	8%	0%	24%	1%	833	BUS	23%	24%	19%	4%	5%	0%	21%	3%	462
CIS	33%	22%	9%	4%	8%	0%	22%	3%	986	CIS	39%	21%	10%	5%	9%	0%	15%	1%	1303
COE	83%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6										
CSC	21%	14%	9%	8%	18%	0%	24%	6%	142										
CTS	31%	24%	10%	2%	10%	0%	22%	0%	49	CTS	25%	38%	25%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	8
DBA	37%	21%	5%	0%	11%	0%	26%	0%	19										
ECM	40%	12%	8%	4%	8%	0%	24%	4%	25										
ECO	8%	17%	23%	15%	4%	0%	29%	4%	52	ECO	24%	24%	29%	0%	6%	0%	18%	0%	17
EDU	52%	14%	7%	3%	5%	0%	14%	4%	787	EDU	49%	19%	11%	3%	3%	0%	15%	1%	151
IPP	53%	19%	8%	4%	4%	0%	12%	0%	582										
ITN	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	5										
MKT	28%	25%	13%	3%	7%	0%	20%	4%	349										
NET	40%	40%	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	10										
OST	49%	16%	12%	2%	4%	0%	16%	0%	49										
TAT	44%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	19%	13%	16										
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4256</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>&gt;1%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2253</b>

**APPLIED SCIENCES**

<b>ISC</b>	47%	17%	5%	0%	9%	0%	17%	5%	58
<b>MAC</b>	33%	11%	11%	4%	15%	0%	11%	15%	46
<b>TOTALS</b>	40%	14%	8%	2%	12%	0%	14%	10%	104

**Online Sections****Seated Sections**

<b>Course</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>WF</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>WF</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	33%	20.0%	10%	4.1%	7.3%	0.1%	22.2%	2.6%	7797		31.9%	24%	14%	5.0%	6%	0.1%	18.3%	2.2%	9870

Percent Summary by Course																			
Online Sections										Seated Sections									
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>		<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>
<b>ACA115</b>	41%	16%	6%	2%	6%	0%	26%	4%	464	<b>ACA115</b>	48%	22%	10%	3%	3%	0%	21%	2%	2269
<b>ACC120</b>	12%	15%	15%	4%	0%	0%	42%	0%	213	<b>ACC120</b>	26%	17%	18%	7%	2%	0%	25%	4%	135
<b>ACC132</b>	39%	20%	17%	5%	10%	0%	10%	0%	41										
<b>ACC140</b>	30%	25%	9%	5%	9%	0%	21%	0%	56	<b>ACC140</b>	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
<b>ACC150</b>	44%	22%	11%	3%	0%	0%	19%	0%	36	<b>ACC150</b>	28%	21%	16%	6%	8%	0%	20%	0%	172
<b>ART111</b>	43%	13%	4%	0%	21%	0%	19%	0%	47	<b>ART111</b>	26%	21%	17%	7%	8%	0%	21%	0%	168
<b>BUS110</b>	9%	23%	20%	7%	11%	0%	30%	1%	328	<b>BUS110</b>	21%	22%	20%	5%	5%	0%	24%	3%	347
<b>BUS115</b>	27%	29%	16%	0%	4%	0%	24%	0%	45	<b>BUS115</b>	20%	36%	20%	2%	5%	0%	14%	2%	44
<b>BUS121</b>	13%	6%	19%	6%	13%	0%	44%	0%	32										
<b>BUS137</b>	8%	33%	16%	5%	9%	0%	28%	2%	195	<b>BUS137</b>	27%	27%	15%	3%	8%	2%	16%	2%	62
<b>BUS228</b>	25%	25%	23%	5%	8%	0%	14%	0%	73										
<b>BUS239</b>	49%	24%	16%	5%	1%	0%	5%	0%	76										
<b>BUS260</b>	39%	26%	18%	4%	2%	0%	11%	0%	84	<b>BUS260</b>	56%	22%	11%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	9
<b>CIS110</b>	32%	24%	9%	3%	4%	0%	27%	1%	456	<b>CIS110</b>	38%	21%	10%	5%	9%	0%	15%	1%	1287
<b>CIS115</b>	12%	19%	6%	4%	20%	0%	20%	19%	105										
<b>CIS120</b>	21%	21%	10%	13%	10%	0%	26%	0%	39										
<b>CIS125</b>	28%	23%	11%	2%	8%	0%	28%	0%	83	<b>CIS125</b>	45%	18%	18%	9%	0%	0%	9%	0%	11
<b>CIS130</b>	81%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	12%	0%	26										
<b>CIS152</b>	43%	25%	8%	3%	11%	0%	10%	0%	128										
<b>CIS165</b>	33%	17%	33%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	6										
<b>CIS169</b>	41%	22%	9%	5%	1%	0%	21%	1%	82	<b>CIS169</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
<b>CIS172</b>	18%	13%	16%	11%	26%	0%	16%	0%	38										
<b>CIS225</b>	70%	13%	0%	0%	4%	0%	13%	0%	23										
<b>COE115</b>	83%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6										
<b>CSC134</b>	20%	14%	10%	8%	17%	0%	23%	8%	106										
<b>CSC148</b>	33%	8%	4%	4%	13%	0%	38%	0%	24										
<b>CSC251</b>	8%	25%	8%	8%	33%	0%	8%	8%	12										
<b>CSC289</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	1										
<b>CTS125</b>	27%	36%	0%	0%	18%	0%	18%	0%	11										
<b>CTS130</b>	24%	24%	14%	3%	10%	0%	24%	0%	29	<b>CTS130</b>	25%	38%	25%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	8
<b>CTS235</b>	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	0%	5										
<b>CTS275</b>	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4										
<b>DBA110</b>	37%	21%	5%	0%	11%	0%	26%	0%	19										

