Writing New Paths to Discovery

Academic Writing

- Pre-writing
- Free writing
- Brainstorming
- Outline
- Thesis Statement
- Topic Sentence
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Dr. John W. Luton, Language, Literature, & Communication  
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In compliance with SACS Core requirements 2.12 and 3.3.2, Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) has created a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that will improve student learning in *academic writing*. The decision to address academic writing developed from academic research, institutional strategic plans, campus-wide surveys, focus groups, open forums, and several university-wide committees of faculty, administrators, staff, and students.

One-third of ECSU students enrolled in GE 102—English Composition and Grammar and GE 103—English Composition and Vocabulary do not pass. Faculty and staff have reported that students have difficulty with writing papers. For this reason, the QEP will focus upon two major components: A revision of freshman English courses and a Writing Studio. To enhance *academic writing*, English faculty will revise the first-year English courses: GE 102 and GE 103. The revised courses will engage students in a variety of writing experiences in order to develop their knowledge of rhetorical situations, critical thinking skills, reading skills, writing skills and writing processes. Our QEP will encourage students to design their own pathways to *academic writing* using two facets of the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ (WPA) outcomes: Students will understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources; students will integrate their own ideas with those of others. ECSU’s QEP will focus upon four specific student-learning outcomes: 1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the rhetorical skills required in academic, professional, and civic life. 2. Students will demonstrate their ability to comprehend material—print and electronic—and to think critically and analytically about relevant sources. 3. Students will demonstrate mastery of the writing process as recursive: Drafting, writing, revising and editing. 4. Students will demonstrate mastery of writing conventions: Organization, persuasion and mechanics.

Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, the Writing Studio Director, will develop a Writing Studio that will broaden the capability and availability of personal, peer and instructional support to aid in timely writing development support. The Writing Studio will also provide tutorial assistance for students from their freshman to senior year. To ensure continual support, a writing studio extension, a satellite laboratory, will be housed in the G.R. Little Library and will operate during library hours. An E-lab also will be continually available to students during each semester. The Executive Director of the QEP, Dr. Barbara Johnson, will oversee and manage all aspects of the QEP and encourage faculty development in coordination with the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Formative and summative assessments will be used to assess student success in achieving the learning outcomes in GE 102 and GE 103. Formative assessments based upon standardized objective measures will assess mechanics, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Writing rubrics will assess student writing in essays, formal argumentation, literary analysis, research, and expository writing.

The Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor/Provost for Academic Affairs have committed $3.1 million for five years to finance the infrastructure and resources needed to implement the QEP. Resources include additional faculty, faculty development, and equipment for the writing studio, satellite lab and E-lab. State and Title III funds will be the primary funding sources, which are allocated annually. The QEP will enable students to "Think! Write! Revolutionize!" once they have developed the skills.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

HISTORY

Institutional Profile
A. History
B. Service Area
C. Mission Statement
D. Strategic Plan
E. Student Population
F. Programs of Study
G. Conclusion
I. ECSU HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

A. History

As ECSU's history continues to evolve, highlights of the last decade include a doctor of pharmacy degree in collaboration with UNC-Chapel Hill (August 2005); the first four master's degree programs in Elementary Education, Biology, Mathematics, and School Administration; and six baccalaureate degree programs—Marine Environmental Science, Social Work, Communication Studies, Aviation Science, Pharmaceutical Science, and Graphic Design; and a Center of Excellence in Remote Sensing Education and Research (2003). Between 1999 and 2010, ECSU repeatedly earned national acclaim in America’s Best Colleges (U.S. News and World Report Magazine) for its top five ranking in the category of “Top Public Comprehensive Colleges” in the south. In 2010, U.S. News and World Report ranked ECSU as number two among the “Best Colleges: Top Public Schools: Regional Colleges (South)”. The Washington Monthly 2010 College Rankings placed ECSU at number eleven among baccalaureate colleges in the US. In 2011, particularly in the recruitment and graduation of low-income students. U.S. News and World Report ranked ECSU number seventeen among all HBCUs. The Education Trust national report recognized ECSU in 2004 and 2005 for its high graduation rate. NCAA Foundation and USA Today ranked ECSU in the top 10 of Division II colleges for the graduation rate of its student-athletes (2001 and 2002).

In 2000, ECSU began designing capital improvement projects funded by $46.3 million from the state’s Higher Education Bond Referendum. The results were a Physical Education/Field House (2003), University Suites residence hall (2004), and the Ridley Student Center (2005). Viking Village, a student residence hall adjacent to the main entrance, resulted from a university-private partnership (2004). In July 2004, the NC General Assembly allotted $28 million to construct facilities for a pharmacy program. Construction of the building began in Spring 2009 and the Pharmacy Complex opened in Fall 2010.

Four North Carolina students earned 4.0 cumulative grade point averages and were named “Bearers of the Mace” (Spring 2007) for the first time in the University’s history. In sports, Diverse Issues in Higher Education (2007) ranked the ECSU basketball and football teams #1 among Historically Black Colleges and Universities for our black male student-athlete graduation rate. The ECSU Football team, in 2008, won the Eastern Division CIAA Championship and Head Football Coach Waverly Tillar was named CIAA Football Coach of the year. The Lady Vikings won the 2008 CIAA Volleyball Championship, and Head Coach Linda Bell won the CIAA Volleyball Coach of the Year award.

After serving the University in an interim capacity, Dr. Willie J. Gilchrist became the ninth chief executive officer and chancellor of ECSU on March 15, 2007. On September 25, 2007, Dr. Gilchrist was officially installed as Chancellor.

Current and future achievements would not be possible if it were not for the nineteenth century visionary, Hugh Cale. ECSU was founded by Hugh Cale March 3, 1891, when House Bill 383 was enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly, establishing a
normal school for the specific purpose of "teaching and training teachers of the colored race to teach in the common schools of North Carolina" (ECSU Historical Highlights, para 1, 2010). Hugh Cale, an African American representative from Pasquotank County, sponsored the bill. Between 1891 and 1928, curricula and resources were expanded under the leadership of Peter Wedderick Moore. Enrollment increased from 23 to 355 and the faculty grew from 2 to 15 members by the time Dr. Moore retired as President-Emeritus on July 1, 1928.

When ECSU first began operation on January 4, 1892, with 23 students, it did so in rented quarters with a budget of $900. Today, the faculty and student body are increasingly multicultural. Enrollment is also increasing. There were 3,307 undergraduate students enrolled during the fall 2010 semester and 60 graduate students in the fall 2010 (ECSU Quick Facts, 2010). After the Fall 2010 Commencement, more than 18,000 alumni held our undergraduate and graduate degrees. The library contains over 199,880 books; 487,732 microforms; 77 databases; 1,297 sound recordings; 390 videotapes and films; and 1,735 serials and subscriptions. There are 862 acres of land, of which 200 represent the campus proper.

B. ECSU Service Area

ECSU serves northeastern North Carolina, an area that encompasses twenty-one counties bordered by Virginia to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The counties are: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Vance, Warren, and Washington. At present, this beautiful and historic region is generally isolated from the rest of the state. More than one-fourth of the region is covered by water. Extensive wetlands, rivers and sounds interrupt land travel to the area. The economy traditionally has been agrarian, relying heavily on peanut, cotton, and soybean crops, along with fishing and river commerce. Farms, river estuaries, and small crossroads communities are typical.

The area boomed in the 1700s; however, it was relatively untouched by the physical destruction of the Civil War, largely ignored during Reconstruction, and, consistently passed over by rail, air and telecommunications providers in the last seventy years. Encouraged by public and private initiatives to develop infrastructure, industry, and tourism, the area currently is enjoying a gentle resurgence in growth and economic development. The twenty-one county service area that surrounds the University is characterized by significant health and socioeconomic disparities.

C. Mission Statement

ECSU, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs for a diverse student body. The institution's rich heritage provides a firm foundation for its educational endeavors, as well as its role in serving the needs and aspirations of individuals and society.

Through teaching, research, and community engagement, ECSU provides a student-centered environment that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning. The University is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region.
D. **ECSU Strategic Plan**

The purpose of ECSU’s Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 is to communicate an overall direction for the University and to provide vision for students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and donors. The Strategic Plan identifies six objectives relevant to the QEP:

1) ECSU will integrate technology campus-wide.
2) ECSU will offer undergraduate and graduate courses and program options in the times, places, and formats that meet the needs of its students and the region.
3) ECSU will continue to enhance services for students with special needs.
4) ECSU will educate students who will be competitive in the 21st century.
5) ECSU will attract and retain exceptional faculty/scholars that can create educational experiences that will lead to graduates prepared for leadership roles.
6) ECSU will continue to update academic components that will lead toward internationalization of the curricula.

E. **Student Population**

A constituent institution of the University of North Carolina multi-campus system since 1972, ECSU currently enrolls approximately 3,301 students, typically including 79% African Americans, 14% Caucasians, and 7% Other. The University actively seeks to recruit and enroll a more diverse student body. ECSU is the only public four-year higher education institution serving northeastern North Carolina.

F. **Programs of Study**

ECSU is a comprehensive public university offering degree programs at the baccalaureate level in the basic arts and sciences, and selected professional and pre-professional programs. ECSU’s instructional programs are offered through four schools, sixteen academic departments and a General Studies department. Consistent with its founding mission as a normal school, ECSU has continued to emphasize teacher education.

ECSU offers masters degrees in four areas: Elementary Education, Education Administration, Biology, and Mathematics Education. Through its graduate center, the University provides educational access to students who seek advanced professional studies and masters degrees.

G. **Conclusion**

ECSU is developing into the premier public institution serving northeastern North Carolina. The University provides affordable academic programs and services of exceptional caliber in a nurturing environment. The QEP is one avenue that the ECSU faculty is using to refine and strengthen the academic skills of our students. ECSU’s vision is to continue to be a leading partner in enhancing educational, cultural, and economic opportunities as we prepare students for viable citizenship in northeastern North Carolina, the state, nation, and the world.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

ECSU's Quality Enhancement Plan

A. Introduction
B. QEP Development
C. Dissemination of QEP as a Campus-wide Initiative
D. Institutional Support for Pedagogical Initiatives
II. ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY’S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

A. Introduction

The purpose of ESCU’s QEP is to enhance students’ academic writing skills, while strengthening their reading comprehension and critical / analytical thinking skills.

The QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic related to enhancing student learning (Quality Enhancement Plan Handbook, p.3). Guided by our Mission Statement and goals in our Strategic Plan, the ECSU QEP is designed to impact student learning positively. The purpose of developing the QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process has become an opportunity for ECSU to improve academic writing and enhance the overall quality of the institution. As a result, we have implemented a strategic plan to assess the implementation of the QEP and its outcomes.

B. QEP Development: Focus Involving all Constituencies

Developing ECSU's QEP was a unifying effort for the faculty, staff, alumni, students, University community partners and administrators. For ECSU, the QEP will focus upon academic writing, specifically the restructuring of GE 102—English Composition and Grammar and GE 103—English Composition and Vocabulary. The QEP addresses strengthening students’ writing. It will also address the enhancement of pedagogical strategies through the Center for Teaching Excellence. The QEP will further support ECSU’s Vision Statement to “attract and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty that will educate and lead our students to become productive members of a global and increasingly interdependent society.”

The initial formation of the QEP Core Committee began in 2008 under the leadership of Dr. Barbara L. Johnson, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs. QEP Core Committee Members were chosen from academic and non-academic campus programs.

A major “kick-off” presentation was made during our fall 2008 Faculty/Staff Institute. A firm foundation was established for everyone to participate in the development of ECSU’s QEP.

To determine the focus of the QEP, a survey was given to all participants in the Fall 2008 Faculty/Staff Institute. The survey asked individuals to indicate what they perceived as academic weaknesses exhibited by ECSU students. Several areas were accented; however, academic writing skills emerged as a critical area. To ensure that all major University stakeholders were involved, members of the QEP Core Committee administered surveys and conducted focus groups comprised of students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and community leaders. Based upon this information, a review of test scores was conducted by examining PRAXIS I, SAT, and ACCUPLACER test scores.

- PRAXIS I: PRAXIS I is an assessment used to determine a student’s eligibility for ECSU’s Teacher Education Program. It assesses reading, writing and mathematics at the eighth grade level. Between 2004 and 2007, 233 students...
completed all sections of the exam. Eighty (34.33%) students passed all three sections; 103 (44.2%) students failed the writing portion, and 122 (52.36%) students failed the reading section (Bradshaw, 2009; Appendix I, Table 1).

- SAT score reports (2006-2008): SAT scores show that scores in critical reading and writing were lower than the national average and lower than scores associated with students attending other North Carolina institutions of higher education. Additionally, each year writing scores were lower than critical thinking scores (Wilkins, 2009; Appendix I, Figure 1-Figure 3).

- ACCUPLACER: ACCUPLACER is an assessment used to assign first year students to appropriate English and mathematics courses during their first semester of school. Students may be placed into college level courses (GE 102—English Composition and Grammar, and Algebra) and/or developmental courses (College Reading, Grammar and Usage, Introduction to College Math). Nearly half the students (n=633) during the fall 2004 semester, and nearly half the students (n=673) during the fall 2007 semester were placed in developmental courses (College Reading, and/or Grammar and Usage). Fifty percent of the students (n=483) were placed in College Reading and/or Grammar and Usage during the fall 2005 semester. In 2006 and 2008, 36%, (n=557) and 31% (n=699) of the students were placed in College Reading and/or Grammar and Usage (Griffin, 2009; Appendix I, Table 2).

In addition to the objective measures, benchmark data summaries from the National Survey of Student Engagement were examined. The NSSE assesses students’ perceptions in five areas: Level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive academic environment. The data showed that ECSU students fell within the third quartile with regard to the aforementioned areas as did other HBCUs and institutions the same size as ECSU (NSSE Multiyear Benchmark Report, 2009).

Faculty, staff and students were surveyed to assess their opinions about students’ writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. The survey also assessed perceptions of students’ mathematical and oral presentation skills. In most instances, faculty and staff evaluated students’ writing and reading skills as fair (Appendix I, Table 3). Students evaluated their writing and reading skills slightly higher than the faculty and staff cohort (Appendix I, Table 4). Students, faculty and staff indicated that writing and reading skills were very important to academic success (Appendix I, Table 5 & Table 6), and writing and reading problems were sometimes related to academic performance—faculty and staff averages were slightly higher than student averages. (Appendix I, Table 73). Focus groups with faculty, staff, and students resulted in individuals expressing the need for addressing writing along with other issues that impact academic development.

After apprising the faculty and staff of the decision to address academic writing at the 2009 Spring Faculty/Staff Institute, Proficiency Profile (Educational Testing Services) data were collected by General Studies to assess students’ level of competency in writing, in reading comprehension and in critical thinking skills; the data showed deficiencies in students’ writing, reading comprehension and critical thinking skills (Wilkins, 2009).
Academic writing skills consistently emerged as an area of academic weakness for our students. Other areas of weakness identified were reading comprehension and critical thinking/analytical skills. Once we had our focus—academic writing—we needed a QEP slogan that would capture the essence of a plan to enhance academic writing skills while improving reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills. A request to the University community for suggestions for a QEP topic/theme was distributed. From those submitted, constituents were then asked to select which slogan best captured our QEP challenge. The slogan Think! Write! Revolutionize! prevailed. Based upon research and input from our University community, we agreed on academic writing as the QEP emphasis and Think! Write! Revolutionize! as our QEP slogan.

