

I. Title and a brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

Project Renaissance: A Medical Model of Intervention to Promote Student Success for Under-prepared Students

In compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Core Requirement 2.12 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Florida State College at Jacksonville began this critical undertaking by holding numerous campus and collegewide meetings to discuss institutional effectiveness data. As one of the first institutions to develop a QEP, the College struggled without specific guidelines but quickly realized that the primary institutional challenge was the growing number of new students unprepared for college-level work. These students had an exceptionally high dropout rate and course failure rate. [Institutional data](#) revealed that approximately 70% of entering students needed remediation (hereafter referred to as "college preparatory") and that more than 50% of these students dropped out of college within the first year. In addition, the failure rate in the area of college preparatory math was more than 50%.

II. Initial Goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The QEP had three major goals for the college preparatory student population:

1. Increase the first-time-in-college (FTIC) fall-to-fall retention rate by 5% per year
2. Increase course passing rates (success rate) by 5% per year
3. Increase the program completion rate by 5% per year

A collegewide [QEP Leadership Team](#) led [45 initiatives](#) embedded within five overarching areas:

- **Articulation with high schools:** Because so many high school graduates were coming to college unprepared, the initiatives in this area were designed to help align the student learning outcomes in math, English, and reading for high school graduates to increase college-readiness. In addition, new communication methods were needed for high school students, teachers, administrators and parents.
- **Student intake processes:** Our data revealed that students were not satisfied with the admissions and placement processes and were not completing the registration process. We therefore focused initiatives on improving the students' experience during these activities.
- **Student communication processes:** Data revealed that our communications with new students did not assist them in making effective decisions about academic goals and course selection. These initiatives included specific changes in print and electronic student communications and resources.

- **Academic processes:** Data revealed a high dropout rate and failure rate for college preparatory students. These initiatives included course design improvements, use of assessments to improve student learning, and faculty professional development.

- **Research/evaluative processes:** The QEP leadership team realized it was taking on complex, politically sensitive, and expensive issues. Initiatives were designed to maintain momentum, provide ongoing communication, and acknowledge that initiative changes would occur throughout the process as the College learned of the [impact of initiatives](#). In effect, the initiatives in this area were our iterative process in action.

III. Significant Changes Made to the QEP

After reviewing the first year of QEP implementation, the College adapted the manner in which it managed complex multi-campus projects. The collegewide QEP leadership team remained intact to ensure consistency, but five [campus-based teams](#) were created for more direct implementation of strategies and activities. QEP initiatives changed as a result of learning from the results of implementation, and will be discussed further in Section IV.

IV. Description of the QEP’s Direct Impact on Student Learning

Achievement of goals and outcomes

The macro outcomes of the three major QEP goals for college preparatory students are summarized below:

Goal	Entered Fall 2003	Entered Fall 2008	% Change
Goal 1: Increase Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate 5% per year	48.0%	49.0%	+1.0%
Goal 2: Increase Success Rate 5% per year	Entered Fall 2003	Entered Fall 2008	
Pass Rate Basic* College Preparatory Mathematics Courses	47.9%	57.5%	+9.6%
Pass Rate Basic College Preparatory Reading Courses	81.4%	83.6%	+2.2%
Pass Rate Basic College Preparatory Language (Writing) Courses	83.2%	86.0%	+2.8%
Pass Rate Upper Level* College Preparatory Mathematics Courses	52.0%	68.9%	+16.9%
Pass Rate Upper Level College Preparatory Reading Courses	71.7%	74.2%	+2.5%
Pass Rate Upper Level College Preparatory Language (Writing) Courses	71.9%	80.9%	+9.0%
Pass Rate College Credit Courses by College Preparatory Students	52.0%	61.1%	+9.1%
	Entered Fall 1999	Entered Fall 2004	
Goal 3: Increase 4-year Program Completion Rate by 5%	15.0%	14.0%	-1%

*Basic level college preparatory courses are Elementary Algebra, Introduction to Composition A, and Reading Skills. Upper level college preparatory courses are Intermediate Algebra, Introduction to Composition B, and Introduction to Reading Techniques

