

Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE)

A Focus on Freshmen



Quality Enhancement Plan

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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**Quality Enhancement Plan
Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE):
A Focus on Freshmen**

Submitted By

Texas State University-San Marcos

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I. Executive Summary

Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) which focuses on freshmen is the theme of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Texas State University-San Marcos. The plan includes two goals, each with three student learning outcomes. Outcomes are supported with discussion of actions and a corresponding description of the organizational structure and resources necessary to achieve the outcomes, as well as an assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of the QEP. In addition, four main initiatives, designed to organize and implement the actions denoted in the plan, are identified.

The two interrelated goals of the freshman-focused QEP are (I) to help students clarify their career goals and (II) to assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan to meet their goals. The goals are accomplished through the following six student learning outcomes in which students will (1) assess their future career opportunities; (2) relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values; (3) choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world; (4) select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals; (5) chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion; and (6) choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.

Initiatives designed to achieve the goals include the development of a *PACE Center*, a fully-staffed, one-stop / total-intake advising / mentoring / career exploration location for freshmen that also provides the leadership, development, and services needed for the overall implementation of the QEP; the enhancement of the course *US 1100: University Seminar*, a required one-credit course that introduces students to the nature and aims of university education where a portion of the curriculum encourages Personalized Academic and Career Exploration through related instruction, guidance, and the development of a portfolio; utilization of *Faculty Liaisons* from each academic college, who coordinate activities to assist students in exploring academic and career pathways; and enhanced technology providing student scheduling and record keeping software and electronic portfolio applications.

The concept grew from a comprehensive, methodical, and logical planning process conducted during a three-year period. Starting with the QEP Topic Development Team which solicited ideas and proposed topics, and shifting to the QEP Task Force, which narrowed the topic and developed the plan details, the QEP resulted from the input and efforts of faculty, staff, and students representing the broadest range of University stakeholders. Existing practices, empirical data from campus assessments, and best practices served as a foundation for the development of the plan.

Actions, organizational structure, resources, and a timeline needed to complete the plan were discussed, designed, and related to the achievement of the student learning outcomes. Student learning will be assessed with various quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures. Formative assessment to measure success and suggest modifications has been incorporated, as well as summative assessment to measure the overall success of the plan.

II. Process Used to Develop the QEP

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Texas State University-San Marcos grew from a comprehensive, methodical, and logical planning process conducted over a three-year period. (See Appendix I for the QEP Development Timeline on page 75.) The Plan resulted from the input and efforts of faculty, staff, and students representing the broadest range of University stakeholders.

The Leadership Team provided continuity, guidance, and oversight throughout the development of the QEP. (See Appendix II for the Leadership Team composition on page 77.) However, the crux of the plan emanated from the insight, extensive research, and thorough planning by two QEP groups, each representing a diverse array of constituents. The first group provided leadership for identifying the topic while the second group developed the details of the plan. The overall QEP planning process is illustrated in the following figure.

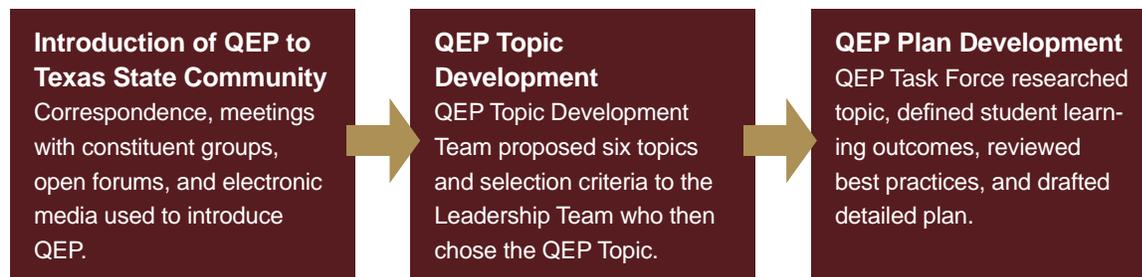


Figure II.1: Process Used to Develop the QEP

QEP Introduction

The Texas State Leadership Team laid the foundation for the Quality Enhancement Planning process in the summer and fall of 2007. The Leadership Team began by naming the QEP Co-Chairs, Dr. Beth Wuest, Director, Academic Development and Assessment, and Dr. Nico Schöler, Professor, Music. Later, the Provost introduced the concept of the QEP to the university-at-large through electronic correspondence. (See Appendix III for a copy of the QEP Initial Correspondence by the Provost on page 78.) As a follow-up to the Provost's correspondence, the QEP Co-Chairs, in the spring of 2008, met with approximately 25 constituent groups and held two open forums to introduce the QEP concept, to explain the purpose and nature of the QEP, to provide access to the QEP website, and to solicit input. (See Appendix IV for the Schedule of Introductory Meetings with Constituent Groups on page 79.) Simultaneously, the establishment of a working QEP website and corresponding e-mail account provided a means for ongoing, open communication.

Topic Development Process

During spring 2008, a QEP Topic Development Team, composed of 23 members representing a variety of constituent groups, was created for the purpose of gathering ideas for the QEP topic. (See Appendix V for the QEP Topic Development Team membership on page 80.) The Team was charged with the following responsibilities:

- Introduce the QEP concept to constituents

- Identify criteria for the selection of the QEP topic
- Solicit ideas for the QEP topic from constituents
- Review and narrow the proposed ideas for the QEP topic
- Develop brief summaries for proposed topics in the narrowed list

During summer 2008, the Leadership Team reviewed recommendations proposed by the QEP Topic Development Team and approved the QEP topic. Details of the process used to arrive at the final topic are described in Section III: Identification of Topic of this report. (See page 5.)

Plan Development Process

During fall 2008, a QEP Task Force composed of 43 members representing a variety of constituent groups, including faculty, staff, and students with special interest in the selected QEP topic, was charged with the development of the organizational and functional details of the Quality Enhancement Plan. (Refer to Appendix VI on page 81 for the composition of the QEP Task Force.) The Task Force was assigned the following responsibilities:

- Research the selected QEP topic
- Define student learning outcomes related to the QEP
- Identify actions needed to achieve the desired student learning outcomes
- Consider the infrastructure necessary to implement and maintain the QEP
- Establish a timeline for accomplishing the QEP
- Budget necessary resources to successfully implement the QEP
- Develop a comprehensive assessment plan
- Prepare documentation for submission

Because of the large number of members in the QEP Task Force, the group was divided into six planning groups (advising, mentoring, student support services, budget, assessment, and marketing) to gain manageable input on specific aspects of the planning process. Each planning group met on an as-needed basis. Each of the planning groups was represented on a 14-member Executive Task Force that met twice each month.

The QEP Task Force met monthly from fall 2008 through spring 2010 to complete its assignment. In addition to regular discussion and planning sessions, the Task Force initiated the following activities:

- Conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis related to the QEP theme
- Met with consultants from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and institutions that had successfully drafted a QEP for their institution's SACS reaffirmation process
- Visited other institutions illustrating examples of best practices

- Attended conferences, institutes, and annual meetings related to the topic, such as the SACS Summer Institute and the NACADA Assessment Institute
- Reviewed literature of best practices

Common Practices

Through a variety of means as noted, Texas State gained widespread participation in the systematic development of the QEP. The process provided extensive input to the development of the plan as well as broad-based support for the student learning outcomes to be achieved and buy-in for the actions included in the plan.

Throughout the process of selecting the QEP topic and developing the plan, several common practices were in place to maintain open communication with the Leadership Team and the university-at-large. Because of the importance of the QEP, the Co-Chairs were added to the membership of the Leadership Team in the fall of 2008. After this time, the QEP Co-Chairs met monthly with the Leadership Team to report QEP Task Force progress and to obtain feedback. Each semester, faculty, staff, and students were invited to open forums where updates on the planning process were provided and questions were answered. Documentation of progress and updates were also conveyed to the university at large via the QEP website (<http://sacs-qep.txstate.edu>). The QEP Co-Chairs regularly checked the e-mail account (sacs-qep@txstate.edu) to obtain feedback and suggestions from the university community.

III. Identification of the Topic

An extensive, deliberate, and inclusive process helped to ensure the selection of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic that is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning at Texas State. Key issues in higher education, particularly those with notable relevance to Texas State, served as sources of inspiration. Institutional data provided evidence of need and justification for the development and implementation of the proposed long-term improvement project. Likewise, the scope of the plan was carefully considered in the development of the selected QEP project with long-term, significant implications for ongoing student learning.

Topic Selection Process

As noted earlier, the Provost initially introduced the concept of the Quality Enhancement Plan to the university community through electronic correspondence in fall of 2007. The QEP Co-Chairs provided additional information by meeting with 25 constituent groups including all colleges, all administrative divisions, Faculty Senate, the Council of Deans, the Council of Chairs, Staff Council, a variety of student organizations, the Alumni Association, and representatives of the City of San Marcos Mayor's Office. They also hosted two open forums to explain the nature and purpose of the QEP, provide an overview of the Quality Enhancement Planning process, address questions and concerns, and encourage input.

Once the QEP concept was introduced, the university at large received an email message soliciting possible topics. Faculty, staff and students submitted ideas to the QEP email address and the ideas were, in turn, published on the QEP website. Thirty-five distinct topic suggestions were received.

The topic selection process included the formation of the QEP Topic Development Team, formed as a 23-member representation of the broadest range of University stakeholders including faculty from each college, staff from each Division, and individuals from the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Associated Student Government, the Graduate House, the Alumni Association, and the City of San Marcos Mayor's Office. The Team identified the following criteria to be used for the selection of the topic:

Broadly focused – involving university-wide participation

Interdisciplinary – encompassing as many disciplines as possible at both undergraduate and graduate levels

Significant – making a meaningful difference

Assessable – having measurable progress and outcomes leading to continuous improvement

Justifiable – using empirical data to the extent possible to support the topic and plan

Founded on best practices – incorporating analysis and application of research and best practices

Engaging – utilizing creative strategies to engage students, faculty, and staff in active learning

Reflecting diversity – promoting inclusivity of diverse backgrounds and orientations

Retention enhancing – increasing retention rates

Realistic – reflecting feasible practices and use of human and financial resources

Futuristic – preparing students for the world ahead and adding to lifelong learning

Attentive to mission – reflecting the mission and goals of Texas State

Reflecting Texas State culture – building on the past and culture of Texas State

Community-minded – connecting to the local community and beyond

Complementary of existing infrastructure – adding to existing processes and infrastructure

Using these selection criteria, the QEP Topic Development Team collectively reviewed the submitted topics. Through the course of extensive discussion during two half-day retreats, the Topic Development Team combined viable proposed topics into cohesive groups. Through this process, six Candidate Topics emerged. Subgroups of the QEP Topic Development Team were formed to further investigate the potential of the Candidate Topics and develop summaries to be submitted to the Leadership Team for its final approval. For consistency, each summary contained a brief description, goals, student learning outcomes, strategies for implementation, justification of the topic, benefits to the institution and students, evaluation and assessment strategies, and a description of how the selection criteria, as well as the university mission and goals would be met. (See Appendix VII for an example of a Candidate Topic summary on page 83.) The Candidate Topics included the following:

- The Individual and Civic Responsibility: Educating the Responsible Global Citizen
- Individual Responsibility for One Another: Creating a Campus of Character
- Building Sustainable Communities
- Learning Beyond the Classroom: Preparing Students for Life
- Personalized Learning Experiences
- Preparing Students for the 21st Century

During the President's Summer Retreat, the Leadership Team carefully reviewed the summaries of each of the six Candidate Topics and aligned each with university priorities. Rather than opting for one of the proposed topics, the Leadership Team focused on a recurring element in four of the six proposals: learning for future success. The general topic that emerged from this focus was Enhancing Student Success through Personalized Advising and Mentoring. The President later announced the general topic selection in her Convocation address at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year.

A new QEP Task Force, consisting of 43 members with diverse and relevant insight into the selected general QEP topic, and widely representative of the constituency, was established. This group met monthly over the course of two years to shape the topic into a well-defined, manageable, and focused plan. Through extensive review and discussion of literature, institutional data, and current practices, the QEP Task Force reframed the general topic to its final form. The resulting topic, Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE), focuses on freshmen and was designed with the intent of achieving two interrelated goals:

- To help students clarify their career goals, and
- To assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan

Student learning outcomes to accomplish the two goals were identified and are described in Section IV: Desired Student Learning Outcomes.