Moreover, to help the QEP Writing Sub-Committee, white papers were requested from University faculty based upon the topic and the focus—academic writing. Papers could be written individually or as a team. Research papers submitted that were relevant to the topic, were then selected for potential use into the QEP. This activity was completed over the summer of 2009, so that faculty would have the time necessary for completing the white paper (Appendix II).

C. Dissemination of the QEP as a Campus-wide Initiative

In August 2009, campus broadcast media were used to promote the QEP to the ECSU community and Elizabeth City: Email, the electronic reader board (the marquee), the website, the radio station, and other on-campus services. QEP presentations have been given at every Faculty/Staff Institute, Board of Trustees meeting, Academic Administrative Planning Council (AA&PC) meeting, and Academic Executive Council (AEC) meeting. Moreover, a special feature article in the April 2010 The Compass—ECSU’s campus newspaper—focused upon the QEP (Appendix III). As a result of this article, Dr. Byrne’s GE 102 classes were given a final examination writing topic on the QEP—based upon their research and knowledge of the QEP (Appendix IV).

To focus upon the promotion of the QEP, the Branding Committee was asked to develop a logo specifically for the QEP. Based upon the University’s guidelines for logos, the committee—composed of faculty, staff, and students—designed a logo that was presented at the August 2010 Faculty/Staff Institute. University Marketing created three logos and the QEP Branding Committee developed one. The logo was chosen by the SACS Leadership team, after presentation at the August 2010 Faculty/Staff Institute.

To help faculty inform ECSU’s graduate students about the QEP, a banner was placed in the graduate student orientation room and a short presentation was made by Dr. Barbara Johnson and Dr. Chantelle MacPhee about the QEP. Emphases were placed on the function of the writing studio, E-lab and satellite labs (see Section IV). Moreover, banners are hanging throughout the University in order to better inform the students who pass through the hallways.

In order to capture the attention of ECSU students, the marketing subcommittee developed several strategies including bookmarks, and a QEP Giveaway. The bookmarks feature general information about the QEP and have the QEP logo. QEP Giveaway days are currently scheduled for basketball games (men’s and women’s) and February 16, 2011. The subcommittee decided to focus on large prizes that would be more likely to get the attention of students: Apple’s iPhone or iPad; other new cell phones; high-dollar gas cards; shopping sprees; and other appealing prizes.
Additionally, a student marketing committee, headed by student athlete Calvin Wright, was formed to educate students about the QEP.

D. Institutional Support for Pedagogical Initiatives Related to the QEP

To enhance pedagogical strategies in all major programs and to support the QEP, the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence will be asked to develop workshops, in consultation with faculty, in various subject areas, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Composing Common Course Syllabi Rubrics;
- Developing Assessment Tools;
- Teaching Grammar in the Classroom; and
- Grading Rubrics for Writing-Intensive courses.
A. Academic Writing Defined
B. Current Campus Practices
C. National Trends/Best Practices
D. Academic Writing Challenges
E. Components of a Quality Enhancement Plan
III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The main purpose of ECSU’s QEP is to enhance students’ academic writing skills, while strengthening their reading comprehension and critical/analytical thinking skills. In order to develop the structure and operational design for an effective instructional academic writing plan, data from placement exams, focus groups, and PRAXIS have been collected and analyzed. As indicated earlier, faculty, administrators and students at ECSU shared concerns and ideas related to the academic needs of students with the QEP Core Committee. Analysis of this information revealed that while our students could always benefit from assistance in the areas of critical thinking and reading comprehension, academic writing skill development was identified as the main area to address.

A. Academic Writing Defined

Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) describe academic writing as “one of those terms that is often invoked, usually solemnly, as if everyone agrees on its meaning, and so is used imprecisely yet almost always for what the user regards as a precise purpose; e.g., commonly by teachers in explaining what they want from students.” However, this definition is too specific in an institutional setting in which types of writing—reports, essays, response papers, research papers—vary as much as the writing styles of its students. In this manner, we have adopted Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) definition to encompass “any writing that fulfills a purpose of education in a college or university in the United States. For most teachers, the term implies student writing in response to an academic assignment, or professional writing that trained “academics”--teachers and researchers—to write for publications and conferences attended by other academics.” Thaiss and Zawacki further identify this genre of writing by three characteristics: “disciplined and persistent inquiry, control of sensation and emotion by reason, and an imagined reader who is likewise rational and informed” (p. 8). Based upon this definition, ECSU created a dynamic slogan for the ECSU QEP: Think! Write! Revolutionize! with the subtopic as “Writing New Paths to Discovery.”

B. Current Campus Practices

Across campus, ECSU’s writing strategies vary considerably. At the freshman level, particularly in GE 102—English Composition and Grammar and GE 103—English Composition and Vocabulary, taught by tenured, tenure track and adjunct faculty in the Department of Language, Literature and Communication (LLC), there are no common syllabi (102 and 103), no common final examinations, nor are there standard departmental assessment procedures. In essence, each faculty member teaches the course as he or she designs it and assesses it in the same manner, if he or she chooses to do so. While there is a master syllabus, most faculty members add poetry and other genres to the curriculum outside of the designated texts. They may teach from the traditional English canon rather than on contemporary issues that engage students and enhance their abilities to think, write, revise and develop a style that is uniquely the student’s own—a crucial element in encouraging students to become active, engaged learners throughout their undergraduate career and beyond.
Moreover, the current syllabi for GE 102 and GE 103 vary considerably in the types of writing—response papers, essays, research papers, narratives, process analyses—yet each professor’s decision as to how the course is taught differs significantly from section to section. Study groups, peer feedback, or even peer discussion groups are limited in scope. Although there are peer-tutorial services in the General Studies Department, tutorial support is not linked directly to GE 102 and GE 103. There is currently no synchronous online assistance to help students 24 hours a day with the potential for immediate feedback. The reinforcement element so critical to GE 102 and GE 103 is limited also. One of the QEP’s strategies is to facilitate student independent learning with peers as well as elevate expectations. Currently, students are taught in class, asked to come to office hours, and then may seek secondary tutorial assistance with the Online Writing Lab (OWL) or General Studies tutors.

While there is online tutorial instruction via the OWL in the Honors program, there is neither synchronous help nor sophisticated programming available to aid the student. In fact, in current GE 102 and 103 courses, students may require individualized, face-to-face instruction. At the moment, students cannot receive this type of help outside of the OWL’s operating hours, tutor availability, the professor’s office hours or during class time. Essentially, the QEP has helped faculty realize the need for 21st century pedagogical practices and assessment to determine if students are truly comprehending and practicing what they are learning, both throughout their undergraduate careers and thereafter, regardless of the student’s major. GE 102 and 103 courses need an overhaul if students are to develop their academic writing skills, and the QEP is revolutionizing the way in which GE 102 and GE 103 are taught and assessed by providing a much needed introduction to writing prior to the student’s enrollment in courses in his or her major. The QEP will provide a necessary venue in which students may further expand upon what they have learned to become better academic writers.

An examination of contemporary composition practices is needed for the QEP to address the needs of ECSU students based upon what faculty have identified in QEP focus groups, study groups, and surveys. As a culturally diverse institution, the task will be to define a strategy that will best address the needs of ECSU students throughout their enrollment at this institution—whether undergraduate or graduate.

C. National Trends / Best Practices

An examination of pertinent literature was conducted to assist the QEP Core Committee in the formation of instructional support and intervention strategies that can be implemented. Information gathered from the Literature Review has facilitated the development of a QEP that is based on sound pedagogical principles and can be accurately assessed at specified intervals (see Section V). The components of the QEP can be adjusted, depending upon the results of the assessment data.

The purpose of the Literature Review, as summarized in this section, is threefold: (1) to identify academic writing challenges in Higher Education; (2) to identify successful academic writing strategies for instructional support; and (3) to provide background for pedagogical components for the QEP.
D. Academic Writing Challenges in Higher Education

1. Poor Writing Skills

A survey of the academic writing literature yields a variety of instructional challenges teachers face when developing and implementing curricula and strategies that facilitate the formation of effective writing skills. Among the challenges faced by composition teachers are a plethora of poor writing characteristics that often accompany college and university freshmen. Yagoda (2006) listed the “seven deadly sins of student writers,” highlighting such offenses as dangling modifiers, omitted commas, gratuitous commas, improper use of semicolons, vagueness, and other issues of style and grammar usage (p. B.13). Additional studies have documented the need for improved instruction in academic writing as evidenced by poor skills in composition and research strategies (e.g., Beason, 2001; Bennett-Kastor, 2004; Blaauw-Hara, 2006; Brocato, Henderson & Horton, 2005; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

Some professional teachers of writing have de-emphasized the “seven deadly sins” that have been implicated by Yagoda and others as the primary characteristics of poor academic writing. For example, Elbow (2004) believes that, at least in early writing drafts, spelling and grammar should be basically ignored in order for the student to allow his or her writing ideas to flow onto the written page. This approach maintains that “free writing” is actually a part of the thinking process and that students should not strive to have all their ideas formulated prior to beginning to write. This strategy is certainly one path for students to follow. Elbow (2004) also denies that reading should be the preliminary step to writing as a means of providing a necessary input to the writing process. Again, depending on the student, this may or may not work. Everyone develops a writing style based upon cultural, sociological, psychological, and environmental influences. The way in which one person writes may differ based upon a number of variances: The way in which the writer wishes to depict emotions, actions, reactions, observations, analyses, critiques. Elbow maintains that writing serves as a trigger for thinking and communicating:

The more we write and talk, the more we have to write and say. The greater the number of words that come out of us, the greater the number of words we find left inside. And when students feel empty—“I have nothing to say, nothing on my mind”—the cause is not insufficient input [sic] but insufficient output. Talking and writing put words and thoughts into students’ heads (p. 10).

However, beyond the realm of academia lies the “real world” of employment. According to a report authored by the National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools and Colleges (2004), applicants with poor writing skills are unlikely to be hired, and once hired, upward mobility is nearly impossible without effective written communication. The Commission concluded that “remedying deficiencies in writing may cost American firms as much as $3.1 billion annually” (p. 4). Therefore, institutions of higher learning need to address this issue, almost attacking it, in order for graduates to be prepared to enter the workforce with the skills needed for success.

2. Limited Skills in Critical Thinking

As MacMillan (1987) discovered in his review of 27 instructional strategies designed to increase critical thinking, “It has been recognized for many years that one of the primary
aims of education, especially at the college level, is to foster students’ ability to think critically, to reason, and to use judgment in decision making” (p. 3). Unfortunately, of the 27 studies reviewed, not one was shown to be effective in increasing critical thinking skills.

A subsequent review of critical thinking studies (Pithers & Soden, 2000) reported little if any progress in developing successful pedagogical approaches to increase students’ skills in reasoning and analysis (p. 237). Perhaps part of the dilemma may rest in the difficulty of developing operational definitions for critical thinking as well as establishing valid measures of assessment for meta-cognitive skills.

The ability to process and understand information is a necessary pre-condition to the ability to produce good communication, whether one desires to speak or write effectively.

Evidence abounds that writing skills are linked to students’ abilities to analyze and reflect on information related to life experience and course content (Ibarreta & McLeod, 2004; Singleton & Newman, 2009). Singleton and Newman (2009) discussed the link between cognition and writing and concluded that “Empowering students to be able to think deeply about the concepts and skills inherent to a particular discipline is a daunting task” (p. 247). This assessment seems, with equal validity, to characterize the task of faculty who are charged with providing academic writing instruction, since thinking skills are reflected in and have a shaping effect on the communication of thoughts as recorded in the written medium.

While it has been difficult to identify specific pedagogical approaches that have been successful in increasing critical thinking skills, Dam and Volman (2004, p. 359) have indicated that the following components, when infused in academic curricula, may help to develop such skills:

1) considering students’ beliefs and values;
2) establishing an environment that promotes active learning;
3) using a problem-based curriculum;
4) stimulating interaction between students; and
5) providing learning experiences on the basis of real-life situations.

3. Inadequate Reading Input and Comprehension Skills

Several researchers (e.g., Badley, 2008; Bruner, 1986; Pugh, Pawan, & Antommarchi, 2000; Yagoda, 2006) in opposition to arguments posed by Elbow and others, have cited the lack of reading good material as a major factor in the production of poor writing skills among students. According to Pugh, Pawan, & Antommarchi (2000), independent reading may account for as much as 85% of students’ learning in college (p. 285). Yagoda (2006) suggested,

Reading a lot is the only way to get a deep-seated understanding of the way punctuation is meant to be used, of spelling, of the construction of complex sentences, and of the meaning of the words that you might use in your own writing. Skilled writers profit from a continuously looping, subliminal soundtrack of all the sentences they’ve ever read. The students who do not have such a soundtrack fall back on the archive of conversations that are in their heads. The spoken language follows a different protocol, including conventions like using
In his memoir, “Literacy Behind Bars,” Malcolm X tells us that reading empowered him to write, to communicate more effectively, because he practiced writing daily and developed his vocabulary through reading. He wrote without a specific pathway outlined, but he indeed wrote. In this manner, he improved. Bruner (1986) describes a transactional relationship between reading and writing, in which signs, symbols, and voices are deconstructed in reading, and then reconstructed in the writing process. Badley (2008), building on Bruner’s transactional concept, suggested that “by reading and critically reflecting upon the stories and texts of other authors we should learn more about our own writing” (p. 363). Perhaps Bruner (1986) best articulated the link between reading and writing: “The great writer's gift to a reader is to make him a better writer” (p. 37). Malcolm X and Frederick Douglass would most certainly agree.

4. Communication Apprehension and Cognitive Performance

While a number of studies have cited poor analytical thinking skills and inadequate reading input and comprehension as contributing factors in the formation of ineffective writing skills, several communication scholars have demonstrated that general communication apprehension is also a key factor. Students fear speaking and writing because what is produced is in the public domain, particularly in classes in which class participation, group work, and peer review are used. It is no longer a merely private action. Therefore, an effective instruction and intervention strategy should adequately address this factor as well.

As Bourhis and Allen (1992) have indicated, the study of communication apprehension and avoidance is one of the longest running research efforts in the field of communication. Richmond & McCroskey (1998) demonstrated a significant and negative correlation between communication apprehension and performance. Increased levels of personal communication apprehension diminish oral and written communicative performance (Bourhis & Allen, 1992). As many of these studies have indicated, communication apprehension has an adverse effect on the quality of both spoken and written communication. In their meta-analysis of studies that focused upon the role of communication apprehension in the communication process, Bourhis and Allen (1992) confirmed a statistically significant and negative correlation between communication apprehension and cognitive performance. Because of the small but stable relationship between communication apprehension and cognitive performance, Bourhis and Allen called for future research that should concentrate upon “identifying variables that moderate the apprehension-cognitive performance relationship” (p. 73).