Course passing rates (success rates) include passing the course (“C” or above) and passing a common exit exam designed to assess achievement of college-ready competencies in reading, English, and mathematics. College preparatory mathematics has traditionally been the area of greatest remedial need. From Fall 2003 to Fall 2008, student success in the lower level college preparatory math (Elementary Algebra) increased from 47.9% to 57.5%. In Intermediate Algebra, the higher level college preparatory math course, the success rate increased from 52.0% to 68.9%. Increases in college

preparatory reading and language (writing) were similarly realized. Regression analysis was used to study [degree/certificate completion trends](#) for the college preparatory student population term-by-term for the five-year period Fall 2004 through Fall 2008 (inclusive). The linear trend with the strongest significance ($p < .01$) was observed for students who required college preparatory mathematics only.

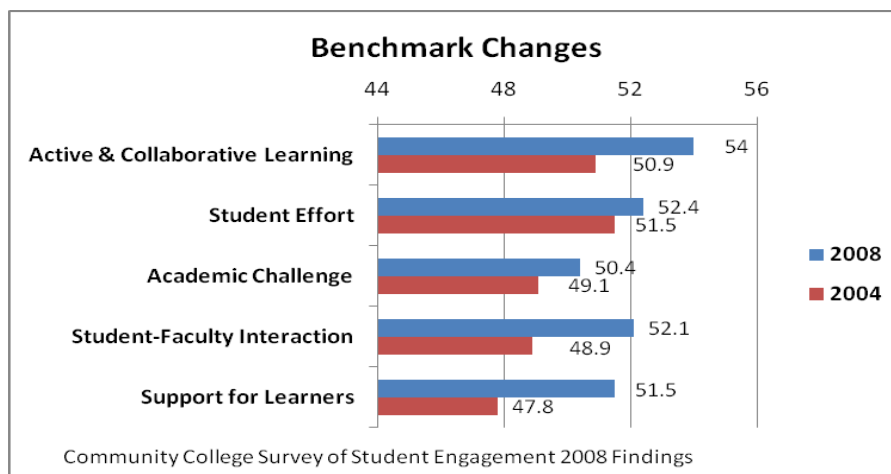
While the ambitious goals of improving retention and success by 5% per year were not achieved, the College community experienced meaningful learning regarding the academic curriculum, the student learning environment and student support services. The institution documented and disseminated data on the performance of college preparatory students by measuring persistence rates; student learning improvement by pass rates on standardized college preparatory state exit exams (including granular student learning outcomes) and success rates in college preparatory courses; behavioral changes by enhanced program completion rates; and students' perceptions of the student learning environment and student support services by analyzing national and local survey results. Collegewide and campus-based meetings were held multiple times each semester to provide updates, solicit feedback on student progress and generate new ideas. This process is part of an iterative cycle of learning, change, and adaptation, in which the academic environment and student support services continue to be enhanced. The impact of these changes is difficult to prove because of the difference in student cohorts and other intervening variables that impact student success; however, the College believes that these changes will improve the overall student experience and student learning outcomes.

Academic Environment

The following includes highlights of the most significant institutional learning and change that occurred as a result of the QEP. The College administered the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#), based on the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), in order to assess its effectiveness in key facets of the academic environment. The CCSSE was administered to a randomly selected group of college preparatory and college-level class sections. In analyzing the 2004 CCSSE results for the [Florida consortium](#) and against [other institutions of our size](#), the College community realized that action was necessary to improve the student learning environment, especially in the areas of Active/Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners. Institutional initiatives include faculty professional development, use of master students (tutors), diagnostic and prescriptive software, use of exit exam data, and requirement of a student life skills (first-year experience) course.

Research in best practices to enhance instruction, particularly for the college preparatory population, has led to the development of a number of faculty professional development programs which promote active learning strategies. The

College now offers a full range of [professional development certificate programs](#) that address instruction in online, classroom and hybrid modalities, and thus far, [over 800 faculty members have participated](#). Examination of student perception of the [CCSSE benchmarks](#) of effective educational practice over the course of the QEP has shown not only that the College exceeds national averages in these benchmarks, but also that there has been marked progress over time.



