PANTHER PACE

Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement

A Quality Enhancement Plan to Increase Student Success

AUGUST 2021

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

Panther PACE

Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement

A Quality Enhancement Plan to increase student retention through Academic Community engagement

Submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in partial fulfillment of the Reaffirmation of Accreditation

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

Contents

List of Commonly Used Acronyms

AC   Academic Community

ACs   Academic Communities

ATD   Achieving the Dream

CCP   Career Certificate Program (formerly PSAV)

CCSSE   Community College Survey of Student Engagement

CTLE   Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence

FPI   Florida Pathways Institute

FTIC   First Time in College

ICC   Inter-Club Council

IRE   Institutional Research and Effectiveness

NPS   Net Promoter Score

PACE   Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement (Panther PACE)

PBSC   Palm Beach State College

PLG   Professional Learning Group

SENSE   Survey of Entering Student Engagement

SGA   Student Government Association

VP AA   Vice President, Academic Affairs

VP AIS Vice President, Academic Innovation and Strategy

VP SS   Vice President, Student Services

Executive Summary

Panther PACE
Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement

Palm Beach State College first opened its doors in 1933 as Florida's first public junior college. That year, 41 students attended classes in a building near what was then Palm Beach High School. Today, the College serves over 46,000 students at five locations and offers over 130 programs of study.

Palm Beach State's QEP, Panther PACE: Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement, was developed over a two-year period and was informed by broad-based engagement in the review of the strategic plan and institutional data, conversations amongst College constituents, and refinement of proposals to select a QEP that is a best fit for what our students need to be successful.

QEP Goal:
In order to increase student success, Palm Beach State students will connect to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students through Academic Community events.

QEP Outcomes:
1. Students engaging in Academic Community (AC) events will show a 24% increase in levels of College engagement between 2022 and 2027 as measured on the New Student Experience and Student Experience Surveys. Additionally, Palm Beach State will rank in the top 10% in the nation with scores exceeding 61 on "Student-Faculty Interaction" and "Support for Learners" Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) benchmarks between 2022 and 2027.
2. Retention rates will increase and demonstrate progress for students who participate and are engaged in student activities as measured against milestones and targets for periods between 2022 and 2027.
3. Faculty and Staff application of Student Development Theory in student interactions will increase after participating in workshops and Professional Learning Groups for measures against milestones and targets between 2022 and 2027.

The focus of Palm Beach State's QEP will be to connect students to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students using Academic Community (AC) events to increase student engagement, resulting in higher levels of retention. Events will be created intentionally across student lifecycle to connect students to their Academic Community, ensure students explore the possibilities that exist within their community, and support students based on where they are in their degree progress to give them what they need to be successful then and to prepare for their next step. Additionally, faculty and staff involved in the QEP will create workshops that focus on Student Development Theory to invest in the College's best resource – faculty and staff – to ensure they have opportunities to learn more about how they can support students.

QEP Contact: Erin Sullivan, Associate Professor | sullivae@palmbeachstate.edu | 561-207-5212

Letter from the President

Welcome to Palm Beach State College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), "Panther PACE: Pathways for Academic Communities and Engagement." Palm Beach State College has served our students and the residents of Palm Beach County for more than 88 years, and from the beginning, student success has been our top priority. Panther PACE builds on our commitment to student success through creating Academic Community-based events, which will serve to connect students to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students.

Institutional data and surveys expressed the need for stronger connections between students and the college. As a non-residential college that serves students with busy lives and many demands on them, Palm Beach State must be intentional in creating the environment to foster these connections. Panther PACE meets this need for connection through supportive Academic Community events and through faculty and staff professional development opportunities.

The Academic Community events will show incoming students all learning pathways open to them. For students who are unsure of what academic direction to take, these initial Panther PACE activities will help students define their own future. For those with clear collegiate goals, communities will introduce students to the finer details of their chosen area of study. This type of engagement allows all students to begin their journey on sure footing knowing they are supported no matter what life may bring.

This approach also applies to continuing students, where our faculty, academic advisors, and other members of the PBSC family will engage learners, making sure they are supported in their academic goals. Reinforcing continuing student engagement through Panther PACE Academic Communities makes sure all who are seeking a degree or certificate are supported by QEP efforts.

Panther PACE will lead to greater student success and is a priority to the institution. Leadership, faculty, and staff at Palm Beach State are ready to put this plan into action and positively impact our students through enhanced engagement and support.

Ava L. Parker, J. D.

President, Palm Beach State College

Introduction to Palm Beach State

Institution at a glance

Palm Beach State College first opened its doors in 1933 as Florida's first public junior college. That year, 41 students attended classes in a building near what was then Palm Beach High School. Today, the College serves over 46,000 students at five locations and offers over 130 programs of study.

Palm Beach State is governed by a five-member District Board of Trustees appointed by the governor, is the fourth largest of the 28 colleges that comprise the Florida College System and is the largest institution of higher learning in Palm Beach County. The College offers Bachelor's, Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degrees, as well as college credit certificates, job preparatory programs, corporate and continuing education, customized training, and lifelong learning courses.

Table 1: Student profile

Full-time equivalency	28,102
Gender	59% female 41% male
Race	34% white 33% Hispanic 27% black 6% all others
Number of countries represented among students	160
Enrollment status	26% full-time 74% part-time
Enrolled in credit courses	41,626
Enrolled in non-credit courses	5,244
Average student age	25

College Relations and Marketing and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness provide multiple resources on the College website, such as *Fast Facts,* to describe the history and demographics of the College (https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/about/fast-facts.aspx).

College mission and beliefs

The strategic planning process affords the College an opportunity to periodically reconsider and refine its mission, vision, and values. The most recent review was completed in 2018 and resulted in the *Panther Strong 2023: Strategic Plan,* available online at: https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ire/StrategicPlanning/ and https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ire/StrategicPlanning/documents/PantherStrong2023Flyer.pdf.

Panther Strong 2023 includes the College mission, vision, and values.

<u>Mission Statement</u>
Palm Beach State College provides accessible, student-centered teaching and learning experiences in academic, technical and lifelong learning to transform lives and strengthen our community.

<u>Vision Statement</u>
Palm Beach State College is nationally recognized as an innovative academic leader advancing student success through its unparalleled commitment to excellence, engagement, and dynamic partnerships.

<u>Values</u>
CONSCIENTIOUS
We serve the College community and global society as we aspire to do what is right, ethical, and fair.

BELONGING
We value all persons and backgrounds, and cultivate an inclusive community that nurtures diverse, equitable, and civil perspectives.

PERSEVERANCE
We inspire hope and encourage our constituents to achieve their goals and pursue lifelong learning.

TRANSFORMATIONAL
We positively and profoundly change the lives of our constituents by adopting programs and services that meet their needs.

Palm Beach State College has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that will improve student learning and success by creating and organizing Academic Community events to support students in Palm Beach State's seven pathways. The mission, vision, and values were a strong consideration during the topic selection and development process.

I. A topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluating process

The selection of Palm Beach State's QEP topic was rooted in the College's Strategic Plan, Panther Strong 2023, as a way to reflect upon our data and progress in supporting our mission, vision, and values and to add support to strategic work already in place at the College.

Strategic Plan

Development of Palm Beach State's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan Panther Strong 2023 was a College-wide, multi-phase effort that engaged College leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Input was captured from College constituencies across the five campuses, and a Mission, Vision, and Values Review was conducted. The College conducted a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Analysis and Environmental Scan Review, which identified potential limitations, points for consideration, trends/risks in higher education, and a review of internal data trends based on the College's cycle of planned research. This informed the identification of strategic issues that will have the greatest impact on the College. Twelve outcomes and 32 leading measures to provide milestones for the yearly targets were identified. This work led to the completion of the Strategic Plan, which includes the identification of goals and strategies and the creation of an implementation plan. Three goals – Engage, Expand, and Excel – were identified in the Strategic Planning Process. Panther Strong was introduced to the District Board of Trustees on March 20, 2018, by President Ava Parker, and was approved on April 17, 2018.

ENGAGE	EXPAND	EXCEL
90% Key Stakeholder Engagement	15% Retention Rate Increase (for part-time students)	20% Completion Rate Increase
Top 10% National Engagement Benchmarks	15% FTE Growth	25% AA Students Attain Micro-Credentials
Honor Roll "Great Colleges to Work For"	80% Top-of-mind Awareness	Equitable Graduation Rates
Effective Space Design	UX Technology	Amplify Instructional Excellence

Selecting the QEP Topic

Developing the Proposals

Selecting *Academic Community Support* as Palm Beach State's QEP was a multi-semester effort that emphasized broad-based constituency participation. During Palm Beach State College's Spring 2019 Development Day general session, the College provided an update on the SACSCOC reaccreditation process and encouraged teams to submit proposals in line with the Strategic Plan Panther Strong 2023 for the College's QEP. The submission window spanned just over two months, and faculty, instructors, staff, and administrators working individually and in teams submitted twelve proposals. In the summer of 2019, the College collected initial feedback on the twelve proposals from key groups, including Palm Beach State's Reaffirmation Leadership Team and Strategic Council. Additionally, the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VP AA) convened an ad hoc committee of faculty, staff, and students to assess the proposals and select five to bring to the College community for a vote during the Fall 2019 Development Day cluster meetings. The vote inspired robust discussions among the cluster members, with a suggestion to

somehow combine proposals with a recurring theme, but the vote did not indicate a clear favorite for Palm Beach State's QEP. (See Figure A1 on page 49 for voting results.)

QEP Forums

Taking the feedback from the College community, the College formed a QEP Development Team, which planned to host a QEP Forum on each campus. Invitations went out to faculty, instructors, staff, administration, students, District Board of Trustee Members, and external community members. The QEP Forums were designed to have participants first interact with each of the five proposals in a roundtable fashion and then each participant would choose a proposal s/he wished to explore more deeply, with the goal of workshopping and refining the five proposals, selecting elements from other proposals to combine, and identifying potential learning outcomes. One QEP Forum was held in person at Loxahatchee Groves on Friday, March 13, 2020, with great success; however, the additional forums were suspended in response to COVID-19 and the College's shift to remote instruction. (See Figures B1-B7 on pages 52-65 for Top 5 Proposals.)

With the challenge of keeping the College community engaged while working remotely, the QEP Development Team created Virtual QEP Forums delivered through Zoom. Seven virtual forums were hosted between Tuesday, April 14, and Tuesday, April 21, 2020. The Virtual QEP Forums were structured with a brainstorming activity based on the question, "What's the one thing our students need to be successful?", a review of the top five proposals, and an open discussion of the preferred elements of each of the proposals. The Virtual QEP Forums concluded with a vote for each participant's top and second choice proposal. Over 200 participants engaged in the in-person and virtual forum process, with a breakdown of 16 administrators, 69 full-time and part-time faculty, 98 staff members, two business community representatives, and 21 students participating, some of whom participated in multiple forums. The main themes that arose from the discussions were **Focus on Student Experience and Support** and **Focus on Soft Skills and Thinking Dispositions**, and when the votes were tallied and analyzed through that lens, the votes from the in-person and online QEP Forums showed that each idea was supported with 50% of the vote. (See Table A2 on page 49.)

Online Vote

Based on feedback from the forums, the QEP Development Team combined the five proposals into two that contained the elements the forum participants identified as most beneficial to our students and to the College. Voting to select the top QEP from those two combined proposals was held from Wednesday, April 29, to Tuesday, May 5, 2020, and was publicized through an all-user email, Intranet posting, social media, and invitations to students and community partners. Over 450 votes for Palm Beach State's QEP were received, representing 192 full-time and part-time faculty, 191 staff members, 49 students, and 26 community members. (See Figures A3-A5 on pages 50-51 for voting breakdown.)

Figures and Tables within Appendix A on pages 50-51 display the results of the activities described above.

QEP Topic Selection During a Pandemic

Given the overlap of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, QEP topic selection activities, which began on March 13, 2020, and Palm Beach State pausing all in-person activities mid-day March 13, 2020, participation in QEP topic selection was not as robust as it would have been in a traditional year. Priorities for many shifted as faculty, staff, students,

and community members adjusted to remote instruction, remote work, and personal demands presented by the pandemic. Employee attendance and engagement in the virtual forums was higher than expected, which makes sense as these forums were the first opportunities for the College community to come together and connect since shifting to remote services. The conversations were heavily influenced by what students were sharing with faculty and staff as they adjusted to remote instruction and the pandemic.

While the College serves over 46,000 students annually, the target students for Palm Beach State's QEP represent a smaller portion of that whole. Bachelor's, Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Career Certificate Program (CCP) students comprised just under 24,000 students in the Spring 2020 semester. As life challenges arose and priorities shifted with the pandemic, many students became less engaged in College events, with some having to step away from education altogether as they worked to balance the new challenges facing them. Targeted outreach and engagement of these students was completed through email invitations, social media postings, and partnerships with Student Government Association (SGA) and Inter-Club Council (ICC); however, student participation numbers ideally would be higher in the forum participation and online vote. To counterbalance this and ensure that the student voice is central to the QEP, the QEP Development Team includes a member of SGA leadership who collects student feedback and represents their voice in the QEP meetings; the QEP Manager regularly solicits student input through outreach initiatives such as the Loss Momentum Project, which is described in further detail below, and students will be involved in lending their voice and energy to guide the implementation of the QEP.

Leadership Support

Throughout the QEP development process, Leadership has supported the QEP. Multiple levels of leadership receive updates and provide feedback to help shape the QEP, create space for the QEP Development Team to provide updates to faculty and staff, and speak directly to faculty and staff on the importance of the QEP.

Immediately upon creation of the QEP Manager role in January 2020, the QEP Manager began attending monthly Panther Strong 2023 Strategy Council meetings to learn about initiatives in place, receive guidance and feedback on QEP development, and align the QEP to the strategic plan. The QEP is also supported through the QEP Manager's attendance at bi-weekly meetings with the Reaffirmation Leadership Team, bi-weekly meetings with the Vice President of Academic Innovation in Strategy (VP AIS) where the QEP progress and next steps are discussed, and periodic discussions with the President.

In addition to this regular cadence of meetings, the QEP is given space at selected meetings to provide updates and obtain feedback from targeted audiences. The QEP Manager provided an update on QEP progress and topic selection plans at the January 27, 2020, Extended Cabinet meeting. After the QEP forums completed, the QEP Manager and VP AIS presented the results to President Parker on April 28, 2020, for her consideration and feedback prior to launching the online vote for final topic selection. The QEP Development Team crafted an executive summary of the top two proposals and submitted them to the President's Cabinet in advance of their May 18, 2020, meeting. During the meeting, the QEP Manager reviewed the development process and constituent feedback on the QEP proposals and recommended that the Cabinet and President Parker select Student Experience and Support as Palm Beach State's QEP, which was unanimously approved. At the September 15, 2020, District Board of Trustees regular meeting, the QEP Manager provided a QEP update to the Board as an informational item. Similarly, at the June 29,

2021, District Board of Trustees regular meeting, the VP AIS and QEP Manager provided to the Board an update on SACSCOC reaffirmation and the QEP goals and outcomes, which was well received. At this meeting, President Parker introduced the agenda item and expressed her support of the QEP.