Providing instruction in higher education that adequately considers the influences and challenges of a culturally diverse student body at ECSU is vital to achieving relevant student outcomes and preparing students to make significant contributions as members of society. A number of researchers have addressed the need to provide instruction in communication skills (especially academic writing) that reflects a sensitive awareness of cultural diversity in the classroom (e.g., Clewell, Puma, & McKay, 2001; Crochunis, Erdey, & Swedlow, 2002; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Hinkel, 2001; and Pajewski and Enriquez, 1996.)
E. Components of a Quality Enhancement Plan for Improving Academic Writing

The existing body of professional interdisciplinary literature reveals four important factors that can exert a powerful influence on the formation of academic writing skills for college and university freshmen: Critical thinking strategies, the cognitive process, culturally diverse student body, and communication anxiety. These factors should be assimilated as necessary components in a QEP that is designed to improve students' academic writing skills. They also should reflect the findings of significant composition research which clearly and consistently demonstrate that budding writers should observe conventions that are determined by the social context of writing (Beaufort, 2007; Thais & Zawacki, 2006). In order for students to “pick up the literary strategies characteristic of their disciplines,” it is necessary for writing faculty to present objectives that are consistent across the writing program (e.g., using common course syllabi) and supported by scaffolding measures such as writing studios and other tutorial services (Carroll, 2006, p. 90). An awareness of such factors when designing an effective QEP for improving academic writing will enable student writers to compose written communication that is valid in many disciplines as well as within the discipline-specific context of the student’s major. To approach writing instruction in a manner that addresses only general aspects will not adequately serve today’s students. As Beaufort (2007) indicates, “To focus on one or several aspects of writing expertise to the exclusion of the others represents less than a full view of the developmental process for gaining writing expertise” (p. 142). Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) in a landmark cross-disciplinary study described academic disciplines as “dynamic spaces” that can accommodate a wide variety of student writing styles while also addressing concerns that will serve students as careful, systematic researchers. They point out that the observed tension between a student’s individual passion for writing and the traditional conventions of the academy can actually be productive in forming effective writers:

The practices we … suggest imply what we consider a productive tension between the student—a passionate individual with interests to cultivate and express—and an academy that imposes expectations on individuals, even though that academy is made up of dynamic and diverse disciplines and areas of interest (p. 141).

First, in order to write effectively, students must be able to exercise critical thinking strategies that reflect a systematic analysis of information that is based on sound principles of logic. Since a lack of analytical or critical thinking skills will be reflected in poor academic writing, a QEP whose purpose is to improve academic writing needs a critical thinking component to enhance students’ abilities to analyze and reflect on information that will serve as both an initial impetus for and sustaining monitor of organized and coherent writing output. However, this component will be embodied in the course rubric, rather than specifically focused upon and assessed by the QEP.

Second, when sound critical thinking strategies are applied to the analysis of a well-constructed written text that can be comprehended by the student, the cognitive process is set into motion which can influence the quality and effectiveness of written communication. A lack of solid reading input, coupled with poor reading comprehension, will adversely affect academic writing. A QEP that is designed to improve students’ academic writing skills should contain a reading comprehension component in order to provide the necessary input for writing. Again, this component can be embedded into the course rubric, infused throughout the courses—GE 102 and GE 103.
Third, as a number of studies have shown, instruction that adequately considers the influences and challenges of a culturally diverse student body is vital to achieving relevant student outcomes, especially in the area of academic writing. Because of the existence of a multicultural student body at ECSU, an effective instruction and intervention plan whose purpose is to improve academic writing must implement specific academic support strategies that are culturally sensitive, while teaching content that is both challenging and relevant to an increasingly diverse student body.

Finally, a QEP that is aimed at developing more effective academic writing skills must demonstrate an awareness of the influence of communication anxiety on written communication performance and also provide suitable intervention for students whose general communication apprehension—written or otherwise—may be impeding their writing progress. In essence, the direction in which the student wants to go is not as important as choosing a path of writing that works for him or her. What may work for one student may not work for another. The pathway to success is mottled with options, and the student must learn which one works for him or her for particular assignments.

1. Academic Writing Process—Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery

In all writing, a process occurs that varies depending on the student, the disciplinary context, and the discrete assignment. Some students plan every paragraph before ever writing a word. Other students write and revise constantly in an attempt to write a coherent essay. Another group may combine planning and revision in order to develop an essay. Regardless of the choice, students are constantly being asked to write essays of varying length and depth, yet at ECSU, there is no writing resource for students to develop their analytical writing skills on an individual or small group basis. Students are simply given assignments and left to their own devices. Intervention strategies need to be developed to address academic writing—a critical need—at this institution.

Students may engage in all or some of the following prewriting activities: Brainstorming, freewriting, outlining and drafting, regardless of the medium they use to convey these ideas—technologically or in alphabetic literacy.

At ECSU, students could develop their writing skills in class with the professor in small groups, peer review sessions or individual attention, or practice certain elements they are struggling with from a computer located anywhere. Their physical presence is not mandatory to complete work. If the student knows he or she is weak in grammar, online exercises can be designed to meet the needs of that particular student. In fact, current composition texts from Prentice Hall and Norton address this issue in the online writing components of their textbooks precisely so that students can develop their writing skills anywhere, anytime. ECSU students would certainly benefit from an online component as one intervention strategy, but a second is needed that addresses different writing forms in order for students to be prepared, regardless of their chosen major, for the 21st century workplace. By essentially determining the student's strengths and weaknesses through pre and post tests, for writing, grammar and rhetoric, and addressing them in the classroom writing activities and Writing Studio, the student opens himself or herself to self-discovery about how to develop his or her particular weaknesses into strengths. In this instance, then, students learn and better understand how to engage in academic writing.
2. Writing Intervention Strategy for ECSU

At ECSU, students are faced with several challenges upon enrollment and prior to graduation: Learning to think analytically, to write with a purpose, to write in different voices and to discover new ways in which to view subject matter with support from textual evidence. The process of writing itself, however, differs for each student, and the QEP at ECSU is designed to address each student’s particular writing dilemmas as they occur, both individually in the Writing Studio and in peer groups, where constructive feedback is monitored. Moreover, the E-lab is designed to enable students to practice after regular hours, when professors and assistants are unavailable. As Lee Ann Carroll makes clear in her book Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers (2002), “Students’ literacy develops because students must take on new and difficult roles that challenge their abilities as writers. In fact, student writing may sometimes need to get “worse” before it can get “better.” Because many college writing tasks are essentially new to students, they will need repeated practice to become proficient.” (p.9). The Writing Studio, E-lab and satellite lab will perform, even reinforce, this function when the professor is simply not available. In essence, Carroll’s goal is to “describe the ways in which college can function as a learning community, a supportive environment” (p. 26) in which students may develop their skills.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

WRITING LABS AND STUDIO

A. Overview: Writing Centers & ECSU’s Writing Studio and Satellite Lab
B. Writing Labs and Studio Design Overview
C. Personnel
D. E-writing Lab
E. Satellite Lab
IV. WRITING LABS AND STUDIO

A. Overview: Writing Centers & ECSU’s Writing Studio and Satellite Lab

Since their wide-spread institutional presence in the 1970s, Writing Centers have traditionally served the purpose of remediation based on “skills and drills” in response to open access, the “literacy crisis” and the changing demographics of college students. More recently, Writing Centers are increasingly linked to university-wide Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) efforts and to the recognition that all writers need writing groups and experience with peer group collaboration. They serve as centers that sustain best practices in writing instruction. In “A Brief History of University Writing Centers: Variety and Diversity”, Waller notes “Ideally, most writing centers want to be seen as places where all writers within the university community can find thoughtful, competent readers of their writing” (Waller 2002). The expanded and sustained goal of highlighting academic writing and best practices in writing instruction will be fulfilled by the QEP Writing Studio in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Academic writing is the acknowledged basis of learning and evaluation in every course taken by ECSU students, but it is explicitly emphasized in the core composition courses taken by all entering freshmen students (GE 102 and GE 103). Thus these courses must function as the basis of the QEP plan by creating sound pedagogical and programmatic strategies for academic writing. These strategies will be based on creating common pedagogical approaches that are responsive to the strengths and needs of the specific population of ECSU students and which will offer concrete opportunities for support and growth through classroom instruction and assessment through the pedagogical support of the QEP Writing Studio and Satellite Lab. (The strategies are outlined in the context of the timeline in the Overview: Implementation Design; page 33).

1) GE 102 and GE 103 will function on the basis of a First Year Writing Pedagogy.

The QEP must revolutionize GE 102 and GE 103 with common course syllabi, common final exams, common assessment procedures and a common venue for students to engage in the learning process daily, especially in such critical introductory level courses (see Section V). Each faculty member teaching the sequence of courses will incorporate the academic writing goals of the course in their syllabi, assignment goals, and assessment. Thus the common core highlights successful teaching practices and serves as a concrete guide for teaching expectations. It also serves as a repository for current and new teaching faculty as they work on developing their individual syllabi in the context of their pedagogical styles. This common pedagogy is based on the best practices model of first year writing programs which service a large number of teaching faculty both tenured and non-tenured (including adjuncts, lecturers and graduate students).

Articulating the academic writing mission of GE 102 and GE 103 and demonstrating how these goals translate into practical aspects of the course is the focus of the QEP plan. It is supported by workshops and assessments as demonstrated by the Overview: Implementation Design below.
2) The QEP Writing Studio functions as pedagogical and assessment support for all students of GE 102 and GE 103.

Housed in Johnson Hall (where all GE102 and GE 103 sections are taught) the QEP Writing Studio will offer extended support for the common course syllabi, exams and assessments that will be the basis of GE 102 and GE 103. In the Writing Studio, computer workstations or work areas that are designed to transform easily into group spaces, individual working areas, or proscenium arch style (Yancey, 2006) will enable students to engage in writing activities without having to wait until the next class to address an issue. The learning process becomes more engaging. As Steve Graham and Dolores Perin (2007) highlight in their Carnegie Corporation report, "In this type of instruction, students might work collaboratively on writing assignments using laptop computers, or they might learn to word-process a composition under teacher guidance" (p. 17). They may also draft or write in handwritten form, depending on the way in which he or she is taught. The more paths we enable our students to take, the more engaged they will become. They will learn what path works for them, and not simply be guided by what the instructor deems will work based on his or her own experience. Thus, the Writing Studio will continually and concretely model the best practices of academic writing in the context of writing process pedagogy which includes peer collaboration, rhetorical contexts of writing assignments, working with instructor feedback, and working on group projects and presentations. It will serve to make visible the expectations of instructors and create a concrete and visible context where academic writing is practiced. The ergonomics of the Writing Studio will be carefully designed to reflect the studio approach to writing instruction implemented in GE 102 and GE 103 and to reflect the significance of technology to academic writing.

The Writing Studio will house the syllabi and assignments of individual instructors and offer workshops on specific assignments and aspects of academic writing (for example: incorporating research by analyzing sources, summarizing and paraphrasing, understanding plagiarism, differentiating between opinion and analysis, creating criteria for evaluation, decoding assignments). The topics will reflect instructor concerns and be supported by a listserv and website which will create a digital presence for instructors and students alike. The website will also be linked with the website for the Center for Teaching Excellence, creating a collaborative pedagogical presence and a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) emphasis.

Students in GE 102 and GE 103 will be required to visit the Writing Studio at least two times during the semester (once for a face-to-face appointment, which may include a small peer group of students, and once to receive training on SMARTHINKING early in the semester). This experience will lead to GE 102 and GE 103 students coming to the Writing Studio and to the satellite labs (during and after hours and weekends). The frequency of the students’ visits will be documented by the Writing Studio and Satellite Lab personnel. The required tutoring and online interactions will integrate the role of the Writing Studio, the satellite lab and the E-labs.

The Director, Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, and the instructors of the Writing Studio will document the effectiveness of the Writing Studio, the satellite lab and E-lab and
monitor the academic progress of students of GE 102 and GE 103 by creating a
detailed database of tutoring and SMARTHINKING sessions. Reports about
progress in various areas of academic writing including grammar and formal
writing will be generated as the means of marking overall progress and of
stocktaking. These will be assessed before the beginning of each academic year
in consultation with the QEP Advisory and Implementation committee and under
the supervision of the Executive Director of the QEP (see Organizational Chart; p
22). Archived materials will be digitized and available for assessment and
institutional research purposes.

3) Expanding the role of the Writing Studio and Labs and Developing Collaboration
with the Center for Teaching Excellence.

In the subsequent years of the QEP these measures will expand beyond the core group
of GE 102 and GE 103 to encompass other undergraduate and graduate programs by
having a writing studio that embraces all student populations and offers assistance 24/7
in both an E-lab and a satellite lab to guide all students on their path to success. Starting
with a smaller focus and studying the initial population of students will enable the Writing
Studio, the satellite lab and E-lab to work with other groups of students and incorporate
tutors from other disciplines and majors. The continuing partnership with the Center for
Teaching Excellence and a sustained development of WAC initiatives will be central to
developing and expanding the focus beyond the First Year Writing Courses.

Thus the Writing Studio and Labs will integrate the goals of the QEP with its initial focus
on GE102 and GE103. It will continue to expand academic writing goals to include
advanced ECSU students campus-wide, expanding personnel, and realize the mission
of supporting academic writing at ECSU.

B. Writing Labs and Studio Design Overview

1. ECSU Online Writing Lab (OWL)

OWL is housed in the Honors Program on the second floor of Johnson Hall. This lab is
designed to assist ECSU students with the writing process. Students can make
appointments with the ECSU OWL for a face-to-face consultation, or they may submit an
essay electronically. Within 48 hours, the staff responds.

2. General Studies Academic Support Center

The Academic Support Center in General Studies on the first floor of Moore Hall
provides academic support for students enrolled in developmental courses—math,
reading, and writing. Independent labs are offered to students referred by instructors
across the campus. Generally, the specialist provides 1:1 guidance to students from a
variety of majors.

3. QEP Writing Studio

Unlike its counterparts in Johnson and Moore Hall, the QEP Writing Studio will be state-
of-the-art in terms of its programs, assessment, availability, personnel, and OWL. To
inspire and assist the learning processes of its students, a major Writing Studio will become an integral part of enhancing academic writing at ECSU, and will be based upon the following enduring principles:

1) The **Writing Studio** will be a place for all students at the University; however, its use will be a *planned requirement* for students in GE 102 and GE 103. It will also emphasize the strategic and practical skills of academic writing for all majors across disciplines.

2) The **Writing Studio** will be a place where students learn how to write more skillfully. It will not be thought of or operated as a place where only remedial help will be offered. The preeminent goal of the studio will be to offer insight and practical recommendations in analyzing the specific ingredients of the writing process. It will also offer simple, practical exercise opportunities to apply these ingredients. Students will learn how to control their written production and grow as writers. The Writing Studio will enhance, inspire and instruct.

3) The **Writing Studio** will be a place where innovative methods and theories of writing can be practiced and demonstrated. The **Writing Studio** will operate from the premise that students in need of remediation, and indeed, all practicing writers, can become more successful *academic writers* if they are provided enhanced instruction, and personal assistance as required.

4) The **Writing Studio** will be a place where graduate students and their instructors are welcomed partakers of the services offered by the **Writing Studio** staff. Instructors from the graduate programs may schedule in-services for themselves and for their students.

The studio will inform students about a grammar hotline which will be available online and by telephone. In addition, newly developed computer models and methods will be used in upgrading the techniques of information assimilation and application.

C. **Personnel**

The following personnel will work to ensure the smooth and effective operation of the writing studio:

1. **Director, Writing Studio**

   The Director of the Writing Studio will report to and work collaboratively with the Executive Director of the QEP to accomplish the academic and assessment goals of the QEP in the context of the Writing Studio. The Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of the QEP will serve an important function in this respect by preparing the required reports and assessment data of the Writing Studio and by serving as the onsite representative of the Executive Director of the QEP. Thus the Director of the Writing Studio will work closely with the Executive Director and with the Executive Assistant to ensure that the QEP benchmarks are being met.