Percent Summary by Course																				
Online Sections										Seated Sections										
	A	B	C	D	F	I	WP	WF	Tot		A	B	C	D	F	I	WP	WF	Tot	
ECM168	27%	27%	9%	9%	0%	0%	45%	0%	11											
ECM201	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	1											
ECM220	50%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	17%	6											
ECM230	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5											
ECO251	10%	13%	20%	13%	7%	0%	37%	0%	30	ECO251	25%	17%	33%	0%	8%	0%	17%	0%	12	
ECO252	5%	23%	27%	18%	0%	0%	18%	9%	22	ECO252	20%	40%	20%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	5	
EDU118	50%	18%	3%	8%	3%	0%	16%	3%	38											
EDU119	32%	15%	8%	1%	14%	0%	13%	17%	78	EDU119	39%	22%	6%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	36	
EDU131	61%	12%	4%	4%	5%	0%	12%	2%	171											
EDU144	48%	26%	6%	0%	4%	0%	17%	0%	54	EDU144	19%	6%	31%	13%	0%	0%	31%	0%	16	
EDU145	35%	35%	12%	0%	8%	0%	12%	0%	26											
EDU146	44%	23%	8%	1%	5%	0%	17%	1%	77	EDU146	39%	44%	11%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	18	
EDU147	61%	11%	4%	0%	4%	0%	11%	11%	28											
EDU151	36%	9%	14%	9%	5%	0%	27%	0%	22	EDU151	71%	10%	10%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%	21	
EDU153	50%	8%	8%	0%	8%	0%	25%	0%	24											
EDU185	71%	5%	10%	5%	0%	0%	10%	0%	21	EDU185	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	2	
EDU186	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4											
EDU221	68%	7%	7%	0%	0%	0%	18%	0%	28											
EDU234	38%	15%	16%	16%	10%	0%	8%	5%	61	EDU234	57%	16%	11%	3%	8%	0%	0%	5%	37	
EDU235	38%	17%	10%	3%	7%	0%	21%	3%	29											
EDU247	58%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	17%	17%	12											
EDU250	59%	3%	13%	0%	3%	0%	22%	0%	32											
EDU259	60%	23%	3%	0%	3%	0%	3%	7%	30	EDU259	76%	18%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	17	
EDU275	72%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	12%	4%	25											
EDU280	41%	13%	0%	6%	9%	0%	25%	6%	32	EDU280	25%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	4	
EDU285	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4											
ENG111	7%	12%	10%	10%	6%	0%	50%	4%	210	ENG111	19%	25%	17%	6%	8%	0%	21%	4%	2041	
ENG112	26%	25%	5%	0%	4%	0%	38%	3%	77	ENG112	28%	46%	8%	2%	2%	0%	15%	0%	61	
ENG113	15%	21%	15%	7%	8%	0%	32%	4%	253	ENG113	24%	31%	15%	5%	5%	0%	18%	1%	700	
ENG114	40%	24%	9%	4%	4%	0%	17%	1%	335	ENG114	26%	26%	22%	5%	5%	0%	14%	1%	487	
ENG233	29%	25%	8%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%	24											
ENG242	43%	9%	0%	4%	9%	0%	30%	4%	23											
ENG262	17%	19%	0%	5%	0%	0%	55%	5%	42											
HIS111	13%	25%	11%	5%	21%	2%	21%	2%	96	HIS111	11%	28%	25%	12%	12%	0%	11%	0%	244	
HIS112	20%	0%	0%	10%	0%	10%	60%	0%	10	HIS112	8%	4%	0%	4%	21%	0%	63%	0%	24	
HIS221	38%	31%	0%	0%	19%	0%	13%	13%	16											