The resulting topic, Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) focusing on freshmen, directly aligns with the institution’s mission, values, and goals. (See Appendix VIII for the Texas State Mission, Values, and Goals on page 87.) The university mission describes Texas State as a student-centered institution dedicated to excellence in serving the educational needs of the diverse student population. Among other things, this QEP proposes that freshmen would strengthen their self-assessment of interests, abilities, and values, learn more about career and educational opportunities, and then design their educational plans based on their personal educational needs and based on the educational requirements of the major and the envisioned career in a changing work world. This QEP, furthermore, proposes a student-learning focus that allows for greater personalization for Texas State’s diverse student population. Thus, this QEP will help accomplish the mission of Texas State University-San Marcos. Of the six university goals, the chosen topic directly impacts the ability to achieve goal 3, to *“Provide a premier student-centered, educational experience that fosters retention and success and is built on academic programs with clearly defined learning outcomes and a rigorous level of academic challenge.”* Likewise, the topic is consistent with essentially all of the university values.

Sources of Inspiration

The inspiration for this QEP topic, for clarifying the direction and narrowing the scope of the QEP, and for the development of the planned actions came from (a) student, faculty, and staff input, (b) anecdotal evidence collected by advisors, mentors, and career planners, (c) results of surveys, focus groups, and other empirical studies at Texas State University-San Marcos, (d) published literature on best practices, and (e) initiatives at peer institutions. Several substantiated premises lent support to focusing the QEP topic on personalized academic and career exploration for freshmen. The following recurring premises provided a foundation for the development and refinement of the topic. (The actual empirical data and the Literature / Best Practices that substantiate these premises are discussed in Section V: Literature Review and Best Practices starting on page 18.):

- (i) Students gain knowledge and skills through academic and career exploration activities. Freshmen who are advised, mentored, and engaged transfer learned knowledge and skills for success to their continued education. Few freshmen, however, are seeking advice on their own, reaching out to mentors, or engaging in other academic and career exploration.
- (ii) A rapidly changing work world necessitates new and different career decision making competencies. Few students, however, are aware that acquisition of these skills as freshmen will produce more and better experiential opportunities, which, in turn, will more likely yield professional success.
- (iii) Access to personalized academic, career, and support-services enables stu-

dents to succeed. Many students, however, are not aware of the various services available to them or are not aware until later as upperclassmen when they have limited time to take advantage of the academic and career related opportunities available through the university.

(iv) Self-awareness of interests, abilities, and values enables students to make effective academic and career choices. Many students, however, are not aware of their interests, abilities, and values and how they impact their academic and career choices.

(v) Engagement in positive curricular and co-curricular activities motivates students to succeed. Only a small portion of the student body, however, is engaged in co-curricular activities that are meaningful for academic and career exploration, particularly as lowerclassmen. Students often do not know what activities are available.

(vi) Experiential learning and mentoring contribute to students' awareness of their academic and career path. Few students, however, participate in experiential activities, and only very few students are engaged in formal mentoring relationships.

Empirical Justification

In the reframing of the topic to its final form, the QEP Task Force looked for existing empirical data within the university to support the overall plan and a course of action to enhance student learning. The group identified existing data sources and spent considerable time reviewing and discussing findings in relation to enhancing student learning.

Texas State routinely assesses the effectiveness of academic advising, career counseling, and mentoring services. Results of some of these quantitative and qualitative assessments provided evidence of success and indicators for improvement. Available data are limited in that results primarily provide indirect rather than direct measures of student learning. The limited availability of direct data, by itself, signaled a need for greater attention to student learning in academic and career exploration. Furthermore, initial institutional data seemed to indicate that students are reasonably capable of planning academic and career pathways. However, in the ever-changing and increasingly demanding, global work world, "good" is no longer sufficient in meeting the needs of future graduates.

Institutional data provided an empirical justification for the Quality Enhancement Plan topic, Personalized Academic and Career Exploration. Synopses of various assessments are described below.

Academic Advisement Survey. The *Academic Advisement Survey*, locally developed in 1994, was replicated in 2000. The latest survey, mailed to a random sample of 1,500 undergraduate students, stratified by college and classification, was completed by 682 students for a 45% response rate. Results in 2000 were compared to the 1994 survey results to assess improvement in advising services. Major findings from the survey indicate that the perceived quality of academic advising improved. However, respondents continued to want more communication related to academic major requirements and additional help in learning to build their class schedules. Results support the need for enhanced instruction

pertaining to academic planning and to the charting of courses for program completion.

Academic Advising Survey. Since 2007, the *Academic Advising Survey* has been administered by each advising center following advising appointments. Over the course of the past two years, 1,593 students have responded to the question “How can we improve our advising services to better serve student needs?” Of the responses, 902 (56.6%) suggested improvements that were coded into three main themes: a) access to advisors, b) advisor knowledge, and c) more personalized planning. Respondents (39.0%) cited concerns regarding access to advisors when options for meeting with advisors were limited. They believed the best scenario exists when both advising appointments and walk-in advising are available. Students also preferred options for scheduling advising appointments, including online, in-person, and over-the-phone alternatives. Respondents’ (13.2%) comments on advisor knowledge implied that advisors need to have a better working knowledge of the major as well as Texas State services and processes. Students (12.3%) also reported asking advisors to address their personal and career goals and to suggest ways their curriculum might help them reach their goals (i.e., through internships and elective selections). Students expected advisors to spend more time helping them learn to select their field of study, coursework, and extracurricular activities. In general, students sought more personalized attention in the advising process and in the exploration of their career and field of study. Findings of the *Academic Advising Survey* substantiate a need for improved education related to the charting of courses for program completion and incorporation of co-curricular activities to enhance educational and career goals.

ACT Survey of Academic Advising. The *ACT Survey of Academic Advising* was administered to a random sample of 1,500 seniors, stratified by college, during fall 2000. Surveys were completed by 526 students for a 35% response rate. Results were compared to national user norms as an indication of the general quality of academic advising services. Major findings from the survey indicated that the academic advising system met student needs. Of 18 advising-related topics / issues typically discussed by advisors with advisees, the level of satisfaction on 10 of 18 items exceeded national norms. Approximately 20-25% disagreed that advisors knew them and that advisors took initiative in arranging meetings. Respondents also appeared to desire more career-related guidance and discussion of continuing education after graduation. Results suggest the need for an action plan to strengthen advisor-advisee relationships and increase frequency of contacts, as well as to provide more career-related education and discussion of continuing education.

In spring 2004, a shortened version of the *ACT Survey of Academic Advising* was administered electronically to a random sample of 4,238 undergraduate students, stratified by college; 295 responded for a 7% response rate. Improving study skills and habits, matching learning styles to courses and instructors, and clarifying life and career goals were cited by respondents as topics that should have been discussed with advisors but were not. Again, results indicate a need for career-related education, such as assessing career opportunities and relating careers to personal characteristics.

Alumni Survey. The Texas State *Alumni Survey* has been administered every year since 2006 to collect information from recent bachelor’s degree graduates about a variety of their experiences at Texas State. The target population for this electronic survey consists of

alumni who received bachelor's degrees from Texas State in the previous calendar year. Recent results reveal that among the three areas considered least affected by a Texas State education was career planning (with a mean score of 1.90 on a 3 point scale with 3 = "very little"). Over half of the graduates (62% in 2008; 60% in 2007; 64% in 2006) rated advising from College Advising Center academic advisors as good or very good. Overall, results from the *Alumni Survey* indicate a need for additional guidance in career planning as well as suggest room for improvement in academic planning.

Career Services' Employer Survey. Each semester, Career Services surveys employers who participate in the On-Campus Recruiting program. Employers rate Texas State seniors on a series of qualities using a one (low) to five (high) scale. Of the employers participating in this survey in the most recent academic year (2008-2009), 76 of 107 (70%) rated the qualities of each student they interviewed. Data from this group indicate that employers believed Texas State students' overall interview skills to be better than average. Employers perceive that students performed best in the following areas: "professional appearance" (fall mean score of 4.0; spring 4.2), "communication and interpersonal skills" (fall 3.9; spring 3.9), and "resume" (fall 3.9; spring 3.9). Criteria that interviewers believed the students performed the least well included "ability to market self" (fall 3.7; spring 3.8), "knowledge of personal / career goals" (fall 3.7; spring 3.8) and asking "pertinent closing questions" (fall 3.7; spring 3.7). Although these seniors who were chosen by employers to be interviewed performed well overall, there is ample room for improvement, especially in a competitive, global work world. Furthermore, it is logical to presume that those students not chosen for these interviews would need much better initial job search skills in order to become more attractive job candidates. Enabling students to gain a stronger knowledge of their personal and career goals as freshmen would allow them to better focus their curricular and co-curricular activities and engage in more frequent networking opportunities over the course of their matriculation. The resulting increase in self-confidence and professional presentation skills should improve students' scores on the survey and, more importantly, increase their chances for success in the competition for post-graduate educational and job opportunities.

Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Texas State participated in the CIRP Freshman Survey for five years, in the fall semesters of 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007. New freshmen complete surveys in their first discussion group meetings during PAWS Preview, a transition program providing just-in-time information to new students. In the fall of 2007, surveys were completed by 2,377 students or 76% of the 3,117 new freshmen enrolled at Texas State. Of the respondents, about half (51%) said they would like to find out about university programs and events via e-mail messages. Sixty-eight percent were very likely or likely to get involved in student organizations while ten percent did not plan to participate in student organizations. Results suggest a need to aid students in choosing appropriate academic and career pathways, as well as to encourage and guide student involvement in valuable co-curricular activities and organizations early in their collegiate years.

Focus Group Results. In the spring of 2009, three focus groups were convened to augment existing data by delving deeper into issues faced by Texas State students as they make academic and career choices. The three groups consisted of undeclared traditional students, undeclared first-generation students, and undeclared pre-professional business

majors. When questioned about making academic and career choices, students in each group became visibly distressed and described the process as “stressful” and “scary.” Students considering a change in major noted their concern over “wasting time,” “wasting money,” needing “to pay back loans,” and pending “lack of job security.” Observations indicate that few students clearly grasped the concepts involved in academic and career planning. As a result, students rarely sought the needed guidance from professional advisors or career planners. Students also had a limited understanding of how to effectively set goals with respect to careers. In conclusion, students welcome the support and assistance enabling them to establish academic and career pathways but lack the ability to initiate the process. Expanded curriculum in academic and career exploration has the potential to enable students to analyze and choose academic and career pathways.

Freshman Survey. A survey was conducted in spring of 2009 to determine the degree to which students’ experiences at Texas State helped them have confidence in their ability to clarify their educational and career goals and implement a related educational plan. Of the 1,078 freshmen responding to the survey, between 34% and 50% had “a lot” of confidence in their ability to meet the two goals stated above. For example, 49.4% of freshmen stated that they had a lot of confidence in their ability to “choose an appropriate educational pathway consistent with my abilities and interests.” Fewer (34.9%) freshmen stated that they had a lot of confidence in their ability to “choose university-sponsored activities that further my career goals.” A total of 29.2% of freshmen stated that they had no or little confidence in their ability to choose these types of activities. While two-fifths of freshmen stated that they were confident in their abilities to clarify their educational and career goals, and to develop and implement an educational plan, three-fifths were not as confident. Many of these had some confidence, and about 20% had no or little confidence in their abilities. In conclusion, well over half of the students would benefit from well designed curriculum and instruction and personalized attention related to academic and career exploration.

Mentoring Program Statistics. The Texas State Mentoring Program focuses on matching new students (freshman and transfer) with an experienced member of the faculty or staff or an upper-division student who, as the mentor, will help the student have a successful first year at Texas State. A mentor is an advisor, guide, and friend. Mentors, through a personalized relationship, help mentees set goals, refer them to campus resources such as career exploration self-assessments, and introduce the mentees to people on campus. On average, *Mentoring Program Statistics* show that students who participate in the Mentoring Program stay in school and have higher GPAs than their non-mentored counterparts. Being part of the Mentoring Program proves to be a step in ensuring student success. In fall 2008, 126 students were mentees in the program and in spring 2009, there were 136. However, for a university with approximately 30,000 students, the Mentoring Program serves a very small portion of the enrollment. Enhanced and expanded mentoring could play a vital role in improving student learning and success especially as related to academic and career exploration.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Texas State participated in the NSSE, a survey of first-year and senior undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities, in 2000 and 2001. Of the seniors responding to the 2001 survey, 38.2% had talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor while only 17.4% of first-year students (significantly

below the national average of 27.4%) had a similar conversation. Other shortcomings, when compared to the national norms, were observed in the students' involvement in co-curricular activities and experiential learning. Less than 25% of Texas State students (24.9% of first-year students, which is below the national average of 30.7%; 20.0% of seniors, which is significantly lower than the national average of 27.1%) reported participating in co-curricular activities six or more hours a week. In similar fashion, 75.4% of first-year students (below the national norm of 76.6%) and 64.7% of seniors (below the national norm of 72.4%) participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment. In order to mirror the national norm, students need greater opportunity to discuss career plans with faculty members and advisors, who may, in turn, encourage participation in related co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities. Additional instruction and guidance in career exploration, academic and career pathways, and co-curricular opportunities would help foster related discussions and decision-making.