   In the context of the Writing Studio, The Director will bring considerable experience in the teaching and tutoring of writing, in the research that underlies effective writing
and tutoring pedagogies for a diverse student population, and in the administration of Writing Centers that integrate tutors, technology, and site-specific research on effective writing practices. Thus the Director of the Writing Studio, Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, will professionalize tutors and staff by:

- Creating a Mission Statement and Handbook for the Writing Studio (disseminated via a website) integrated with the practical training of tutors in the best practices of teaching and tutoring writing. This training will take the form of workshops, an advanced undergraduate course in Rhetoric and Composition Studies, monthly meetings, and training in creating, maintaining an analyzing tutoring data. In addition tutors will serve representatives of the Writing Studio by visiting 102/103 classes, and by incorporating best practices of academic writing in their individual and peer group sessions.

- Hiring and training three undergraduate peer tutors, and two tutors equivalent to 60 hours a week of tutoring and Writing Studio and Satellite Lab work. The Director will encourage membership and presentations at the International Writing Center Association, and Writing Center Conferences. Writing Studio Tutors are expected to present at these conferences and to produce scholarship devoted to peer tutoring in such journals as the Writing Center Journal, Praxis, and participate in peer blogs and newsletters such as The Dangling Modifier.

- Hiring and training the Administrative Support Associate of the Writing Studio and working closely with the individual in maintaining online appointments using Accutrak for Writing Centers, and sending attendance and non-attendance reports to 102/103 instructors. The Administrative Support Associate is responsible opening and closing procedures, attending to phone calls and supervising the daily schedule, In addition the individual will work closely with the Director in supervising the maintenance and upgrades to the website and in maintaining archives of the Writing Studio in digital format for assessment purposes.

The Director of the Writing Studio is currently a faculty member of the Department of Language and Literature and will work closely with the Chair and the faculty teaching GE102/103.

2. Writing Lab Tutors and Peer Tutors

Muriel Harris of Purdue University outlines four particular roles that tutors often fill.

- First, tutors encourage student independence through collaborative talk. Engaging in collaborative talk is easier in group settings because students do not feel as pressured with tutors to perform well or appear knowledgeable when they are actually confused.

- Second, tutors assist with the acquisition of strategic knowledge. In other words, tutors can help students apply somewhat abstract knowledge about writing to actual writing. During tutorials, students can learn how writers behave and how writers perform certain tasks.

- Third, tutors assist with affective concerns. They listen to students who need to vent frustrations, gain confidence, and discuss academic concerns.
Finally, tutors help to interpret the meaning of academic language. Tutors can help students to understand what a teacher expects, or can help the student learn the academic language needed to ask the right kinds of questions. (1995).

As a part of their training, tutors will have sources such as *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, by Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli and *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Tutors*, by Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood available. In addition they will have access to Internet and print copy journals and will be reading research and applying it to their context on an on-going basis.

The Writing Studio will be staffed by three undergraduate student interns, who will serve as peer tutors, and by two additional postgraduate tutors (one full time and one half time position). The three peer tutors will be advanced students with demonstrated success in academic writing. They will be interviewed, trained, and assessed by the Director of the Writing Studio by such mechanisms as observations, self-assessments of performance in the context of research on peer tutoring (for example “directive” or “minimalist” tutoring), and based on the descriptive data of tutoring sessions. Postgraduate tutors are expected to lead group workshops on various topics, and to work to maintain and integrate the archives of The Writing Studio and the Satellite Lab. The performance of postgraduate tutors will be assessed by the Director of the Writing Studio on the basis of observations, self-assessments of performance in the context of Writing Center theory and practice, and descriptive data of sessions.

**Evaluation of Tutors**

The forms of evaluation via feedback include the following:

- **Observation**: The tutor will be both formally and informally observed during the performance of his/her tutorial services.
- **Interview**: The tutor will be periodically interviewed as to his/her grasp of the major virtues and/or techniques of his/her tutorial practices. In extreme cases, testing may be necessary.
- **Instructor Feedback**: The tutor’s performance will be periodically evaluated by instructors who have used and requested tutor assistance.
- **Student Feedback**: The tutor’s performance will be evaluated on a routine basis by students using the writing studio.

The Writing Studio Director will be responsible for creating a handbook that reviews personnel evaluation procedures, ethical conduct, personnel remediation and dismissal.

**Tutorial Practices**

Day-to-day tutorial services will be Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on both a walk-in and appointment basis. The hours of operation are subject to change to accommodate the students’ demand for the services of the writing lab. Appointments can be either 30 or 60 minutes in duration. Tutorial services have three overall goals:

1) to help students with their individual writing projects;
2) to educate students about overall writing procedures and practices;
3) to expose students to critical/analytical thinking skills which can provide them with the ability to become their own, self-actualizing editors and writers.

The Writing Studio Tutors (peer and postgraduate) will maintain regular hours that are posted on the website. These will change from semester to semester to accommodate class schedules. Students of GE 102 and GE 103 will sign up to work with tutors individually or in peer groups in consultation with 102/103 instructors. The Tutors will also maintain walk-in hours and instruct students in the use of SMARTTHINKING as needed. They will create a report for each tutoring session and e-mail the report to the Instructor and to the student client. They are expected to attend Writing Studio Meetings, and to prepare paper panels for presentations at Writing Center Conferences. They will create handouts for future tutors and students on commonly observed tutoring situations such as understanding writing assignments and editing and organizing.

Tutors will help students to:

- Clarify specific demands of individual assignments.
- Ease writing anxieties.
- Explore ideas and topics.
- Plan and organize assignments.
- Determine strategies for revision.
- Learn a system for analysis and correction of grammatical errors and weaknesses.
- Improve overall procedures for solving writing problems.
- Learn a means of approaching the communication process in full.
- Gain a bibliography of writing self-help books and inspiring literature.
- Learn how to use computers to enhance and inspire the writing process.

Together, the Writing Studio personnel will create a pedagogical space which showcases best practices for academic writing, and educates students, and by extension the ECSU community, on the uses and purposes of a Writing Center. As the Writing Studio expands to work with greater numbers of students in various disciplines, it will create a larger presence for academic writing in the context of diverse academic disciplines or discourse communities. Training of tutors will then include training in writing across the curriculum (WAC) and greater participation in WAC.

3. Administrative Support Associate to the Writing Studio

The Administrative Support Associate will provide administrative/executive support to the Director and the writing lab staff. The Administrative Support Associate is responsible for opening and closing procedures, attending to phone calls and supervising the daily schedule, maintaining online appointments using Accutrak for Writing Centers, and sending attendance and non-attendance reports to 102/103 instructors. In addition the Administrative Support Associate will work closely with the Director in supervising the maintenance and upgrades to the website and in maintaining archives of the Writing Studio in digital format for assessment purposes.
D. **E-Lab**

The Director of the Writing Studio, Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, will be responsible for making available an electronic writing (E-Writing) lab that can be accessed by any ECSU student or faculty person seven days per week, twenty-four hours every day. The E-lab will be provided free of charge by the Norton Textbook Publishers from whom the GE 102 and GE 103 texts are purchased.

Moreover, the E-lab will also incorporate SMARTHINKING, an online tutorial that students can access. A tutor will be available synchronously and asynchronously. Students will be able to receive feedback in real time (similar to Yahoo Instant Messenger or other IM services) or submit a paper to receive feedback within twenty-four hours. More importantly, the tutors at SMARTHINKING are specialized in the subject area and possess at least an M.A. in the discipline.

E. **Satellite Writing Lab**

A satellite writing lab located on the second floor of the G. R. Little Library will be available fall and spring sessions from Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sundays from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. During the summer sessions, the satellite writing lab will be Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Director of the Writing Studio will be responsible for monitoring and supervising the library satellite writing lab as well as ensuring the appropriateness of related computer software, SMARTHINKING, Criterion, and Accutrack.

The Writing Studio will maintain an online appointment calendar where students can choose to make an appointment. They may also stop by or call the Writing Studio. An electronic weekly appointment book will be maintained at the reception desk. Students will be greeted by the tutor and taken to the area of the Writing Studio most appropriate to their appointment—one on one, group tutoring, or training in SMARTHINKING. A parallel weekly appointment roster will maintain reservations for computer access to SMARTHINKING. Thus multiple uses will be reflected by appointments maintained weekly, and monthly. Appointments will consist of half-hour appointments with a maximum of two a week or one 60 minute appointment a week. Because every attempt will be made to send e-mail reminders, repetitive no shows will lead to semester long suspension of appointment privileges.

The Writing Studio will maintain an online database charting details of each student client’s specific appointment at the Writing Studio including tutor progress reports using Accutrack for Writing Centers. The information will be conveyed to the instructor via e-mail by the tutor. Students will also receive details about their appointment via e-mail. Statistical and narrative information about the tutoring sessions will enable the Director, in consultation with the Advisory Board and Implementation Committee, to determine the effectiveness of sessions and their impact on the academic writing of the students who visit the Writing Studio.

To ensure effective use of the Writing Studio, classes will incorporate orientation visits at the beginning of each semester. Furthermore, consultations will be offered to meet the special needs of instructors that arise during a particular semester.
The ECSU Writing Studio, as an integral component of the QEP, will enrich, enhance, and support students and faculty both on-campus and off. Distance learning students will have access to the same support services that students on campus do: SMARTTHINKING, Criterion, and online tutorial sessions.

As stated earlier, the QEP will begin by enhancing the writing curriculum of the GE 102 and GE 103 courses that will be reflected in the course syllabi. (See Appendix V for Syllabus). Notable changes that will be immediately apparent include:

- Faculty assigned to teach the GE 102 and GE 103 courses will develop syllabi, assignments, examinations, and scoring rubrics based on commonly held goals and outcomes for the courses;
- The addition of a new, inclusive textbook to be purchased by the students plus one reader to be rented will replace the need for several texts currently required in both courses;
- Enhanced emphasis on academic writing skills and related reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills;
- Required use of the resources that enhance academic writing skills in the newly renovated, technologically updated, professionally staffed Writing Studio;
- The addition of an E-lab as a resource available 24-7;
- The addition of a satellite lab housed in G.E. Little Library and available 7 days a week during Library operating hours; and
- The requirement that all students purchase a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Workshops and in-services planned by the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence in collaboration with GE 102 and GE 103 faculty and the Director of the Writing Studio will provide instructors with the skills necessary to develop common examinations, assignments, and common scoring rubrics for the GE 102 and GE 103 courses.

University enrollment trends indicate an increase in the number of entering freshmen each year (See charts below).
### Student Population (Undergraduates) (Last 3 Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Characteristics</th>
<th>Fall 2008 #</th>
<th>Fall 2009 #</th>
<th>Fall 2010 #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>3021</td>
<td>3208</td>
<td>3307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>460</td>
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<td>American Indian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>150</td>
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Source: ECSU Fact Book 2010-2011

### Entering Freshmen Students (Last 3 Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Characteristics</th>
<th>Fall 2008 #</th>
<th>Fall 2009 #</th>
<th>Fall 2010 #</th>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
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<td>287</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>550</td>
<td>480</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>American Indian</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Resident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
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Source: ECSU Fact Book 2010-2011.
As a result of student enrollment trends, the QEP will be developed to accommodate approximately 420 students who place in GE 102 via ACCUPLACER and 350 students who advance to GE 103. Once students have been appropriately placed, a pre-test will be given to determine their skill level in academic writing at the beginning of the courses.
QEP IMPLEMENTATION

A. Phase I
B. Phase II

Writing New Paths to Discovery
V. QEP IMPLEMENTATION

QEP implementation can be categorized into five primary domains:

- Personnel: selection of the QEP Executive Director and Writing Studio staff (Appendix X);
- Infrastructure Development: the creation of the Writing Studio space and E-lab;
- Faculty Development: providing faculty with the necessary training to implement the plan;
- Curriculum Development: revisions to GE 102 and GE 103 designed to enhance writing; and
- QEP Evaluation and Refinement: the process for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the QEP.

The Personnel and Infrastructure Development domains were discussed in the previous section. We now turn to the remaining three domains. The following chart presents each domain and the major tasks to be completed in each.

A specific implementation schedule for these activities has been developed, including a timeline for completion and the assignment of a person or group responsible for the activity. The table below presents an overview of the project implementation schedule, and a discussion of the schedule follows:
### Overview: Project Implementation Design

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<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td>Selection of QEP Executive Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Selection of Writing Studio Director</td>
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<td>Selection of Executive Assistant &amp; Administrative Support Associate</td>
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<td>Selection of Writing Lab Instructors</td>
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<td>Selection of Writing Studio Tutors</td>
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<td>Satellite Writing Lab (G.R. Little Library)</td>
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<td>E-Lab</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Development:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Common Practices</strong></td>
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<td>Workshop for GE 102 / 103 Faculty</td>
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<td>Workshop for General Faculty:</td>
<td>Best Practices</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Development:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing Tools</strong></td>
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<td>Workshop for General Faculty:</td>
<td>Writing Studio Introduction</td>
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<td>Workshop for General Faculty:</td>
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<td><strong>Curriculum Development:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Curriculum Development:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation of Best Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assessment Pilot</strong></td>
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<td><strong>QEP Evaluation and Refinement:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Training of Evaluators</strong></td>
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<td>Training of Faculty to Evaluate Writing Samples</td>
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<td><strong>QEP Assessment Review</strong></td>
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<td>Review of Implementation - improvements to overall QEP</td>
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<td>Review of Implementation - curriculum</td>
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A. Phase One—Faculty/Staff Preparation and Piloting

The first phase of the QEP involves faculty/staff preparation prior to the entrance of the Fall 2011 freshman class. Faculty/Staff preparation will include, but is not limited to, professional development centered on using rubrics in the evaluation of student papers, training selected faculty to read and evaluate writing samples, and informing faculty/staff about best practices in writing. Additionally, the preparation will entail piloting Criterion during the Summer 2010 semester and the new syllabi for GE 102 and GE 103 during the Summer 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, and Summer 2011 semesters.

B. Phase Two—QEP Delivery

The general timeline for the QEP follows:

1. Summer 2011
   
   Year One: Preparation and Start-Up:

   The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence collaborates with the Language, Literature, and Communication (LLC) Chairperson, Dean of the School of Arts & Humanities, and LLC faculty to determine specific workshop focus, presentations, and schedule. GE 102 and GE 103 faculty will participate in workshops to:

   - Develop common course syllabi;
   - Develop common course assignments;
   - Develop common examinations;
   - Develop common scoring rubrics;
   - Writing Studio development;
   - Become familiar with the function(s) of the Writing Studio, the Satellite Writing Lab and the E-lab; and
   - Become familiar with the use of the various computer software and other electronic resources in the Writing Studio, the Writing Lab, and the E-lab.

   The two language labs currently located in Johnson Hall will be renovated to accommodate:

   - A Writing Studio that will house approximately 30 state-of-the-art computer stations on one side;
   - A director’s office with a one-way window;
   - Administrative assistant;
   - A whiteboard used for instruction; and
   - An electronic desk with controls for projectors, screens, etc.

   The other side of the Writing Studio is separated from the instructional area by a door and a wall with a huge window that enables the Director to observe all studio activity it houses.