Percent Summary by Course																			
Online Sections										Seated Sections									
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>		<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>
<b>HUM123</b>	37%	34%	8%	3%	9%	0%	9%	1%	270	<b>HUM123</b>	24%	52%	6%	3%	3%	0%	13%	0%	151
<b>IPP111</b>	49%	20%	10%	6%	3%	0%	12%	0%	106										
<b>IPP112</b>	42%	26%	12%	5%	1%	0%	14%	0%	74										
<b>IPP113</b>	43%	21%	8%	4%	8%	0%	16%	0%	104										
<b>IPP150</b>	46%	16%	9%	8%	3%	0%	19%	0%	90										
<b>IPP151</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12										
<b>IPP152</b>	61%	21%	7%	2%	0%	0%	9%	0%	56										
<b>IPP193</b>	59%	18%	7%	0%	5%	0%	11%	0%	56										
<b>IPP240</b>	84%	10%	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	51										
<b>IPP245</b>	55%	18%	6%	6%	9%	0%	6%	0%	33										
<b>ISC112</b>	47%	17%	5%	0%	9%	0%	17%	5%	58										
<b>ITN150</b>	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	5										
<b>MAC114</b>	38%	14%	10%	3%	21%	0%	10%	3%	29	<b>MAC114</b>	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2
<b>MAC121</b>	24%	6%	12%	6%	6%	0%	12%	35%	17										
<b>MAT115</b>	13%	46%	13%	4%	4%	0%	21%	0%	24	<b>MAT115</b>	31%	34%	19%	3%	2%	0%	11%	0%	62
<b>MAT140</b>	23%	30%	17%	5%	5%	0%	18%	2%	282	<b>MAT140</b>	20%	26%	20%	8%	6%	0%	18%	2%	665
<b>MAT151</b>	10%	21%	22%	14%	8%	0%	25%	0%	63	<b>MAT151</b>	9%	23%	23%	3%	9%	0%	34%	0%	35
<b>MKT120</b>	41%	23%	8%	3%	5%	0%	18%	1%	146										
<b>MKT122</b>	24%	17%	17%	3%	7%	0%	24%	7%	29										
<b>MKT123</b>	10%	29%	15%	7%	7%	0%	22%	10%	41										
<b>MKT220</b>	25%	20%	13%	3%	13%	0%	23%	5%	40										
<b>MKT222</b>	38%	31%	8%	0%	8%	0%	15%	0%	13										
<b>MKT223</b>	6%	28%	19%	6%	6%	0%	31%	6%	36										
<b>MKT225</b>	17%	44%	11%	6%	11%	0%	11%	0%	18										
<b>MKT226</b>	23%	23%	23%	0%	12%	0%	12%	8%	26										
<b>NET240</b>	40%	40%	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	10										
<b>NET289</b>	50%	33%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6										
<b>NOS230</b>	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3										
<b>OST233</b>	54%	18%	13%	0%	5%	0%	10%	0%	39										
<b>OST236</b>	30%	10%	10%	10%	0%	0%	40%	0%	10										
<b>PED110</b>	55%	14%	7%	3%	6%	0%	11%	2%	497	<b>PED110</b>	62%	15%	5%	2%	7%	0%	8%	0%	263
<b>PED165</b>	44%	17%	13%	2%	14%	0%	9%	2%	126										
<b>PED256</b>	38%	23%	15%	3%	15%	0%	5%	0%	39										