Student Services Survey. In compliance with Senate Bill 1563 of the 76th Texas Legislative Session in 1999, a survey of student satisfaction with services is conducted by Texas State every two years, with the latest data collected in 2008 from 336 customers (students). In each of the past three *Student Services Surveys*, students typically reported a relatively high level of satisfaction with academic advising (mean score of 3.23 on a 4 point scale, with 4 = "very satisfied" in 2008; 3.25 in 2006; 3.17 in 2004). Their satisfaction with career planning (3.20 in 2008; 3.09 in 2006; 3.16 in 2004) and job placement (2.57 in 2008; 2.85 in 2006; 2.84 in 2004) was also strong; however, only a small percentage of respondents addressed these two survey items (16.4% and 8.9% respectively). In conclusion, because of the low rate of response, it is difficult to determine if students are as well served in career planning and job placement as the few responding to the survey attest. The resounding lack of response may be more indicative of uncertainty particularly as related to career planning. Therefore, incorporating focused academic and career exploration content into the curriculum has the potential to increase student success.

In summary, empirical data from each of the aforementioned university sources lent support for enhancing curriculum and instruction related to academic and career exploration. The data indicate students' desire for information and guidance in assessing and selecting careers and educational pathways related to those careers. Therefore, building on existing academic and career development programming and adding new dimensions to existing offerings should prove beneficial to students throughout their collegiate years and beyond.

Scope of the Plan

The QEP focuses on developing knowledge and skills for personalized academic and career exploration in freshmen. Yet, the expectation is that the QEP has the potential to serve the larger university student body in a number of other ways. Freshmen who have acquired knowledge and skills to enhance their academic and career planning, will continue to apply the understanding and aptitude throughout their collegiate years. Further, they will be prepared to take advantage of opportunities to supplement their academic path, such as through curricular and co-curricular options and experiential learning activities. Following graduation, the acquired knowledge and skills will play a vital role as they continue their lifelong learning and adapt to the demands of the changing work environment.

Many of the actions implemented as a part of the QEP will serve as the basis for initiatives and student support services aimed at other groups within the university. Non-freshmen transfer students and undeclared majors will find the resources and initiatives of the QEP valuable as they also explore their academic and career options. Declared majors, in turn, will benefit from the information and guidance on augmenting academic and career paths with intentional curricular and co-curricular choices.

IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes

The desired student learning outcomes were developed through inclusive, comprehensive deliberations which resulted in a foundational framework to descriptively unify advising and mentoring at Texas State. From this framework, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Task Force selected two goals as the focus of the QEP and clarified related student learning outcomes.

Advising Framework

An advising framework was designed to integrate advising / mentoring within the university's vision, mission, and values, and to describe the relationship among existing processes. To begin the conceptualization of this framework, Dr. Charlie Nutt, Executive Director of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), visited the campus and met with the QEP Task Force, the Leadership Team, academic advisors, and other interested parties. All involved agreed to accept the NACADA definition of advising (NACADA, 2004), which describes it as an inclusive educational process, best performed with broad-based, combined efforts of faculty, staff, and students:

Academic advising, along with teaching, research, and service, is central to achieving the fundamental goals of higher education. Academic advising is an intentional educational process that requires concern for and consideration of all these fundamental goals. Of particular importance to academic advising are: teaching students to understand the meaning of higher education; teaching students to understand the purpose of the curriculum; and fostering students' intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning. Though it may vary from one context to another, in every setting academic advising is a multidimensional and intentional process, grounded in teaching and learning, with its own purpose, content, and specified outcomes.

The definition of academic advising implies the integration of mentoring and advising, working in tandem. Mentoring is defined by the International Mentoring Association (2009) as three congruous elements:

- *It is a series of tasks that effective mentors must perform to promote the professional development of others.*
- *It is the intense, trusting, supportive, positive, confidential, low-risk relationship within which the partners can try new ways of working and relating, make mistakes, gain feedback, accept challenges, and learn in front of each other.*
- *It is the complex, developmental process that mentors use to support and guide their protégé through the necessary career transitions that are a part of learning how to be an effective, reflective professional, and a career-long learner.*

As defined, mentoring plays an essential role in the advising process. Faculty, staff, and peers serve integral and unique roles in the mentoring process. **Thus, Texas State views**

advising as the encompassing, collaborative activities, including mentoring by faculty, staff, and fellow students, to provide instruction, guidance, and support needed for long-term student success.

Consistent with Texas State's views on advising, based on advice from Dr. Nutt, and following extensive discussions among constituent groups, a university-wide framework was developed. The framework articulates the shared vision, mission, values, and goals of advising at Texas State. See Figure IV.1 on next page.

<p style="text-align: center;">Vision</p> <p>Texas State University-San Marcos will enhance learning and success for all students through excellent, innovative, and collaborative advising.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mission</p> <p>As an integral part of teaching and learning at Texas State, advising is a student-centered, collaborative process that engages students in educational planning to promote academic, personal, and professional development, while considering diverse interests, abilities, and goals.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Values</p> <p>The university community is committed to the following values that guide advising:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lifelong Learning</p> <p>We value engagement in continuous formal and informal learning to acquire knowledge and skills for intellectual, personal, social, and career fulfillment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Independence</p> <p>We value self-advocacy in the decision-making process.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-Appraisal</p> <p>We value ongoing self-reflection and assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Integrity</p> <p>We value honesty, accountability, compassion, fairness, respect, and ethical behavior.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Diversity</p> <p>We value diversity of people and ideas, a spirit of inclusiveness, and a global perspective.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Social Responsibility</p> <p>We value informed, conscious choices that positively influence educational, personal, and cultural development in a global society.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Goals</p> <p>The goals of advising at Texas State are to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) ease transition to the university experience,(2) encourage student engagement for intellectual and personal growth,(3) help students clarify their career goals,(4) assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan,(5) teach students to use resources and relationships to maximize their educational and personal potential,(6) help students understand the nature, purpose, and potential of higher education,(7) promote continuous improvement of the advising process through ongoing assessment, development, and training.

Figure IV.1: Advising Framework

Student Learning Outcomes

In the process of defining the student learning outcomes, the QEP Task Force elected to focus on two of the goals in the Advising Framework: those numbered as Goals 3 and 4 in the framework became Goals 1 and 2 of the QEP. The two interrelated goals directly address the selected topic, Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) for freshmen by encouraging students to clarify career goals and establish educational plans to achieve their goals. For each of the two goals, three specific and measurable cognitive learning outcomes were defined for a total of six student learning outcomes. See figure below.

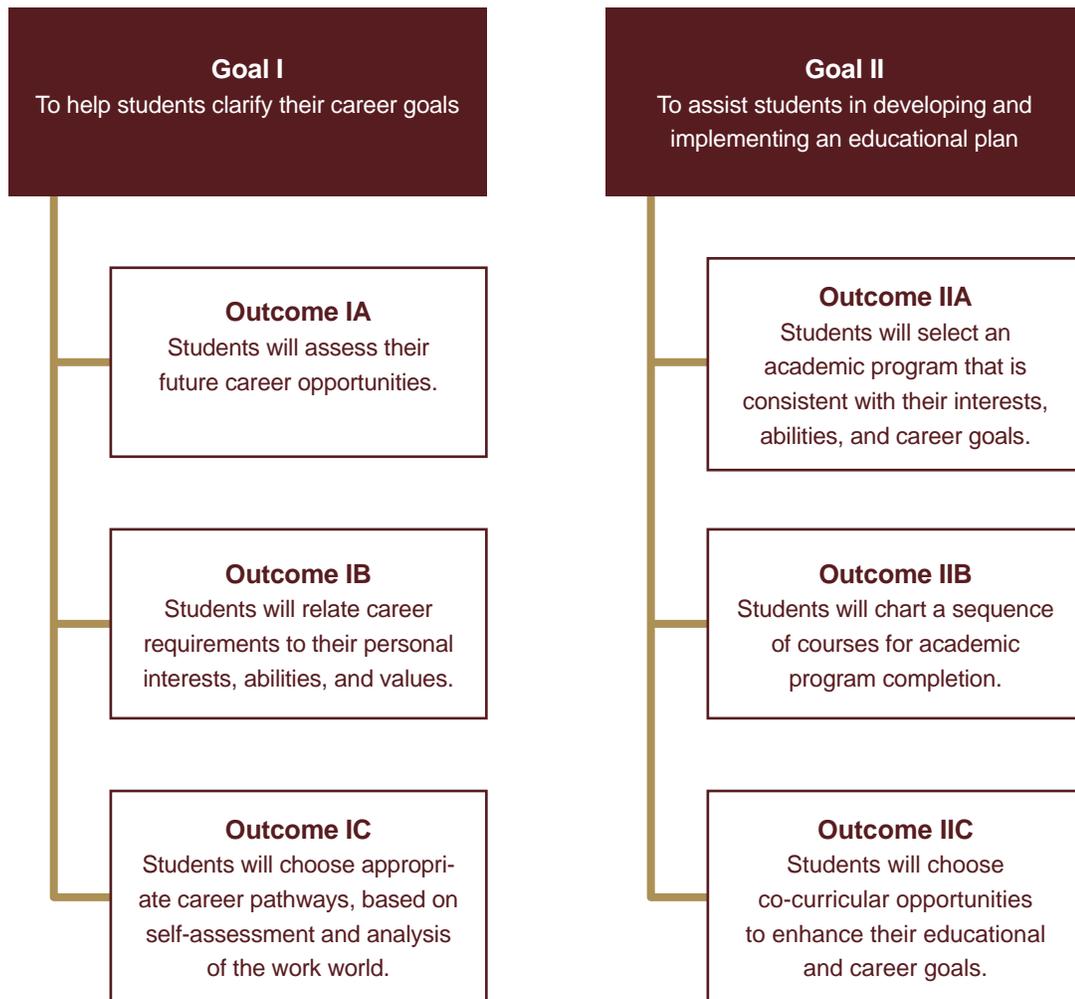


Figure IV.2: Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

V. Literature Review and Best Practices

All references in this chapter make use of author-date citations, based on the 15th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Advising and Student Learning

A wealth of literature describes the best advising practices in relation to student learning. While the primary purpose of Academic Advising Programs (AAP) is “to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans,” as specifically defined in the Professional Standards for Higher Education by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards 2009, 38), AAP as well as Career Services (CS) “must enhance overall educational experiences by incorporating student learning and development outcomes in their mission” (ibid., 38 and 125). More specifically, both AAP and CS “must promote student learning and development outcomes that are purposeful and holistic and that prepare students for satisfying and productive lifestyles, work, and civic participation” (ibid.). Among others, relevant and desirable outcomes and their dimensions include fostering realistic self-appraisal and self-understanding, managing career development, and developing educational goals (ibid.). In short, goals of advising, according to the CAS Standards, include (1) helping students clarify their career goals and (2) assisting students in developing and implementing educational plans.

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and much of the recent scholarly literature on advising goes into more detail on student learning in the advising process. Marc Lowenstein (2005) describes the shift from a prescriptive (and not as effective) advising paradigm to a learning-centered advising model: “Under the learning-centered approach, the excellent advisor plays a role with respect to a student’s entire curriculum that is analogous to the role that the excellent teacher plays with respect to the content of a single course” (ibid., 123). Holly Martin (2007) describes the process of constructing student learning outcomes for academic advising and demonstrates their efficacy. NACADA’s *Guide to Assessment in Academic Advising* (Campbell, et al. 2005) discusses student learning outcomes in detail, mapping the advising experience – what should be learned, where to provide learning opportunities, and when the learning should occur.