   - Space for group collaboration and brainstorming ideas;
• Space for quiet reflection and organizing thoughts for written presentations;
• Ten computer stations for outlining and composing academic writing assignments;
• Cubicles where students receive individual assistance from tutors; and
• A resource library containing e-books for each computer and hard copies, computer programs, etc. that present tips that enhance academic writing skills.

All computers in the Writing Studio will contain programs selected by the LLC faculty and departmental chairperson that will assess academic writing skills and that will provide tips for developing effective writing assignments.

The Satellite Writing Lab located in the G.R. Little Library will be equipped with computer software to enhance students’ academic writing skills as well as assess writing samples. Desk Copies of the textbooks for both GE courses will be available in the Writing Studio and the satellite lab.

The Writing Studio and Satellite Writing Lab will be fully operational by the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester.


Year One: Preparation and Start-Up:

• GE 102 and GE 103 faculty will work collaboratively with the Director of the Writing Studio, Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, to develop a schedule for providing individual as well as whole group training and/or assistance by the Writing Studio personnel and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence. Training/workshops will introduce faculty to the use of the Writing Studio as well as address effective teaching strategies.
• Students in GE 102 will be given a pre-test to determine their academic writing skill level;
• All students at ECSU will be introduced to the free E-lab from Norton Publishers.
• All students at ECSU will be introduced to SMARTHINKING.
• GE 102 students will be given a post-test to determine growth in academic writing skills since beginning the QEP.
• All GE 102 and 103 faculty and Writing Studio personnel will be trained in Criterion.
• GE 102 and GE 103 faculty collaborate with the QEP Core Committee and the Director of the Writing Studio to determine whether the implementation schedule (see Implementation Grid; pages 48-52) has been met and whether changes in the curriculum are effective (based upon feedback and post-test scores). They will determine what changes, if any, should be made in the plan.


Year One: Preparation and Start-Up:

GE 102 and GE 103 students will be given a pre-test. Students will begin the following:

• Full use of the Writing Studio as well as the Satellite Writing Lab; and
• Advance to more complex academic writing assignments.

GE 102 and GE 103 faculty will engage in the following activities:

• Work in collaboration to refine and update course syllabi based on assessment findings from last semester;
• Continue workshops in collaboration with the Director of the Writing Studio and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence;
• Administer a post-test at the end of the academic year; and
• Re-evaluate the QEP based on post-test results.

4. July 2012-May 2013

Year Two: QEP in Full Operation

GE 102 and GE 103 faculty meet to review QEP assessment data from the previous year and make instructional adjustments based on their findings. Faculty workshops, class presentations, and individual training are planned and scheduled in collaboration with the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Director of the Writing Studio. Agreement is reached regarding course assignments that will require use of the Writing Studio and/or the E-lab and/or Satellite Writing Lab and special assistance from tutors and/or lab administrators.

Instructors meet to discuss changes, and/or refinement needed in the course syllabi, examinations, assignments, and scoring rubrics in order to best meet the academic writing needs of the students.

During the Fall Faculty Institute, a day will be devoted to introducing the entire ECSU faculty and staff, 25 at a time, to the Writing Studio, its purpose and use. The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence will also be involved to share information regarding individual as well as group workshops planned according to the professional needs registered by the faculty.

Pre-tests and post-tests will be administered to both the GE 102 and GE 103 classes to assess the impact of the QEP. Instructors teaching the introductory courses in the major area programs will collaborate with the Director of the Writing Studio and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence to design workshops and training in developing effective academic writing assignments, essay examinations, and scoring rubrics. Workshops in effective teaching strategies will also be scheduled. Major area faculty teaching the introductory courses will be given an orientation to the Writing Studio and its use as well as the use of the E-lab and the Satellite Writing Lab. These instructors will plan a culminating academic writing project to be presented at the end of their courses. LLC instructors, chairpersons, Dean of the School, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Director of the Writing Studio will meet at the end of each semester to discuss assessment results and plan instructional changes as necessary.

At the end of each semester, faculty will meet with the QEP Implementation Committee to plan for the next semester once faculty has reviewed the assessment results.
5. **July 2013-May 2014**

**Year Three: Complete Immersion**

QEP strategies will continue. Graduate students will continue to have access to assistance from the Writing Studio staff as well as from the e-writing lab. The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Director of the Writing Studio in collaboration with the chairpersons and program coordinators representing every academic major program on campus will plan, schedule and implement workshops to refine instructional skills in the area of academic writing. Chairpersons, deans with their respective faculties will decide which courses in each curriculum will be enhanced to become writing intensive courses.

The QEP Implementation Committee, serving as an Advisory Committee to the Writing Studio Administration and staff, will meet at the end of each semester to analyze assessment results and make instructional decisions that will strengthen the QEP intervention strategies.


**Year Four: Continued Immersion**

The QEP intervention strategies to enhance academic writing skills will continue, with pre and post test administration in the GE 102 and GE 103 courses. Data collection, analysis of assessment results will inform any changes made in the QEP to make it a successful tool for positively impacting students’ academic writing skills.

7. **July 2015-May 2016**

**Year Five: Assessment Report**

The QEP intervention strategies to enhance academic writing skills will continue, with pre and post test administration in the GE 102 and GE 103 courses. Data collection, analysis of assessment results will inform any changes made in the QEP to make it a successful tool for positively impacting students’ academic writing skills.

A progress report of ECSU’s QEP will be based upon data collected over the five (5) year period and will be reported to SACS as well as the campus community and other constituents.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

OVERVIEW: GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. QEP and Course Level Learning Outcomes
B. Assessment Materials
C. QEP Assessment Process
D. Evaluating QEP Process
E. Information Sharing
VI. OVERVIEW: GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. QEP and Course Level Outcomes

1. QEP Outcomes

The QEP is designed to assist students with developing academic writing skills. The learning outcomes of Think! Write! Revolutionize! are as follows:

1) Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the rhetorical skills required in academic, professional, and civic life.
2) Students will demonstrate their ability to comprehend material—print and electronic—and to think critically and analytically about relevant sources.
3) Students will demonstrate mastery of the writing process as recursive: Drafting, writing, revising and editing.
4) Students will demonstrate mastery of writing conventions: Organization, persuasion and mechanics.

2. GE 102—English Composition and Grammar

It is expected that 75% of the students enrolled in GE 102 will be able to do the following:

1) demonstrate the ability to write succinct, grammatically correct sentences as well as coherent paragraphs
2) demonstrate the ability to recognize common writing errors (e.g., comma splices, subject-verb agreement) and identify parts of speech
3) explain what plagiarism is and remedy issues associated with plagiarism

3. GE 103—English Composition and Vocabulary

It is expected that 80% of the students enrolled in GE 103 will be able to

1) demonstrate the ability to write succinct and grammatically correct sentences and coherent paragraphs
2) demonstrate competence in the use of research methods, finding sources, and evaluating and integrating information into a paper with appropriate documentation
3) demonstrate critical thinking ability through written communication
4) demonstrate the ability to differentiate among fact and opinion, and inferences when reading and using sources for papers.
5) explain what plagiarism is and remedy issues associated with plagiarism

The following chart consists of the QEP learning outcomes and the associated course level (GE 102 and GE 103) learning outcomes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QEP learning outcomes</th>
<th>GE 102 learning outcomes</th>
<th>GE 103 Learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the rhetorical skills required in academic, professional, and civic life.</td>
<td>Students (75%) will demonstrate the ability to write succinct, grammatically correct sentences as well as coherent paragraphs.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will demonstrate competence in the use of research methods, finding sources, and evaluating and integrating information into a paper with appropriate documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will demonstrate their ability to comprehend material-print and electronic- and to think critically and analytically about relevant sources.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will demonstrate critical thinking ability through written communication.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will demonstrate the ability to differentiate among fact and opinion, and inferences when reading and using sources for papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will demonstrate mastery of the writing process as recursive: Drafting, writing, revising and editing.</td>
<td>Students (75%) will demonstrate the ability to write succinct, grammatically correct sentences as well as coherent paragraphs.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will demonstrate the ability to write succinct and grammatically correct sentences and coherent paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Students will demonstrate mastery of writing conventions: Organization, persuasion and mechanics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students (75%) will demonstrate the ability to write succinct, grammatically correct sentences as well as coherent paragraphs.</th>
<th>Students (80%) will demonstrate the ability to write succinct and grammatically correct sentences and coherent paragraphs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (75%) will demonstrate the ability to recognize common writing errors (e.g., comma splices, subject-verb agreement) and identify parts of speech.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will demonstrate the ability to recognize common writing errors (e.g., comma splices, subject-verb agreement) and identify parts of speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (75%) will explain what plagiarism is and remedy issues associated with plagiarism.</td>
<td>Students (80%) will explain what plagiarism is and remedy issues associated with plagiarism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Assessment Materials

Assessments will be formative and summative in nature. The formative assessments will consist of locally developed, course level assessments and an automated, nationally used writing assessment tool: Criterion. Summative assessments will consist of locally derived assessment rubrics and a nationally used assessment, the Proficiency Profile by Educational Testing Services. In addition, locally derived surveys and an e-portfolio will be used to assess implementation of the QEP as well as faculty/staff perceptions of the effectiveness of the QEP.

1. ETS Proficiency Profile

The ETS Proficiency Profile is an assessment that measures skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and mathematics. Of interest to ECSU's QEP are reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. According to the Proficiency Profile: User's Guide (ETS, July 2010), the following are measured under each construct:

College level reading measures students' ability to:

- interpret the meaning of key terms;
- recognize the primary purpose of a passage;
- recognize explicitly presented information;
- make appropriate inferences;
- recognize rhetorical devices.

College level writing questions measure students' ability to:
• recognize the most grammatically correct revision of a clause, sentence, or group of sentences;
• organize units of language for coherence and rhetorical effect;
• recognize and reword figurative language;
• organize elements of writing into larger units of meaning.

Critical thinking questions measure students' ability to

• distinguish between rhetoric and argumentation in a piece of nonfiction prose;
• recognize assumptions;
• recognize the best hypothesis to account for information presented;
• infer and interpret a relationship between variables;
• draw valid conclusions based on information presented (p.4).

The ETS Proficiency Profile will be used as a pre/post measure to assess proficiency in the areas covered in the QEP. The Proficiency Profile will be administered to all incoming freshmen within the first four weeks of the start of the semester and to all sophomore students upon completion of 38 credit hours which includes GE 102 and GE 103 within the General Education curriculum. The Proficiency Profile will provide a picture of students' academic writing at the designated times.

2. Writing Rubrics

Standard writing rubrics were developed for GE 102 and GE 103 to assess general academic writing skills. The writing rubrics will be used to assess students' ability to produce written documents that are reflective of college-level writing. The rubrics assess, for example, mastery of grammatical usage and college conventions as well as the ability to illustrate rhetorical purposes.

3. Criterion

ETS's software application, Criterion, will provide both formative and summative data with regard to students' writing. Criterion generates quantitative data in terms of grammar usage, mechanics, style, organization, and development. The instructor will be able to aggregate the data to determine the effectiveness of the learning objectives in relation to the entire class. Faculty may elect to augment their classes based upon the data obtained from Criterion. Additionally, faculty within the Department of Language, Literature & Communication may make recommendations with regard to changes within the curriculum based upon data obtained from the composition courses.

4. SafeAssign

SafeAssign, a software application that is incorporated within our BlackBoard course management system as a screening tool for plagiarism. SafeAssign compares student papers with Internet sources and assesses for inappropriate copying of material. Additionally, SafeAssign provides a percentage of the text copied. As students' abilities to comprehend and analyze college level material increases, incidences of plagiarism should decrease. A random sample of student writing within the GE 102 and GE 103 courses will be evaluated in SafeAssign.
5. Locally developed assessments for GE 102 and GE 103

Objective assessments will be locally developed for GE 102 and GE 103 in order to assess learning outcomes for each course. The assessments will be given at the beginning, middle, and end of each course. Parallel forms of the assessments will be developed in order to prevent performance effects that are reflective of memorization as opposed to actual knowledge.

C. QEP Assessment Process

As shown in the figure above, there will be several points at which students will be assessed with regard to their academic writing skills. The QEP Evaluation Grid below presents the assessments as they relate to each outcome of the QEP, the specific measures used, the type of data gathered, the timing of data collection, and the responsible parties for data collection.
## QEP Evaluation Grid

### Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the rhetorical skills required in academic, professional, and civic life. (Outcome 1 pertains to GE 102 and GE 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>How used</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Type of Data/Use of data</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Revisions to courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Writing Rubrics (general writing rubrics) | Pre/post assessment       | First and last month of classes, each semester | - Faculty GE 102,103  
- QEP Executive Director  
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment (OIERA) | Summative Quantitative data              |         |                     |
| Criterion (automated writing tool, ETS) | Pre/post assessment       | First and last month of classes, each semester | - Faculty GE 102,103  
- QEP Executive Director  
- OIERA | Summative evaluation  
Quantitative data  
Writing mechanics  
Essay evaluation  
Qualitative  
List of problematic areas in essays |         |                     |
|                                     | Continuous                | In concert with class writing assignments     | - Faculty GE 102,103  
- QEP Executive Director  
- OIERA | Formative evaluation (course level)  
Quantitative data  
Writing mechanics  
Essay evaluation  
Qualitative  
List of problematic areas in essays |         |                     |
**Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate their ability to comprehend material-print and electronic-and to think critically and analytically about relevant sources. (Outcome 2 pertains to GE 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>How used</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Type of Data/Use of data</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Revisions to courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Profile</td>
<td>Pre/Post</td>
<td>Beginning of Freshman year</td>
<td>-General Studies -OIERA -QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Summative -Quantitative -Reading -Critical thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After completion of 38 General Education hours, inclusive of GE 102,103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE 103 -Local rubric</td>
<td>Course level</td>
<td>In concert with class writing assignments</td>
<td>-Faculty GE 102,103 -QEP Executive Director -OIERA</td>
<td>Formative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SafeAssign</td>
<td>Pre/Post</td>
<td>Each semester -beginning -midterm -end</td>
<td>-QEP Executive Director -OIERA -Assessment team</td>
<td>Summative -Quantitative -Randomly selected writing samples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>How used</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Type of Data/Use of data</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Revisions to courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Rubrics (locally developed)</td>
<td>Pre/post assessment</td>
<td>First and last month of classes, each semester</td>
<td>- Faculty GE 102,103 - QEP Executive Director - OIERA</td>
<td>Summative evaluation Quantitative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
<td>Pre/post assessment</td>
<td>First and last month of classes, each semester</td>
<td>- Faculty GE 102,103 - QEP Executive Director - OIERA</td>
<td>Summative Quantitative - Writing mechanics - Essay evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>In concert with class writing assignments</td>
<td>In concert with class writing assignments</td>
<td>- Faculty GE 102,103 - QEP Executive Director - OIERA</td>
<td>Formative evaluation (course level) Quantitative data - Writing mechanics - Essay evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### QEP Evaluation Grid, continued

**Outcome 4:** Students will demonstrate mastery of writing conventions: Organization, persuasion and mechanics  
(Outcome 3 pertains to GE 102 and GE 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>How used</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Type of Data/Use of data</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Revisions to courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Proficiency Profile           | Pre/Post               | Beginning of Freshman year After completion of 38 General Education hours, inclusive of GE 102 and 103 | General Studies  
-OIERA  
-QEP Executive Director | Summative  
-Writing mechanics  
-Tone  
-Syntax                                                                     |         |                     |
| Criterion                     | GE 102 Course level    | In concert with class writing assignments                               | Faculty GE 102,103  
-QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA  
-Faculty GE 102,103  
-QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA | Formative  
-Quantitative data  
-Writing mechanics  
-Faculty GE 102,103  
-QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA |         |                     |
|                              | GE 103 Course level    | In concert with class writing assignments                               | Faculty GE 102,103  
-QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA | Formative  
-Quantitative data  
-Writing mechanics  
-Faculty GE 102,103  
-QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA |         |                     |
| Objective assessment, locally developed or purchased | Pre/Post               | Each semester -beginning  
-midterm  
-end | QEP Executive Director  
-OIERA  
-Assessment team | Summative  
-Quantitative-raw scores  
-writing mechanics  
-tone  
-syntax  
-grammar |         |                     |

Note: OIERA stands for Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research Assessment.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

Data Tracking & Evaluation

A. Data Analysis
B. Student Tracking
C. The Writing Studio
D. Administration of the QEP Implementation & Assessment Components
E. Information Sharing
VII. DATA TRACKING AND EVALUATION

A. Data Analysis

Comparative analyses are planned with regard to pre and post objective assessments at the formative and summative levels.