The QEP Manager continues to provide QEP updates to Extended Cabinet, President's Cabinet, Joint Dean's Council, President Parker, and the District Board of Trustees. Additionally, the QEP Manager provides updates to faculty and staff at key events such as Faculty and Staff Convocation, Faculty Forums, Semester Startup meetings, Campus Update meetings, and Development Day. Leadership also voices its support of the QEP through communicating updates and development at Faculty Forums. This level of communication and support will continue throughout QEP implementation.

Verifying the need with internal data

Institutional data were core to the development of Panther Strong 2023 and informed the selection of Palm Beach State's QEP topic; furthermore, the disruption presented by COVID-19 provided the opportunity for the College to reflect on the experiences students are currently having at the College and envision what we want that experience to be during and after the pandemic.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a national survey of two-year institutions, and the data students give helps colleges focus on activities that promote high levels of student learning and retention, and help colleges identify areas to improve their programs and services. Palm Beach State participated in CCSSE for the fifth time in Spring 2019, with prior surveys conducted in 2004, 2007, 2011, and 2016. In the 2019 CCSSE survey, Palm Beach State showed improvement in four of the five benchmarks and remained even on the fifth; however, there is always room for overall improvement and targeted efforts to improve specific items within the benchmarks.

Institutional Research and Effectiveness's analysis of Palm Beach State's internal CCSSE results identified Student-Faculty Interaction, defined as the level to which students have contact with their instructors on a more personal level, as an opportunity for improvement since this type of engagement contributes to effective learning and persistence towards educational goal attainment. Palm Beach State scored in the Top 20% among extra-large colleges in this benchmark, but there is room to grow. Organizing Academic Community events to provide a robust support system of activities will create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to build stronger relationships and connect regarding course support and larger student goals and aspirations.

Palm Beach State's 2019 CCSSE results also illuminated areas for improvement within Support for Learners. Comparing Palm Beach State to other extra-large colleges, students reported using career counseling during the academic year slightly less; this could indicate an opportunity to have continuing conversations with students about their career goals, not just a one-time conversation to be held at the beginning or end of their time at the College. Within this benchmark, the "College emphasizes providing the support you need to thrive socially" is another area of opportunity. While Palm Beach State's score was a little over a percentage point higher than other extra-large colleges, only 37.5 responded "quite a bit/very much" to this question, indicating that the organization of Academic Community events would fill an unmet need for many of our students.

Student Experience Surveys

In Fall 2018, Palm Beach State launched an internal New Student Experience Survey to ask students about their experiences becoming a student and as a new student at the College. The survey was created to help gain a better understanding of how well the College is meeting students' needs and to guide efforts to improve the first semester student experience. In Fall 2019, the College launched an internal Student Experience Survey to ask students who recently reached 24 credits earned about their experiences at the College. The Student Experience Survey mirrors most topics of the New Student Experience survey, with slight wording variations where appropriate, and together they provide insight into the students' journey at the College. The percentages are calculated using a Net Promoter Score, which subtracts the Detractors (1-2-3 responses) from the Promoters (6-7 responses), which provides a goodness rating of likely promoters.

The New Student Experience Survey targeted first time in college degree or certificate seeking students in their first or second semester at PBSC. In Fall 2018, a survey link was delivered via email to 5,965 students, and 868 responses were recorded over six weeks between October 2 and November 15, 2018, a 15% response rate. Using the same methodology in Fall 2019, a survey link was delivered via email to 7,129 students, and 608 responses were recorded over approximately four weeks in October and November 2019, an 8.5% response rate. The 2019 Student Experience Survey (24 credits) targeted first time in college degree or certificate seeking students at PBSC. A survey link was delivered via email to 3,723 students, and 290 responses were recorded over approximately four weeks in October and November 2019, an 8% response rate.

The 2019 Student Experience Survey (24 credits) results showed a 43% engagement rating, with only 41% of students reporting feeling connected to the College community; the New Student Experience Survey showed strikingly similar numbers, with an overall engagement rating of 40% in 2019 and 36% in 2018, and only 40% in 2019 and 38% in 2018 of students report feeling connected to the College community. While there is some growth when comparing the 2018 new students and the 2019 students who have earned 24 credits, it shows a gap within the College's support system of ensuring that the students continue to integrate into the College, feel welcomed at the College, participate in extracurriculars, and have connections with faculty or staff members that make them feel hopeful and excited about their future.

As with so much in higher education and the world at large, COVID-19 impacted the College's regular schedule of assessment, and the internal Student Experience Survey conducted in Fall 2020 does not allow for a direct comparison between this survey and those administered in previous years. The survey was targeted to all students, instead of a separate survey for new students and those with 24 credits, and was shortened and revised to reflect the College's change to remote instruction and services due to the pandemic. The survey link was delivered via email and text message to 27,699 students, and 3,639 responses were recorded between October 1-11, 2020, representing a response rate of 13%. The 2020 Student Experience Survey found that the overall engagement rating dropped to 38%, and only 26% of students reported feeling connected to the College community. Similarly, qualitative responses showed the desire for stronger connection and communication.

Loss Momentum Project Town Hall Sessions

In Spring 2021, the College launched the Loss Momentum Project, which uses Achieving the Dream's (ATD) modified Loss Momentum Framework (discussed in detail below on pages 19-21) to understand the student experience and identify common loss points for students along their academic journey from Connection to Entry to Progress to Completion to Transition. The framework allows institutions to analyze these common loss points and create momentum strategies to help keep students moving towards their goals. The goal of the Loss Momentum Project is to reimagine the Palm Beach State student experience and make improvements to our processes.

To gain input on these processes and the desired Palm Beach State student experience we wish to create, the QEP Development Team and Loss Momentum Project Team combined efforts to host Town Hall Listening Sessions, which included a robust discussion on the desired student experience and ways to achieve it. Eight sessions were held between February 3 and March 4, with six sessions targeted to College employees and two sessions offered for students. 163 Employees (representing administrators, part-time and full-time faculty, advisors, recruiters, eLearning staff, IT, administrative assistants, career center staff, and SLC staff) and 78 students attended the well-received sessions to give feedback on their current experiences at the College and their desired experiences moving forward. These suggestions were used to refine the QEP activities.

Themes that arose in the discussions were connection; community; establishing a welcoming, supportive culture; increased engagement; and collaboration between departments. Representative student and employee comments from the Town Hall Sessions are below:

- Connection to the resources/people/students (employee)
- Connected to the community. Going to school and feeling like you belong and do not just drive there and back home. (student)
- Student forums or chat rooms to talk with students outside of your classes (student)
- Let students choose an ambassador for their PBSC experience based on common interest or background. Ambassador as in faculty or staff who can connect with them. (employee)
- I always go back to connecting them to a student who is like them, a role model that they can see being successful (employee)
- We learn better in communities. We need a collaborative community across the functions that make a stronger one (employee)
- Build Pathway cohorts (employee)
- Many places have done learning communities. Students with like interests and majors put together, work with student activities to provide programming for these cohorts. It all flows into one thing (employee)
- To have a sense of community (student)
- Sometimes I think community college is overlooked and I think getting involved makes the experience better and creates a sense of community (student)
- I feel like clubs/organizations can be advertised more to students because oftentimes students find out about clubs when it's too late to sign up (student)
- a way to connect to classmates idk if there is one already (student)
- A fun mingling/mixer event (somehow virtual) for new students to meet friends/classmates/peers? (student)

- We don't want students to feel lost. We want them to have personal connections and to be seen (employee)
- A college culture focused on building relationships. Like Dave said, we all learn better in communities (employee)
- Welcome, valued, member of the PBSC Community (employee)
- It's important to be heard and feel supported from advisors and professors. (student)
- Thinking about connection and mentorship. We all do better in our personal and professional lives when we are building relationships. Sometimes some have the idea that this is "my" responsibility. But as we are learning, we have people help us (employee)
- Message to students that they're not on their own (employee)
- We need a college culture focused on collaboration. No student should feel like they're doing this alone. (employee)
- The entire college needs more ongoing training about college student development. We must understand … whether 18 or 40 … our students are enrolled at PBSC to further their career (employee)

Overall, the analysis of internal College research shows the opportunities a QEP focusing on the creation of Academic Communities will provide. Creating a robust support system of events in support of the Academic Communities picks up on the Guided Pathways work already in place at the College and brings in a strong, methodical structure to ensure the College is creating positive student/faculty interactions, continuing connections with career services throughout the students' time in the College, providing pro-social support systems, and instilling a sense of belongingness with the ultimate goal of helping students grow during their time at the College and prepare to thrive wherever their next step is after completion.

Final Rationale to focus on Academic Community Events as the QEP topic

A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that focuses on Academic Community Events was supported by College constituents, internal data and strategic planning, and the external community. In addition to its broad-based support amongst faculty, instructors, staff and students, *Supporting Academic Community Events* was selected for the following reasons:

- A focus on student experience and support through the Academic Communities would support the College mission to provide, "accessible, student-centered teaching and learning experiences" and our transformational value to, "positively and profoundly change the lives of our constituents by adopting programs and services that meet their needs."
- With the disruption presented by COVID-19, a new emphasis on how the College ensures students feel connected, are aware of resources and support provided, and utilize those resources is needed. As the College adjusts to delivering services virtually and safely transitioning back to on-campus services, ensuring students feel connected and a part of a community is more important than ever.
- Initiatives that bolster student experience and support would align with strategic planning goals of Accelerate Completion and Grow Enrollment and Retention.

- A review of scholarly literature supported a need for student engagement and instilling a sense of belonging amongst students.

Review of the Literature

Guided Pathways and Academic Communities

The creation of Academic Community events within the College is the logical next step for Palm Beach State, as the College is in the process of reorganizing into a Guided Pathways Model. The Pathways Model provides an "integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences … that guide each student effectively and efficiently from his/her point of entry through attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market" (Community College Resource Center, 2017, p. 1). A large piece of the Guided Pathways Model is to provide clear, understandable, intentional educational experiences that integrate both academic and non-academic support, all with a focus on equity to ensure outcome improvements of all students (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2020). The spirit of the Guided Pathways Model is to help students clarify what their goals are and how to get there, provide them with a support system to explore their path and all possibilities as they move towards their goal, and ensure that meaningful learning takes place along the way.

Palm Beach State's seven Pathways are a slightly modified version of the eight Meta-Majors outlined by Florida Shines:

- Arts, Humanities, Communication and Design
- Business
- Education, Human Services, Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Industry, Manufacturing, Construction and Transportation
- Public Safety
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

The Pathways are groups of related majors, and they will provide the structure for the Academic Community events. Creating and organizing the field-focused pathways into Academic Communities with related events provides the opportunity for students to explore careers and opportunities within that pathway, engage with peers, faculty and staff with similar interests, be a part of a supportive community, and engage in relevant high impact practices (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2020; Mintz, 2019; Tinto, 2016). The Pathways Model was introduced to higher education in the early 2000s and design and implementation within colleges are ongoing, and the literature has shown the use of the Pathways Model increases student success (Jenkins, 2014).

A clear call from the research on Guided Pathways is the need to support students in exploring their career interests. Of students nationwide participating in the 2018 SENSE (Survey of Entering Student Engagement), 44% of students reported that friends, family, or other students are their main source of advising, and 74% reported that they chose a career before registering for their first day of classes (Center

for Community College Student Engagement, 2020). The concern is that while having a goal is certainly great, students may be working from inaccurate or incomplete information, so they may be unaware of other career possibilities that fit their interests. They may be inadvertently limiting themselves because they are unaware of related degrees that could lead to higher salary and career responsibility (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2020). Bringing students into Palm Beach State's Academic Communities and providing support, networking, and exploration activities through AC events can help bridge the gap and ensure students find a career that is the right fit for their interests, aspirations, and life goals.

Another opportunity identified by the Center for Community College Student Engagement is to ensure students are learning through engagement activities. Pathways are more than just reorganizing the catalog and changing a few policies; true implementation requires creative thinking and engagement. Active and collaborative learning, service learning, and regular interactions with faculty members are activities linked to increased student engagement; however, many colleges have not fully implemented this. As the Center for Community College Student Engagement states, "To produce better outcomes, colleges need to change the student experience and, in turn, change student behaviors in ways that lead to increased success. If the student experience does not become more engaging, then these changes in practice are unlikely to lead to measurably better outcomes" (2020, p. 3). Meaningful interaction with peers and faculty in class and complementary interactions outside of class are substantial opportunities to increase student engagement.

Creating an Environment for Student Success

It is well established in the literature that students who feel they are a part of the college and connect with at least one person are more likely to learn, persist, and complete. Having a significant contact with a faculty member, staff member, or advisor within the first semester increases the likelihood of students reenrolling in the next term, and these relationships prove even more effective when established within the first six weeks of the student's first year (Levitz & Noel, 1989). In addition to the importance of students connecting with college employees, the student-to-student relationship is also an essential element in student success. Students who are more academically and socially integrated with others in the college community are more likely to persist (Soria & Stebleton, 2013). Being intentional about support systems, when programs are offered, and how students are connected to them are key to student success.

Tinto's emphasis on self-efficacy and sense of belonging explained in his Social Integration Model provide a lens through which one can view retention and persistence from the perspective of the student rather than through the institution hoping to retain the student (1975; 2013; 2016). Self-efficacy, "a person's belief in their ability to succeed at a particular task or in a specific situation" (2016), illustrates how one's past experiences influence their self-perception and their capacity to have control over their present situation. Even students who were successful in their previous academic endeavors will likely stumble as they adjust to the demands of higher education; what matters most for all students as they transition to these new demands is that they are supported early on as they navigate these challenges, so they come to believe they are capable of handling future challenges (Tinto, 2016). Sense of belonging speaks to how students need to see themselves as valued members of a community of students, faculty, and staff, essentially that they matter and belong to the group. Integration into the community will serve as a tether

to keep the student feeling connected, even as they face challenges in their academic journey (Tinto, 2016).

Positive college experiences can increase students' integration into academic and social structures, while negative experiences can weaken this integration, and both academic and non-academic staff have the ability to influence a student's decision to remain or leave an institution. Similarly, the interactions students have with college employees can influence a student's ability to navigate and utilize campus resources (Tinto, 1993; 2004). Creating a robust support community that students join upon entering the college, and then reinforcing the connection to that community and support available within it can help create a sense of belonging and bolster students' resilience as they develop self-efficacy.