NACADA also provides many examples of best practices on what students can and should learn, as related to advising, and where and how the learning can be achieved. For example, the NACADA pocket guide *Student Learning Outcomes: Evidence of the Teaching and Learning Components of Academic Advising* (NACADA 2007b) discusses best practices from the Ivy Tech Community College system (in Indiana), Oregon State University, and the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Student learning outcomes and best practices at other universities are discussed and listed on NACADA’s website (<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu>). Most examples of student learning outcomes related to advising entail students’ (a) assessing future career opportunities, (b) relating career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values, (c) choosing appropriate career paths, based on assessment of the work world and of themselves, (d) selecting a major that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals, (e) charting a sequence of courses for completing their major, and (f) choosing appropriate co-curricular opportunities.

Campbell and Nutt (2008, 6) point out that it is crucial to align a coherent philosophy / mission for academic advising, the student learning outcomes that are derived from this mission, and the teaching and learning mission of the university. This is even more important at large universities with a decentralized advising structure in order to provide the same foundation for all advisors or advising centers. Furthermore, Campbell and Nutt report that it has become common to develop an advising syllabus, and that it is most important to develop assessment strategies with multiple measures, qualitative and quantitative. Development programs should be put in place that are comprehensive and ongoing, “informed by the identified outcomes for student learning and for the delivery of academic advising” (ibid., 7).

More and more colleges and universities use an advising syllabus to emphasize advising as teaching and learning (NACADA 2007a, 3, and Appleby 2008). Among other things, advising curricula, as listed in advising syllabi, include the development of life and career goals, the selection of academic programs and courses, institutional policies and procedures, institutional resources, and “the meaning, value, and interrelationship of the institution’s curriculum, and co-curriculum” (NACADA 2007a, 6).

The delivery of advising can be organized using several models. Decentralized models are common at large universities. One of the decentralized models is the Satellite Model, in which academic sub-units such as colleges maintain advising centers. In this model, advising centers are usually staffed by professional advisors, which often include specialists for specific advising needs (see Pardee 2000, 195, and NACADA 2006, 8). One of the main strengths of this model is the more personalized advising process. (See also King 2008.)

Career Counseling and Exploration and Experiential Learning

Two-thirds of new college students change their mind about their major during their first year of studies. Thus, “the vast majority of students entering college are truly undecided about a college major” (Cuseo, Fecas, and Thompson 2007, 74), which indicates that career exploration is absolutely necessary, particularly for freshmen.

A plethora of literature can also be found on career exploration and career services. Most recently, Daniel H. Pink, utilizing the “planned happenstance” theories of John Krumboltz, wrote on “the 6 career secrets no one ever told you” (Pink 2008, back cover). These “secrets” are usually contrary to what students learn about pursuing careers, but they are actually what students should know to be successful in their future careers: (1) There is no plan. (2) Think strengths, not weaknesses. (3) It’s not about you. (4) Persistence trumps talent. (5) Make excellent mistakes. (6) Leave an imprint. As Pink countered common misconceptions, so did Helen Harkness (1997). She emphasizes that “we live in an age of chaos, constant change, and contradiction but are taught to value stability, order, and certainty, realities from another age” (ibid., 207). Therefore, students need to be taught this principle: “What you do naturally and instinctively well can be researched and you can discover where you can do what you’re good at and get paid for it” (ibid., 202). Career exploration for college students, then, means to first encourage students to assess their interests, strengths, personality traits, work values, and the like, in order to match those with majors and career options (Metz 2005). Once students learn more about themselves, they should begin to research compatible career options through publications such as the *Occupational Outlook*

Handbook, published bi-annually by the United States Labor Department; this Handbook is a “nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives” (<http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>). Many similar resources for work world exploration can be found in libraries, at career centers, and online.

Braxton, Brier, and Steele (2007, 379) point out the importance of career counseling and exploration: “Individuals who advise or teach undergraduate college students should embrace an abiding concern for the career development of the students they serve.” Gore and Metz (2008) discuss “Advising for Career and Life Planning” in detail. Best practices include that career counselors should help “students understand and articulate their interests and find academic and career paths that might be congruent with those interests” (Gore and Metz 2008, 105; see also Holland 1997). Advisors should also assist students to “develop realistic educational and career expectations” and include “self-referent thought in the development and implementation of an academic or career choice” (Gore and Metz 2008, 106; see also Lent 2005). Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot (2005, 9) point out that “more often, initial career goals are changed because students discover that the career they wanted is not really suited to their interests, or their performance in the major that would prepare them for their initial career choice is inadequate (or both). ***Thus, successful first-year students must begin to achieve clarity about their career goals.***” Finally, advisors also “encourage students to explore their tentative academic or career choice by interviewing a faculty member or job incumbent; by promoting participation in academic or career-related professional organizations, honor societies, or service organizations, or by informing students of relevant internships, practicum opportunities, or service learning experiences” (Gore and Metz 2008, 106; see also Super 1990). This active exploration through experiential activities not only aids in the decision-making process, but also allows students to acquire valuable professional presentation skills. Experiential learning enables students “to do some reality testing with regard to their interests, work values, and skills. Moreover, experiential learning offers students the opportunity to enhance their self-concept and develop a more stable vocational identity – processes valued by most adult and career-development theories” (Smith 2005, 205). Among the best practices, the University of North Carolina (UNC) Charlotte (<http://www.uncc.edu>) has a well-developed experiential learning initiative, the assessment data collected show that students with experiential learning experiences “are more likely to obtain positions related to their major than those who have no experience” (Smith 2005, 209).

Steven D. Brown, et al. (2000, 2003) analyzed various methods of career exploration. The most effective ones are written exercises, one-on-one sessions, the use of information about the work world, role-modeling, and building a support network. (See also Gore and Metz 2008, 110.)

Hughey, et al. (2009), the latest, comprehensive handbook on best practices in career advising, discusses the integration of academic and career counseling, theories of career development, information resources to enhance career counseling, evaluation and assessment in career counseling, and many other topics.

Cognition and Learning Theories

Psychologist Howard Gardner (2006) pointed out that five “minds” need to be trained in order to be successful in the future workplace:

- (i) the Disciplined Mind – *employing the ways of thinking associated with major scholarly disciplines (history, math, science, art, etc.) and major professions (law, medicine, management, finance, etc., as well as crafts and trades); capable of applying oneself diligently, improving steadily, and continuing beyond formal education* (ibid., 154),
- (ii) the Synthesizing Mind – *selecting crucial information from the copious amounts available; arraying that information in ways that make sense to self and others* (ibid., 155),
- (iii) the Creating Mind – *going beyond existing knowledge and syntheses to pose new questions, offer new solutions, fashion works that stretch existing genres or configure new ones; creation builds on one or more established disciplines and requires an informed ‘field’ to make judgments of quality and acceptability* (ibid., 156),
- (iv) the Respectful Mind – *responding sympathetically and constructively to differences among individuals and among groups; seeking to understand and work with those who are different; extending beyond mere tolerance and political correctness* (ibid., 157), and
- (v) the Ethical Mind – *abstracting crucial features of one’s role at work and one’s role as a citizen and acting consistently with those conceptualizations; striving toward good work and good citizenship* (ibid., 158).

While the Disciplined Mind is trained mainly in academic courses themselves, it is the task of academic and career counselors, as well as mentors, to direct students to those courses. The Synthesizing Mind and the Creating Mind can and must be trained as well as applied in academic and career exploration. The Respectful Mind and the Ethical Mind need to be developed in any interaction. Thus, Gardner’s paradigm, supported by Tony Wagner (2008) and others, points toward the Total Intake Model of advising (a one-stop location, at which several other essential services are offered to students, in addition to advising) – at least for freshmen. Such centers ***specifically for freshmen*** have, in recent years, been developed by Southeastern Louisiana University (http://www.selu.edu/acad_research/programs/cse/index.html), the University of Alabama at Birmingham (<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/student-success/67081/>), Central Washington University (<http://www.cwu.edu/~acadadv/students/firstyear.php>), Illinois State University (<http://www.ucollege.ilstu.edu/>), the University of Texas at San Antonio (<http://www.utsa.edu/cfac/>) and many others. They all reported a significant increase of student success (see for example, Whitman 2009 or Carlton 2009).

Mentoring

Mentoring, which originally was seen as one-directional (mentee’s) learning, has been more recently thought of as rooted in principles of adult learning. According to Zachary, “This

learning-centered shift in the approach to mentoring requires that a mentor facilitate the learning relationship rather than transfer knowledge to the learner” (2000, xv). Both students and faculty consider mentoring as a rewarding relationship that leads to student success: “Many faculty are eager to work with students who are making key academic, personal, and career choices. These mentoring relationships may provide an attractive counterpoint to formal instructor-student interactions” (Reinarz 2000, 214). Faculty mentoring of students is seen as a best practice and an important contribution to the undergraduate student experience (Lagowski and Vick 1995).

Norman H. Cohen (1995, 3) distinguishes six mentoring functions: (1) to establish trust, (2) to offer tailored advice, (3) to introduce alternatives, (4) to challenge, (5) to motivate, and (6) to encourage initiative. Functions 2 through 6 can be directed at, among other things, self assessment, study skills in general, academic major selection, selection of courses and / or degree plans, and career exploration, including referral to others within the professional network of the mentor, and identifying co-curricular activities to prepare the mentee for a career. All of these relate to “exploration of potential,” and “only continued exploration of potential will allow mentees to discover what their competencies really are” (ibid., 95). While mentoring relationships help the mentees to find appropriate educational and career pathways, “caring and informed mentors can [also] help people avoid careers that are unsuitable” (Murray 2001, 48).

Peer mentoring and peer advising is likewise discussed as a best practice in the refereed scholarly literature. While peer advisors are more frequently used at four year public colleges (Habley and Morales 1998; see also Koring and Campbell 2005), the strength of peer mentoring and advising is derived from the “opportunities to relate easily to advisees because they often share some of the same problems” (Reinarz 2000, 217).

One-Stop (Student Success) Centers with Advising

Based on the Total Intake Model of advising (Habley 1983), more and more universities offer one-stop “student success” centers for all or for specific student populations. Sam Houston State University, for example, established a Student Advising and Mentoring Center (SAM Center), where all students at the university may receive intrusive (proactive) academic advising and mentoring, “assisting them in discovering methods to set personal goals, establishing strategies to achieve their objectives, enhancing skills to sharpen academic accomplishments, and providing incentives for realizing educational success” (SAM Center Mission Statement, http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/). For the success of this concept, the SAM Center received the 2005 “Outstanding Institutional Advising Program Certificate of Merit” from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

The University of Cincinnati established a Center for Exploratory Studies, which offers students exploratory advising to discover their academic interests, investigate career options, and shape their college experience (<http://www.uc.edu/explore/>). NACADA highlighted this Center as a best practice in its monograph *Advising Special Populations* (Huff and Jordan 2007). The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs has a Student Success Center that is a one-stop location for academic advising of undergraduate students, career services, new student orientation, degree audits, and transfer evaluations: “At the Student Success Center,

we empower students to realize their academic goals, develop their career options and provide access to information regarding campus resources” (<http://www.uccs.edu/~ssc/>). The University of Tennessee at Knoxville also maintains an exemplary Student Success Center (<http://studentsuccess.utk.edu>), which offers academic advising, first year studies and first year intervention, tutoring and study help, supplemental instruction, and other services. The University of Kentucky maintains a Central Advising Service and Transfer Center, which is a comprehensive resource center (<http://www.uky.edu/UGS/centadv/>).

The University of Central Florida integrates academic advising and major exploration in its Office of First Year Advising and Exploration (FYAE) which provides “individual advising services, innovative major exploration, technology-based advising, and collaborative outreach services” (<http://firstyear.sdes.ucf.edu/about.html>). James Madison University, Brigham Young University, Northern Arizona University, and numerous other universities and colleges maintain successful centers that integrate academic advising and career counseling (Hughey, et al. 2009, Appendix A). To mention a last example, Saint Louis University is known for its Student Success Center (<http://www.slu.edu/x28737.xml>) that integrates the First-Year Seminar, tutoring, writing support, career services, and disability services, as well as major exploration and academic advising.