Initial writing samples will be randomly selected from GE 102 courses within the first two weeks of class prior to the students receiving formal writing instruction. After submission of the paper for rubric evaluation, students will be required to submit their papers into Criterion. The data acquired via the initial submission will serve as baseline data. The final paper submission process will be the same as the initial paper submission; however, it will be submitted after the students have received formal writing instruction. A similar process will be followed for GE 103.

Other analyses may consist of examining the profiles of students who enter GE 102 and GE 103 under alternative conditions (students who enter GE 102 after taking developmental courses in reading and/or writing, students who transfer into ECSU with composition credit and students who have repeated GE 102 and/or GE 103.

B. Student Tracking

Students will complete a form that will be attached to their standardized course assessments in GE 102 and 103, and to their writing samples. This form will serve as a method to assist with identifying assessments that were completed by students who progress through the QEP courses under alternative circumstances (students who enter GE 102 after taking developmental courses in reading and/or writing, students who transfer into ECSU with composition credit, students who have repeated the designated course, and students who elect to take GE 102 and/or GE 103 when they are not required to do so). Additional demographic data may be collected in order to assess whether or not there are subpopulations within the student body that need additional assistance with the skills addressed within the QEP.

C. The Writing Studio

An electronic system will be used to track of the volume of people (students, faculty, staff) who use the Writing Studio, the types of assistance they seek, how often they seek assistance, and their satisfaction with the assistance received. ACCUTRACK will allow the Director to monitor the types of assistance within the Writing Studio students are accessing and administer satisfaction surveys. SMARTHINKING monitors student access of its tutorial service, including the types of assistance sought and the duration of the assistance. The Director of the Writing Studio will be able to track student use of the Writing Studio among those who are in the QEP courses vs. those who are not in the QEP courses. Additionally, data will be collected to determine the effectiveness of the writing studio. Data may include, but will not be limited to, pre and post assessment of students’ writing skills.
D. Administration of the QEP implementation and assessment components

Because there are inter-related components to implementing and assessing the effectiveness of the QEP, the QEP Implementation Committee will enlist the assistance of several entities across campus to aid in the successful deployment of the plan. Campus offices and/or entities of great import to the implementation and assessment plan, in no particular order, are General Studies, the Office of the Registrar, Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment and The Center for Teaching Excellence. Additionally, faculty within the Department of Language, Literature & Communication who teach entry courses and the faculty at-large are essential to the success of the QEP.

The remainder of this section will describe the roles of the aforementioned entities as they relate to the QEP assessment process.

1. The Office of the Registrar

The registrar’s office will assist with the QEP courses (i.e. blocking students from enrolling simultaneously into GE 102 and 103). The registrar’s office also will provide final grade reports of students within the QEP courses. This will assist with aggregating the data across semesters and years.

The Registrar will designate the responsible parties to provide the listed services.

2. General Studies

General Studies is responsible for overseeing the general education curriculum. Hence, GE 102 and 103 fall within this department. General Studies, as with the Office of the Registrar, will assist with making sure individuals who are eligible to enroll in GE 102 and 103 are enrolled in the courses. Additionally, General Studies also will be one entity assisting with the identification of the following students: Students who circumvent GE 102 and GE 103 due to having acceptable transfer credit, students who enter GE 102 through the developmental grammar course, students who repeat composition courses, students who repeat World Literature courses, and students who are eligible to bypass 102 and/or 103 but elect to take the courses. Tracking students within the stated areas will provide comparison data with respect to how students perform in other University writing courses.

Example 1: Do students enrolled in GE 201 who circumvented GE 102 and 103 perform as well as students enrolled in GE 201 who took GE 102 and 103?

Example 2: Do students who enter GE 102 after taking the developmental grammar course perform as well as students who enter GE 102 at the onset of their academic careers?

In addition to assisting with tracking students, General Studies has implemented a plan and has collected data assessing students’ level of proficiency in reading, writing and critical thinking skills using the ETS Proficiency Profile. General Studies administers the Proficiency Profile to all incoming students at the beginning of their first semester. The same students take the exam at the end of their sophomore year upon completion of 38 hours of general education course credit. Data from the Proficiency Profile is one
component of the assessment process that will allow for the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the QEP after students have completed GE 102 and GE 103.

3. The Center for Teaching Excellence

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) will assist with organizing training for faculty and staff with regard to the improvement of student skills in the areas covered by the QEP. The Center for Teaching Excellence will assist with organizing composition and grammar reviews for faculty, organizing training in the use of automated programs used for the QEP, and assisting with the development of writing rubrics and training in the use of the writing rubrics.

Professional development in the use of the writing rubrics for the QEP will assist with establishing inter-rater reliability among multiple evaluators. This will assist with the accuracy of the data, and possibly dissuade biases when evaluating student writing samples. Additionally, composition and grammar reviews along with workshops relating to other aspects of the QEP will assist with helping faculty to establish a working repertoire of how to assist students with academic writing skill.

Finally, the CTE will assist with the development and dissemination of evaluations for faculty/staff professional development seminars. Evaluations also are inclusive of the development and distribution of surveys designed to assess faculty perceptions of student progress within the QEP domains.

4. Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment and QEP Executive Director

All data collected for the QEP will be sent to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment. The QEP Executive Director will evaluate the data and write a report of the findings that will be distributed to the campus community. A preliminary report will be presented in December of each year with a final report presented in August of the following year. Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment along with the Director of the QEP will be responsible for developing and improving, if the need arises, the data collection process.

5. Evaluating the QEP

The implementation of the QEP will be directed and monitored by the QEP Implementation Committee. The implementation team will consist of full-time faculty who teach GE 102 and GE 103, the Executive Director of the QEP, the Director of the Writing Studio, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, and members from the QEP core committee and subcommittees. Implementation evaluation areas may be divided into five parts: Personnel, infrastructure development, faculty development, curriculum development, and QEP evaluation and refinement (see Implementation Grid below).
## QEP Implementation Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Domain</th>
<th>Action / Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Data / Results</th>
<th>Revisions Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Hiring / Selection of QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>QEP Core Committee</td>
<td>Is the QEP Executive Director in place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hiring / Selection of Writing Studio Director</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>QEP Core Committee QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Is the Writing Studio Director in place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hiring/Selection of Executive Assistant/Instructor and Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Are Assistants in place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Selection of Writing Lab Instructors</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Have the Instructors been selected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>Selection of Writing Studio Tutors</td>
<td>Summer &amp; Fall 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Have the Tutors been selected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure Development</strong></td>
<td>Writing Studio (Johnson Hall)</td>
<td>Renovations to be completed Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director Writing Studio Director Facilities Management</td>
<td>Physical renovations completed? Equipment ordered? Equipment installed &amp; software functioning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### QEP Implementation Grid, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Domain</th>
<th>Action / Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Data / Results</th>
<th>Revisions Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satellite Writing Lab (G.R. Little Library)</td>
<td>Renovations to be completed Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Physical renovations completed? Equipment ordered? Equipment installed and software functioning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Lab</td>
<td>To be established Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Website developed? Website published?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Faculty Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action / Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Data / Results</th>
<th>Revisions Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops for GE 102 / GE 103 Faculty</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director Director, Center for Teaching Excellence Chairperson, Language, Literature, &amp; Communication (LLC) Dean, School of Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>For each workshop: -% of required faculty in attendance (Goal: 100% by Summer 2011) -learning evaluation of workshop participants -participants' evaluation of workshop -implementation assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops for General Faculty: Best Practices (various topics)</td>
<td>Begin Fall 2011 - continue each semester</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director Director, Center for Teaching Excellence</td>
<td>For each workshop: -% of required faculty in attendance (Goal: 100% of faculty by 2012) -learning evaluation of workshop participants -participants' evaluation of workshop -implementation assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Writing Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Domain</th>
<th>Action / Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Data / Results</th>
<th>Revisions Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Workshops for GE 102 / GE 103 Faculty | Workshops for GE 102 / GE 103 Faculty | Summer 2011 | QEP Executive Director, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence Chairperson, Language, Literature, & Communication (LLC), Dean, School of Arts & Humanities | For each workshop:  
- % of required faculty in attendance (Goal: 100% by Summer 2011)  
- learning evaluation of workshop participants  
- participants’ evaluation of workshop  
- implementation assessment | | |
| Workshops for General Faculty: Writing Studio Introduction | Workshops for General Faculty: Writing Studio Introduction | Fall 2011 - Summer 2012 | QEP Executive Director, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence | For each workshop:  
- # of required faculty in attendance (Goal: 100% of faculty by Summer 2012)  
- learning evaluation of workshop participants  
- participants’ evaluation of workshop | | |
| Workshops for General Faculty: Various Topics | Workshops for General Faculty: Various Topics | Begin Fall 2011 - continue each semester | QEP Executive Director, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence | For each workshop:  
- % of required faculty in attendance  
- learning evaluation of workshop participants  
- participants’ evaluation of workshop  
- implementation assessment | | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Domain</th>
<th>Action / Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Data / Results</th>
<th>Revisions Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development</td>
<td>GE 102 - Composition and Grammar</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>QEP Executive Director Director, Center for Teaching Excellence GE 102/103 Faculty</td>
<td>Development of Shared Content</td>
<td>Evaluation of Shared Content by Developers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GE 103 - Composition and Vocabulary</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
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<td>Development of Shared Content</td>
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<td>Assessment Pilot</td>
<td>GE 102 - Composition and Grammar</td>
<td>Summer 2010 - Summer 2011</td>
<td>QEP Core Committee QEP Executive Director</td>
<td>Assessment results Faculty evaluation of the process of administering measures Faculty evaluation of assessment feedback</td>
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### GE 103 - Composition and Vocabulary

**Timeline:** Summer 2010 - Summer 2011

**Responsible Party:** QEP Core Committee

**Assessment:** Assessment results

Faculty evaluation of the process of administering measures

Faculty evaluation of assessment feedback

### Training of Evaluators

**Action / Activity:** Selecting and training faculty to read and evaluate writing samples

**Timeline:** Spring 2011 - Summer 2011

**Responsible Party:** QEP Core Committee

**Assessment:** # of faculty identified and training

Reliability of faculty ratings

Validity of faculty ratings

### QEP Assessment Review

**Action / Activity:** Review of implementation to identify needed improvements to overall QEP

**Timeline:** Begin Fall 2011 - continue each semester

**Responsible Party:** QEP Core Committee

**Assessment:** Quantitative assessment results

Qualitative evaluations by faculty and students

### Review of implementation with focus on the curriculum

**Timeline:** Begin Fall 2011 - continue each semester

**Responsible Party:** QEP Core Committee

**Assessment:** Quantitative assessment results

Qualitative evaluations by faculty and students
E. Information Sharing

Information regarding student performance within QEP courses, the use of the writing studio and the implementation of the QEP will be shared at the school, department, and faculty levels as preliminary and final data reports become available. Students also will be availed of the results through their classes. Additionally, results regarding the QEP will be shared each year with the general faculty at the spring and fall faculty institutes.

Data sharing will assist the QEP Advisory Committee and the faculty with evaluating the merits of the QEP plan. Data sharing will allow for the augmentation of the program, if the need arises, and perhaps assist with developing support for additional resources and training for faculty, staff and students.

Information Sharing of the QEP

The figure represents the communication of data, reports, and feedback. The report originating from the QEP Executive Director and Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment includes results based upon data from GE 102 and GE 103; the report also contains a summary of results and recommendations from the Writing Studio director. Feedback originating from the QEP Executive Director and Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment may include additional recommendations based upon constituent feedback. Changes to the QEP are made based upon data and feedback.
Writing New Paths to Discovery

BUDGET

A. QEP Budget
B. Physical Resources
VIII. QEP BUDGET AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES

A. QEP Budget

The success of the Quality Enhancement Plan depends on the availability of sufficient resources to enable an effective implementation of the initiatives. Consequently, the University has committed adequate resources in its financial plans to successfully fund the implementation of the QEP over the next five academic years ending 2016. The costs outlined represent an unbiased estimate of the University’s financial capacity to meet the institutional goals and needs identified for the QEP, with the overarching requirement that each dollar spent enhance the quality of the university’s graduates.

The budget, developed by the University administration and the QEP Steering Committee, is divided into two main periods: The development period and the implementation period.

The expenditures related to the QEP development period consists of the following:

- QEP Committee Members stipend
- Consultant Expenses
- QEP Committee Members Travel Expenses
- Other Expenses Related to the Design, Marketing and Promotion of the QEP.

The expenditure related to the implementation of the QEP during the five-year period consists of:

- Personnel Costs – Salaries and Fringe Benefits
- Operating Expenses:
  - Equipment: Computers, and computer work stations
  - Network Infrastructure
  - Office Equipment and Supplies
  - Assessment software subscription (Criterion)
  - Writing Instructional Software (Smarthinking)
  - Instructional Supplies and Software (Accutrack)
  - Advertising and Promotions
- Professional Development
- Miscellaneous Charges – Writing Lab Renovation and Maintenance

The budget for the QEP development covers a three-year period with an initial appropriation of $31,500 for the first year, rising to $140,825 and $144,625 for the second and third year, respectively. The total estimated expenditure for the QEP development is $316,950, representing 10.1% of the total QEP planned budget.

During the implementation phase, the University plans to spend $2,817,523 over the five-year period, starting with a first implementation year budget of $570,600 (plus $80,750 in 2010-11 for outfitting the writing lab) with an annual average of $564,518. The implementation expenditure represents 89.75% of the total QEP budget. During this period, personnel related expenses are expected to amount to $2,061,250. This represents the largest component of the budget, accounting for 65.66% of the total QEP budget. The University will spend $657,500 or 20.94% of total QEP budget, in operating
expenses for the QEP. The effect of inflation on the cost of subscription services is addressed by entering into five-year contractual agreements with the service providers. This eliminates the need to estimate the expected inflation over the implementation period.