Over time, retention theories have been refined and become more nuanced in their analysis of the student experience and the inclusion of different student demographics and experiences (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). A larger focus was placed on understanding student transition periods, providing support services through interdepartmental collaboration, and recognizing that treating students equitably means not having one-size-fits-all policies (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011). Holistic approaches to student success stress the importance of interactions with all college constituents and that having individuals on campus who care for them directly influences the graduation rate (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; Habley, 2004; Wyckoff, 1998.)

Social engagement is key to student success in college. Students that go from parking lot to class and back to the parking lot are less likely to be retained, so creating an environment for students to engage in academic and social activities, develop friendships with fellow classmates, and connect to college employees is an essential part of the college environment, with early engagement setting the groundwork for the most cumulative benefit (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011). Best practices for improving student success include establishing meta-majors to connect students with similarly minded peers in a supportive community of instructors and staff (Mintz, 2019), ensuring that students' early interactions with the College will help them make personal connections (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012), creating a sense of belonging through intentional, sometimes inescapable student engagement, co-curriculars, and experiential learning activities (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Mintz, 2019), increasing exposure to career planning including opportunities that exist within a major and connections to alumni who graduated with similar majors (Mintz, 2019), and continuing professional development for staff and faculty (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012).

Education in Student Development Theory

The changing needs of students and expectations of the role of higher education means that professional development is central to all college employees as we continue to evolve to support students (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012). Additionally, while faculty and staff are all subject matter experts within their field, they may not have had the opportunity to learn the nuances of how to best engage with and support students in college. The QEP provides the opportunity to bridge that gap with a peer-based, collaborative learning model focused on increasing knowledge of and applying student development theories.

Much of the literature on student success implicitly or explicitly refers to the field of student development theory, including the sources used in the preceding section. Patton, Renn, Guideo, and Quaye define

student development theory, "as a collection of theories related to college students that explains how they grow and develop holistically, with increased complexity, while enrolled in a postsecondary educational environment" (2016, p.6), with "development" defined as "the process of becoming increasingly complex" (2016, p.5). Similarly, Rogers defined student development theory as, "the way that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of the enrollment in an institution of higher education" (1990, p. 27).

Whether or not faculty and staff are explicitly aware of its necessity, student development theory is the foundation of most student interactions within the College, with the intention to create positive growth in the students. Intentionally increasing knowledge and discussing application of student development theory amongst different departments can help College faculty and staff be better able to address student needs, design programs and policies, and create a positive environment for students (Patton, Renn, Guideo, & Quaye, 2016). Such a discussion, with the manifest intention of understanding and benefiting our students, has the latent benefit of creating stronger partnerships across departments.

Palm Beach State's QEP fits in a unique place within the literature. While literature exists on the importance of engaging students through pathway-based Academic Community events, and separately, much has been written in support of training faculty and staff in student development theory, no research exists to explore the impact of the combination of Academic Community engagement and employee training in student development theory. Palm Beach State's QEP aligns to the current needs of the College in a manageable way through the work of our Strategic Plan and complementary initiatives and presents an opportunity to fill the void in the literature as we see how the two combine to bring positive impact to students.

II.   Focus of the plan

The key issue identified by constituents is the College must support a stronger, more cohesive community. By addressing this issue through creating and organizing Academic Community events by pathway, there are benefits to both the students and the institution. The QEP is designed to provide a mechanism to connect students to their Academic Communities to build relationships, explore life and career possibilities, and build skills necessary for success. Additionally, QEP implementation creates an environment conducive to intentional inter-departmental collaboration within the College. Breaking down departmental barriers and connecting cross-disciplinary groups of employees to support students in their Academic Communities allows for knowledge-sharing and empowers employees to better support their students. Professional learning workshops and cohorts provide the opportunity for faculty and staff to network as they collaborate to learn and apply Student Development Theory principles within their work.

With the key issue and listed benefits in mind, the QEP is written with the focus of connecting students to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students using Academic Community (AC) events to increase student engagement resulting in higher levels of retention.

After the events are well-developed and being implemented fully in each AC annually, faculty and staff involved in the QEP will also partner with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) to build workshops that focus on Student Development Theory to ensure faculty and staff have opportunities to learn more about how they can support students in academic and non-academic ways.

QEP Goal:
 In order to increase student success, Palm Beach State students will connect to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students through Academic Community events.

QEP Outcomes:
1. Students engaging in Academic Community (AC) events will show a 24% increase in levels of College engagement between 2022 and 2027 as measured on the New Student Experience and Student Experience Surveys. Additionally, Palm Beach State will rank in the top 10% in the nation with scores exceeding 61 on "Student-Faculty Interaction" and "Support for Learners" Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE benchmarks between 2022 and 2027.
2. Retention rates will increase and demonstrate progress for students who participate and are engaged in student activities as measured against milestones and targets for periods between 2022 and 2027.
3. Faculty and Staff application of Student Development Theory in student interactions will increase after participating in workshops and Professional Learning Groups for measures against milestones and targets between 2022 and 2027.

Actions to be implemented
The goal of the QEP is to create stronger connections within the College. Reflecting upon our desired student experience at Palm Beach State and connecting initiatives and resources in a cohesive manner will encourage better inter-departmental collaboration within the College in support of our students.

Preparation Work

The QEP will be submitted to SACSCOC ahead of Palm Beach State's on-site visit in the Fall of 2021, and full implementation will begin Fall 2022 after receiving feedback from the on-site visiting team and approval from SACSCOC. However, as this plan links in with Panther Strong 2023 and touches so many initiatives within the College, some preliminary work and data collection will begin ahead of the official implementation of the QEP. The work done leading up to the full implementation of the QEP will ensure that the QEP links to and enhances the good work already in progress at the college.

Loss Momentum Project

Palm Beach State is part of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) Network, which is a national network of 220 colleges in 40 states that supports colleges as they focus on advancing and accelerating student success through the use of data driven decisions. Palm Beach State is part of the 2018 cohort and has submitted and executed a plan every year to meet these goals with a special focus on the topic of equity. The plan for the 2020-2021 academic year includes a reflection on student success through the lens of the Loss Momentum Framework. The Loss Momentum Framework, which was developed by Completion by Design and modified by Achieving the Dream, focuses on the student experience and identifies common loss points for students along their academic journey from Connection to Entry to Progress to Completion to Transition. The framework allows institutions to analyze these common loss points and create momentum strategies to help keep students moving towards their goals.
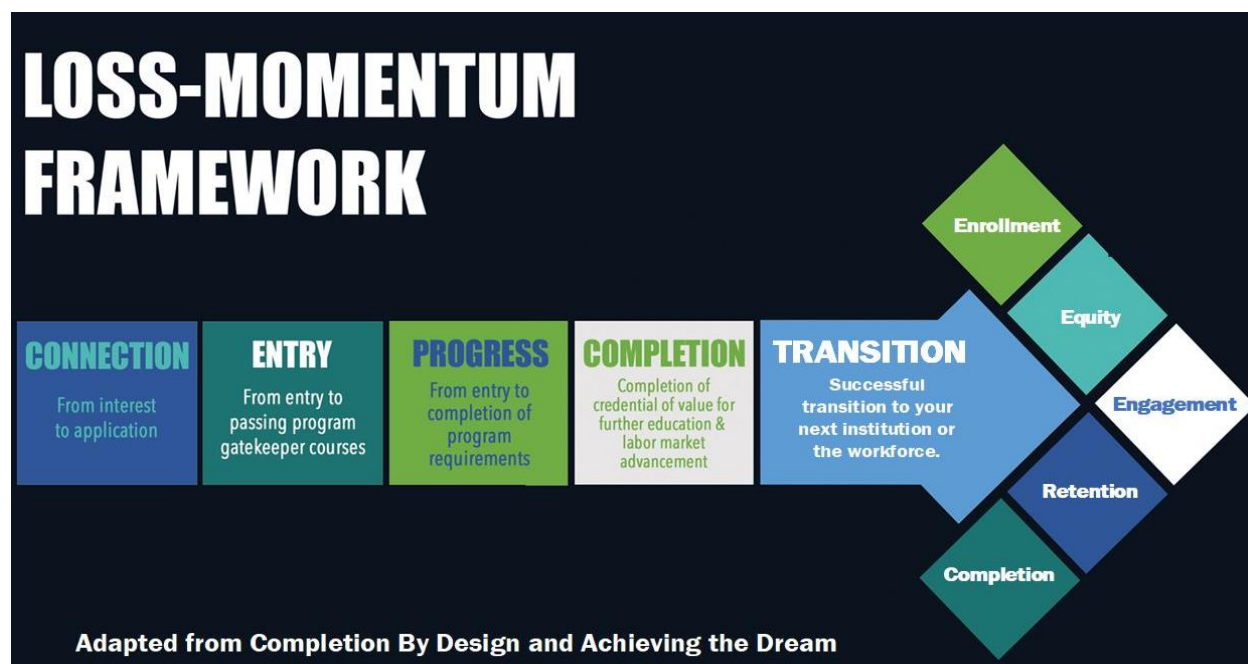
(Source: Achieving the Dream, modified by Palm Beach State College)

To achieve this at Palm Beach State, the College has created the Loss Momentum Project, which began Spring 2021 and continues as an iterative process as cross-disciplinary groups analyze, identify, implement, and measure the effectiveness of our efforts. The Discovery phase began in February and

March of 2021, which included weekly town hall style meetings open to all employees and students to acquire information about process inputs and to craft a Student Experience Statement. The focus was bottom-up information gathering (rather than a traditional meeting focused on top-down information transmission) and engaged 163 employees and 71 students, with some attending multiple sessions. The intent of these meetings was to gather information to inform the mapping teams and to develop a framework that should drive the student experience at Palm Beach State.

A student experience statement was generated from the feedback and discussion at the town halls. The statement captures the repeated themes in the town hall sessions and links to Palm Beach State's Mission, Vision, and Values. Red items align with **College Mission**, green items align to Palm Beach State's **Vision Statement**, and blue words align to **College Values**.

<div align="center">

Palm Beach State College
is a welcoming and empowering
learning environment where
personalized service matters
and **communities** thrive
to support **student success.**

We **inspire hope**,
foster intellectual curiosity,
and advance **learning** and
skills that accelerate upward mobility
and **transform lives.**

The Palm Beach State
student experience
is one of **inclusion**, well-being,
connection, and a sense
of belonging for all.

</div>

This statement was vetted by the Loss Momentum Project advisory council, Strategic Council, and the President's Expanded Cabinet before going to the College community for a vote and comments. 453 faculty and staff voted and gave the statement a 68% net promoter score (1-2-3 detractors subtracted from the 6-7 promoters), 907 students voted and gave the statement a 62% net promoter score. Extended Cabinet granted approval in their March 26th meeting to move forward with the communication and roll out of the Student Experience Statement in the Fall 2021 term. This statement will inform QEP implementation, as well as provide guidance and linkage as the College embarks upon new initiatives and as employees create the Palm Beach State experience through the good work they do every day.

Beginning in Spring of 2021 and continuing each semester with a focus on different intersecting College processes, the college will map key processes and student interactions through the Loss Momentum framework. The goal is to identify how students experience the College's processes and identify pain points and opportunities for improvement. As we map the student experience through feedback from students and the process holders, we will use the information to create and implement changes as warranted, and then measure the effects of those interventions. As the college completes each phase of the process mapping effort, new processes will be identified and mapped. At the end, the College will have a complete a map of all key processes and a visual of how they intersect to create the student experience. Special attention to different student personas will be considered. The conversations around the student experience, process improvement, and defining what we want our student experience to be will all inform the creation of the Academic Community events created through the QEP.

Florida Pathways Institute

Palm Beach State is a member of the Florida Pathways Institute (FPI), which is a statewide Guided Pathways implementation effort. As part of the first FPI Cohort, the college will work over the next two years to implement and scale pathways at the institution. Palm Beach State College currently organizes its programs into pathways and provides advising tracks for AA students to help them ensure the courses they take for their AA will set them up for success at their transfer institution. However, true pathway implementation is more than just static maps. In part of the action plan for the College's first year, the FPI team set the goal to create a more student-centric institution. This will be done through establishing a governance structure tasked with creating the Academic Communities. The QEP will complement the Academic Communities through intentional student engagement by community: organizing existing events by Academic Community, creating new events to be offered by Academic Community, and measuring the effect of these Academic Community events on engagement and retention.

Other initiatives currently in progress at the College that will support the FPI work and QEP is the selection of a Student Success Platform. This software will allow the College to effectively track student progress, verify if students are on/off path, and target communications to students by Pathway and Academic Community. As the college reorganizes advising to a college-wide case management model by Pathway, the Student Success Platform will be a powerful vehicle to connect students to advising and their entire support team. Expected acquisition of the Student Success Platform is late Fall 2021 with an intentional, phased rollout following soon after, and reorganization of advisor caseload by Pathway is currently underway. The support ecosystem created by the FPI work and related activities will set the stage for the QEP.

Academic Community Events

Organizing and creating Academic Community events will build on the work the College has already established with the creation of the Pathway Maps and organization of degrees and certificates by pathway. Creating supportive community events around the Pathways is the next logical step in engaging our students and helping them achieve their goals.

Academic Community events will extend throughout each student's time at the College. Depending on the nature of the events, some will be promoted to the student regardless of their progress, and others will be targeted to where the student is on their path to completion.

Table 2:

Timeline for Academic Community events

0-15 Credits	15-30 Credits	30-45 Credits	45+ Credits
or equivalent percent completion for clock-hour programs			
Welcome Events			
Academic Community Exploration Events			
Career Mentor and Alumni Story Events			
	Success Toolkit Workshops		
	Networking and Career Skills Events		
		Transfer Workshops	
		Career Fairs	
Engagement Events by Academic Community			

The first fifteen credits, or clock-hour equivalent, will focus on connection, belonging, and exploration. Welcome events will connect students to their peers and college employees who work to support the students' chosen Academic Community. Similarly, Academic Community Exploration and Career Mentor and Alumni events will provide opportunities for students to explore their Academic Community, envision the possibilities of their chosen community, and build their support network. As students progress within the College, events will shift to build life and career skills necessary within their chosen Academic Community. Within the final 60 credits of the students' degree, or equivalent for their chosen programs, events will focus on preparing them for their next transition, whether that is moving into the workforce or transferring to a university. Additionally, throughout the students' time at the College, outreach and engagement activities by pathway will offer consistent support.

While Palm Beach State already offers some events, workshops, and clubs that would be ideal to advertise to students in specific Academic Communities, no mechanism currently exists to organize and communicate these events to those students. The first step to this culture shift within the institution is to create a place to advertise events by Academic Community and communicate them to students in an intentional, targeted way. The creation of Academic Community webpages and intentional flagging of events by Academic Community/Pathway within the College's existing Student Activities platform Engage, would easily create a communication flow of relevant events and club meetings to the target audiences. Engage also creates an easy way to track student participation at these events. Establishing Social Media accounts for each Academic Community and Academic Community newsletters will further facilitate communication of events and support to students.