First-Year Seminars

The success of freshmen has been discussed widely, for example, in a wealth of literature on the First Year Experience and on Students in Transition. M. Lee Upcraft, John N. Gardner, and Associates (1998) found that freshmen are most successful if they fulfill several goals, which include (a) “establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships” and (b) **“deciding on a career and life-style”** (ibid., 2). A first year seminar (course) is most useful in the transition from high school to college. The class size and class content of such courses directly influence the freshmen’s success, as the 2006 National Survey of First-Year Seminars (Tobolowsky & Associates 2008) shows. This survey, taken by 968 higher education institutions across the United States, resulted in the summary of best practices that included the following:

- Freshmen Seminars tend to be small and have a most prevalent class size of 16 to 20 students per section (Griffin, Romm, and Tobolowsky 2008, 25; Tobolowsky 2008, 97).
- At most universities, the most important objectives for their seminars are to develop academic skills and to orient students to campus resources and services (Tobolowsky 2008, 98).
- Among the innovative and effective course components are e-portfolios for students (Griffin, Romm, and Tobolowsky 2008, 61).
- Among the innovative and effective course components are integrating career and major exploration experiences as well as self-reflection (Griffin, Romm, and Tobolowsky 2008, 62).

Some colleges report great success in integrating academic and career planning in a first-year seminar. (See, for example, Fralick 2008, 24.)

Student Resources and Support Services

Colleges and universities offer many student services that will enhance student success, such as orientation, career services, wellness services, counseling, mentoring, disability services, residence life, ethical and legal services, and the like. Student Affairs usually coordinates student activities by various campus organizations, particularly student organizations. Best practices call for student services that are student-centered, blended (holistic perspective), integrated technologically, personalized, customized, timely, and supportive of student learning and the academic success of students in general (Kruger 2005 and Shea 2005, 17-18). Very important are collaborations and partnerships across campus (Kleinglass 2005, 35). In fact, the entire campus must be involved in order to provide “transformative education,” because “our society expects colleges and universities to graduate students who can get things done in the world and are prepared for effective and engaged citizenship” (Keeling and Dungy 2004, 3). To become intentional, life-long learners, students must develop intellectual and practical skills, must take charge of their own learning and participation, and must understand aspects of their micro and macro environments that affect their lives and well-being (Ramaley and Leakes 2002). This kind of education, of transformation, requires a seamless experience from the perspective of students – everyone should be capable of and willing to help them, however and whenever possible. Everyone is responsible and nothing is off limits for discussion. The university should build mechanisms for reaching across boundaries and respond to the lives of students in ways that feature convenience and choice. Students, too, are needed to help one another.

As Ender and Newton 2000 pointed out, peer mentors are especially useful in referring students to campus and community resources and services, such as tutoring, library resources, services by student learning assistance centers, internet resources, campus locations (or even the existence) of offices for advising and / or career services. Peers may not only refer students to those services and resources, but also make them aware of potential problems and procedures involved in creating a workable class schedule, changing majors, or conducting other administrative business. Last, peers may also give good advice regarding what co-curricular activities or student organizations have to offer.

Technology

Technology is used widely as a best practice to enhance student learning, advising, mentoring, and career counseling. Michael J. Leonard (2008) summarizes the best practices as those that integrate web sites, student information systems (large-scale programs that provide access to student records), degree audit programs (programs that match program requirements with completed course work), career guidance programs such as DISCOVER (<http://www.act.org/discover>) or SIG13 (<http://www.valparint.com>), Webinars (web-based seminars, which may also be archived on CDs or DVDs), instant messaging, social networking sites such as Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) or MySpace (<http://www.MySpace.com>), podcasts (a series of digital media files that are released periodically), blogs, RSS feeds (web feed formats to publish frequently updated information in a standardized format), cell phones, course management systems, as well as e-mail and listservs. Students live in a digital world, and they need to be reached in “multiple ways, through multiple methods, to suit different learning styles, personalities, and opportunities for interaction” (Leonard 2008,

304). Gore and Metz (2008) also emphasize the importance of information providers such as O*NET (<http://www.onetcenter.org>; an online source for occupational information) and Choices Planner (<http://www.bridges.com>; an online career information delivery system that helps students compare, connect, and choose from a large network of work and education options). (See also Lipschultz and Leonard 2007.) Garis and Dalton (2007) provide an overview of e-portfolios and their potential to enhance learning as well as assessment.

Campus Collaborations

Collaboration is among the most important of best practices: “An important part of networking within the community is for an organization to have an attitude of cooperation and helpfulness” (Sherk 1999, 5). To collaborate with others across the institution is among the top five recommendations for today’s advisors. Barefoot, et al. (2005) describe numerous first-year collaborative initiatives that are recognized for their institutional excellence. The basis for collaborations is an institution’s goals and values, with which any action or initiative should be congruent (Braxton, Brier, and Steele 2007, 387), and advising, mentoring, and career exploration are primary collaborative initiatives that lead to student success (*ibid.*, 392).

While discussing “Collaborations Beyond the Advising Office,” Hunter, Henscheid, and Mouton (2007) specifically emphasize linking academic advising with first-year seminars:

“Because academic advising and first-year seminars share many goals and objectives, linking the two has the potential to produce increased effectiveness and efficiency in each. The possibilities for moving our institutions toward a philosophy of advising as teaching has no more fertile ground than within the first-year seminar. Student transition to the collegiate culture offers many opportunities for learning-centered educators to collaborate in addressing student needs, institutional systems, and educational outcomes. One way to achieve a comprehensive approach to student transition issues, student success strategies, academic orientation to the institution, career exploration, and decision making strategies may well be through linking these two important initiatives. By developing opportunities for cross-campus conversations, institutions can begin to address the satisfaction, productivity, and learning of all involved in these important academic endeavors” (*ibid.*, 104).

Summary of the Literature Review and Best Practices

The review of refereed literature, educational standards, and current procedures at universities in the U.S. revealed the following best practices: The advising paradigm is based on a learning-centered advising model, and thus academic advising, as well as career counseling, is based on assessable student learning outcomes. While large universities usually maintain advising centers in academic sub-units (such as colleges), several universities recently reported great success in establishing one-stop centers specifically for freshmen. The integration of academic advising, career counseling, and mentoring has been reported as being very important for the overall academic and professional success of students. Because early engagement and the front-loading of resources are critical, first-year seminars are important in supporting student learning related to academic and career exploration. More specifically, written exercises, one-on-one sessions, the use of information about the work world, role-modeling, and building a support network have been proven to be the most effective methods.

VI. Actions to be Implemented

Actions deemed relevant to achieving the goals and student learning outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE), were carefully considered. Best practices, as reviewed in the previous section, provided potential strategies to achieve the established student learning outcomes for the QEP. Potential actions were carefully weighed in the university context, including the university mission and university goals, current organizational structure and resources, and capacity. Actions deemed sound within best practices and the university context formed the foundation for achieving the goals and student learning outcomes.

In order to understand the actions to be implemented, the current situation of academic and career exploration at Texas State will be briefly summarized. This summary is followed by a discussion of three interrelated areas that encompass the actions to be implemented with the QEP: actions to achieve student learning outcomes, key initiatives to guide actions, and administrative organization and professional development to enable initiatives and actions. Finally, the envisioned impact of the fully implemented QEP will be described.

The Current Situation of Academic and Career Exploration at Texas State

Currently, academic advising at Texas State is offered by professional (staff) academic advisors in eight College Advising Centers. With the exception of the University College Advising Center, which services undeclared students (in addition to General Studies majors), there is no specialized approach for groups of students with specific needs, such as freshmen. After the initial orientation, advising is generally not required of students, except for students on academic probation. There is limited coordination among the eight College Advising Centers and no institution-wide unified record keeping. Some of the College Advising Centers still use paper files, which cannot easily be moved when students change majors. Appointments are usually made over the phone; walk-ins are possible, when advisors are not completely booked. The current ratio of students to advisor is, on average, 420 to 1, which is much higher than the recommendation (300 to 1) by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

Currently, neither academic advising nor career counseling is based on a student learning approach, but is mainly a traditional, one-directional information-sharing. Academic advising and career counseling are not integrated with each other. Academic advising and career counseling based on self-assessment and / or self-reflection occurs only to a limited degree. There is no portfolio system, nor a requirement of any kind to collect pieces of academic or career exploration. Students usually do not chart their envisioned career pathway and / or their academic degree plan.

Career planning and exploration is introduced to incoming students and to the parents of incoming students during summer orientation. During the freshman year, many students complete one visit to Career Services and / or a career-related assignment in their *University Seminar* class. Career Services does invite freshmen to take advantage of career counseling services and to participate in special events. Career Services also encourages academic advisors to refer to Career Services students who are experiencing difficulties

with career decisions. However, at the current level of staffing in Career Services (12 FTE), it is not feasible to provide personalized career counseling to all freshmen. Similarly, while Career Services offers an array of career exploration opportunities and resources, students are not required to use them. Freshmen are informed and encouraged to participate, but there have been no systematic, intentional efforts to program career activities specifically targeted at the needs of freshmen.

The curriculum of the first-year *University Seminar* course (US 1100) currently includes a minimum of one session related to academic and / or career exploration, but instructors have the option to teach additional units related to academic and / or career exploration. Although many instructors use the one class session to visit Career Services with their students, some do not. There is currently no coordinated effort between academic advising, career counseling, and *University Seminar* at Texas State.

While a few colleges or departments organize career exploration activities, most do not. There is no systematic approach to departmental or college-wide career exploration activities, and some colleges and departments do not encourage their students to participate in experiential learning activities, such as co-curricular on-campus activities, informational interviews, or job shadowing. Student Affairs encourages students to participate in co-curricular activities, but this general outreach is not based on intentional coordination with specific student needs, interests, educational plans, and / or envisioned career pathways.

The *Mentoring Program* at Texas State matches students seeking such service with faculty, staff, or peer mentors. While this program is very successful and of high quality, less than 0.5% of all students and less than 5% of freshmen use the formal mentoring services. Those who do use it are mainly at-risk students, and the mentoring is largely directed at study skills and the use of resources on campus, rather than on academic and career exploration.

Thus, Texas State currently lacks a coordinated effort to assist students with (personalized) academic and career exploration. As empirical data indicate, few students are exploring in ways that are educationally sound. A student learning approach is needed to coordinate this effort and provide a framework for enhancing students' academic and career exploration.

Actions to Achieve Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

To achieve the desired student learning outcomes, several student-centered actions must take place. At least two student-centered actions for each outcome were identified. The organizational structure, resources, and assessments for each student-centered action are charted in the context of the action. Organizational structure, resources, and assessment will be described more fully in subsequent sections, but are briefly outlined below. (See Appendix IX: Goals, Outcomes, Actions, Structure, Resources, and Assessments on page 88.)

Goal I: To help students clarify their career goals

Outcome I.A.: Students will assess their future career opportunities.

Action I.A. 1.: Students will take a career readiness inventory and write a reflective piece on their results.

Outcome I.A.: Students will assess their future career opportunities.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.A.1. Students will take a career readiness inventory and write a reflective piece on their results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make career readiness inventory available • <i>University Seminar faculty</i> to assign reflective writing piece about career readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career readiness inventory • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for career readiness inventory • Assessment of sample of reflective papers included in portfolio

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** Findings of the *Academic Advising Survey*, given to Texas State students between 2007 and 2009, substantiate a need for more personalized attention in the students’ exploration of careers and fields of study. Similarly, the results of the *ACT Survey of Academic Advising*, given to Texas State students in 2000, indicate a desire for more career-related guidance.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** A career readiness inventory provides insights on students’ attitudes, awareness, and preparation for making educational and career choices. Results from a study by Gaffner and Hazler (2002) found that the students’ lack of career readiness was a strong predictor of indecisiveness. Steven D. Brown, et al. (2000, 2003) analyzed various methods of career exploration, the most effective of which is a written exercise, such as a reflective writing piece. (See also Gore and Metz 2008, 110.) The CAS Standards (2009, 38 and 125) emphasize, among other things, “realistic self-appraisal” and “self-understanding.”

• **The Action.** Therefore, to gain an understanding of potential underlying issues, students will take a career readiness inventory provided through Career Services and reflect on their results in a writing assignment. *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, faculty, and mentors will use these results to identify areas where additional development may be needed. In a new collaborative effort, instruction and guidance for the exercise will be provided in the *University Seminar* and in individual, personalized sessions with *Academic Advisors* and *Career Counselors*. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the reflective writing piece will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. Ultimately, the reflective writing piece will be added to a student’s electronic portfolio.

Action I.A.2.: Students will research careers and related educational expectations by applying knowledge of future studies and information literacy, conducting informational interviews, and attending major / career fairs.