Research and professional development in active learning and educational technology have led to some effective strategies in college preparatory instruction, particularly in the area of mathematics. In 2006, college preparatory faculty began using successful former mathematics students as “Master Students” in a modified supplemental instruction method. Master Students were available in the classroom and in the Learning Assistance Center to serve as peer tutors both for content assistance as well as overall learning strategies. They were also instrumental when the College explored a lab-assisted model of mathematics instruction utilizing sophisticated diagnostic/prescriptive software. The diagnostic assessment indicates topical areas students need to address. Master Students and College faculty monitor student progress with online materials and offer individualized or small group instruction on challenging topics. In an iterative process, faculty members identify student learning outcomes where students experience the most difficulty and adjust the curriculum for future students. In comparison with Elementary Algebra taught in a traditional classroom, the lab-assisted approach led to a 5% increase in course success rate and a 12% increase in the pass rate on the state exit exam in Fall 2008. This success has led to the College’s commitment to develop Academic Skills Centers for lab-assisted college preparatory instruction at each campus.

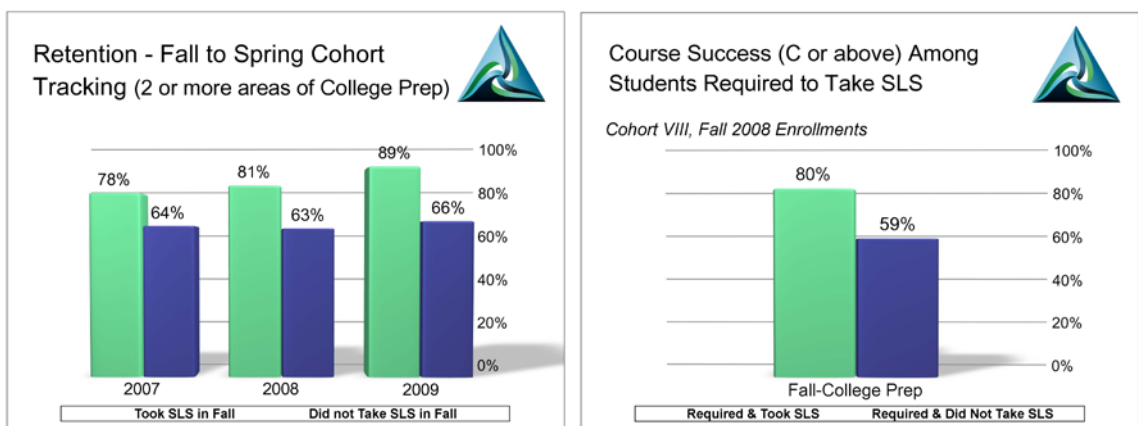
Math faculty members also have the ability to receive [reports on individual performance](#) of students who fail the exit exam in Elementary Algebra. These reports are used to help remediate students at the end of the term before the students make a second attempt at the exit exam. The College plans to capture these data in an aggregate manner in the future in order

to analyze trends and make improvements to the curriculum. Math faculty members have also created an optional one-credit course for students who have failed the exit exam by one or two points or who earned a 68% or 69% grade in Elementary Algebra. The students enroll in this four-week course, and then subsequently enroll as a cohort in Intermediate Algebra with the same instructor. This pilot was very successful: 95% of participating students successfully completed the course. The instructors observed that the instructional techniques of mastery learning, time-on-task, practice exit exams, and the use of a master student formed a successful remediation program. Faculty members are now piloting a similar course for students in Basic Math. Furthermore, after analyzing student data, faculty raised the cut score on the Elementary Algebra state exit exam, increased the minimum CPT placement score for Intermediate Algebra, and instituted a prerequisite of completion of reading and English college preparatory courses prior to enrollment in social science courses. Increasing prerequisites and minimum passing scores led to more prepared and successful students in future courses.

The QEP, moreover, supported the development of a number of college preparatory courses under the SIRIUS Academics project. These courses were developed by content expert faculty working closely with highly qualified instructional designers. Each course undergoes a rigorous review process for adherence to outcome-based standards using integrated assessments to enhance learning. The media-rich courses can be used in any instructional modality: face-to-face, hybrid, or online. The College has tracked student success in classes using the SIRIUS course materials and has noted a particular success in sections taught by adjunct faculty. In addition, a focus on the SIRIUS college preparatory mathematics has led to the alignment of course curriculum to the state exit exam student learning outcomes and modification of the diagnostic/prescriptive software.