Professional Development (PD) for the QEP personnel will cost $98,773 or 3.15% of the budget, over the five-year period. The QEP personnel for the PD consist of the GE 102 and GE 103 faculty and the Writing Lab instructors. The high personnel cost stems from hiring three additional full-time English faculty and 1.5 time equivalent Writing Lab instructors, to support the QEP program. A QEP Executive Director and a writing lab director/faculty will be appointed with each receiving an annual stipend of $15,000. In addition, a full-time Executive Assistant/instructor will be hired at an initial salary of $40,000, with a modest increase thereafter consistent with the state’s budget. Also, in the personnel expenses are provisions for an administrative assistant, stipend for the assessment team and student interns. Additionally, $25,000 ($15,000 in the first year, and $2,500, thereafter) will be spent on the remodeling and maintenance of the writing lab.

In summary, achieving the QEP goal of enhancing student writing skills will require a budget commitment of approximately $3.14m through the five-year implementation of the program. It is expected that 50% of the funding for the QEP will come from Title III grant funds, while the remaining half will be paid for with State funds.
### QEP Operating Budget for Development & Production

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**Percent Of Total:** 10.10%
## QEP Proposed Implementation Budget

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Percent of Grand Total: 1.00% 4.49% 7.18% 18.18% 17.30% 17.28% 17.27% 17.30% 100.00%
# QEP Budget Summary

## 2008-09 through 2015-16

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<th>Amount</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td>$3,139,473</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$2,061,250</td>
<td>65.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>$657,500</td>
<td>20.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>$98,773</td>
<td>3.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>$316,950</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>$2,817,523</td>
<td>89.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pie chart visualizes the distribution of the budget with the following breakdown:
- **Personnel**: 66%
- **Operations**: 21%
- **Professional Development**: 3%
- **Development**: 10%

63
B. PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The physical resources to be appropriated and utilized to implement the Quality Enhancement Plan at ECSU include three components: (1) a writing studio, which will be located in Johnson Hall; (2) an E-Lab; and (3) a Satellite Writing Lab, which will be located in the University library.

1. The Writing Studio

In order to enhance academic writing skills, and other related skill sets such as reading comprehension, critical/analytical thinking, oral presentation, collaborative writing and creative planning, a Writing Studio will become an integral part of enhancing academic writing at ECSU. The Writing Studio will be based upon the following enduring principles, as detailed in Section IV:

1) The Writing Studio will be a place for all students at the University; however, its use will be a planned requirement for students in GE 102 and GE 103.

2) The Writing Studio will be a place where students learn how to write more skillfully. It will not be thought of or operated as a place where only remedial help will be available. The preeminent goal of the studio will be to offer insight and practical recommendations in analyzing the specific ingredients of the writing process. The Writing Studio will enhance, inspire, and instruct.

3) The Writing Studio will be a place where innovative methods and theories of writing can be practiced and demonstrated.

4) The Writing Studio will be a place where graduate students and their instructors are welcomed partakers of the services offered by the Writing Studio staff. Instructors may schedule in-services for themselves and for their students and may even volunteer in the Writing Studio.

2. E-Lab

An electronic writing (E-Writing) lab will be made available that can be accessed by any ECSU student or faculty person seven days per week, twenty-four hours a day. The E-Lab will be operated under the direction of the Writing Studio Director. This E-Lab will be provided by the Norton Textbook Publishers from whom the GE 102 and GE 103 texts are purchased as well as SMARTTHINKING an online tutorial service.

3. Satellite Writing Lab

A satellite writing lab located on the second floor of the G. R. Little Library and open 7 days a week. The Director of the Writing Studio, Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, will monitor and supervise the operation of the library satellite writing lab, and will ascertain that related computer software is current.
IX. CONCLUSION

In keeping with the ECSU Mission Statement as well as the Strategic Plan, the QEP Core Committee developed avenues to gather input from the various University constituencies to gauge what they considered the greatest academic shortcomings of our students. The resulting information was invaluable in assisting the committee in pinpointing areas of need that could be considered in the development of ECSU’s QEP.

Results from surveys and discussions at focus group meetings with faculty, students, alumni and community leaders indicated that one of the areas of weakness in our students’ academic preparation is writing skills. Determining how to best address this concern was vigorously discussed, contemplated, and debated for many months with input from all University constituencies. A topic for our QEP was determined through an electronic survey of five choices provided via the ECSU community. The topic selected by a majority of the respondents was: Think! Write! Revolutionize!

After many months of research and discussion, we have developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that we believe will yield positive growth for our students in the area of academic writing.

Entering freshmen take a placement test that determines whether they will take remedial English or are ready for first year college English instruction. As a result, ECSU’s QEP will begin in the freshmen English classes and continue throughout the student’s academic career at ECSU. All first year English courses will be restructured to strengthen and reinforce academic writing skills. The Writing Studio will be established to support course work and to serve as an additional writing resource for freshmen students as well as students and instructors across all majors. The Writing Studio will offer computer programs that strengthen and assess academic writing skills: SMARTTHINKING and Criterion. Accutrack will be used to issue student satisfaction surveys for the Writing Studio as well as provide data in terms of usage. At the end of the sophomore year, students’ academic writing skills will be assessed again to determine individual progress.

The QEP is one avenue that the ECSU faculty is developing to refine and strengthen the academic skills of our students. Our vision is to continue to be a leading partner in enhancing educational, cultural, and economic opportunities as we prepare students for viable citizenship in northeastern North Carolina, the state, nation, and the world. Our Strategic plan and mission clearly wish to achieve this vision, and the QEP, with all its components, will assist us in achieving that—one replete with many paths and, therefore, many opportunities for advancement. In essence, our students will learn to Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery.
REFERENCES


Educational Testing Services (n.d.) Criterion online writing evaluation. Retrieved March 19, 2010 from http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.435c0b5cc7bd0ae7015d9510c3921509/?vgnextoid=b47d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD.


Writing New Paths to Discovery

APPENDICES
APPENDIX I: TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: PRAXIS I Composite (2004-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRAXIS I Tests</th>
<th>Students Taking All 3 Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: SAT Score Report for 2006

2006 Average SAT Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>ECSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>503 495</td>
<td>518 513</td>
<td>497 485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>421</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National
NC
ECSU
Figure 2: SAT Score Report for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 502</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC: 495</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECSU: 418</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: SAT Score Report for 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Critical Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 502</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC: 496</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECSU: 414</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: ECSU’s Placement Test Results (Students who Fail/Place into Developmental Courses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GE 100 Grammar and Usage</th>
<th>GE 106 College Reading</th>
<th>GE 109 Intro to College Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004, n=633</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>19.27</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2005, n=483</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>20.08</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006, n=557</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007, n=673</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>26.30</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008, n=699</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Faculty/Staff Observation - Overall students’ ________ skills are.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educ. &amp; Psych</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math, Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Ed/Adv.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are reported. Values for the question are as follows: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent
Table 4: Students' Observation - Overall students' ________ skills are.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educ. &amp; Psych</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math, Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.67 (n=18)</td>
<td>3.05 (n=18)</td>
<td>2.78 (n=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Ed/Adv.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2.66 (n=126)</td>
<td>2.88 (n=126)</td>
<td>2.76 (n=126)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are reported. Values for the question are as follows: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent

Table 5: Faculty/Staff Observation - To what extent are ________ skills important to overall academic success of students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educ. &amp; Psych</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math, Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Ed/Adv.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are reported. Values for the question are as follows: 1=Not at all important, 2=Somewhat important, 3=Important, 4=Very important
Table 6: Students' Observation - To what extent are ________ skills important to overall academic success of students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed. &amp; PSY</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Hum.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Ed.</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are reported. Values for the question are as follows: 1=not at all important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important

Table 7: Faculty/Staff Observation - To what extent are problems with ________ associated with academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed. &amp; PSY</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Hum.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Ed/Adv.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Students’ Observation - To what extent are problems with ________ associated with academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
<th>Oral Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed. &amp; PSY</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Hum.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean scores are reported. Values for the question are as follows: 1=not at all, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=always
APPENDIX II: QEP PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Elizabeth City State University
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Preparation for Development

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted six weeks in advance of the on-site review by the Commission on Colleges, describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined issue or issues directly related to improving student learning. The development of the QEP involves significant participation by the institution’s academic community. The plan should be focused and succinct.

Call for Focused QEP White Papers
Theme: Academic Writing
Preparation Guidelines

BACKGROUND

In August, 2008, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee began its work. After examining key historical documents (e.g., ECSU Mission Statement, ECSU Strategic Plan, UNC Tomorrow Initiative, results of the College Placement Tests, SAT Scores), conducting a series of Open Forums involving the entire ECSU community, analyzing the results of a QEP Survey that was completed by a large number of ECSU constituencies (including the Faculty Senate), presentations, discussions and solicitation of topics for the QEP during faculty institutes, and engaging in discussions of the QEP survey results with members of the QEP Committee, a consensus emerged from the ECSU community that the QEP topic would focus on the enhancement of students’ academic writing skills/competencies. The proposed plan will emphasize improving academic writing skills in redesigned freshman year courses taken during the first and second semesters. The specific courses considered for redesigning are GE 102 English Composition and Grammar and GE 103 English Composition and Vocabulary.

The University community has selected Academic Writing as the theme for the ECSU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that is part of the reaffirmation of accreditation process. The QEP will be a focused course of action addressing one or more issues related to improving student learning. The QEP will be a five year plan with the requirement that an Impact Report in the fifth year will demonstrate the effectiveness of the plan and associated activities. The QEP will be submitted to SACS in early September 2010.

The QEP Committee has collected and synthesized various suggestions for the focus for our Quality Enhancement Plan. The Committee is requesting that individuals submit a two-page abstract describing a plan that will enhance student learning in the area of academic writing. A specific tentative topic is Enhancing Students’ Academic Writing Skills through a Redesigned First Year Writing Program.
The Committee will evaluate submitted abstracts/proposals and select the best five (5) that merit further development. Faculty whose abstracts are selected will be asked to develop white papers that will more fully examine the potential for success for the writing emphasis as the ECSU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). A stipend of $1,000 will be awarded to faculty who develop the successful themes/topics.

Objective for QEP Theme and Topic

The key objective for this more detailed development in a white paper format is to gain additional insight into why the topic or theme is important and relevant for ECSU and to be able to assess the likelihood that a viable QEP is possible with this topic or theme. Following the selection of a theme or topic, the QEP Committee will begin development of the full Quality Enhancement Plan. The QEP Committee will use the corresponding white paper as the starting point for development of the QEP.

Strong white papers will accomplish the following:

- Identify a clear theme or topic that is important for improving student learning at ECSU
- Provide an opportunity for meaningful tasks to support the objectives of the theme or topic
- Provide a clear link between proposed activities and student learning
- Review relevant research on the topic, identify best practices, and recommend effective/model evaluation and assessment strategies.
- Identify methods and approaches for measuring the effects of the tasks or activities on student learning
- Have a good structure for an assessment plan
- Suggest an appropriate management structure that will be responsible for implementation
- Identify the scope of resources (including personnel, funding, facilities, and technology) needed to conduct the various activities
- Suggest the nature of the leadership and resources that are required for expanding this proposal into a full Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to be submitted in September 2010.
- Provide a bibliographical listing of references consulted and works cited in the paper.
- Use the APA style guidelines for writing research paper.

It has been suggested that the academic writing theme be further strengthened by a university-wide Writing Studio that will be designed to support and enhance students’ writing competencies from the first year through graduation and beyond.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee at Elizabeth City State University seeks focused research papers that develop the QEP topic Enhancing Students’ Academic Writing Skills through Redesigned First Year Courses, but will consider topics with a related academic writing theme. The QEP Committee will use the focused white papers as background/support information in drafting the narrative for the QEP document.
APPENDIX III: QEP IN THE NEWS

Think! Write! Revolutionize
By Ameshia Holland

QEP! QEP! QEP! That's the focus of Elizabeth City State University, and now it should be your focus. Many students, faculty and staff are involved in creating the QEP and they serve on different committees. Each committee is involved in a different aspect of the QEP. The committees include the QEP Core Committee and the QE Subcommittees: Branding, budgeting, marketing and writing. The QEP is a course of action to improve student learning in a specific area and ECSU is addressing writing.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaccreditation process that affirms the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to the enhancement of the quality of higher education. Student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Developing a QEP as apart of the accreditation process is an opportunity for ECSU to enhance overall institutional quality, and effectiveness by focusing on an issue that the university considers important to improving student learning.

Academic writing was chosen by faculty and staff as an area of concern in ESCU students. The goal of the QEP is to improve student writing in EVERY major. Starting as freshmen, Composition and Literature 102 will be an intensive writing course. With the help of a Writing Studio, students will get help "with writing assignments an professors will be able to better help their students with certain issues with academic writing programs' that will point out the student weaknesses.

Well, what is SACS and why should I care? Reaccreditation signifies that ECSU is worthy of granting degrees and that we earn degrees of value.

SACS reaffirmation of public and private schools over the past 100 years holds its primary mission as the improvement of education by recognizing and encouraging institutional quality through accreditation.

Dr. Barbara Johnson is the Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and in charge of the Core Committee and has devoted her time to this reaffirmation. Dr. Johnson, the Provost and Chancellor Gilchrist they are making this their top priority. "We're hoping to get everyone involved. We want our students to be more. and the QEP will help with that," she said.

Dr. Chantele MacPhee, who is the Chairperson of the English Department and Dr. John Luton are writing the QEP and have one extensive research for the best literature to implement academic writing all majors. MacPhee said, "The QEP will soon be everywhere. On the computer screens, on posters, Marketing committees are really working hard."

Faculty are not the only people who have contributed to the QEP. Some students have contributed to -the QEP and they are our voice. They have been very active in the committees. You, too, can have a say by completing surveys or submitting feedback and ideas in tile QEP suggestion box located on the ECSU website.

After the fall of 2011, the QEP will be well integrated into ECSU's curriculum, if SACS approves the QEP plan. Everyone is hoping and very confident that it will be approved.

So if asked what should you know about the QEP?
The meaning: Quality Enhancement Plan
The slogan: "Think! Write! Revolutionize!"
The focus: Academic writing
Who Is Involved: Everyone, including the Elizabeth City community.
APPENDIX IV: SAMPLE OF FINAL EXAMINATION WRITING TOPIC

Sample of Dr. Elizabeth Byrne’s GE 102—English Composition and Grammar Final Examination writing topic on the QEP—based upon their research and knowledge of the QEP.

GE 102—Composition & Grammar
Dr. Elizabeth Byrne
Spring 2010

Take-Home Final Exam (100 points)

For the final exam, you will have to conduct some research around campus. This involves seeking out information on the Quality Enhancement Plan’s motto:

Think! Write! Revolutionize! Once you find out what this motto has to do with ECSU, you can begin your essay.

Write an introduction in which you give an overview of what this program is and does. Then, for the body of the essay, successively address each word of the motto, sharing the information you’ve gathered; quoting individuals would be an especially nice touch. Finally, conclude with a summary and a look to the future.

You will be graded not only on the content and organization, but also on grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Be sure to proofread and make corrections to your essay before submitting it. The essay must be typed.

Due: Day of the final exam, if not before.
APPENDIX V: SYLLABUS FOR GE 102

ECSU
ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY
Elevate Higher. Emerge Stronger.