Outcome I.A.: Students will assess their future career opportunities.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.A.2. Students will research careers and related educational expectations by applying knowledge of future studies and information literacy, conducting informational interviews, and attending major / career fairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>University Library</i> staff to assist with information access and literacy • <i>College Faculty Liaisons / Career Counselors</i> to sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities • <i>University Seminar</i> to assign future career scenarios exercise and report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio • Collection of career specific books, publications, and online resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz results on information literacy for participating students • Survey random sample of students who attended major / career fairs • Rubric for sample of future career scenarios reports included in portfolio

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** Respondents to a shortened version of the *ACT Survey of Academic Advising*, given to Texas State students in 2004, cited a need for career-related education, such as assessing career opportunities. Similarly, the results of the *ACT Survey of Academic Advising*, given to Texas State students in 2000, indicated the students' desire for more career-related guidance and discussion of continuing education after graduation.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** In a rapidly changing work world, students need the skills to go beyond traditional means of researching and forecasting future career and educational options. Because freshmen will be entering / re-entering the workforce several years in the future, knowledge of factors affecting employment trends is invaluable to their assessment of future career opportunities. To effectively assess career options, education is needed on future studies, the study of plausible change, and information literacy, the ability to recognize when information is needed and "actively and independently seek information to enrich understanding of career . . . and other personal situations" (American Association of School Librarians, et al. 1998, 4-5).

• ***The Action.*** To enable freshmen to gain the knowledge and skills to research careers and related educational expectations, students will be instructed on future studies, scenario planning, and information literacy, be encouraged to conduct informational interviews with professionals in the field, and be expected to attend major and career fairs to gather first-hand information. In an enhanced collaborative effort, *University Seminar* faculty will work in conjunction with *University Library Staff*, *Career Counselors*, and faculty to provide instruction and assignments to engage students in this process. A revised *University Seminar* curriculum will enable and lead this effort. In addition to university-wide career fairs, the newly established *Faculty Liaisons* in each College will collaborate with faculty, Career Services, and *Career Counselors* to organize college-wide or departmental major and / or career

exploration events. Additionally, a collection of career literature in the Resource Room of the *PACE Center* will give freshmen access to books and other materials. Additional resources are available in the (already existing) Career Services Resource Room. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the future career scenarios exercise will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. Ultimately, the future career scenarios exercise and report (for *University Seminar*) will be added to a student’s electronic portfolio.

Outcome I.B.: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.

Action I.B.1.: Students will analyze a career option based on the results of their personal assessment of interests, abilities, and values.

Outcome I.B.: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.B.1. Students will analyze a career option based on the results of their personal assessment of interests, abilities, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make assessment instruments available • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign future scenarios exercise and report • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to discuss options associated with individual interests, values, personality type, and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Electronic portfolio • Collection of career specific books, publications, and online resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Sample of analyses of career options based on interests, abilities, and goals

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** The Student Services Survey, given to Texas State students in 2008, had a very low response rate on questions related to career planning and job placement, which may indicate uncertainty related to career exploration. Results of a shortened version of the ACT Survey of Academic Advising, given to Texas State students in 2004, indicate that an assessment of career opportunities needs to be related to personal characteristics.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** Helen Harkness (1997) emphasizes that students need to be taught as follows: “What you do naturally and instinctively well can be researched and you can discover where you can do what you’re good at and get paid for it” (ibid., 202). In the light of career exploration for college students, this suggests that students should use aids such as interest inventories to learn about personal strengths and abilities and to search career inventories to match strengths and abilities with career options (Metz 2005). The CAS Standards for Career Services state that the institution “must offer career counseling that assists students . . . to understand the relationship between self-knowledge and career choice through assessment of interests, competencies, values, experience, personal characteristics, and desired lifestyles” (CAS Standards 2009, 126).

• **The Action.** The *University Seminar* curriculum will insert a component on the analysis of career options. If students have not yet taken them before or immediately after New Student Orientation, students will be asked to complete assessment instruments available

from Career Services, such as the System of Integrated Guidance and Information (Sigi3), Strong Interest Inventory, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the NEO (Neuroticism-Extroversion-Openness) - Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI, Costa and McCrae 1992, 2004), and the Self-Efficacy Inventory (SEI, Haycock, et al. 1998). To synthesize results, students will be assigned a writing exercise based on an analysis of career opportunities related to their assessment results. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the writing assignment will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. Ultimately, this writing assignment will, together with results of the interest as well as career-readiness inventories, be added to a student's electronic portfolio.

Action I.B.2.: Students will explore qualities needed to be successful in a particular career through mentoring relationships with faculty, staff, and / or alumni, informational interviews, and job shadowing.

Outcome I.B.: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.B.2. Students will explore qualities needed to be successful in a particular career through mentoring relationships with faculty, staff, and / or alumni, informational interviews, and job shadowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mentors</i> to assist with the development of relationships with faculty, staff, and alumni • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to link students with alumni contacts • <i>Career Counselors</i> to help identify informational interviewing and job shadowing opportunities • <i>University Seminar faculty</i> to assign a reflective writing piece about information gleaned from exploration activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio • Alumni databases • Bobcat Career Contacts database – Parents of current students and employers who recruit on campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates and survey results regarding mentoring activities • Rubric for sample of reflective writing pieces on exploration activities

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** The Texas State Freshman Survey (2009) shows that three-fifths of freshmen lacked confidence in their abilities to clarify their educational and career goals. The Texas State *Mentoring Program Statistics* (2006-2009) show that very few students – less than 0.5% of the overall student population and less than 5% of all freshmen – have been participating in the mentoring program. And results of the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*, given to Texas State students in 2001 and 2002, showed that a significantly lower percentage of freshmen, compared to the national average, have had conversations about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** The review of literature and best practices revealed that several functions of mentoring can be directed at the exploration of qualities needed to be successful in a particular career – these activities relate to “exploration of potential,” and “only continued exploration of potential will allow mentees to discover what their competencies really are” (Norman H. Cohen 1995, 95). Results of mentoring include referrals to others within the professional network of the mentor and identifying activities to prepare the mentee for a career. (See, for example, Norman H. Cohen 1995.) Gore and Metz (2008,

106) emphasize that advisors should “encourage students to explore their tentative academic or career choice by interviewing a faculty member or job incumbent; by promoting participation in academic or career-related professional organizations, honor societies, or service organizations; or by informing students of relevant internships, practicum opportunities, or service learning experiences.”

• **The Action.** The *Mentoring Program* – which will be expanded as part of this plan – will enable faculty, staff, and peer mentors to help students develop relationships with (other) faculty, staff, and alumni of Texas State. Freshmen will be matched with mentors based on their expressed academic and career goals. The (newly created) *College Faculty Liaisons* will provide contacts of alumni (who will be available for informational interviews as well as help facilitating job shadowing) to students. The two (new) *PACE Career Counselors*, in collaboration with Career Services at Texas State, will also help arrange job shadowing opportunities and / or informational interviews with professionals in the fields that students are considering. The *University Seminar* course will assign students to write a reflective paper about information gleaned from the various exploration activities, including meetings with mentors, alumni, and / or *Career Counselors*. This reflective paper will focus on qualities needed to be successful in a particular career path. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the reflective writing piece will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. Ultimately, students will include this reflective paper in the electronic portfolio.

Action I.B.3.: Students will develop professional presentation / image and communication skills for application to future education / experiential activities.

Outcome I.B.: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.B.3. Students will develop professional presentation / image and communication skills for application to future education / experiential activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to assist with development of application letters, résumés, and portfolios, and to sponsor learning activities on impression management • <i>University Seminar faculty</i> and <i>Advisors</i> to assure that communication documents have been included in portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and survey / quiz results from related workshops • Sample of résumés, correspondence, and portfolio content

• **The Action.** The (new PACE) *Career Counselors* and *College Faculty Liaisons* will organize sessions for students to learn professional presentation skills, professional image skills, and professional communication skills needed for applications to future educational opportunities and / or to experiential activities. In advising sessions, *Career Counselors* will re-emphasize such skills on a more personal basis and discuss application letters, résumés, and portfolios. With the help of *PACE Career Counselors*, *College Faculty Liaisons*, and faculty mentors, the enhanced *University Seminar* course will require students to design a personal résumé and write sample application / correspondence letters. Rubrics detailing performance levels and criteria for the personal résumé and correspondence will be given to

students to use as a reference and for self assessment. *Academic Advisors* and *University Seminar* faculty will assure that communication documents as well as a current résumé will be included in the students’ electronic portfolios.

Outcome I.C.: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.

Action I.C.1.: Students will chart a career pathway consistent with their interests, abilities, and values.

Outcome I.C.: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.C.1. Students will chart a career pathway consistent with their interests, abilities, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign exercise on charting a career pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubric for sample of Career Pathway Charts

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** Results of the Texas State *Alumni Survey* (2006-2009) showed a need for additional guidance in career planning. Results of the *Career Services’ Employer Survey*, given to Texas State students during the academic year 2008-2009, showed the necessity to increase students’ knowledge of personal and career goals. Results of the *CIRP Freshman Survey*, given at Texas State in 2007, indicated a need to aid students in choosing appropriate career pathways. Observations in Texas State student *Focus Groups* (2009) indicated that few students clearly grasp the concepts involved in career planning; students also lack the ability to initiate the process of establishing career pathways, and they have a limited understanding of how to effectively set goals with respect to careers.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** Authors such as Gore and Metz (2008) as well as Lent (2005) discuss best practices of career and life planning, which include finding and charting career pathways that are consistent with students’ interests. Advisors should assist students in developing realistic career expectations and include “self-referent thought” in charting career pathways (see, for example, Lent 2005). Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot (2005, 9) point out that “more often, initial career goals are changed because students discover that the career they wanted is not really suited to their interests, or their performance in the major that would prepare them for their initial career choice is inadequate (or both). Thus, successful first-year students must begin to achieve clarity about their career goals.”

• ***The Action.*** After the completion of the aforementioned actions – advising, completion of self-assessment and career readiness inventories, exercises, other *University Seminar* assignments, informational interviews, and / or job shadowing – students will chart a career pathway as an assignment in the revised *University Seminar* course. This career pathway will be consistent with students’ interests, abilities, and values. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the career pathway chart will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. The document will be included in the electronic portfolio.

Action I.C.2.: Students will participate in experiential learning activities such as volunteering, job shadowing, or part-time jobs to help design an appropriate educational and career path.

Outcome I.C: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.C.2. Students will participate in experiential learning activities such as volunteering, job shadowing, or part-time jobs to help design an appropriate educational and career path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>College Faculty Liaisons, Academic Advisors, and Career Counselors</i> to help identify appropriate experiential opportunities • Faculty in Academic Departments / Schools / Colleges to arrange experiential learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in experiential learning • Sample of self-generated reports from experiential learning

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** Results of the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*, given to Texas State students in 2001 and 2002, showed that a significantly lower percentage of Texas State students, compared to the national average, participates in co-curricular activities six or more hours a week. Similarly, fewer Texas State students participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** Experiential learning activities provide students first-hand experience in the “real-world” environment. Applying Kolb’s (1984) classic 4-stage experiential learning cycle, including experiencing, reflecting, abstract conceptualizing, and experimenting, suggests that active participation accompanied by educational structure can produce positive learning outcomes. Smith (2005, 205) concludes that experiential learning enables students “to do some reality testing with regard to their interests, work values, and skills. Moreover, experiential learning offers students the opportunity to enhance their self-concept and develop a more stable vocational identity – processes valued by most adult and career-development theories.” Students with experiential learning experiences “are more likely to obtain positions related to their major than those who have no experience” (ibid., 209).

• **The Action.** To gain insight into appropriate educational and career paths, students will be encouraged to participate in organized volunteer work, job shadowing opportunities, or part-time jobs, reflect on their experience, and conceptualize learning to the development of their career pathway. *College Faculty Liaisons, Academic Advisors, Career Counselors*, and faculty from academic units will encourage students and help them identify and arrange appropriate experiential opportunities. Although some of these activities may occur in the first semester, most will take place during the second half of the freshmen year.

Goal II: To assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan

Outcome II.A.: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.

Action II.A.1.: Students will analyze educational programs based on their career assessment results.