One of the most significant changes made as a result of the QEP was the implementation of a mandatory Student Life Skills (SLS) course for college preparatory students. After implementing the [SLS requirement](#), the College changed three aspects of this course: the student population required to enroll, the timeframe in which students must complete the course, and the faculty who can teach the course. Initially, students taking two or more areas of college preparatory instruction were required to take SLS within their first two semesters of enrollment. It soon became clear that this course was valuable both in the retention and success of this at-risk population. For those students required to take SLS, fall-to-spring retention increased 10% to 20% if they enrolled during their first semester (see below). A consistent pattern of increased student success was also noted in other courses in which SLS students enrolled. As a result, the policy has been expanded to include *all* college preparatory students in their first semester of enrollment. This policy has contributed to a total combined increase of 321% in SLS enrollment from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009. In addition, faculty are required to complete SLS training

prior to teaching this course and are urged to establish learning communities with other faculty teaching college preparatory classes for better integration of course material, monitoring student academic progress, and timely intervention.



The College community believes that faculty development, the SLS course, and master students were instrumental in improving the College’s CCSSE scores. Furthermore, math faculty members exerted a concentrated effort to use assessment results to improve the math curriculum and accompanying diagnostic/prescriptive software. The combination of these efforts has improved the student learning environment for current and future students.

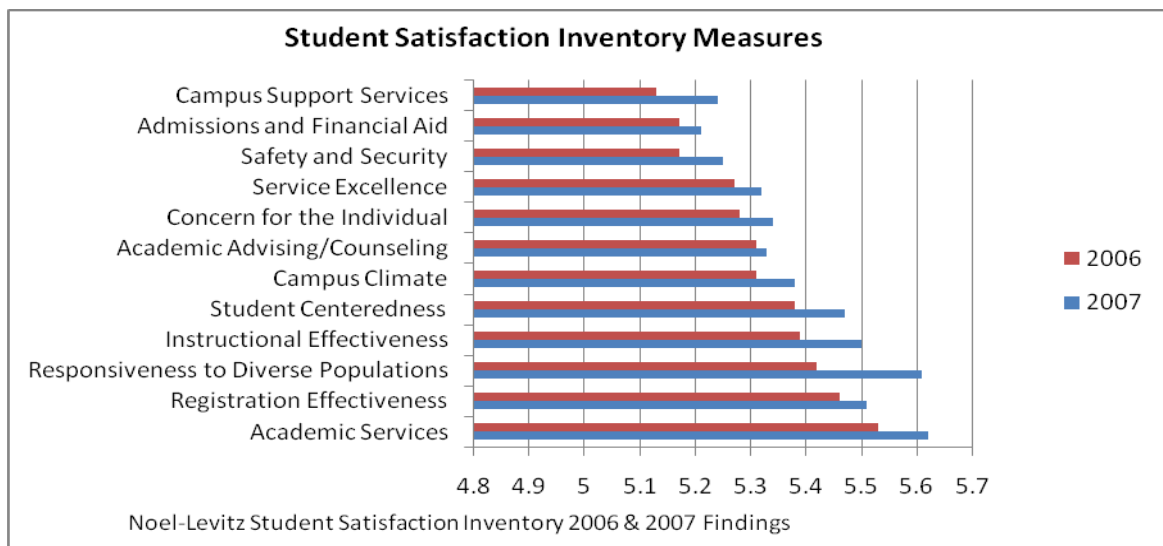
Student Support Services

Based on longitudinal data showing that over 50% of students directed to placement testing after submitting an application never enrolled, the College adopted a range of measurement efforts to more fully understand and address factors related to entering student success, satisfaction, and support. To understand these factors, the College administered standardized and/or nationally normed surveys, including the [Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory \(SSI\)](#) and the [Survey of Entering Student Engagement \(SENSE\)](#), to the currently enrolled student population, in order to assess its effectiveness in key components of student support services. In analyzing the survey results, the College community determined that improvement must be made in student support services. The following includes highlights of the most significant institutional learning and change that occurred in student support services as a result of the QEP. The changes include one-stop student services centers, a new student welcome center, an enhanced credit-based new student orientation, a student “Connections” portal, a withdrawal intervention process, and an early alert system.