<b>Percent Summary by Course</b>																				
<b>Online Sections</b>										<b>Seated Sections</b>										
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>		<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>WF</u>	<u>Tot</u>	
<b>PHI210</b>	0%	26%	16%	16%	0%	0%	42%	0%	19											
<b>PHI240</b>	13%	20%	0%	7%	13%	0%	47%	0%	15											
<b>POL130</b>	59%	9%	5%	3%	3%	0%	20%	0%	88	<b>POL130</b>	22%	56%	11%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	9	
<b>PSY241</b>	31%	31%	10%	0%	5%	0%	21%	3%	78	<b>PSY241</b>	39%	30%	14%	5%	2%	0%	8%	3%	132	
<b>REL110</b>	14%	25%	14%	2%	6%	0%	40%	0%	88	<b>REL110</b>	54%	14%	10%	4%	4%	0%	3%	10%	69	
<b>SOC210</b>	6%	4%	3%	5%	14%	0%	58%	12%	193	<b>SOC210</b>	32%	19%	12%	5%	7%	0%	23%	3%	237	
<b>SOC220</b>	5%	14%	9%	9%	9%	0%	39%	16%	44											
<b>TAT110</b>	44%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	19%	13%	16											
<b>WEB289</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	1											

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## Appendix E: QEP Administrator Job Description

**DEPARTMENT:** Institutional Advancement

**REPORTS TO:** President

**OVERALL FUNCTION:** To provide leadership and organization to the implementation of Blue Ridge Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and to ensure the completion and delivery of all QEP-related reports to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) according to the required deadlines.

### **Major Responsibilities:**

1. Direct the preparation of all modifications to the QEP, which are required for compliance, with the recommendations provided by SACS.
2. Work closely with members of the QEP Committee to prepare all required SACS reports.
3. Initiate the implementation of the QEP, overseeing the quality assurance process for all initiatives and ensuring completion of each objective within the established timeline.
4. Facilitate meetings and prepare college-wide communications related to QEP issues.
5. Serve as a liaison to all QEP-related committees.
6. Coordinate the training and professional development of all staff and faculty as it relates to the QEP.
7. Work with the STAR Center staff to ensure the smooth implementation of a computer skills assessment for all incoming students.
8. Provide QEP technical and operational support to departments and divisions on both campuses, and respond to all requests for assistance with data and analyses related to the QEP.
9. Conduct assessment research as needed for benchmarking and comparability purposes, and analyze data for QEP objectives; prepare results and findings for dissemination as appropriate.
10. Work closely with the Institutional Effectiveness office relative to the administration and analysis of the various measurements administered for the purposes of determining the effectiveness of various implementations within the QEP.
11. Report QEP progress to the president on a monthly basis and assist the president with meetings, projects, and reports as they relate to the QEP.
12. Perform other duties, as required.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

#### **Skills:**

- Necessary written skills to convey ideas, facts, and information effectively and accurately to students, staff, faculty, and the general public
- Ability to clearly and effectively present ideas in meetings and through oral reports
- Broad educational background and work experience which demonstrates knowledge of the principles of education and assessment
- Organizational skills necessary to meet deadlines for reports and assignments

- Skills to effectively plan work activities, schedules, priorities, and utilization of resources
- Knowledge, skills, and ability to perform all essential functions of this job

**Education:**

Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution in the field of education

**Experience:**

At least one year's experience in higher education administration

# Carol Ann McLendon

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Flat Rock, NC 28731  
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E-mail: ca\_mclendon@blueridge.edu

## Objectives

To conduct research and participate in college-wide planning at the postsecondary level.