Outcome II.A.: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.A.1. Students will analyze educational programs based on their career assessment results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide information on various educational programs • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make assessments available • <i>Academic Advisors, Mentors, and College Faculty Liaisons</i> to guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in the portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigi3, <i>Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI,</i> and other assessments • Electronic advising records • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Review random sample of inventory results in student portfolios

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** Observations in Texas State student *Focus Groups* (2009) indicated that few students clearly grasp the concepts involved in academic and career planning. Students also lack the ability to initiate the process of establishing academic and career pathways, and they have a limited understanding of how to effectively set goals with respect to careers. Results of the Texas State *Alumni Survey* (2006-2009) suggested room for improvement in academic planning. Results of the *Career Services’ Employer Survey* (2008-2009) showed the necessity to increase students’ knowledge of personal and career goals. The Texas State *Mentoring Program* statistics showed that students who participated in the *Mentoring Program* stayed in school and had higher GPAs than their non-mentored counterparts; however, very few students have been participating in the *Mentoring Program* so far.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** The review of literature and best practices revealed that several functions of mentoring can be directed at self assessment, academic major selection, and selection of courses and / or degree plans – these activities relate to “exploration of potential,” and “only continued exploration of potential will allow mentees to discover what their competencies really are” (Norman H. Cohen 1995, 95). Harkness (1997, 202) points out that students can and should discover what they are good at and can get paid for it.

• **The Action.** The proposed action focuses on the analysis – by the students – of educational programs, based on the students’ career assessment results. To support this endeavor, Career Services will make career-related inventories available to the students and help students interpret the results. While *Academic Advisors* will provide information on various educational programs, *Career Counselors*, mentors, and *College Faculty Liaisons*

will guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students in aligning options with their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in the electronic portfolio. A rubric detailing criteria and performance levels for the reflective statements will be given to students to use as a reference and for self assessment. Students and advisors will keep records of all advising sessions.

Action II.A.2.: Students will define the most appropriate educational pathway based on their academic status, abilities, and interests.

Outcome II.A.: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.A.2. Students will define the most appropriate educational pathway based on their academic status, abilities, and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide degree requirements • <i>Academic Advisors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to provide estimation of scheduling of required courses • <i>Academic Advisors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to provide updates on educational programs • <i>Academic Advisors</i> discuss options with students and assist students in making appropriate choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sample of advising records

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** Results of the *CIRP Freshman Survey*, given to Texas State students in 2007, indicated a need to aid students in choosing appropriate academic and career pathways. In the Texas State *Freshman Survey* (2009), three-fifths of freshmen stated that they lacked confidence in their abilities to clarify their educational (and career) goals.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** The review of literature and best practices showed that advisors should help “students understand and articulate their interests and find academic and career paths that might be congruent with those interests” (Gore and Metz 2008, 105; see also Holland 1997). Gore and Metz (2008, 105) state that advisors should help “students understand and articulate their interests and find academic . . . paths that might be congruent with those interests.”

• **The Action.** The proposed action focuses on students’ defining the most appropriate educational pathway, based on their academic status, abilities, and interests. To do so, *Academic Advisors* will provide up-to-date information on degree requirements and on educational programs in general. Furthermore, *Academic Advisors* and *College Faculty Liaisons* will collaborate in estimating the number of students for courses and in scheduling courses. *Academic Advisors* will discuss options with the students and assist them in making appropriate choices. The proposed reduction of the student-advisor ratio will allow students to receive more time for personalized advising. Students as well as *Academic Advisors* will keep records of advising sessions and the resulting decisions on educational pathways.

Outcome II.B.: Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion.

Action II.B.1.: Students will assess options and electives to enhance educational program based on their goals.

Outcome II.B.: Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.B.1. Students will assess options and electives to enhance educational program based on their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide guidance in selection of options and electives • <i>Mentoring</i> to assist with assessment of options and electives • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> and <i>Academic Advisors</i> collaborate to provide information and updates on options and electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in advising sessions • Survey random sample of students regarding advising experiences, including effectiveness

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** The results of the *ACT Survey of Academic Advising*, given to Texas State students in 2000, suggest the need for an action plan to strengthen advisor-advisee relationships and increase frequency of contacts.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** Among the student learning and development outcome domains and their related dimensions described in the CAS Standards (2009, 38) are students employing critical thinking in the selection of their major and in their course selection. Several of the six mentoring functions discussed by Cohen (1995, 3) can and should be directed at the selection of courses. Most of the best advising programs in the nation have a strong focus on students assessing options and electives that match their personal goals; such focus is often emphasized in advising syllabi (NACADA 2007a and Appleby 2008).

• ***The Action.*** The proposed action focuses on students assessing their options and available electives, so they can enhance their educational program according to their personal goals. While advisors provide guidance in selecting options and electives, and while mentors assist with the assessment of options and electives from a practical perspective, students are being enabled to match their personal goals to options and electives. *College Faculty Liaisons* and *Academic Advisors* will collaborate in providing information and updates on options and electives, so students can consider up-to-date information. Students (taking an appropriate amount of advising time) as well as advisors will keep records on the assessment of options and electives.

Action II.B.2.: Students will develop a sequence for taking courses to efficiently complete educational program.

Outcome II.B.: Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.B.2. Students will develop a sequence for taking courses to efficiently complete educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide sample sequences and assist students with sequencing classes • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> and <i>Academic Advisors</i> collaborate to provide updated information on registration requirements and scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample of advising records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Completion of degree according to schedule o Proper sequencing • Participation rates in advising sessions

• **Institutional Need to Support the Action.** Findings of the *Academic Advising Survey* at Texas State (2007-2009) substantiate a need for more personalized attention in the advising process as well as a need for improved education related to the charting of courses for program completion. The results of the Texas State *Academic Advisement Survey* (2000) showed the need for more communication related to academic major requirements as well as the need for more enhanced instruction pertaining to academic planning and to the charting of courses for program completion. In addition, the Texas State *Freshman Survey* (2009) showed that three-fifths of freshmen lacked confidence in their abilities to develop and implement an educational plan.

• **Literature to Support the Action.** Among the best advising practices is the encouragement and enabling of students to develop a sequence of courses, so they can efficiently complete their educational programs. Advising curricula (as explicated in advising syllabi) include, among other things, the goal of students selecting academic courses (NACADA 2007a, 6).

• **The Action.** To prepare students for developing their sequence of courses, *Academic Advisors* will provide students with sample sequences, with assistance from the *Academic Advisors*, students will develop a personalized sequence for taking courses to efficiently complete the educational program. *College Faculty Liaisons* and *Academic Advisors* will collaboratively provide updated information to the students regarding registration requirements and scheduling. Students as well as advisors keep records of the advising sessions and of the sequence for taking courses.

Outcome II.C.: Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.

Action II.C.1.: Students will be acquainted with and participate in professional organizations directly related to their educational and career focus.

Outcome II.C.: Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.C.1. Students will be acquainted with and participate in professional organizations directly related to their educational and career focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Department faculty, Academic Advisors, Mentors, and Campus Activities and Student Organizations Associate Director</i> to make lists of major-related organizations available and encourage participation • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to sponsor College organization fairs and related information sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic transcript of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** Results of the CIRP *Freshman Survey* (2007) indicate a need to guide student involvement in valuable co-curricular activities and organizations early in their collegiate years. Similarly, the Texas State *Freshman Survey* (2009) showed a lack of confidence in students' ability to choose university-sponsored activities that further career goals. Results of the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*, given to Texas State students in 2001 and 2002, showed that a significantly lower percentage of Texas State students, compared to the national average, reported participating in co-curricular activities six or more hours a week.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** The CAS Standards (2009) list as best practices the students' seeking of opportunities for involvement in co-curricular activities. Many best practices include that students must be encouraged to pursue experiential learning opportunities, and Smith (2005, 205) concludes that experiential learning enables students "to do some reality testing with regard to their interests, work values, and skills. Moreover, experiential learning offers students the opportunity to enhance their self-concept and develop a more stable vocational identity – processes valued by most adult and career-development theories." Students with experiential learning experiences "are more likely to obtain positions related to their major than those who have no experience" (ibid., 209). Advising curricula (as explicated in advising syllabi) include, among other things, the goal of students' learning "the meaning, value, and interrelationship of the institution's curriculum and co-curriculum" (NACADA 2007a, 6).

• ***The Action.*** Co-curricular experiential engagement enables students to solidify their course-related studies. Co-curricular experiential learning activities include active participation in professional organizations. The proposed action focuses on (1) providing information about professional organizations that directly relate to a specific educational and career focus and on (2) students' becoming active in such organizations. Academic departments, *Academic Advisors*, mentors, and Student Affairs will create listings with information about

professional organizations, and / or encourage and help students to identify, and become active in, one or more such organization. To support this process, *College Faculty Liaisons* will organize and sponsor organization fairs and information sessions related to professional organizations. Students who are becoming active in professional organizations may be supported and mentored by faculty members in the same organizations. Student participation is electronically tracked, and students can thus create an electronic co-curricular transcript.

Action II.C.2.: Students will be acquainted with and participate in organizations / activities that will develop qualities and skills applicable to their educational and career goals as well as interests.

Outcome II.C.: Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.C.2. Students will be acquainted with and participate in organizations / activities that will develop qualities and skills applicable to their educational and career goals as well as interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Campus Activities</i> and Student <i>Organizations Associate Director</i> to help connect students with appropriate activities • <i>Mentors</i> to connect students with activities and service opportunities to develop personal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bobcat Interest Inventory • Electronic transcript of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness

• ***Institutional Need to Support the Action.*** Findings of the Academic Advising Survey at Texas State (2007-2009) substantiate a need for the incorporation of co-curricular activities to enhance educational and career goals. Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), given to Texas State students in 2001 and 2002, showed that a significantly lower percentage of freshmen, compared to the national average, have had conversations about career plans with a faculty member or advisor. They also showed that fewer Texas State students participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.

• ***Literature to Support the Action.*** The review of literature and best practices revealed that results of mentoring include referrals to others within the professional network of the mentor identifying co-curricular activities to prepare the mentee for a career. (See, for example, Cohen 1995.) Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the CAS Standards (2009) list as best practices the students' seeking of opportunities for involvement in co-curricular activities. Gore and Metz (2008, 106) emphasize that advisors should "encourage students to explore their tentative academic or career choice by interviewing a faculty member or job incumbent; by promoting participation in academic or career-related professional organizations, honor societies, or service organizations; or by informing students of relevant internships, practicum opportunities, or service learning experiences."

• ***The Action.*** In order for students to become acquainted with, and active in, organizations and activities that will develop qualities and skills applicable to their educational and career goals as well as interests, Student Affairs at Texas State will help students to

connect with appropriate activities in a more personalized manner. Activity offerings will be advertised via various media and personalized for very specific educational and career paths. Most importantly, faculty and staff mentors will use their professional networks to connect students with co-curricular experiential learning activities and personalized service opportunities so they can learn and develop professional skills. Such referrals will be based on the results of interest inventories that students will have taken. Students will actively pursue co-curricular activities, and Student Affairs will keep attendance records of on-campus events and activities.

QEP Initiatives

Several initiatives are needed to implement the QEP and enable students to accomplish the actions described above. The four key initiatives are described below. An elaboration on the initiative details will be included in the upcoming sections on organization, structure, and resources.

Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) Center. The leadership, development, and services needed for the overall implementation of the QEP emanate from the newly created PACE Center. The PACE Center – a one-stop advising, career counseling, and mentoring location for freshmen – will provide academic advising and career counseling, connect students with academic and career planning resources, and offer mentoring opportunities with faculty, staff, and peers, as well as coordinate other campus-wide efforts related to the QEP. The PACE Center will complement the existing eight College Advising Centers, which will continue to provide advising services to students with more than 30 semester hours.

The initial contact between the PACE center and all freshmen will occur shortly after their admission to Texas State. Students will be encouraged to complete a career readiness inventory before their first (required) in-person contact – the initial orientation / advising session before classes start. In order to facilitate learning in the advising process through the PACE Center, advisors will reach out to students to begin a personal exploration process within the portfolio framework. All students will be engaged by their *Academic Advisors* in workshops relating to the actions outlined above. Students will also meet with their advisors to review their portfolios and course plan progress. In addition, students will be strongly encouraged to use the Career Services resources beyond their *University Seminar* course (US 1100) requirement. Students will also participate in the *Mentoring Program*, i.e., to be matched with one or more faculty / staff / peer mentors.

University Seminar Course (US 1100). Texas State freshmen are currently required to enroll in University Seminar, a one-credit, semester-long course conducted in a small class environment. The aim of *University Seminar* is to introduce students to the nature and aims of university education, with special emphasis on the value of broad learning. To obtain the desired learning proposed in the QEP, a portion of the *University Seminar* curriculum will be enhanced to encourage Personalized Academic and Career Exploration through related instruction, activities, and guidance. Students will provide evidence of their academic and career exploration in an electronic portfolio, which they will be able to retain and expand as they progress through their university education.