Once the framework is established and existing events are sorted and communicated successfully by Pathway, the focus shifts to creating new events to support the Pathways. As the FPI Academic Community governance structure is established, cross-disciplinary leaders empowered by the College will work with the QEP Strategy Team to coordinate events that fit within the QEP support framework. While events will be the same types of events regardless of community, the Academic Community leaders will

have the freedom to enact in the way(s) they see fit to meet the needs of their pathway. Through the Student Success Platform, Engage, focus groups, CCSSE, and Student Experience Surveys, all of which will track student Academic Community/Pathway, the College will be able to meaningfully collect data on participation, engagement and belonging, and retention.

Professional Development in Student Development Theory

Palm Beach State's 2012-2017 QEP, *Explore, Evaluate, Express and Engage: A Quality Enhancement Plan to improve student learning by focusing on critical thinking*, resulted in the development of Professional Learning Groups (PLGs). Cohorts of faculty, instructional staff, and in some cases academic and student support services staff met two hours each month during the fall and spring semesters to practice their critical thinking skills and plan instructional strategies and assessment to build student critical thinking development. Some of the groups established in the previous QEP continue to meet to this day, making this sustained initiative one of the most successful products of Palm Beach State's 2012-2017 QEP.

Building on the success of the original PLGs, this QEP will use a similar PLG format to support the exploration, discussion, and implementation of Student Development Theory within the participants' work in the college. Palm Beach State's 2012-2017 QEP had a strong focus on faculty and instruction due to SACSCOC's emphasis on improving student learning within the QEP. SACSCOC's expansion of the QEP guidelines to "improve student learning outcomes and/or student success" opens the possibility for greater cross-collaboration amongst college units. With this QEP, all faculty and staff will be invited to engage in the PLGs.

The PLGs will be created by Academic Community focus and will provide a forum to discuss and reflect upon Student Development Theory as it applies to teaching, learning, and serving students. Through participation, PLG members will support each other in exploring Student Development Theory, creating assignments or interventions that apply principles of the theories, and discuss outcomes of the implementation of those ideas. PLG leaders, QEP staff, and subject matter experts in Student Development Theory will identify key theories to ground the initial discussions and develop activities for the PLG cohorts. Membership will offer a supportive network of colleagues with wide ranging perspectives and experiences that help each member grow as they engage in discussions about the student experience through the lens provided by Student Development Theory.

Professional Development workshops will also be created to reach a wider audience at the College. Partnering with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) and to-be-hired professional development staff for Student Services, the QEP team will create workshops to educate faculty and staff on elements of Student Development Theory. Workshops providing an introduction to Student Development Theory and workshops targeted on a specific theory within Student Development Theory and/or techniques for how to implement within individual classrooms/area will be offered. A three-part learning series featuring workshops on Student Development Theory will be offered for faculty and staff to do a deeper dive and build proficiency.

Taking a two-pronged approach of targeted, intensive support through the PLGs and the broader reach of learning opportunities through professional development workshops, Development Day and Convocation breakout sessions, New Employee Orientation, and New Faculty Experience will maximize opportunities

for the College to invest in our most important resource – our faculty and staff – to build their understanding and application of Student Development Theory.

III. Institutional Capability

Proposed Budget for Panther PACE

Projections are based on current pricing, known institutional expenditures, or the budgets of similar institutions with the same QEP topic and types of initiatives.

Table 3:
Projected cost to implement and complete Panther PACE

		Jan-Jun 2022	AY 2022-2023	AY 2023-2024	AY 2024-2025	AY 2025-2026	AY 2026-2027	Five- year total
1	Student Engagement Events	-	$8,000	$12,000	$14,000	$16,000	$16,000	$66,000
2	Academic Community Leaders (course release or in-kind services)	$10,500	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$115,500
3	Faculty/Staff Development Programming	-	$4,000	$6,000	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$34,000
4	QEP Manager (faculty reassignment; benefits included)	$40,000	$80,000	$82,000	$84,000	$86,000	$88,000	$460,000
5	In-State Travel	$2,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$22,000
6	Out-Of-State Travel	-	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000	$40,000
7	Vicinity Travel	$500	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$5,500
8	Promotional Materials and Printing	$2,000	$3,000	$3,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$14,000
9	Supplies	$250	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$2,750
10	**Total Investment**	**$55,250**	**$129,500**	**$137,500**	**$142,500**	**$146,500**	**$148,500**	**$759,750**

1. **Student Engagement Events**
   To further incentivize students to participate in Academic Community events, funding for food, promotion of events, giveaways, and other supplies is required.

2. **Academic Community Leaders**
   To ensure college employees have the time to dedicate to developing and supporting the Academic Communities and relevant events and tracking results, a stipend or release time is required. Current calculations assume three employees per community (21 total) will work in the two main semesters and will receive a stipend of $500/semester or commensurate release time to focus on Academic Community event programming.

3. **Faculty/Staff Development Programming**
   Faculty and staff development opportunities in Student Development Theory will be offered through Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) and professional development workshops. $4,000 is budgeted for 2022/2023, $6,000 for 2023/2024, and $8,000 for subsequent years for programming needs and materials. Workshop content and offerings will scale throughout the implementation of the QEP.

4. **QEP Manager**
   This position will oversee all aspects of the QEP. Responsibilities include taking charge of initiating, implementing, and completing the QEP; coordinating amongst departments; completing or ensuring the completion of any unforeseen tasks that may arise in the process of any QEP phase; reviewing and revising any components of Palm Beach State's QEP during the course of implementation if any assessments or other feedback warrant such revision; administering assessments, collecting data, and preparing reports; maintaining all necessary documentation to provide annual reports to higher administration and a five-year impact report to SACSCOC. The QEP Manager will be held by a faculty remember receiving full course release to focus on the QEP, and the investment represented in the projected cost includes base salary, stipend for summer work, and benefits.

5. **In-State Travel/Development Opportunities**
   Members of the Academic Community Team and CTLE Facilitators will participate in relevant professional development opportunities offered online or within the state.

6. **Out-of-State Travel**
   Members of the QEP teams and QEP Manager will participate in out-of-state professional development, such as SACSCOC annual conference and summer institute, as needed.

7. **Vicinity Travel**
   Some meetings and workshops will be offered online, but the Academic Community teams and QEP Manager will need to travel to other campuses for meetings and workshops. It is yet to be seen how the College will function as we return to more in-campus events as it is safe to do so; a higher than anticipated amount is included in the travel budget in case there is renewed desire for in-person workshops and events.

8. **Promotional Materials and Printing**
   QEP Awareness will be an ongoing requirement. Marketing will be required, especially in the first few years of implementation.

9. **Supplies**
   General office supplies and materials for workshops will be required.

Additional notes regarding institutional commitment and capacity

Since Palm Beach State's QEP will in part serve to link and enhance work already underway at the College, the QEP will capitalize on existing College resources already in place.

The to-be-selected Student Success Platform will serve as an essential piece to communicate with students, track their progress, and collect meaningful data to inform the QEP efforts. The College has committed to purchasing the platform; investing time, resources, and person-hours to deploy the software and train faculty and staff; and sustaining support for the new platform.

The Insight and Engage modules from Anthology Suite of Institutional Effectiveness are already heavily used by multiple departments at the College, so the QEP can easily take advantage of this to categorize and promote Academic Community events to students and to track student retention and other success measures by level of engagement, as outlined in Outcome 2.

Physical space needed for the QEP will be the QEP Manager's existing faculty office, existing CTLE workrooms and spaces on each of the campuses, and classrooms and meeting rooms on the campuses to hold in person events. The QEP Manager will work closely with campus constituents to schedule training events for orientations, development activities, and Academic Community events.

Just as essential as physical space, virtual space for meetings and Academic Community events will be needed. The College currently invests in Zoom and Microsoft Teams to facilitate meetings and will continue to support at least one of these platforms moving forward.

Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) has a strong cadence of surveys, especially as they relate to student engagement and success. With the exception of the disruption posed by COVID-19 in 2020, the New Student Experience and Student Experience Surveys are already administered on an annual basis. Additionally, IRE has committed to administering the CCSSE on a two-year cycle, with the addition of 2027 to capture QEP impact in its final year. Quick polls and student focus groups can easily be organized and sorted through QEP Manager partnership with IRE, through existing Qualtrics software or potentially through the Student Success Platform, with the results informing not only the QEP but many strategic initiatives within the College. IRE leadership and staff stand ready to support the QEP through in-kind service needed to collect and analyze needed data.

Palm Beach State has strong ties to the community through our business partnerships, mentor network, alumni network, and employee Career Champions. These relationships will be utilized to invite volunteer guest speakers to share their work experiences with students in their related Academic Community, which will serve to strengthen our community partnerships.

The success of the QEP will hinge on the faculty and staff involvement in the formation of Academic Community events and participation in those events. Faculty and staff are expected to participate in committees, professional development, and/or events as part of their service to the College, and the QEP provides a new and unique way to fulfil that commitment. Academic Community leaders and the QEP

Manager will work to identify and support interested faculty and staff as they engage with the QEP in support of our students.

Student Government, Phi Theta Kappa, and Honors College Students complete service to the College as part of their leadership growth and development. Partnering with these students and involving them in the formation and execution of Academic Community events will ensure that the events are designed to meet the needs of our students and provide students with opportunities for professional development.

The integration of the QEP as a Strategy within the Panther Strong 2023 Strategic Plan ensures leadership support and guidance as the QEP moves forward. Monthly Strategic Planning meetings already in place will ensure the QEP is supported by the Strategic Council and any roadblocks are addressed to keep the implementation teams moving forward.

The end goal of Palm Beach State's QEP is the success of our students, and the College commits its unwavering support to this goal.

QEP Implementation Timeline

Table 4

Pilot Year 2021-2022	
Summer 2021	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Establish QEP as a Panther Strong 2023 Strategy	QEP mgr., IRE director
Recruit members and establish QEP Strategy Team	QEP mgr., Strategy Co-Champion
Establish and maintain Academic Community Social Media accounts	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Add to New Student Experience/Student Experience surveys questions regarding Academic Community and level of participation in Academic Community Activities	IRE staff
Fall 2021	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Faculty and Staff engagement at Fall Convocation	QEP mgr., VPAIS
Administer Student Experience and New Student Experience Surveys	IRE staff
Establish Academic Community webpages	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Create Academic Community/Pathway tags in Engage	QEP mgr., CRM
Sort and tag existing Academic Community events	QEP mgr.
Provide QEP update and workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Collect and analyze baseline student engagement data; establish engagement thresholds	QEP mgr., IRE Director, IRE Staff, QEP Committee
Add to CCSSE questions regarding Academic Community and level of participation in Academic Community Activities	IRE Director, IRE Staff
Identify and recruit Academic Community Leaders	QEP Committee

Spring 2022	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Orient Academic Community Leaders and establish teams	QEP mgr., VPAIS
Map out Year 1 Academic Community events – Welcome Events and Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review Student Experience and New Student Experience Survey results	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Review follow-up survey and focus group results	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Provide QEP update and workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Develop Student Development Theory workshop framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Administer CCSSE	IRE Staff
Summer 2022	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review pilot year activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Complete QEP Report on pilot phase	QEP mgr.
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Ensure preparations are complete for Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Year 1: 2022-2023	
Fall 2022	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE staff
Hold initial Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer Student Experience/New Student Experience Surveys	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Finalize Student Development Theory workshop framework (standalone workshop and series)	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Offer pilot Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback; establish workshop outcome baselines	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Plan for Spring Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Plan for Spring Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Spring 2023	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders

Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Summer 2023	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review Year 1 activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Complete QEP Annual Report	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Ensure preparations are complete for Welcome Events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Ensure workshops are prepared for fall	QEP mgr., CTLE Director
Year 2: 2023-2024	
Fall 2023	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer Student Experience/New Student Experience Surveys	IRE Staff
Hold initial Career Mentor and Alumni Success Story Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold initial Engagement events by Academic Community	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC Engagement events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Implement Student Development Theory Professional Learning Groups	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback; establish workshop outcome baselines	QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff

Plan for Spring Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Plan for Spring Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Spring 2024	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback	QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Administer CCSSE	IRE Staff
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Groups	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Hold initial Success Toolkit Workshops	QEP Committee, SLC Staff
Review feedback and participation data from Success Toolkit workshops	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, SLC Staff
Summer 2024	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review Year 2 Activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Complete QEP Annual Report	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Ensure preparations are complete for Welcome Events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Year 3: 2024-2025	
Fall 2024	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer Student Experience/New Student Experience Surveys	IRE Staff

Action	Person(s) Responsible
Hold initial Career Mentor and Alumni Success Story Events	QEP Committee, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback; refine as needed	QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff
Plan for Spring Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Plan for Spring Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold initial Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold initial Transfer workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Transfer workshops	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Spring 2025	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Hold initial Career Fairs	QEP Committee, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from career fairs	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold Success Toolkit Workshops	QEP Committee, SLC Staff
Review feedback and participation data from Success Toolkit workshops	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, SLC Staff

Action	Person(s) Responsible
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director, IRE Staff

Summer 2025	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review Year 3 Activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Complete QEP Annual Report	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Ensure preparations are complete for Welcome Events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders

Year 4: 2025-2026	
Fall 2025	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer Student Experience/New Student Experience Surveys	IRE Staff
Hold Career Mentor and Alumni Success Story Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE
Review workshop survey data and feedback; refine as needed	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Plan for Spring Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Plan for Spring Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold Transfer workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Transfer workshops	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff

Spring 2026	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**

Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer CCSSE	IRE Staff
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Hold Career Fairs	QEP Committee, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from career fairs	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold Success Toolkit Workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Success Toolkit workshops	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Summer 2026	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review Year 4 Activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Complete QEP Annual Report	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Ensure preparations are complete for Welcome Events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Year 5: 2025-2027	
Fall 2026	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer Student Experience/New Student Experience Surveys	IRE Staff

Action	Person(s) Responsible
Hold Career Mentor and Alumni Success Story Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback; refine as needed	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Plan for Spring Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Plan for Spring Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Hold Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Networking and Career Skills Events	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold Transfer workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from Transfer workshops	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Spring 2027	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Hold Academic Community Welcome Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from welcome events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Offer Student Development Theory workshops	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review workshop survey data and feedback	QEP Mgr., QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Hold Academic Community Exploration Events	QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Review feedback and participation data from AC exploration events	QEP mgr., IRE Staff, QEP Committee, AC Leaders
Administer CCSSE	IRE Staff
Administer New Student Experience follow-up survey	IRE Staff
Conduct QEP workshops at Development Day	QEP mgr., QEP Committee
Conduct New Student focus groups and quick polls, as needed	QEP mgr., IRE Staff
Hold Career Fairs	QEP Committee, Career Center
Review feedback and participation data from career fairs	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Hold Success Toolkit Workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center

Review feedback and participation data from Success Toolkit workshops	QEP Committee, AC Leaders, Career Center
Support Student Development Theory Professional Learning Group framework	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Review PLG feedback and survey data	QEP Committee, CTLE Director
Summer 2027	
Action	**Person(s) Responsible**
Review Year 5 Activities, assess effectiveness, and recommend implementation and revisions	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, AC Leaders, IRE Staff
Complete QEP 5th year Impact Report	QEP mgr., QEP Committee, Reaffirmation Leadership Team
Update QEP Webpage	QEP mgr.
Submit request to present QEP report to DBOT in fall	QEP mgr., VP AIS
Pending SACSCOC review of 5th Year Impact Report, Institutionalize QEP actions during this academic year, making adjustments and revisions as needed	QEP mgr., VP AIS will oversee

IV.   Broad-based support in development and implementation

Developing the Plan

Call at Development Day

At the Spring 2019 Development Day general session, Palm Beach State provided an update on the SACSCOC reaccreditation process and encouraged teams to submit proposals in line with the Strategic Plan for the College's QEP. The window to submit proposals was open from March 26 to May 31, 2019, and faculty, instructors, staff, and administrators working individually and in teams submitted twelve proposals. In the summer of 2019, the College collected initial feedback on the twelve proposals from key groups, including the Reaffirmation Leadership Team and Strategic Council. Additionally, an ad hoc committee of faculty, staff, and students was convened to assess the proposals and select five to bring to the College community for a vote during the Fall 2019 Development Day cluster meetings. The vote inspired robust discussions among the cluster members, with a suggestion to somehow combine proposals a recurring theme, but the vote did not indicate a clear favorite for Palm Beach State's QEP.