## Education

### Masters in Education (May 2004)

#### University of South Carolina

- ▶ Completed a Research Internship
- ▶ Graduated with a 4.0

### Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (August 1993)

- ▶ President's Honor Roll (4.0 GPA) - Two Semesters
- ▶ Dean's List - Four Semesters

## Experience

Research Specialist (January 2008 – Present)  
Blue Ridge Community College (Asheville, NC)

Assist with the development of the College's Long Range Plan  
Assist faculty and staff with Institutional Effectiveness Planning  
Conduct research for and assist in the writing of the QEP as part of the SACS accreditation process  
Develop, implement and analyze surveys  
Produce reports and ensure the completion of all reports for the NC System Office

Elementary School Writing Tutor (December 2006 – January 2008)  
Carolina Day School (Asheville, NC)

Taught third and fourth grade writing in a one-on-one setting

Substitute Teacher (September 2006 – January 2008)  
Carolina Day School (Asheville, NC)

Taught various grades throughout the Elementary and Key Schools on a temporary basis

## Skills

- ▶ Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- ▶ Very quick learner
- ▶ Great written and verbal communication skills
- ▶ Ability to lead or follow and work with all types of people
- ▶ Good attitude, punctual and organized

## **Appendix F: Choice of Assessment Instrument for Computer/Technical Skills**

In an attempt to identify the instruments that were already available to assess computer and technical competencies, the QEP committee solicited responses from various sources: other community colleges in North Carolina, computer instructors in the North Carolina community college system, student services personnel, the Instructional Technology Council, and commercial vendors.

Then all faculty who teach online were asked to identify what computer and technical competencies their online students must possess in order to be successful in their courses. A list of the computer and technical skills identified by students as being critical for success in an online course was also compiled from the student surveys and focus group discussions. These lists were then compared to the areas assessed by different instruments. Ultimately three products were chosen for further evaluation.

The first was CompuPlacer, a computer skills assessment instrument that considered word processing performance-based skills and knowledge, Windows performance-based skills and knowledge, and general computer knowledge and skills. The second was SAM Challenge 2, computer literacy testing software for Microsoft Office 2003 and Computer Concepts. The third was Accuplacer, an assessment instrument with seven subsets covering a variety of computer and technical knowledge.

All three companies were invited to present their products to representatives from the QEP Committee, the IT Department, and the personnel responsible for the placement testing (Student Services and STAR Learning Center staff members). As well as presentations, each of the three companies provided us with numerous demo assessments. Everyone completing a demo assessment or attending one of the presentations was surveyed for feedback and comments. In addition, IT worked with each company to see how the data from these assessment instruments could be imported into Datatel, the College's administrative software system.

The QEP Committee met in July 2008 to consider the presentation, the feedback, the reliability and validity information provided by the companies, and based on all of this information, selected Accuplacer to assess incoming students' computer and technical skills. Accuplacer's Computer Skills Placement Test (CSP) impressed the QEP committee for several reasons. First, the test was developed based on a review of computer

skills needs drawn from a group of experts, which included psychometricians, test development professionals and community college instructors. Based on research provided by Accuplacer, the company performed a psychometric analysis of the test questions and determined that a cut-off score of 54% indicated that a candidate possessed a basic level of computer skill competency. Any score below 54% suggested a need for educational remediation; however, Accuplacer feels strongly that educational settings vary, and faculty should be given the latitude to determine the cutoff score that they feel best represents the computer skill proficiency required at their institution for a student to be successful in classes where basic computer skills are required.

The committee was also impressed by the reliability and validity information provided by Accuplacer. Regarding content validity, all 70 items on the CSP were reviewed by a group of subject matter experts, which included IT professionals, IT faculty and test development professionals. This group determined that the CSP did indeed contain a high level of content validity. Criterion related validity was determined through comparison of Northeast Mississippi Community College's CSC 1113 course, which is based upon the same seven content areas assessed by the CSP. Final exams scores from CS 1113 and student's scores on CSP were correlated, yielding a Pearson correlation coefficient of .71, a correlation which suggests high validity for this test.

Reliability was determined through a test/re-test of students at Grays Harbor Community College in January of 2006. The students' scores on the CSP were correlated with one another yielding a Pearson correlation coefficient of .91, an excellent reliability score for a placement test. Based on all of this information, Accuplacer is the chosen assessment and will be purchased in the Summer 2009 term.