Elizabeth City, NC
Department of Language, Literature and Communication
English 102—Composition and Grammar I
Credit Hours: 3

Class Location: Johnson Hall

Professor: [Name]
Office: [Office]
Office Hours: [Hours]
Phone: [Phone]
Email: [Email]

Required Texts:
A College-level dictionary (Webster's New World, Oxford English Dictionary

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will emphasize the development of basic and intermediate writing skills, including mechanics, sentence clarity, coherence, organization and vocabulary. Some emphasis will be placed on the role of revision in the writing process. Composition I will seek to develop an understanding of the connections between writing and reasoning, writing and culture, and style and rhetorical contexts. Text analysis and discussion will also be intertwined with all aspects of the course material. Topics include narration, cause-effect analysis, process analysis, argument, and oral presentations. Students will write a minimum of 20 pages, including at least one essay requiring research and documentation.

GENERAL COURSE COMPETENCIES AND GOALS:
GE 102 functions as a transition from high-school to college by introducing students to the processes and practices of successful academic writing in the contexts of disciplinary audiences, genres, clarity and usage. This course will build on what students know how to do successfully by providing them with further experience in various forms of academic writing, and with practice in the areas of rhetorical strategies, genres, and formal features of presentation and organization (both at the global and at the sentence level). In addition to informal and formal writing, students will analyze the successful rhetorical features of their writing, and analyze readings from the perspective of a writer.
Thus the course has structured components which focus on the processes of successful writing and on grammatical competencies.

At part of a larger campus-wide focus on student success, the assignments for this course focus on:

**Consideration of students beliefs and values**—Literacy narrative (Essay I)

**Establish an environment that promotes active learning and stimulating interaction among students**—Workshop style class where students learn actively and collaboratively in groups

**Problem-Based Curriculum**—Students create original analysis, description, and analysis in Profile assignment (Essay II) and in Textual Analysis (Essay III)

By focusing on issues in society, community and culture, the course provides learning experiences on the basis of real life situations.

**SPECIFIC COURSE COMPETENCIES AND GOALS:**

Students who successfully complete the course should gain the following skills and/or knowledge:

1. Demonstrate the ability to write succinct, grammatically correct sentences as well as coherent paragraphs;
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize common writing errors (e.g., comma splices, subject-verb agreement) and identify parts of speech;
3. Explain what plagiarism is and remedy issues associated with plagiarism.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

I: Introduction; review  
II: Grammar/mechanics  
III: Remembered Event/Narration  
IV: Process Analysis  
V: Cause-Effect Analysis  
VI: Comparison Contrast  
VII: Argument: Taking a Position  
VIII: Research Methods & Strategies  
IX: Literary interpretation

**COURSE GRADING COMPONENTS:**

**Prerequisites:** None

**Explanation of Assignments:**

- Students will write a minimum of 20 pages in this course, excluding essay exams. They may include the following types: Remembered Event/Narration, Process Analysis, Cause-Effect Analysis, Comparison/Contrast, Argument: Taking a Position (as part of the research Paper). Some instructors may also require an interpretive essay on literature. Individual instructors may reorder
some of the assigned topics.

- Students will complete assigned exercises, including exercises on grammar and mechanics from the *Norton Field Guide to Writing*.
- The student will read assignments from the text and other sources for discussion and evaluation purposes.
- The student will participate in peer review sessions, reading essays and the revision process.
- Students are expected to do all of the assigned reading in the texts. Students are responsible for information covered in the assigned reading.
- There will be a mid-term and final examination, which will cover the assigned reading and class work. Exams will measure writing and critical reasoning skills.
- All class work is due on the date indicated by the instructor. Failure to comply with this request will result in a reduction in the grade of 10% per day late until the grade itself is an F for the assignment.

**Grading Scale:**

**See attached rubric.**

**Percentages:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Examination</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-portfolio</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance and promptness are required. In this class, **students are permitted no more than four absences for the semester.** Please see the policy below regarding absences. In this course, students themselves must be present to submit papers, edit assignments, and substantially revise materials. I do not want materials sent via email. Please see me when, and if, special problems or circumstances arise. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for all work missed and current assignments upon your return. Students who are ill or have medical emergencies will be excused with proper documentation; however the documentation should be submitted in a timely manner, NOT at the end of the course. Students who are absent from exams without an excuse will receive a grade of F (0) for the missed exam. Communication with your professor is the best policy in matters involving absences and/or illness.

**Note:** Arriving late or departing early will also count toward your absences. This means that after the class roll is taken, you are late and can be counted absent.

**Note:** For any class you miss, you will not be able to make up any quiz or test or required presentation; you will still be responsible for completing (on time) any work that was assigned during the class that you missed and for handing in (on time) any work that is due at the time of the class that you missed.
Note: All cell phones are to be turned on silent mode or off during class time.

**Drop Policy:**

A $5 processing fee is charged for dropping courses after the drop/add period is over. Please see the ECSU catalog for further information (page 33).

**Participation and Preparedness:**

I expect you to participate in class discussion, read material assigned in class, and participate in group work. Do not have private or side conversations in class (oral or written). If you need clarification about what we are doing or about course requirements, ask your professor or ask someone after the class is over.

**Instructor Late:**

If your instructor is ever late to class, you need wait no more than 15 minutes before leaving.

**Missed Assignments / Late Work:**

All essays are due at the beginning of class on the specified dates; any essay submitted after that time is late and will be deducted 10% per day late until the essay receives an F. Make two copies of your work (in case it gets lost) and keep all work for the course until the end of the semester and the grade has been submitted. Students who miss quizzes and/or exams without a valid excuse will not have the opportunity to make up this portion of the class work.

**Plagiarism:**

Students who submit plagiarized material, without proper and responsible documentation and/or attribution, will receive grades of 0 for the material submitted. They will also receive an F in my course. Any other punishment on campus for plagiarism will also be taken. Other forms of plagiarism include collusion, cheating on an examination or quiz and impersonation. According to the student catalogue, “incidents of academic dishonesty will result in punitive measures ranging from issuing a grade of failure to expulsion from the University.”

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The examples and definitions below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The following list is merely illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.

- **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. It includes paraphrasing or summarizing the works of another person without acknowledgement, including submitting another student’s work as one’s own.

- **CHEATING:** This involves giving or receiving unauthorized assistance before, during or after an examination.
• **UNAUTHORIZED COLLABORATION:** Submission for academic credit for a work, product or part thereof, represented as being one’s own effort that has been developed in substantial collaboration with or without assistance from another person or source is a violation.

• **FALSIFICATION:** It is a violation to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise or assignment.

• **MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS:** It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases where there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable or even required.

**Students’ Appeal of Grade:**

According to the catalogue, “a student, after conference with the instructor and Department Chairperson may present in writing to the Chairman of the Academic Standards and Credits Committee an appeal regarding the course grade given, within one year from the date the original grade was received. No change of grade is made, however, except as a result of the recommendation rendered by the Committee to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who then authorizes the change.”

**Students with Special Needs:**

Elizabeth City State University has a policy that any person who is disabled may not be discriminated against on the basis of his or her disability as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Center for Special Needs Students provides an academic support program designed to assist students with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. In order to receive services students must contact the Coordinator of the Center for Special Needs Students at (252) 335-3527 Room 106-A Moore Hall or Campus Box 826 at ECSU. Any student in this class who has a disability that may prevent full demonstration of ability should contact the instructor personally before the end of the first week of classes so that the discussion can be held regarding accommodations necessary to endure full participation and facilitate individual educational opportunities.
Draft Position Description for Executive Director of the QEP

Elizabeth City State University
Division of Academic Affairs
Position Description
Executive Director of ECSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Primary Purpose of Organizational Unit

The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for administering the academic programs of the University. ECSU offers a variety of instructional programs which provide students with opportunities for exposure to different academic areas. Organizationally, Academic Affairs consists of four schools, sixteen departments, and thirteen other programs including the library. The Division offers curricula leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Arts. Our Graduate Program offers Master’s Degrees in Elementary Education, Biology, Mathematics and School Administration.

The Division is also responsible for implementing the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as a requirement by SACS accreditation. ECSU’s QEP is entitled “Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery” and is designed to enhance academic writing skills while improving reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills.

Primary Purpose of Position

The primary responsibility of this position will be to oversee and manage all aspects of the Quality Enhancement Plan, including the QEP Writing Studio. The Director will serve as liaison with the University community in implementing the QEP as approved by SACS. The position will also be responsible for compiling data for reporting and assessment purposes.

Immediate Supervisor

Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Immediate Subordinates

Director of the Writing Studio

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The specific duties and responsibilities of the position are outlined below:

- Implement the Quality Enhancement Plan as approved by SACS;
Chair the QEP Advisory/Implementation Team;

Develop short and long-term goals for accomplishing objective as specified in QEP;

Provide oversight for QEP budget spending;

Develop and monitor outcome measures;

Consult with academic departments and engage the leadership of the administration where appropriate;

Serve as a resource for information exchange on services and/or programs;

Make formal presentations relating to the QEP as necessary;

Collect, analyze and disseminate data periodically to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment;

Supervise and Approve Activities Submitted by the Director of the Writing Studio;

Maintain contact with the International Writing Center Association and WC (Writing Center) Online in collaboration with the Director of the Writing Studio;

Remain abreast of current methods and trends in teaching academic writing skills; and

Represent, along with the Director of the Writing Studio, the University during internal and external conferences, and meetings relating to SACS-QEP.

Qualifications:

A minimum of 30 hours of post-graduate coursework in Instructional Design or related area, with experience in higher education teaching and program administration.

Approvals:

Chairperson ____________________________  Date ____________
Dean ____________________________  Date ____________
Provost and Vice Chancellor ____________________________  Date ____________
APPENDIX VII: POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR DIRECTOR OF THE WRITING STUDIO

Elizabeth City State University
Division of Academic Affairs
Position Description
Director of the Writing Studio

Primary Purpose of Organizational Unit

The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for administering the academic programs of the University. ECSU offers a variety of instructional programs which provide students with opportunities for exposure to different academic areas. Organizationally, Academic Affairs consists of four schools, sixteen departments, and thirteen other programs including the library. The Division offers curricula leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Arts. Our Graduate Program offers Master's Degrees in Elementary Education, Biology, Mathematics and School Administration.

The Division is also responsible for implementing the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as a requirement by SACS accreditation. ECSU’s QEP is entitled “Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery” and is designed to enhance academic writing skills while improving reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills.

Primary Purpose of Position

The primary responsibility of this position will be to oversee and manage all aspects of the QEP Writing Studio. The individual will also be responsible for compiling data for reporting and assessment purposes in conjunction with the Executive Director of the QEP.

Immediate Supervisor

Executive Director of the QEP

Immediate Subordinates

Administrative Support Associate

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The specific duties and responsibilities of the position are outlined below.

- Implement the Quality Enhancement Plan as approved by SACS (80%).
- Chair the QEP Advisory Group
- Develop short and long-term goals for accomplishing objectives as specified in QEP
• Consult with academic departments and engage the leadership of the administration where appropriate;
• Serve as a resource for information exchange on services and/or programs
• Make formal presentations relating to the QEP as necessary
• Oversee and manage all aspects of the QEP Writing Studio
• Maintain contact with the International Writing Center Association and WC Online
• Remain abreast of current methods and trends in teaching academic writing skills
• Represent the University during internal and external conferences, meetings relating to SACS-QEP

**Qualifications**

Doctorate in field or a related area with relevant professional experience. Applicant must have a minimum of 18 hours of graduate coursework in the specified discipline, with a minimum of three years college level teaching.

**Approvals:**

Chairperson _________________________________ Date __________
Dean _________________________________ Date __________
Provost and Vice Chancellor __________________________ Date __________
APPENDIX VIII: POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ASSOCIATE/ WRITING STUDIO

Elizabeth City State University
Division of Academic Affairs

Position Description
Administrative Support Associate/Writing Studio

Primary Purpose of Organizational Unit
The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for administering the academic programs of the University. ECSU offers a variety of instructional programs which provide students with opportunities for exposure to different academic areas. Organizationally, Academic Affairs consists of four schools, sixteen departments, and thirteen other programs including the library. The Division offers curricula leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Arts. Our Graduate Program offers Master’s Degrees in Elementary Education, Biology, Mathematics and School Administration.

The Division is also responsible for implementing the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as a requirement by SACS accreditation. ECSU’s QEP is entitled “Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery” and is designed to enhance academic writing skills while improving reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills.

Primary Purpose of Position
The primary responsibility of this position will be to support the daily functioning of the QEP Writing Studio: opening and closing procedures, answering phones and e-mails, and maintaining daily/weekly calendars online using ACCUTRAK software. Responsibilities include managing and organizing data, preparing minutes of meetings, and organizing instructional materials.

Immediate Supervisor
Director of the Writing Studio

Immediate Subordinates
None

Position Duties and Responsibilities
The specific duties and responsibilities of the position are outlined below.

- Opening and Closing Procedures for Writing Studio.
• Maintaining and Organizing Tutoring Schedules and Appointments Online
• Answering Phone calls and e-mails on a regular basis
• Organizing instructional materials
• Maintaining online databases and archives
• Developing reports in relation to the Writing Studio as needed;
• Serving as a resource for information exchange on services and/or programs

Qualifications

Four year undergraduate degree in a writing-intensive field. Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Computer competencies and ability to organize and retrieve data is required for successful performance of the job.

Approvals:

Chairperson ___________________________ Date ______________
Dean _______________________________ Date ______________
Provost and Vice Chancellor _______________ Date _____________
APPENDIX IX: POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Elizabeth City State University
Division of Academic Affairs
Position Description
Executive Assistant

Primary Purpose of Organizational Unit
The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for administering the academic programs of the University. ECSU offers a variety of instructional programs which provide students with opportunities for exposure to different academic areas. Organizationally, Academic Affairs consists of four schools, sixteen departments, and thirteen other programs including the library. The Division offers curricula leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Arts. Our Graduate Program offers Master’s Degrees in Elementary Education, Biology, Mathematics and School Administration.

The Division is also responsible for implementing the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as a requirement by SACS accreditation. ECSU’s QEP is entitled “Think! Write! Revolutionize! Writing New Paths to Discovery” and is designed to enhance academic writing skills while improving reading comprehension and critical/analytical skills.

Primary Purpose of Position
The primary responsibility of this position will be to support the implementation of the Writing Studio and the assessment of the Writing Studio for the QEP. In addition, this position will support the gathering of assessment materials relevant to the QEP.

Immediate Supervisor
Executive Director of the QEP

Immediate Subordinates
None

Position Duties and Responsibilities
The specific duties and responsibilities of the position are outlined below.

- Supporting the Assessment Work of the Writing Studio under the direction of the Executive Director and Writing Studio Director
- Maintain regular hours in the Writing Studio and in the Office of the Executive Director of the QEP
• Taking minutes of meetings and organizing and gathering data as needed. Assist in the successful operation of the Writing Studio by becoming familiar with its day to day workings and procedures. Answering Phone Calls and e-mails on a regular basis. Maintaining online databases and helping with the writing of assessment reports on an on-going basis
• Develop reports in relation to the Writing Studio for the QEP as needed;
• Serve as a resource for information exchange on services and/or programs

**Qualifications**

Four year undergraduate degree in a writing-intensive field. Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Computer competencies and ability to organize and retrieve data is required for successful performance of the job.

**Approvals:**

Chairperson ___________________________ Date ______________
Dean ___________________________ Date ______________
Provost and Vice Chancellor ___________________________ Date ______________
APPENDIX X: QEP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Chancellor

Provost, Vice Chancellor

Associate Vice Chancellor

Executive Director, QEP

QEP Implementation Team/Advisory Committee

Executive Assistant

Writing Studio Director

Administrative Support Assistant

Writing Studio Personnel