Forums

Taking the feedback from the College community, the College formed a QEP Development Team, which planned to host a QEP Forum on each campus. Invitations went out to faculty, instructors, staff, administration, students, District Board of Trustee Members, and external community members. The QEP Forums were designed to have participants first interact with each of the proposals in a roundtable fashion and then each participant would choose a proposal s/he wished to explore more deeply, with the goal of workshopping and refining the proposals, selecting elements from other proposals to combine, and

identifying potential learning outcomes. One QEP Forum was held in person at Loxahatchee Groves on Friday, March 13, 2020, with great success; however, the additional forums were suspended in response to COVID-19 and the College's shift to remote instruction.

With the challenge of keeping the College community engaged while working remotely, the QEP Development Team created Virtual QEP Forums delivered through Zoom. Seven virtual forums were hosted between Tuesday, April 14, and Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at different times of the day to accommodate schedules. The Virtual QEP Forums were structured with a brainstorming activity based on the question, "What's the one thing our students need to be successful?", a review of the top five proposals, and an open discussion of the preferred elements of each of the proposals. The Virtual QEP Forums concluded with a vote for each participant's top and second choice proposal. Nearly 200 participants engaged in the forum process. The main themes that arose from the discussions were **Focus on Student Experience and Support** and **Focus on Soft Skills and Thinking Dispositions**, and when the votes were tallied and analyzed through that lens, the votes from the in-person and online QEP Forums showed that each idea was supported with 50% of the vote. (See Table A2 on page 49.)

Online Vote
Taking the feedback from the forums, the QEP Development Team combined the five proposals into two that contained the elements the forum participants identified as most beneficial to our students and to the College. Voting to select from those two combined proposals to select the top QEP was held from Wednesday, April 29, to Tuesday, May 5, 2020, and was publicized through an all-user email, Intranet posting, social media, and invitations to students and community partners. Over 450 votes for Palm Beach State's QEP were received. (See Figures A3-A5 on pages 50-51 for voting breakdown.)

Implementation
The five-year plan will require support from a wide variety of College constituents. To ensure the QEP has the support it needs to be successful and long-term sustainability as part of institutional culture, in Summer 2021 the QEP will become a "Strategy" in the Panther Strong 2023 Strategic Plan, with the QEP Manager as Strategy Champion leading the effort and its associated tactics. The Strategic Council, which currently serves as sounding board for QEP development, will continue in an advisory role for all QEP efforts. Formation of Strategy Teams within the QEP Strategy will bring a mix of planners and doers to the table to ensure the success of QEP goals.

Summer and Fall of 2021, the QEP Strategy Team will include faculty, Career Center staff, SLC staff, Student Activities staff, Library staff, Institutional Research and Effectiveness staff, Student Services leadership, and students. This group will work to build out in more detail specific Academic Community engagement events, identify potential Academic Community Leaders, and collect data to establish an appropriate Academic Community "engagement" threshold. Initial planning of Student Development Theory professional development framework will also begin.

After the SACSCOC on-site review in October 2021 and initial feedback is received, the QEP Strategy Team will add a second group to the QEP Strategy by bringing onboard the Academic Community Leaders in Spring 2022 to begin to plan, coordinate, and assist with data collection for the Academic Community events. The seven Academic Communities will be represented by three members each – a faculty member who teaches within that Academic Community, a student services representative associated with the

community, and a SLC or Library representative familiar with the community content. The QEP Strategy Team and Academic Community Leadership team will work to guide and support each other within the QEP Strategy, and additional students, faculty and staff will be consulted to guide the structure of events and align with other College offerings, as needed.

This structure of tiered support and guidance through the Strategic Plan and College leadership will continue throughout the QEP implementation and is expected to become part of institutional culture and continue on past submission of Palm Beach State's 5th Year Impact Report. Guided Pathways, Academic Communities, a focus on student experience and support, and continuous improvement are all essential pieces of what Palm Beach State is, and while the QEP will provide the catalyst to pull these elements together in an intentional way, the completion of the QEP will in no way stop these efforts from continuing.

V. Assessment Plan

QEP Goal:

In order to increase student success, Palm Beach State students will connect to College resources, faculty and staff, and fellow students through Academic Community events.

QEP Outcomes:

1. Students engaging in Academic Community (AC) events will show a 24% increase in levels of College engagement between 2022 and 2027 as measured on the New Student Experience and Student Experience Surveys. Additionally, Palm Beach State will rank in the top 10% in the nation with scores exceeding 61 on "Student-Faculty Interaction" and "Support for Learners" CCSSE benchmarks between 2022 and 2027.
2. Retention rates will increase and demonstrate progress for students who participate and are engaged in student activities as measured against milestones and targets for periods between 2022 and 2027.
3. Faculty and Staff application of Student Development Theory in student interactions will increase after participating in workshops and Professional Learning Groups for measures against milestones and targets between 2022 and 2027.

Table 5:

Outcome	Measures	Source	Baseline	Comparison	Milestones	Target
Outcome One: Students engaging in Academic Community (AC) events will show a 24% increase in levels of College engagement between 2022 and 2027 as measured on the New Student Experience and Student Experience Surveys. Additionally, Palm Beach State will rank in the top 10% in the nation with scores exceeding 60 on "Student-Faculty	CCSSE Benchmark "Student-Faculty Interaction"	CCSSE; IRE	49.5 (2019)	50.9 (2017-2019) ATD Colleges 47.5 (2017-2019) XL Colleges	2022: 49.5 2024: 53.5 2026: 58.5 2027: 61.2	61.2 Top 10% in the Nation
	CCSSE Benchmark "Support for Learners"	CCSSE; IRE	51.0 (2019)	51.5 (2017-2019) ATD Colleges 49.1 (2017-2019) XL Colleges	2022: 51.0 2024: 55.0 2026: 60.0 2027: 63.0	63 Top 10% in the Nation
	New Student Experience "Engagement" Benchmark	New Student Experience Survey; IRE	42% NPS (2019)	N/A	2021: 42% 2022: 43% 2023: 44% 2024: 46% 2025: 48% 2026: 50% 2027: 52%	52.0%

| Interaction" and "Support for Learners" CCSSE benchmarks between 2022 and 2027. | Student Experience Benchmark "Engagement" | Student Experience Survey; IRE | 43% NPS (2019) | N/A | 2021: 43%
 2022: 44%
 2023: 45.5%
 2024: 47.5%
 2025: 49.5%
 2026: 51.5%
 2027: 53.5% | 53.5% |

Table 6:

Outcome	Measures	Source	Baseline	Comparison	Milestones	Target
Outcome Two: Retention rates will increase and demonstrate progress for students who participate and are engaged in student activities as measured against milestones and targets for periods between 2022 and 2027.	Participation in Student Activities	Engage; IRE	Baseline data will be established in 2021-2022	The measure is unique to Palm Beach State	TBD Will be set based on baseline data	TBD
	Engagement in Student Activities	Engage; IRE	Baseline data will be established in 2021-2022	The measure is unique to Palm Beach State	Will be set based on baseline data	TBD
	Student Progress: Impact on Retention	Engage; IRE	Baseline data will be established in 2021-2022	The measure is unique to Palm Beach State	Will be set based on baseline data	TBD
	Student Progress: Impact on GPA	Engage; IRE	Baseline data will be established in 2021-2022	The measure is unique to Palm Beach State	Will be set based on baseline data	TBD

Table 7:

Outcome	Measures	Source	Baseline	Milestones	Target
Outcome Three: Faculty and Staff application of Student Development Theory in student interactions will increase upon participation in workshops and Professional Learning Groups for measures against milestones and the target between 2022 and 2027.	Number of College employee participants in Student Development Theory workshops	Professional Development Registration	Baseline data will be established in 2022-2023	Will be set based on baseline data	By 2027, at least 50% of faculty and staff will have participated a Student Development Theory Workshop
	Number of employees completing Student Development Theory workshop series	Professional Development Data	Baseline data will be established in 2022-2023	Will be set based on baseline data	By 2027, at least 30% of faculty and staff will have completed the Student Development Theory workshop series
	Number of workshop participants reporting increased knowledge and application of Student Development Theory	Professional Development Data	Baseline data will be established in 2022-2023	Will be set based on baseline data	At least 80% of participants will agree that the workshops • Increased their knowledge of Student Development Theory • Increased their ability to apply Student Development Theory in their student interactions
	Number of employee participants in Student Development Theory PLGs	PLG Facilitators	Baseline data will be established in 2023-2024	Will be set based on baseline data	By 2027, at least 100 faculty and staff will have participated in a PLG
	PLG Participant self-reporting of Student Development Theory application	Survey developed by QEP Manager	Baseline data will be established in 2023-2024	Will be set based on baseline data	At least 80% of PLG participants will agree that their participation • Increased their knowledge of Student Development Theory • Increased their ability to apply Student Development Theory in their student interactions Additionally, at least 80% of participants will document how participation led to a

					positive change in their student interactions

Methodology

Outcome 1:

Palm Beach State has participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) five times, with the most recent participation in Spring 2019. Prior surveys were completed in 2004, 2007, 2011, and 2016. The 2019 data is used to establish the assessment baseline for our QEP. Palm Beach State will administer the CCSSE in Spring 2022, which will provide further insight for comparison and give an accurate understanding of where students are engagement-wise as the College returns to more in-person courses and services. CCSSE benchmarks and specific items within the benchmarks relevant to the QEP have been identified as leading measures of QEP success and will be tracked to measure QEP outcomes. Additional questions will be added to the CCSSE to capture students' chosen Academic Community and level of participation in engagement events to allow a deeper dive into the results; doing this will provide insight into student engagement by Academic Community and target in on the level of Academic Community engagement as a factor leading to higher CCSSE results on identified benchmarks. The College will administer the CCSSE in Spring 2024, 2026, and 2027 to capture QEP progress and inform any modifications that may need to be made to the QEP.

Mid-fall semester, Palm Beach State administers the New Student Experience Survey targeting students in their first semester and a companion survey, the Student Experience Survey, to students who have recently reached 24 credits. The surveys are designed with similar questions to provide a longitudinal understanding of students' experiences as they progress through the College. The "Engagement" benchmark and identified items within that benchmark relevant to QEP outcomes will be tracked to measure success of the QEP. Similar to the CCSSE, additional questions will be added to capture students' chosen Academic Community and level of participation in engagement events to target in on the QEP's direct effect on reported levels of engagement.

Since the New Student Experience survey is administered approximately six weeks into the fall term, which is still early in the students' first semester, Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) will conduct a follow-up survey with new students six weeks into the spring term to further assess their involvement in Academic Community events. This will allow a more complete understanding of the students' first full semester at the College and provide insight into program modifications that may need to be made prior to the following fall term.

Additionally, Student Panels will be formed with approximately 100 students. Through the fall and spring semesters, the cohort will be engaged monthly with quick polls, focus groups, and other research methods to gather feedback and assess the impact of the QEP and other College initiatives. This methodology allows for frequent interactions and engagement with a targeted and representative sample of First Time in College (FTIC) students in each of Palm Beach State's seven Academic Communities.

Outcome 2:

To establish the methodology to achieve Outcome 2, the College will employ the following procedural steps to determine the leading measures for the College. This will provide for 2021-2022 baseline data from which milestones and targets can be established for the time period from 2022 to 2027.

Using the Insight and Engage modules from Anthology Suite of Institutional Effectiveness product, the College will construct a dataset that will allow the College to aggregate and disaggregate data. This data will allow the College to sort any combination of factors analyzing participation and engagement data and variables providing evidence of impact on retention and GPA. This will inform our engagement threshold for Outcomes 1 and 2, as we determine what number of Academic Community events a student participates in each semester to be considered "Engaged" in their community. It will also create a predictive model as to how participation and engagement impact the overall student experience for new and existing students. Our working assumption is that increases in Academic Communities event participation will have a positive impact on GPA, overall engagement, and retention.

The work on establishing baseline data was delayed due to the pandemic, which resulted in a modification in how student events are currently offered, a reduction in number of student events, and the furloughing of some Student Activities staff. As the College resumes normal activities in the 2021-2022 semester, accurate baseline data can be gathered to build out this outcome.

Outcome 3:

A robust offering of workshops and Professional Learning Groups specific to Student Development Theory is a new initiative for the College, and as such no baselines currently exist for comparison. Pilot workshops will be implemented in Spring 2023 to establish baseline levels of single workshop attendance, interest in completing a three-part workshop series, and overall effectiveness of workshops. Similarly, as the Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) are established in Spring 2024, baseline interest in PLG participation will be established. From these baselines, year over year milestones will be established to ensure targets for outcome three are met.

Surveys will be used to assess the effectiveness of workshops and PLG engagement. Pre- and post-surveys will be administered virtually to capture specific outcomes of the workshops as well as overall increase in knowledge and application of student development theory. Additionally, PLG participants will be asked open-ended questions to allow them to explain how participation led to positive changes in their interactions with students and to share specific actions and/or interventions they employed in their classroom or their work.

Assessment of the QEP

The QEP assessment plan contains yearly milestones, learning outcomes, and a goal that represents leading and lagging measures of overall QEP success. To ensure that the QEP is on track to meet its targets, regular assessment of the QEP will be completed to provide the opportunity to reflect on the data and make any modifications, as needed.

Quick polls, supplemental New Student Experience surveys, focus groups, and other agile research approaches will be used to fill the gaps in the College's existing assessment cycle and provide insight to adjust Academic Community events and engagement activities within each year of QEP implementation.