## **Appendix G: Draft Agenda for Faculty Workshops on Computer Skills Assessment**

### **I. Computer Skills and Student Learning**

- A. Brief explanation of the research which led the QEP committee to make the determination that a computer skills assessment would impact student learning
- B. The link between computer skills and online learning

### **II. The Accuplacer Assessment of Computer Skills**

- A. Explanation of choice of Accuplacer as our Computer Skills Assessment
- B. Explanation of timeline for implementing the new assessment and collecting data to determine appropriate cut-off scores
- C. Explanation of placement testing process

## **Appendix H: Draft Agenda for Workshop on Computer Skills Assessment Cut-off Score and Implications**

### **I. Interpretation of test scores**

- A. Explanation of how we derived at the cut-off score
- B. Use of the score report sheets
- C. How to use the score report sheets to advise students for appropriate course registration

### **II. Explanation of the CIS 070 requirement**

- A. Explanation of registration requirements
- B. Explanation of CIS 070 retest requirement

## Appendix I: Course Requirement Outline Template

Course:

Term:

Instructor:

### 1. Computer/Technical Considerations

A. Hardware Needs

B. Software Needs

C. Technical Skills

### 2. Course Considerations

A. Types of Assignments

B. Assessments

C. Time Commitment

D. Course Policies

### 3. Other Considerations

## SAMPLE 1

Course: MAT140/MAT140A

Term: Spring 2008

Instructor: Ruth Daniel

### 1. Computer/Technical Considerations

- A. Hardware Needs: Windows 98,2000, XP  
64 MB RAM recommended  
Cable/DSL/T1 recommended, Dial-up at a minimum of 56K modem
- B. Software Needs: Internet Explorer or Firefox  
Latest version of Adobe Flash Player  
Latest version of QuickTime Player
- C. Technical Skills: Be able to use a math template to enter fractions, exponents, radicals, etc.  
into expressions  
Be proficient with a calculator for complicated formulas involving exponents

### 2. Course Considerations

- A. Types of Assignments: Homework assignments correlate with the book. Doing the homework and taking tests will be time consuming. Problems should be worked on paper and the answers submitted on the computer.
- B. Assessments: Tests are a combination of multiple choice and short answer.
- C. Time Commitment: In order to succeed in the course, a minimum of 3-5 hours per week is needed. Videos are available on each section. The videos take about 20 minutes each. More time may be needed depending on your strengths in prior math courses.
- D. Course Policies: Test deadlines are very firm.

### 3. Other Considerations: None

## SAMPLE 2

Course:               ENG 111  
Term:                 Spring 2008  
Instructor:         Caren Kessler

### 1. Computer/Technical Considerations

- A. Hardware Needs - See Fall 2008 Moodle brochure
- B. Software Needs- See Fall 2008 Moodle brochure
- C. Technical Skills- Ability to convert documents to usable formats  
Basic word processing competence

### 2. Course Considerations

- A. Types of Assignments     - Analyses of readings  
                                      - Expository essays  
                                      - Research project
- B. Assessments               - Ungraded classroom exercises  
                                      - Expository essays  
                                      - Research project  
                                      - Responses to readings  
                                      - Workshop preparation and participation
- C. Time Commitment         - 10 – 12 hours per week
- D. Course Policies           - essays submitted late are penalized one letter grade for each day past the  
                                      due date  
                                      - if a student has no contact with the instructor for two weeks, that student  
                                      will be dropped from the course  
                                      - plagiarism will result in an F for the course

### 3. Other Considerations

- students who enjoy writing will more likely be successful in this format  
than students who do not enjoy writing

## **Appendix J: Draft Agenda for Faculty Workshops on Course Requirement Outlines (CROs)**

### I. Explanation for the development of this template

A. QEP data

B. Development by selected faculty

C. Impact of CRO on student learning outcomes

### II. Completion of the CRO

A. Discussion of the sections on the CRO

B. Explanation of how to complete the CRO sections for specific online courses

C. Completion of the CRO by individual faculty for their online courses

### III. Advising

A. How to access the CROs

B. How to use the CROs to properly advise students

## **Appendix K: Draft Agenda for Workshop on re-designed ACA 115**

- I. Review of how QEP goals and objectives resulted in need to redesign ACA 115
- II. Presentation of new unit in ACA 115
  - A. Explanation of the overall goals and objectives of the unit
  - B. Assessment of those goals and objectives
  - C. Presentation of restructured syllabus
  - D. Presentation of unit content
- III. Discussion of how the redesigned ACA 115 will impact student learning outcomes