The first iteration was the “Positive Assessment Experience,” which integrated a more coordinated welcome with preparation for the CPT. Another facet of this welcome was the development of a structured mentoring program, which paired members of this vulnerable college preparatory cohort with employee volunteers who serve as the primary connection

between the student and the College in the critical first semester. After implementing the “Positive Assessment Experience” and mentoring program, the College administered the SENSE survey to entering students in Fall 2008. The [SENSE results](#) indicated that further change was required by the institution. Only 76% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome the very first time they came to this college. The College realized that the “Positive Assessment Experience” and mentoring program were not sufficient to make a meaningful impact on the entering student experience and the student learning environment. The result suggested an opportunity for the College to further enhance this QEP initiative to produce a more significant positive impact on the entering student experience.

In addition, SENSE and [SSI data](#) analysis highlighted potential problems in initial contact with student support services, particularly with orientation, advisement, and financial aid. Although students were required to complete an orientation component before registration for classes, SENSE results showed over 90% of entering students failed to recognize they had participated in orientation activities. The survey also revealed that while students acknowledged registration assistance from counseling/advising staff, only 38% felt they had received assistance in setting long-term academic goals. SSI (2006) results also suggested student concern with financial aid.



Insular offices of enrollment services, advisement, career development, and financial aid were integrated into one-stop student services malls through cross-training of staff, revision of job descriptions, as well as physical resource reorganization. As shown in the chart above, follow-up SSI measures (2006 to 2007) suggest marked improvement related to student satisfaction based upon the adjustments described.

The College has developed a new [Welcome Center](#) process for the first point of contact with students. New “Student Experience Associate” positions have been created. Specially trained advisement staff members respond to most of

the initial questions from potential students, assist with application procedures, and guide students through the intricacies of the financial aid and scholarship process. The Welcome Center has both a collegewide and campus-based presence and is also available to our Distance Learning students.

A new orientation experience has also evolved as a result of institutional learning and adaptation in the QEP process. The new orientation experience has been piloted with a group of at-risk entering students, most of whom are members of the college preparatory cohort. The new orientation (ultimately to become a mandatory one-credit course for all entering degree-seeking students) serves to form the essential connections between students and College personnel and resources. It also gives students vital information about their individual learning styles and preferred modalities of instruction, and assists them in both long- and short-term academic goal setting. This course allows opportunities for cohort registration into first-semester classes to connect students with potential study partners. For students who did not take the CPT in high school, the course also offers test preparation assistance.

Additionally, a variety of new student communications processes were developed through the QEP. The most significant feature is the new student [“Connections” web portal](#), which directly links students to information on their current classes, including an entrance point to the Blackboard Learning Management system that supports all on-campus, hybrid, and online courses. The student web portal is a direct link to students’ degree audits, career development services, and online advisement assistance as well as a means of tracking student status in processes such as financial aid and scholarships. The portal provides a means of disseminating important information to students not only on administrative issues such as registration and payment dates, but also on individual academic issues such as reminders to take mathematics courses early in their program of study or to complete their information literacy assessment. Students are also encouraged to complete online course evaluations to improve instruction and provide essential instructor feedback designed to enhance the student learning environment.

In addition to course evaluation data, SENSE and CCSSE data indicated a need for timely feedback from instructors on student academic progress. This information, coupled with a concern about collegewide withdrawal rates from classes, led to the development of new online processes for Withdrawal Intervention and Early Alert. Student withdrawal from class (formerly a totally online student process with no instructor or advisor input) has also undergone a significant change designed to allow for intervention by faculty as well as advisors and counselors. When a student submits a [withdrawal request](#) online, the student must indicate a reason for the action, and the withdrawal is put into a holding queue for 72 hours. An automatic message is sent to the course instructor and a counselor. These individuals intervene with the student to

determine if the situation truly warrants a course withdrawal or if the student could remain enrolled through appropriate assistance mechanisms. In the Early Alert System, faculty will have the ability to send messages about academic progress to students, counselors, and other interested college personnel such as scholarship directors or athletic coaches. This function is integrated into the existing web-based class roster system, with a drop-down menu of options that the instructor can select.