An annual report will be compiled each summer by the QEP Manager with the support of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to ensure the QEP is on track and to share QEP results with Strategic Council, College Leadership, the District Board of Trustees, and the entire College community. Constituent feedback on this report will guide QEP efforts in the following year of implementation.

The assessment plan allows the College to capture short-term and long-term performance gains, and a continual process of implementing, assessing, evaluating, and revising strategies is built in to ensure QEP success.

VI.   Conclusion: Expected Impact of QEP

During the five-year implementation of the QEP, engagement of students through their pathway-based Academic Communities and a focus on student support will become defining features of Palm Beach State's culture. Faculty and staff cross-disciplinary collaboration to intentionally engage students and create meaningful experiences will become part of the work we do every day to support our students.

By the end of five years, it is expected that the College will have a robust offering of Academic Community engagement events and will support students by their Academic Community from orientation to completion, with the possibility of retaining them as alumni who will return to share their experiences with future students.

This new culture will be established through faculty and staff development in Student Development Theory, both in workshop settings and supportive Professional Learning Groups, and it will continue through the collaboration to create and execute Academic Community events.

The creation of Academic Community events by pathway and data collection that will allow the College to analyze the impact of specific engagement activities and overall level of engagement by Academic Community will inform the College's student engagement interventions moving forward and will encourage data literacy and culture of making data informed decisions to ensure student engagement and retention.

College constituents – faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners – fully support the QEP, and the institution is well-prepared with the necessary resources to carry out the plan. The College has stated what it will do and the expected result, and the assessment plan provides a means to assess QEP effectiveness and narrow down to specific events to measure impact on engagement and retention. Palm Beach State is prepared to increase student retention through intentional engagement by Academic Communities.

References

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 25*, 297-308.

Burke, A. (2019). Student Retention Models in Higher Education: A Literature Review. *College and University, 94*(2), 12-21.

Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2020). *Building Momentum: Using Guided Pathways to Redesign the Student Experience*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, Program in Higher Education Leadership. https://cccse.org/sites/default/files/BuildingMomentum.pdf

Community College Resource Center, (CCRC). (2017). *What is the "Pathways Model?".* https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/PathwaysModelDescription1021.pdf

Connolly, C. *Student Retention Literature – Tinto's Model.* https://corneliathinks.wordpress.com/2016/09/20/tintos-model/

Demetriou, C., & Schmitz-Sciborski, A. (2011). *Integration, Motivation, Strengths and Optimism: Retention Theories Past, Present and Future.* Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma. https://studentsuccess.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10139/2012/11/Demetriou-and-Schmitz-Sciborski.pdf

Habley, W. R. (Ed.). (2004). *The status of academic advising: Findings from the ACT sixth national survey*. National Academic Advising Association.

Hanover Research. (2010). *Overview of Student Retention Theories, Strategies, and Practices at Peer*

    Institutions. Washington, DC: Hanover Research. https://www.algonquincollege.com/academic-

    success/files/2014/12/Overview-of-Student-Retention-Theories-Strategies-and-Practices-at-Peer-

    Institutions.pdf?file=2014/12/Overview-of-Student-Retention-Theories-Strategies-and-Practices-at-

    Peer-Institutions.pdf

Jenkins, D. (2014). *Redesigning Community Colleges for Student Success: Overview of the Guided*

    Pathways Approach. https://www.templejc.edu/live/files/37-redesigning-community-colleges-for-

    student-success

Levitz, R., & Noel, L. (1989). Connecting students to institutions: Keys to retention and success. In M. L.

    Upcraft, & J. N. Gardner (Eds.), *The Freshman Year Experience: Helping Students Survive and*

    Succeed in College (pp. 65-81). Jossey-Bass.

Manyanga, F., Sithole, A., & Hanson, S. H. (2017). Comparison of Student Retention Models in

    Undergraduate Education From the Past Eight Decades. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher*

    Education, 7, 30-42. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1188373.pdf

Mintz, S. (2019). *The 8 Steps Institutions Need to Take to Improve Student*

    Success. www.insidehighered.com. https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/higher-ed-gamma/8-

    steps-institutions-need-take-improve-student-success

Patton, L. D., Renn, K. A., Guideo, F. M., & Quaye, S. J. (2016). *Student Development Theory in*

    College (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Rodgers, R. F. (1990). Recent theories and research underlying student development. *College student*

    development: Theory and practice for the 1990s (pp. 27-29). American College Personnel

    Association.

SACSCOC. (n.d.). *Quality Enhancement Plan*

Document. SACSCOC. https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/Quality-Enhancement-Plan-1.pdf

Soria, K. M., & Stebleton, M. J. (2013). Social capital, academic engagement, and sense of belonging among working-class students. *College Student Affairs Journal, 2*(31), 139-153.

Swail, W. S. (2004). *The art of student retention: A handbook for practitioners and administrators*. Educational Policy Institute.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout From Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research. *Review of Educational Research,* (45), 89-125.

Tinto, V. (2013). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2016). *From Retention to Persistence.* https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/09/26/how-improve-student-persistence-and-completion-essay.

Wyckoff, S. (1998). Retention theories in higher education: Implications for institutional practice. *Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education, 12*(2), 2-7.

Appendix A

Voting Results from Fall 2019 Development Day

Figure A1
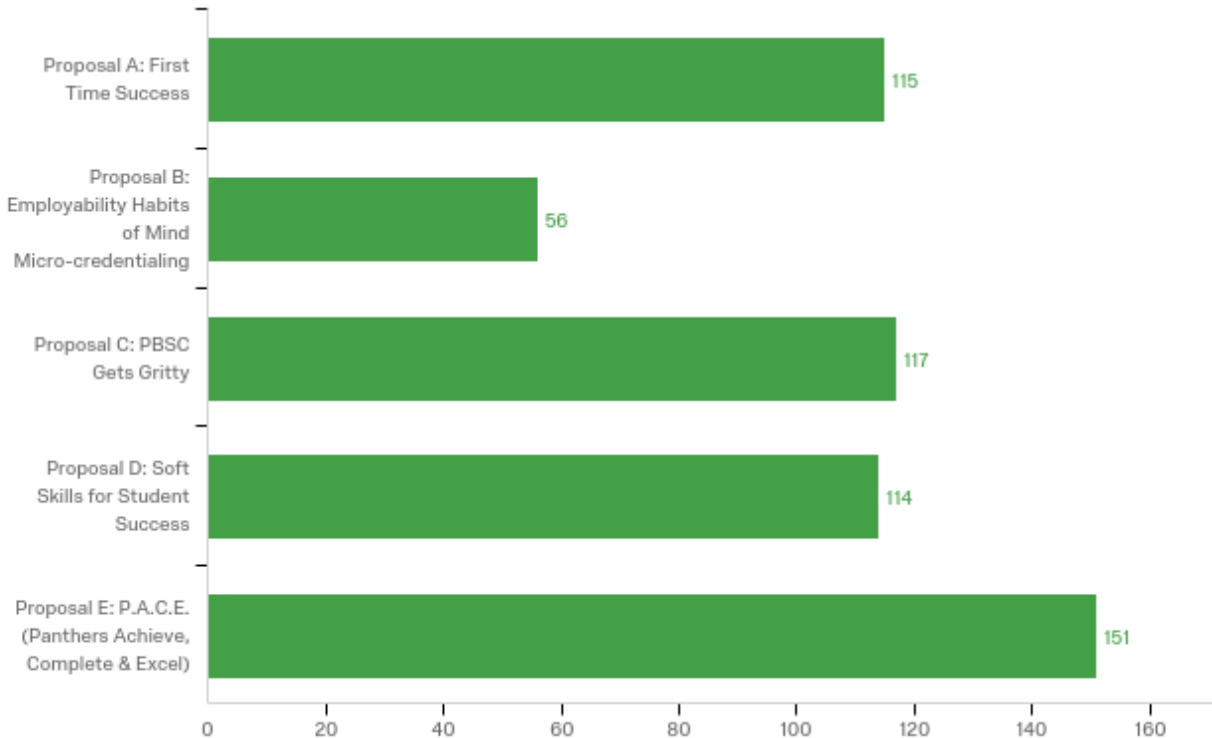
Voting Results from QEP Forums

Table A2

	Top Choice	Second Choice	Weighted Total
Proposal A: First Time Success	25%	12%	21%
Proposal B: Employability Habits of Mind Micro-credentialing	9%	15%	11%
Proposal C: PBSC Gets Gritty	22%	17%	19.5%
Proposal D: Soft Skills for Student Success	19%	21%	19.5%
Proposal E: P.A.C.E. Panthers Achieve, Complete & Excel	25%	35%	29%

Final Vote Results

Figure A3
Combined Vote
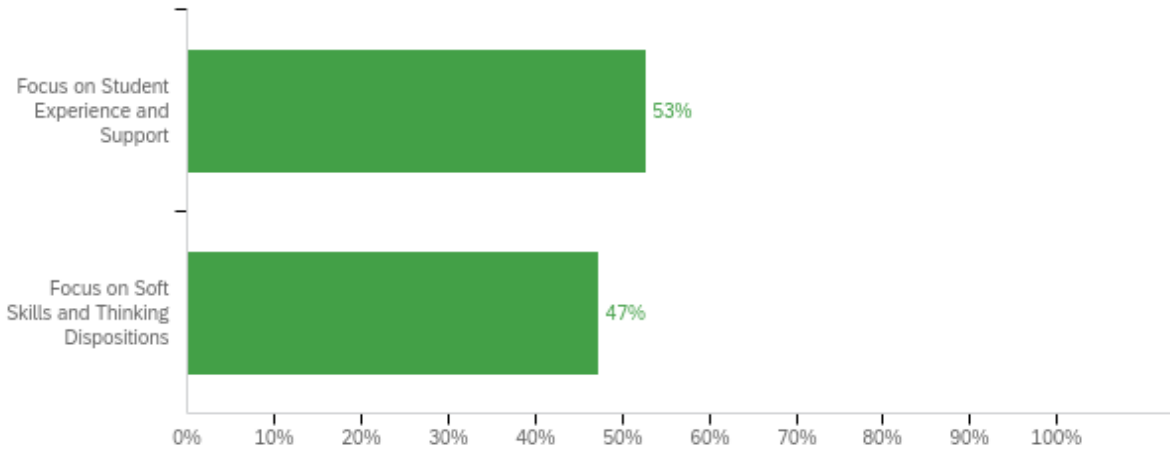
Figure A4
Voting by Primary Role at College
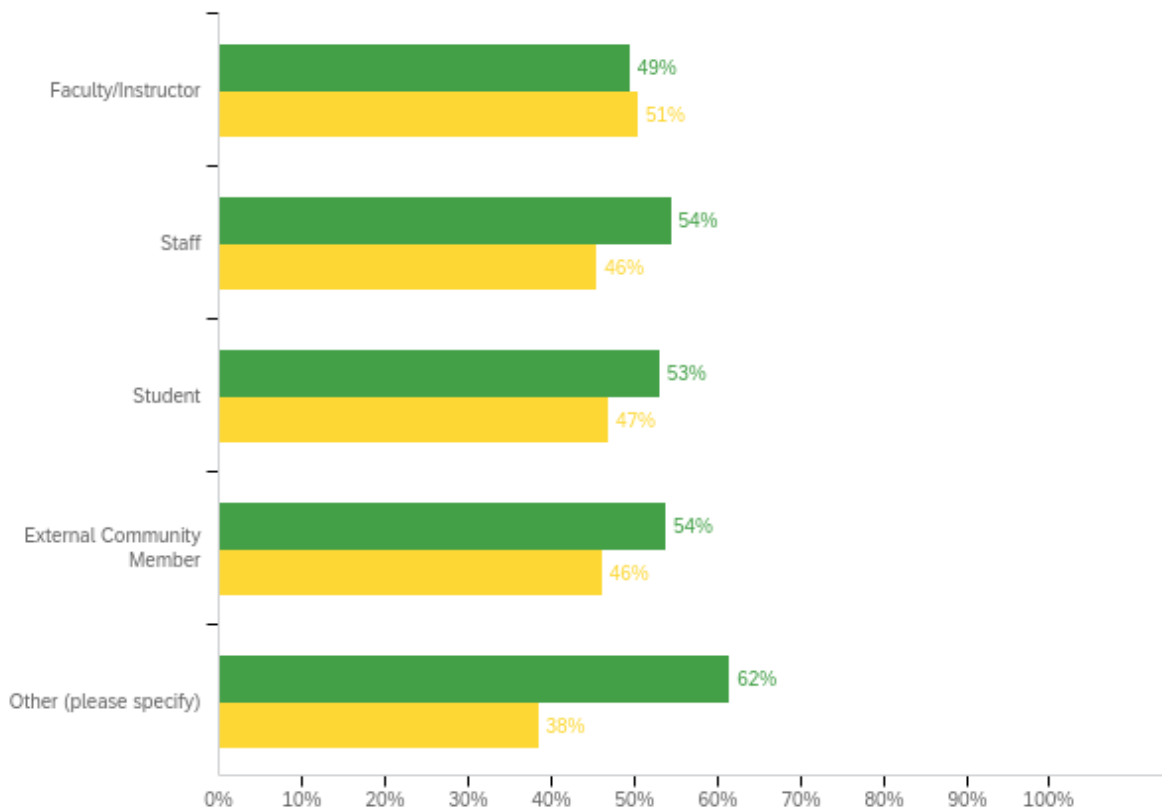
Figure A5
Primary Role at Palm Beach State College
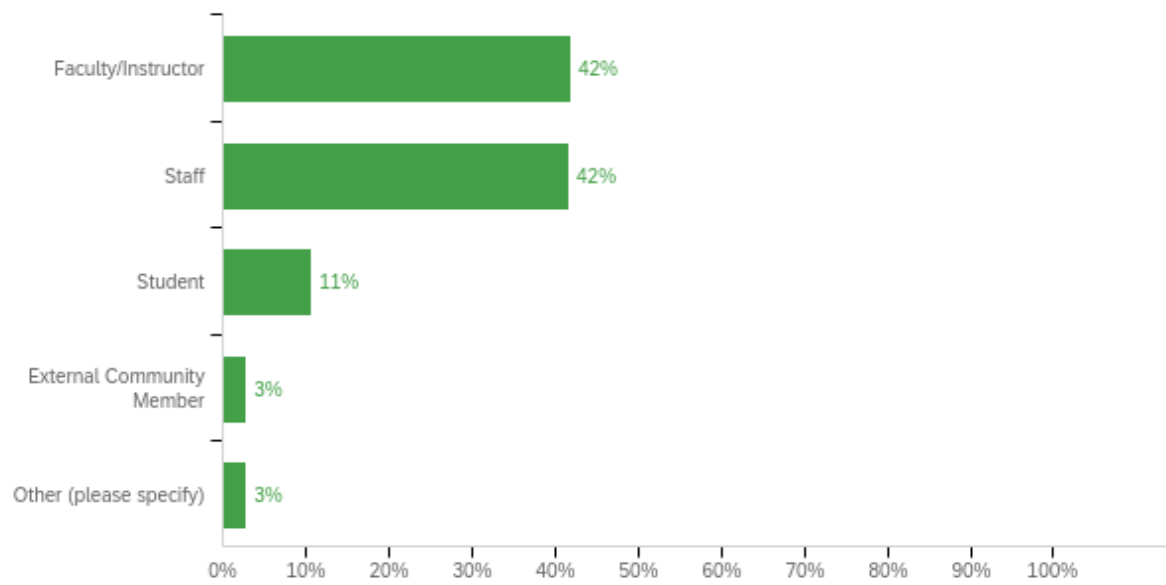
Appendix B

Five Initial Proposals

Presented are modified versions of the original QEP submissions the College reviewed at Fall 2019 Development Day. Following the format of Educause's "7 Things You Should Know About" articles, the QEP Development Team worked with original proposal writers to streamline and clarify proposals to facilitate easy comparison in QEP forums.

Figure B1
QEP Proposal A: First Time Success

What is it?

The purpose of this proposal is to increase the number of students successfully completing their first attempt at gateway courses: ENC1101 College Composition 1, MAT1033C Intermediate Algebra, and MAT1100 Quantitative Reasoning. Improving student's foundational skills in these courses will accelerate the average completion rate.

How does it work?

To better support students in their first attempt in College Composition 1, Intermediate Algebra, and Quantitative Reasoning, the college will (1) reorganize and enrich existing resources and (2) enhance offerings. The proposal writer left the specifics of implementation open but suggested the following ideas:

Modify course schedules to create combination classes. For example, the current corequisite pilot course MAT1035 (Concepts of Algebra) that is linked to MAC1105 (College Algebra). MAT1035, offered in Spring 2020, is a two-credit corequisite course designed to support students enrolled in MAC1105. The courses are taught back-to-back by the same faculty member. Course topics include algebra, geometry, and set theory, as well as critical thinking, study skills, and other mathematical topics that directly support success in MAC1105.

Offer Boot Camps to help bolster students' preparedness prior to their enrollment in gateway courses. The college currently offers two Summer Immersion in Math and English programs: "Jump Write In!" and "Math Jump." These are one-week intensive and collaborative immersion programs that build students' confidence in the subject area while also helping them enhance leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving skills.

Offer enhanced tutoring resources and programs both in the Student Learning Center and online.

Offer seminars attached to classes.

Who's doing it?

Gordon State College's QEP, "First Things First," focuses on the essentials of quantitative and written communication skills taught in foundational courses: College Algebra and Composition I. The plan includes course redesigns for College Algebra and Composition I, using the John N. Gardner Institute's "Gateways to Completion" process. This process is designed to increase student engagement, to make courses more learner-centered, and to help students master essential skills--even those that students should have learned in high school. In addition, the college's First Year Experience course was modified to include a unit that familiarizes students with "First Things First" and instill the attitudes necessary for success in gateway courses.

Gadsen State Community College's QEP, "Your Math GPS: Guidance from Peer Tutors = Success," will aim to improve the academic success of students in Elementary Algebra. It will provide access to academic support through on-demand online tutoring, embedded tutors, and peer tutors. Students can seek assistance on their own through a "Math OnDemand" Blackboard Module. Embedded tutors will be available in the classroom and during study sessions to provide assistance and reach out to students, and instructors can refer struggling students to the QEP Director, who will assign them a peer tutor. Tutoring is also available on a drop-in and scheduled basis at the Tutoring Center. Five-year learning outcomes include decreasing the withdrawal rate in Elementary Algebra by 15 percent, increasing successful completion of Elementary Algebra to 60 percent, and increasing the percentage of students enrolling in the next highest math course after successful completion of Elementary Algebra—to 95 percent.

Why is it significant?

Providing cohesive support to students in gateway courses has multiple benefits:

Success in gateway courses is predictive of a student's overall success in college. Increasing support to boost abilities and confidence early on can prepare students to put in the work necessary to persist and graduate.

Since fewer students have been required to take placement tests, the college would benefit from identifying and scaling best practices that boost success and help student fill gaps in their knowledge.

Decreasing the number of students who retake gateway courses will help keep students on a path to subsequent required courses.

Creative models such as peer support and enhanced tutoring have the potential to help students better understand the work and time investment needed to succeed.

What are the downsides?

This plan will target specific courses and may impact a smaller number of students, as opposed to the broader reach that other proposals could have. Moreover, it may take a lot to implement in terms of staffing.

Where is it going?

The end goal of the proposal is to provide students with the basic quantitative and communication skills required to pass gateway courses on the first attempt.

Figure B2
QEP Proposal B: Employability Habits of Mind Mirco-credentialing

What is it?

The purpose of this proposal is to integrate employability skills, also known as soft skills, with core skills and award micro-credentials for students earning them. These employability skills facilitate the habits of mind (solving problems, ingrained modes of thinking, decision making, teamwork, talking with people of various racial groups, communication, knowledge, life skills, and technical skills), which, when integrated into course content, would support sustainable employability and career growth. This plan would maximize efforts and college resources and would provide opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate on initiatives.

How does it work?

Habits of mind which support success in school, the workplace, and life are acquired through a culture of challenging transformation of teaching and learning. Students must be given the opportunity to explore competency and project-based learning containing authentic experiences focused on developing a culture of informed-technical socialization interwoven into coursework, designed to demonstrate employability skills. The authentic assessment of these skills will be housed in an online portfolio for reference. The college's LMS (currently Blackboard/future Canvas) can be used for submission and storage of the authentic assessments. A micro-credentialing/badging company, such as Badgr or Credly, will be used to award the student their micro-credential(s), which would help students articulate to potential employers what they have learned. Such a company will allow the management, tracking, and awarding of the micro-credentials.

Since the micro-credentials would be awarded to the students through authentic assessments completed in courses, faculty would be the leaders. As content experts, they would be the ones grading the authentic assessments. Policies and procedures for quality control, tracking, and awarding credentials will be developed.

Additionally, the administration will provide guidance and approval. Assistance from eLearning may be needed for the integration of the micro-credentialing/badging software into the LMS. The support from all faculty, staff, and administration is critical for micro-credentialing to be successful.

Who's doing it?

Virginia Highlands Community College's QEP "LearningPlus+ Communication. Professionalism. Problem Solving. Teamwork" will improve student learning by building soft skills (communication, professionalism, problem solving, and teamwork) through experiential learning opportunities. Every Transfer and Career Studies Certificate program is required to identify courses that will include at least one documented soft skill assignment, and every program will provide at least one experiential opportunity to be completed with reflection by students as a capstone experience for the program. VHCC piloted an ePortfolio and Digital Badging system using *Suitable* but found the system did not meet

their needs; consequently, the college will use Blackboard to capture badges. (source: https://www.vhcc.edu/Home/ShowDocument?id=7753)

Georgia State University's QEP "College to Career: Career Readiness through Everyday Competencies" will increase students' awareness of career readiness competencies employers value, help students understand the connections between educational experiences and the career competencies students are developing, and allow students to demonstrate the competencies students have acquired. GSU will use the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career readiness competencies as its definition of general career readiness; GSU's individual colleges, programs, and majors will determine relevant transferrable/soft skills and connect those to NACE competencies. Student ePortfolios on Portfolium will document their work, projects and experiences, and career competencies. (source: https://collegetocareer.gsu.edu/)

Why is it significant?

Allowing students to earn micro-credentials for employability skills as they complete their college courses has multiple benefits:

Offering micro-credentials will motivate students along their career pathway, helping PBSC with retention and enrollment. The students are awarded for obtaining specific skills and competencies along their career pathway that are otherwise not recognized in the completion of coursework.

Instilling employability skills into the academic curriculum will help students make connections between their courses, assignments, and extra-curricular activities. This will promote student success, create added value to the students, and enhance the career pathways.

In developing the micro-credentials, areas of meaningful opportunities throughout the college will be identified. These micro-credentials would be structured to meet the demands of diverse programs, career pathways, and the needs of the industries.

Offering micro-credentials recognizing employability skills will strengthen the partnership with industries. PBSC and industries will have to work closely to recognize essential employability skills and determine how they will be assessed.

Micro-credentials that recognize employability skills will provide employers with an assurance of a workforce equipped with employability skills specific to the industry.

Overall, offering micro-credentials in employability skills will formalize the educational experience students earn at PBSC and package it in a meaningful way for them to share with their employers.

What are the downsides?

A large initial time investment may be required to build the employability skills programming; clusters and programs would work to identify existing experiences/assessments, create new experiences/assessments, and align these with specific employability skills. Also, some employers may not yet understand or value digital badges.

Where is it going?

The end goal of the proposal is to provide students with the habits-of-mind required to sustain employment and growth using employability skills which are focused and transportable.

What are the implications for higher education?

Offering micro-credentials recognizing employability skills will benefit higher education as it provides a pipeline of focused students with greater assurance that their education will lead directly to a positive outcome. They will have the employability skills necessary to be successful in their careers. Moreover, micro-credentials for employability skills enrich the learning experience for the students and greatly impacts the partnerships between industries and higher education. Also, higher education institutions that offer micro-credentials in employability skills become a top-of-mind choice college/university as they provide a more complete, well-rounded learning experience.

Figure B3
QEP Proposal C: PBSC Gets Gritty

What is it?

The purpose of this proposal is to nurture in our students the psychological, social, and emotional qualities that fuel motivation and lead to achievement as identified in Angela Duckworth's GRIT theory, Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset, and other Emotional Quotient, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Well-Being Theory, and soft skills research.

How does it work?

Grit, according to Angela Duckworth, refers to "passion and persistence for very long-term goals." The practices intended to promote grittiness include believing in the ability to change and excel (Growth mindset), persisting despite obstacles (Resilience), taking personal responsibility for one's actions (Independence), and sticking with something from start to finish (Tenacity). PBSC Gets Gritty will include the combined efforts of faculty, Academic Advisors, Student Activities personnel, the Student Learning Center, eLearning, College Relations and Marketing, and other college staff in the development and delivery of an evidence-based program that promotes these traits to support student success.

Students will participate in a variety of workshops, co-curricular activities and classroom presentations focused on the traits of gritty behavior. Evidence of completion of theme-based activities will be documented and gamification of incremental milestones will be used to promote persistence to complete the PBSC Gets Gritty program. Successful completion of milestones can be recognized through a system of internal rewards and an internal certificate can be awarded upon full program completion as a micro credential in keeping with our Guided Pathways model. The program will be structured to allow for integration with further innovations and future non-cognitive soft skills initiatives, work readiness, 21st Century Skills, as well as development of technological infrastructure capabilities, such as e-portfolios and digital badging.

Evidence of completing the components of the program will be monitored, documented and tracked using Blackboard, Engage, and/or other options as they become available.

Semester to semester retention and first to second year retention are key components of this data. Pre and post surveys can similarly be utilized to collect metrics reflecting measurable changes in awareness and to help assess the degree to which the program contributed to their success.

The Character Lab at the University of Pennsylvania partners with schools to conduct grit interventions and to measure the results of those interventions. One of the QEP submitters is a researcher with this lab and can establish contact to affirm ongoing willingness to partner in this refreshed capacity. If this partnership is established, it is likely that the Character Lab will share best practices.

Faculty and staff training will be used to fully implement a robust cross-structural/interdisciplinary program. Development of the PBSC Gets Gritty program would utilize existing assignments and activities across the college with faculty and staff forming campus based Professional Learning Groups (PLGs). These localized groups can be devoted to identifying and creating additional activities, assignments, and experiences that would expand the opportunities for students to meet the program milestones.

Who's doing it?

St. Petersburg College's QEP "Ready! Set! Succeed!" will focus on three key areas: students will identify their learner mindset, including motivation, and take ownership of their academic goals; students will learn strategies, such as time management, knowledge monitoring, and comprehension, to help them along their academic path; and students will show how the learner mindset and learning strategies have helped them in persistence, retention, and completion of their degree or certificate. Since students who opted out of recommended developmental coursework were also identified as those with the lowest success rate in MAT1033 and ENC1101, those students were targeted. Students joined learning communities and interacted with a faculty mentor and success coach; students engaged with others in their community through face-to-face meetings, on-campus events, and online modules. (source: https://sacs.spcollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/SPC-QEP-master_LowRes.pdf)

Jones County Junior College's QEP "Personalized Academic Coaching Experience" will ensure students connect to campus resources and support services, engage in the learning process, and develop skills that drive success. The goal is to improve student learning outcomes, academic and career advisement, completion rates, and to prevent voluntary and absence-related withdraws. First-time freshmen are connected with an Academic Coach who will communicate weekly with students regarding campus activities, challenges commonly faced by freshmen, and required resources. A program outcome is for students to demonstrate an increase in resiliency as measured by the GRIT Scale Pre- and Posttest and the Academic Strengths Inventory (ASI) Pre- and Posttest. (source: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018trackaqeps/Jones_County_JC_QEP_Executive_Summary.pdf)

Why is it significant?

Raising awareness of non-cognitive skills and providing intentional opportunities for students to exercise them has multiple benefits:

Research conducted by Angela Duckworth, at the University of Pennsylvania, has shown that people who are grittier are more likely to accomplish their goals, including graduating from school. A growth mindset is another documented attribute supporting student success, with research suggesting that it is a factor in overcoming the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage on student achievement (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016).

The expected outcomes of this project are higher retention and completion rates across all student demographic segments.

Enabling students to believe they have the qualities needed to succeed will encourage them to persist and achieve greater academic success. It is well known that beliefs and self-concepts shape behavior. PBSC Gets Gritty aims to influence those beliefs and self-concepts in a measurably positive manner to effect productive outcomes. Getting gritty means to develop habits of the mind.

The program would not only enhance their overall educational experience and support student success at PBSC, it would also instill life skills that would serve students beyond PBSC.

The PBSC Gets Gritty program would also amplify instructional excellence through faculty engagement and training in growth mindset and grit 'best practices' for implementation in their courses and office hour interactions with their students. By providing faculty content experts with the knowledge and skills to support the development of these psychological and emotional qualities, faculty can integrate the critical concepts into their teaching practice across all levels of the Pillars of Instructional Excellence.

What are the downsides?

An upside and downside of this proposal is that it spans academic affairs and student services, which may necessitate a significant amount of cross-discipline training and programming. Another downside may be that students must be willing to participate (self-motivation), since we cannot mandate participation in co-curricular activities; this might skew the results, as motivated students are probably more gritty.

Where is it going?

The end goal of the proposal is to foster in students the non-cognitive skills required to persist and be successful in school, their lives, and their chosen professions.

What are the implications for higher education?