Furthermore, the College desired information regarding students' perceptions of the institution's effectiveness in its QEP initiatives. In 2008, the College developed and administered a web-based [First-Time-in-College QEP Survey \(FTCOEP\)](#) to all enrolled students. The survey items were developed to ask students their level of agreement with 25 QEP initiatives that directly impact students.

Unanticipated Outcomes of the QEP

Significant changes to the QEP design included consolidating [initiatives](#), discontinuing initiatives, and creating new initiatives; these changes occurred as a result of learning from the results of implementation. Six initiatives were discontinued or consolidated with other initiatives. For example, 3.14 FTIC remedial student phone call process was discontinued due to the success of 3.05 telecounseling and web counseling systems. There were a number of unanticipated outcomes from the QEP implementation, including an external review of college preparatory mathematics program, a Program Director position for College Preparatory Studies, credit-based student orientation, expansion of SLS requirement, welcome center, Academic Skills Centers, diagnostic and prescriptive software, and the withdrawal intervention function.

One unanticipated expansion of an initiative is related to the articulation efforts of College English faculty and high school teachers that resulted in a 10% increase in placement into college-level writing classes and success in those classes as compared to the general entering population. Recently, the state of Florida passed [Senate Bill 1908](#), which requires school districts to coordinate efforts with community/state colleges to students' college-readiness. Included are requirements for CPT testing in the junior year in order to identify those students who need remediation. School districts and colleges must collaborate on high school courses mirroring college preparatory course curriculum and offer common professional development for instructors. The school districts are also required to use state exit exams and cut scores established by the college for college preparatory courses. The success of the English project has facilitated progress in compliance with this Senate bill. The college is implementing SLS instruction in conjunction with the college preparatory courses with the school districts in its service area.

The ongoing process improvement associated with the QEP generated yet another unanticipated outcome. After one of the sessions of reviewing data and results of the project, a group of mathematics faculty requested an external evaluation of

the entire college preparatory mathematics program. The faculty independently developed parameters for the evaluation and sought a nationally recognized team to accomplish the task. The evaluation noted needs for professional development of faculty, recommendations for additional active learning strategies, and the value of a coordinating office for all disciplines of college preparatory studies. As a result of this external evaluation, a Program Director position for College Preparatory Studies was hired. In addition to coordinating the area, this position is an integral part of implementation of the new orientation, SLS course, the Master Student program, and the Academic Skills Center.

Additionally, the credit-based student orientation and Welcome Center will be institutionalized for all new degree-seeking students, not only the college preparatory student population. The expansion of SLS requirement to all college preparatory students is designed with the new orientation course as a precursor; therefore, the SLS curriculum is under revision. The Academic Skills Centers go beyond the initial initiative by including diagnostic/prescriptive software in new Library and Learning Commons, and combining library resources, information literacy skill development, tutoring, learning resources, and college preparatory instruction into comprehensive one-stop centers. Faculty will have the ability to receive daily reports on individual students' progress and make changes in instructional strategies and learning activities to meet students' immediate academic needs. Lastly, the withdrawal intervention function is now being institutionalized for all college students to further support the College's effort to improve student learning by enhancing and integrating academics with student support services.

Indeed, the QEP has created a meaningful impact on the institutional culture of Florida State College at Jacksonville. Since 2003, the College has instituted numerous changes in student support services in an effort to positively influence the student learning experience within an academic environment that emphasizes interactive instructional strategies. Furthermore, the College continues to promote a culture of evidence with ongoing granular examination of expected student learning outcomes at the course, discipline, and program levels. To sustain these efforts, the College is partnering with its information technology department to build web-based processes for facilitating transparent, iterative communication founded on collaboration and collegiality. Perhaps, though, the greatest learning outcome from the QEP is Florida State College at Jacksonville's commitment to continually enhancing institutional accountability and effectiveness, thereby enriching student learning and development.