Offering grit workshops, co-curricular activities, and classroom activities will benefit higher education as it helps develop in students the resilience and perseverance needed to achieve their educational and career goals. Also, offering a micro-credential for successful participation is in line with the larger trend in higher education of micro-credentials and badging.

Figure B4
QEP Proposal D: Soft Skills for Student Success!

What is it?

The purpose of this proposal is twofold – to incorporate soft skills into all coursework and increase online offerings across the college. The previous QEP of Critical Thinking would be enhanced through a QEP focused on employability/soft skills by providing a continuum of efforts to reach the college's goals. Critical Thinking is a highly valued quality to prospective employers as are soft skills. Online delivery would be an effective way to promote soft skills, especially accountability.

How does it work?

The college would incorporate soft skills into all programs and coursework. Soft skills such as attitude, communication/listening, organization/time management, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and professionalism are necessary to be successful at work and progress in one's career.

Ideas for implementation include assessing written papers and oral presentations for communication skills, offering group projects so students can build teamwork skills, and modeling of soft skill behaviors by faculty and staff to project the value. The important thing is to engage all faculty to incorporate one, some, or all of the employability skills into their course/program. These outcomes could be measured by comparing a five-year span of employer surveys evaluating graduates' employability skills, retention, and advancement.

Soft skills development could be added to Corporate & Continuing Education and Workforce Development Course offering to provide an opportunity for community businesses to assist employees with continued growth in these employability skills.

Online resources such as The Conover Company's pre and post assessments could be used to give students a snapshot of their strengths and weaknesses in these areas and provide strategies for improvement in each category. Such an assessment could be administered in all classes or in a random selection.

A key component of implementation would be to offer college-wide professional development to guide faculty as they develop their courses and find ways to incorporate skills into lessons, whether delivered online or face-to-face.

Additionally, the College will increase its online presence, which will provide more opportunities for students to accelerate completion. Many of our students do not fit the traditional student profile – many work, are married, have children, and/or have other commitments that impact their ability to take face-to-face classes. Working towards maximizing our online resources would enable such students to enroll in more classes. The incorporation of employability skills in their journey could provide them with that finishing touch for success.

Who's doing it?

Ashland Community and Technical College's QEP "Improving Career Readiness through Student Engagement" will help students develop career knowledge and demonstrate workplace skills. Students will engage in career research, active and collaborative learning opportunities in the classroom, and

career/soft skills practice. As a result, students will identify and summarize knowledge of their chosen career path, and students will recognize and demonstrate career/soft skills. For the purpose of the QEP, the career skills of collaboration and communication were chosen as the main focus. Targeted courses across the curriculum were redesigned to include measurable active and collaborative learning opportunities. Career focused activities, such as mock interviews and internship-like experiences are offered, and opportunities to practice career focused activities tailored to programs were created. (source: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018trackaqeps/Ashland%20Community%20and%20Technical%20College%20Q EP%20Executive%20Summary%202018.pdf)

Nunez Community College's QEP "Geaux Pro: Improving Professional Communication Skills for Success in College and Careers" will empower and encourage students to improve their oral/verbal, written, and digital communication skills. Faculty incorporated professional communication skills into their courses and capstone projects and the Student Success Center offers workshops to help students develop these skills. Students can create an electronic portfolio of their best work in written, oral, and digital communication, which will help students demonstrate their skills to employers. (source: https://www.nunez.edu/faculty-staff/qep)

Why is it significant?

Embedding soft skills development into all courses and increasing online offerings has multiple benefits:

Improving students' soft skills will help to increase the probability of achieving engagement, both internally and externally through strengthening their abilities to work and connect with teams of diverse cultures and for an increased community awareness and involvement.

As students become more aware of the value of these basic soft skills, not only in their learning but also in their future employment and advancement, it will lead to increased levels of creativity and growth as well as continuous improvement.

Increasing our online presence to include course and assignment offerings that promote improvement of students' employability/soft skills could also provide more opportunities for students to accelerate completion.

Working towards maximizing our online resources would allow enrollment to increase without the need of increased physical space in many cases. Increased online offerings could relieve classroom shortages and parking congestion experienced at peak times.

What are the downsides?

While there are a number of ways that soft skill development and increased online offerings complement each other, having such a broad focus for the QEP may make it costly to implement and/or difficult to create concise objectives. Reworking key assignments to promote soft skills and give meaningful feedback may take an initial time investment. Also, given the subjectivity of soft skills, care would need to be taken when creating and giving assessments to avoid personal bias.

Where is it going?

The end goal is to provide students with the skills necessary not only to get a job, but also keep a job and grow in their chosen field thus making the student more successful in his/her endeavors. Expansion of online course offerings will increase access to these opportunities.

What are the implications for higher education?

A focus on soft skills will benefit higher education because it provides students with a strong foundation of qualities that are necessary in working with others. The technical knowledge and skills that they learn may get them a job, but the soft skills, combined with those technical skills will increase their abilities to maintain and advance in their chosen profession. Research presented in the Journal of Applied Research for Business Instruction supports that technical skills, still highly valued in the workplace, do not on average hinder employee advancement; rather, "weak or nonexistent soft skills" were reasons that employees did not advance (Blaszczynski and Green, 2012).

Figure B5
QEP Proposal E: P.A.C.E. Panthers Achieve, Complete & Excel!

What is it?

The purpose of this proposal is to ensure a positive first-year experience through offering a comprehensive new student orientation that informs and engages students, increasing opportunities for new students to build connections with full-time faculty in SLS1501 and gateway courses, providing a meaningful advising experience through case management, offering a faculty and staff development program that focuses on student development theory, and providing curriculum-based experiences. Ensuring students feel that they are a part of the college and know what resources are available to them will improve student success and increase retention rates from first to second year and beyond.

How does it work?

A key way to ensure students have a positive first year is to provide opportunities for students to build connections with faculty in SLS1501 and gateway courses. This could be achieved through a number of ways: Pathway-based communities where students and relevant faculty/staff interact regularly for discussions on career opportunities, challenges students are facing, or open topics. Faculty and staff could partner with Student Activities to create more social events that bring everyone together. The college could issue a passport book that faculty members sign when students visit during office hours or meet other objectives; a completed passport book could be redeemed for a t-shirt or prize.

A comprehensive New Student Orientation program that informs and engages is a critical piece to help students acclimate to college life and feel that they belong. The college's New Student Orientation is being refreshed to add more engaging, relevant information and to work within the parameters of Workday. If this proposal is selected, the changes may be in place prior to QEP implementation. While some changes in the orientation may be necessary if this proposal is selected, the opportunity with this QEP is to reinforce what students learn in orientation through their entire first year and create a consistent experience.

Peer advisors could be used to help bridge the gap between students and the college. Palm Beach Gardens has a successful model where peers are the frontline in the advising office answering phones, helping students make appointments and navigate college systems, and answering basic questions. The peer advisors also visit SLS1501 courses to share their experiences in school and talk about registration for future terms. Students relate to the peer advisors in a different way than they do other college employees, and the feedback for this program is overwhelmingly positive. Since the peer advisors handle quick questions and SLS visits, this gives the Student Development Advisors more time to focus on their caseload. The Palm Beach Gardens model could be scaled to other campuses.

To ensure the success of this plan, the college could create a faculty and staff development program that focuses on student development theory. Becoming more knowledgeable about the ways in which students learn, grow, and mature during college can help faculty and staff understand students holistically, leading to more productive student interactions and more engaging academic and co-curricular activities.

Who's doing it?

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College's QEP "O.A.R.S.: Orientation. Advising. Retention. Success." will invigorate the first-year experience by revamping the orientation course and streamlining advising practices. The college moved away from a strictly online orientation facilitated by a single instructor and implemented a seated, web-enhanced orientation of twenty or fewer students taught by their faculty advisor. Learning outcomes include increased retention and graduation rates, and ensuring students develop strategies to study effectively, synthesize academic and career information, employ key soft skills, identify support networks, recognize expectations of higher education, and assume responsibility for meeting program requirements. (source: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018trackaqeps/Lurleen_B_Wallace_CC_QEP_Executive_Summary.pdf)

Nashville State Community College's QEP "Improving Student Success through the First Year Experience" focuses on improving student success through first year experiences, including a New Student Orientation, a First Year Experience course, academic advising, career planning and personal reflection. As a result of the FYE, students will create an academic plan that includes college-level math, English, and nine hours in their focus area in the first year, describe connections between degree choice and career choice, differentiate resources available to support success, articulate connections between their courses and their ultimate academic goals, and reflect on their personal growth as a result of their education. (source: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018trackaqeps/Nashville_State_CC_QEP_Executive_Summary.pdf)

Jones County Junior College's QEP "Personalized Academic Coaching Experience" will ensure students connect to campus resources and support services, engage in the learning process, and develop skills that drive success. The goal is to improve student learning outcomes, academic and career advisement, completion rates, and to prevent voluntary and absence-related withdraws. First-time freshmen are connected with an Academic Coach who will communicate weekly with students regarding campus

activities, challenges commonly faced by freshmen, and required resources. As a result of this QEP, students will demonstrate an increase in resiliency/GRIT; demonstrate Satisfactory Academic Progress towards their academic or career plan; identify career interests; demonstrate knowledge of campus resources for physical, mental, emotional and academic needs; and demonstrate improvement in time management, study skills, motivation, and technological tools. (source: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/2018trackaqeps/Jones_County_JC_QEP_Executive_Summary.pdf)

Why is it significant?

Ensuring a positive first-year experience for students will have multiple benefits:

The QEP would create an opportunity to come together and reflect upon what we want our students' first year experience to be. With that end goal in mind, existing best practices will be scaled, and new opportunities created, which would create a cohesive feel to the first-year experience.

Since first time in college students will feel better connected to the college, retention rates from first to second year for first time in college students will increase. This will lead to increased persistence from first year to completion.

Increasing student engagement should lead to an increase in percentage of students taking full-time schedules and increased participation in student organizations and co-curricular activities.

Student satisfaction as measured by the New Student Experience Survey, Student Experience Survey, and Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) will increase since students have a stronger support network at the college.

What are the downsides?

Attempting to implement a QEP with such a broad focus may split our efforts and lead to us not meeting all objectives. Developing this proposal into our QEP may mean researching best practices and selecting elements of this proposal to focus on for our five-year plan.

Where is it going?

Students that complete the first-year experience will be better connected to the Palm Beach State College community and will enter their second year as engaged, contributing members of the College.

What are the implications for higher education?

Creating a cohesive, positive first-year experience will benefit higher education as it ensures students have the knowledge and resources needed to persist through their first year of college and beyond. Students will have more meaningful experiences inside the classroom and out, which will help them see the relationship between what they are learning in college and their chosen careers.

Top Two Proposals

The Top two proposals reflect the feedback and discussion at the QEP Forums and combine elements of the original five proposals that participants identified as most beneficial to our students and to the College.

Figure B6
Focus on Student Experience and Support
Combining Proposals A and E

The College will organize and enrich resources with the goal of ensuring a positive, welcoming student experience. The QEP will be an opportunity for the College to think about what we want our students to experience as they become a member of our Panther community, identify and scale best practices already in place at the College, and create a cohesive experience for students. Engaging students early and providing connected, meaningful touchpoints will ensure that students feel that they are a part of the College and know what resources are available to them, which will lead to an improved success and increased retention rates.

Possible Elements for Implementation:

Create an employee development program that focuses on Student Development Theory. Becoming more knowledgeable about the ways in which students learn, grow, and mature during college can help faculty, instructors, and staff understand students holistically, leading to more productive student interactions and more engaging academic and co-curricular activities.

Create a cohesive support network for students where faculty/instructors, advisors, and SLC staff can connect when a student is struggling in a class or off path. This would also create an opportunity for departments to collaborate to share resources and initiatives that exist across the institution, which could then be communicated to the students.

Enhance support for foundational gateway courses (ENC1101, MAT1033, MAT1100) to help students pass the first time. Reorganizing existing resources and expanding online resources that boost students' basic quantitative and communication skills will ensure students have the tools to be successful.

Offer a comprehensive New Student Orientation program that informs and engages to help students acclimate to college life and feel that they belong. The college's New Student Orientation is being refreshed to add more engaging, relevant information and to work within the parameters of Workday. If this proposal is selected, the changes may be in place prior to QEP implementation. While some changes in the orientation may be necessary if this proposal is selected, the opportunity with this QEP is to reinforce what students learn in orientation throughout their education and create a consistent, supportive student experience.

Provide opportunities for students to build connections with faculty in SLS1501 and gateway courses. This could be achieved through a number of ways: Pathway-based communities where students and relevant faculty/instructors/staff interact regularly to discuss on career opportunities, challenges students are facing, or open topics. Faculty and staff could partner with Student Activities to create targeted social events that bring everyone together.

Figure B7
Focus on Soft Skills and Thinking Dispositions
Combining Proposals B, C, and D

The College will integrate soft skills, sometimes referred to as employability skills, habits of mind, or thinking dispositions, with core skills and offer micro-credentials as students complete these competencies. Purposefully incorporating lessons that instill skills such as problem solving, decision making, communication, professionalism, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and grit, will give students the motivation and tools necessary to be successful in school, the workplace, and their lives. Additionally, micro-credentials students acquire along the path to a certificate or degree will keep students motivated to complete and give students industry recognized credentials to demonstrate abilities.

Possible Elements for Implementation:

Offer a variety of workshops, co-curricular activities and classroom presentations focused on developing soft skills. Purposeful assignments given in class connected with meaningful co-curricular activities will help students see the connections between coursework and real-world application.

Provide opportunities for faculty, instructors, and staff across disciplines to collaborate on initiatives. Development of program and assessments would utilize existing assignments and activities across the college, and faculty and staff could form Professional Learning Groups to identify and create additional activities, assignments, and experiences to build skills and earn micro-credentials. This will also give employees the opportunity to refine the skills we wish to instill in our students.

House the authentic assessment of these skills in an online portfolio for reference. The college's LMS (currently Blackboard/future Canvas) can be used for submission and storage of the authentic assessments. A micro-credentialing/badging company, such as Badgr or Credly, will be used to award the student their micro-credential(s), which would help students recognize their development and articulate to potential employers what they have learned. Such a company will allow the management, tracking, and awarding of the micro-credential

Belle Glade Campus
1977 College Drive
Belle Glade, FL 33430
561.996.7222

Boca Raton Campus
801 Palm Beach State College Drive
Boca Raton, FL 33431
561.393.7222

Lake Worth Campus
4200 Congress Avenue
Lake Worth, FL 33461
561.967.7222

Loxahatchee Groves Campus
15845 Southern Boulevard
Loxahatchee, FL 33470
561.790.9000

Palm Beach Gardens Campus
3160 PGA Boulevard
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
561.624.7222

Historic Building
West Palm Beach satellite location
812 Fern Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
561.967.7222

PALM BEACH STATE
C O L L E G E

palmbeachstate.edu