To enhance student learning and allow for more personalized attention, the ratio of students to instructor will be reduced from the current figure of 30 to 1 to a ratio of 20 to 1. In addition, the number of first-call-classrooms will be increased from the present number of two to at least five, to allow for classroom space for the additional sections of this course.

To enable the actions outlined above, the *University Seminar* curriculum will be enhanced so that the number of required academic and career exploration sessions will be increased from what is currently one-fifteenth of the course to at least one-third. *University Seminar* faculty in cooperation with PACE staff will pursue a series of career-related assignments, exercises, and activities that will encourage student self-analysis and result in documentation to be included in their electronic portfolios. Common topics to be addressed in the *University Seminar* curriculum will include career readiness, self-awareness and self-assessment, decision-making strategies, career exploration through experiential learning and co-curricular activities, education planning and decision making, charting career and educational pathways and degree plans, and professional presentation / image and communication skills.

College Faculty Liaisons. Faculty representatives from each academic college on campus will be appointed and charged with assisting students in exploring academic and career pathways. Liaisons, supported by a graduate assistant, will coordinate exploration activities appropriate to their colleges, schools, and departments, such as majors fairs, student and professional organization exhibitions, alumni and professional networking, and career panels / expositions. *Liaisons* will also help in recruiting faculty mentors. Finally, *Liaisons* will organize events and resources needed to ensure a smooth transition from the PACE Center to the college's academic advising office.

Enhanced Technology. Although Texas State currently provides state-of-the-art technology to the campus community, additional technology applications are essential to the long-term success of the QEP. Enhanced student record keeping software that ties into the recently acquired student information system is essential for the smooth transmission of (academic as well as career) advising and mentoring records. An electronic portfolio is needed to provide a repository of student work to illustrate the growth of the individual student and the success of the QEP. Likewise, enhanced web materials will be needed to provide additional resources and to convey the activities of the other initiatives. Finally, new scheduling software will allow students to make appointments over the internet. All of these software systems allow personalization and interactivity.

Timing of Actions within Students' Freshman Year

The timing of the proposed actions with the students' freshman year cannot be exactly determined, as it largely depends on whether students take the *University Seminar* course during their first or during their second freshman semester. All other services and proposed actions are available throughout the year and can be accessed / completed at any time.

Administrative Organization and Professional Development

Two new administrative positions will be created to oversee the actions and initiatives of the plan. A *Dean of Advising* and an *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator* will provide

the leadership needed to implement the elements of the plan, analyze formative assessment results, and amend the plan as necessary to promote achievement of the goals and outcomes. The *Dean of Advising* and the *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator* will also manage the PACE Center advising staff, coordinate PACE activities from all divisions and organize related professional development. In addition, the current *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)*, currently reporting to the Dean of the University College, will start reporting to the new Dean of Advising with the implementation of this QEP; this *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* will provide leadership in revising the *University Seminar* curriculum and oversee the implementation of the revised curriculum.

Professional development of faculty and staff will be essential to the continuous improvement of the PACE process through ongoing assessment, development, and training. *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, mentors, and staff from Student Affairs and other student support services will need continual coordination, updating, and inspiration. Likewise, faculty mentors, *University Seminar* instructors, *College Faculty Liaisons*, and academic program coordinators will need ongoing coordination, updating, and inspiration. Each Academic Advisor in the PACE Center will be assigned several sections of *University Seminar* and will coordinate activities with the corresponding instructor; thus, the *Academic Advisors* will work closely with the *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* to communicate advising-related matters in the University Seminar. The PACE Center's *Dean of Advising*, the *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator*, and the *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* will be expected to provide leadership in the initiation and implementation of the professional development opportunities. Offering support in these professional development efforts will be the Office of Professional Development and the Office of Academic Development and Assessment. Professional development will also be enhanced through participation in state and national organizations and activities pertaining to first-year experiences as well as academic and career planning.

The Envisioned Impact of the Fully Implemented QEP

Once fully implemented, academic advising for freshmen will take place at the PACE Center; sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be advised in the eight College Advising Centers. After the initial orientation, at which freshmen will first learn about PACE and its services, academic advising will be integrated with mentoring, career counseling, and the *University Seminar* course; this collaborative approach will ensure that materials and approaches will be reinforced to enhance student learning. There will be effective coordination between PACE and the eight College Advising Centers. A new software package will assure unified record keeping; *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, mentors, faculty, and staff will be able to access the files from any location / from any computer with an internet connection. Advising appointments will be made online. Walk-ins will still be possible. The ratio of students to advisor will be the NACADA-recommended 300 to 1, which will allow for more advising time and, thus, more personalized services.

Both academic advising and career counseling will then be based on a student learning approach. Academic advising and career counseling will be integrated with each other and will be based on self-assessment and / or self-reflection. A new electronic portfolio system

will enable students to collect and store their academic and career exploration experiences to use in future personal and professional presentations. Students will chart their envisioned career pathways as well as their academic degree plans.

Career planning and exploration is introduced to incoming students and to the parents of incoming students during summer orientation. During the freshman year, the vast majority of freshmen will visit with one of the *Career Counselors*, and they will complete several career-related assignments for their *University Seminar* courses. Many freshmen will also participate in special events organized by Career Services, *College Faculty Liaisons*, and others. There will be systematic, intentional efforts to program career activities specifically targeted at the needs of freshmen.

The curriculum of the first-year *University Seminar* course (US 1100) will include an increased portion of the course (at least one-third) related to academic and / or career exploration. The *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* and the *University Seminar* instructors will work in collaboration with Academic Advisors and Career Counselors as well as with the *Mentoring Coordinator*. One *Academic Advisor* will be a designated liaison to *University Seminar* and maintain good communication between *Academic Advisors*, the *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)*, and *University Seminar* instructors.

The College Faculty Liaisons will organize career exploration activities in their college and / or departments. There will be a systematic approach to departmental or college-wide career exploration activities, and the faculty and staff in all colleges and departments will encourage their students to participate in experiential learning activities, such as co-curricular on-campus activities, informational interviews, or job shadowing. Those activities will be based on the self-assessments completed by the students.

The *Mentoring Program* at Texas State will be expanded and will offer faculty, staff, and peer mentoring to all freshmen. A large percentage of freshmen will use those mentoring services, and the mentoring focus will not only be on study skills and the use of resources on campus, but also on academic and career exploration.

Thus, Texas State will make a coordinated effort to assist students with personalized academic and career exploration. Freshmen will be exploring and learning about themselves, about the future work world, and about educational opportunities. They will be enabled to chart desired career pathways and degree plans, choose co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities, as well as join professional organizations. Freshmen will be in a personalized learning environment with instructors, *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, and mentors, and will also develop professional presentation and communication skills. A student learning approach will coordinate all efforts and provide a framework for enhancing students' academic and career exploration.

The actions outlined in this chapter are only the most essential actions, which will be supplemented as the QEP is being implemented. For example, the University anticipates offering workshops and advising sessions in residence halls, exploring specific activities that can be targeted for classes or groups of students / special interest groups, working more closely with service learning efforts, offering guidance with financial planning, offering advice and sessions on foreign language acquisition, encouraging engagement in the University

Honors program, and more. Many initiatives will also involve learning communities in the residence halls that are specifically for freshmen. (Texas State requires all freshmen to live on campus.)

When implemented, the QEP will change the culture of the freshman class and, over time, the culture of our campus. Our students will be more purposeful, more confident, more competent, and – ultimately – more successful. At the same time, the collaborative efforts to personalize the attention paid to each student will extend Texas State's long-held reputation as a concerned and caring institution of higher learning.

VII. Timeline

In addition to the main activities directed at achieving the student learning outcomes, the timeline includes a schedule for the hiring and training of necessary personnel, internal planning stages, ongoing professional development, formative assessment, modifications to the plan, and summative assessment. Details regarding the timeline for budgetary expenditures are included in Section IX: Resources of this report. (See page 55.)

Date	Action
Spring 2010	On-site review of Quality Enhancement Plan
Fall 2010	Approval of Quality Enhancement Plan and SACS Reaffirmation
Spring 2011	Search for QEP <i>Dean of Advising</i> and <i>Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator</i>
Summer 2011	Hire QEP <i>Dean of Advising</i> and <i>Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator</i> Familiarize <i>Dean of Advising</i> and <i>Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator</i> to QEP goals and outcomes
Academic Year 2011-2012	Move <i>Assistant Dean (University Seminar)</i> from University College to PACE Center Establish detailed long-range plan for development and implementation Establish the PACE Council (See page 48.) Gather additional baseline data on QEP components
Fall 2011	Initiate professional development activities for groups with QEP involvement Pilot self-assessment inventories and portfolio software Structure curriculum and educational units by <i>University Seminar</i> Develop information literacy components by library Develop and test assessment instruments (rubrics, survey, pre- and post-tests)
Spring 2012	Prepare for implementation of QEP components Hire and train PACE Center <i>Academic Advisors</i> , <i>Career Counselors</i> , <i>Mentoring Coordinator</i> , and <i>Technical Support Specialist</i> Pilot educational units in <i>University Seminar</i> Pilot assessments (rubrics, surveys, pre- and post-tests)
Summer 2012	Involve incoming class of 2012 with PACE Center advising, mentoring, and career counseling staff Appoint and develop <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> and the graduate assistants Plan college QEP activities and materials by college liaisons
Academic Year 2012-2013	Expand PACE Council involvement Fully implement QEP actions Initiate PACE activities within colleges by faculty liaisons Implement and assess professional development Survey students and conduct focus groups as part of assessment plan Gather first year formative assessment data on all QEP components

Date	Action
Fall 2012	Move PACE Center to permanent facilities in the Undergraduate Academic Center upon building completion
Academic Year 2013-2014	Transition first class from PACE Center to College Advising Centers Re-evaluate and revise plan, as necessary, based on formative assessment results Train personnel on updated plans Implement modified plan Survey PACE service providers as part of assessment plan Gather second year formative assessment data
Academic Year 2014-2015	Re-evaluate and revise plan, as necessary, based on formative assessment results Train personnel on updated plans Implement modified plan Survey students and conduct focus groups as part of assessment plan Gather third year formative assessment data
Academic Year 2015-2016	Revise plan as necessary based on formative assessment results Train personnel on updated plans Implement modified plan Survey service providers as part of assessment plan Gather fourth year ongoing and summative assessment data
Fall 2015	Prepare QEP Impact Report
Spring 2016	Submit QEP Impact Report

VIII. Organizational Structure

The proposed Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will require the sustained, coordinated efforts of faculty, staff, and students throughout campus. To accomplish the goals of the QEP, a structure providing the leadership and personnel, along with reporting lines and activities, has been established.

PACE Leadership

To provide ongoing leadership for the implementation and sustainability of the PACE plan, two key organizational structures will be institutionalized. The PACE administration and PACE Council will bring key players together, discuss issues relevant to the success of PACE, establish goals, and develop strategies for achieving the common goals.

PACE Administration. A *Dean of Advising* will be hired and report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. This person will also serve as the leader of the PACE plan and PACE Center. The Dean of Advising along with two *Assistant Deans* will oversee all activities outlined in the QEP, including the implementation of actions, organization and development of staffing, use of resources, and assessment of the PACE plan. Personnel from the PACE Center will also directly report to the *Dean of Advising* on activities pertaining to the PACE initiative. Personnel from other divisions supporting the PACE plan will report to the Dean of Advising for PACE activities. The PACE administration will receive suggestions and support from a PACE Council.

PACE Council. A representative PACE Council will be founded to provide guidance and support in achieving the PACE goals. Members, including faculty, staff, students, and representatives of the key functions involved in PACE, will serve as a steering committee. The PACE administration will provide leadership and convene meetings of the PACE Council. By reviewing assessment data, offering suggestions, and providing leadership, the PACE Council will provide an effective feedback loop for continuous improvement. Under the leadership of the PACE Council, a PACE Assessment committee will be formed to carry out the assessment activities of the QEP.

PACE Organization

The organizational structure is described for each initiative of the PACE plan. Faculty and staff from each division will be essential to the continued success of the Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) plan, with the most direct involvement coming from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Information Technology. The following organization chart depicts the personnel directly involved in the implementation and delivery of the QEP:

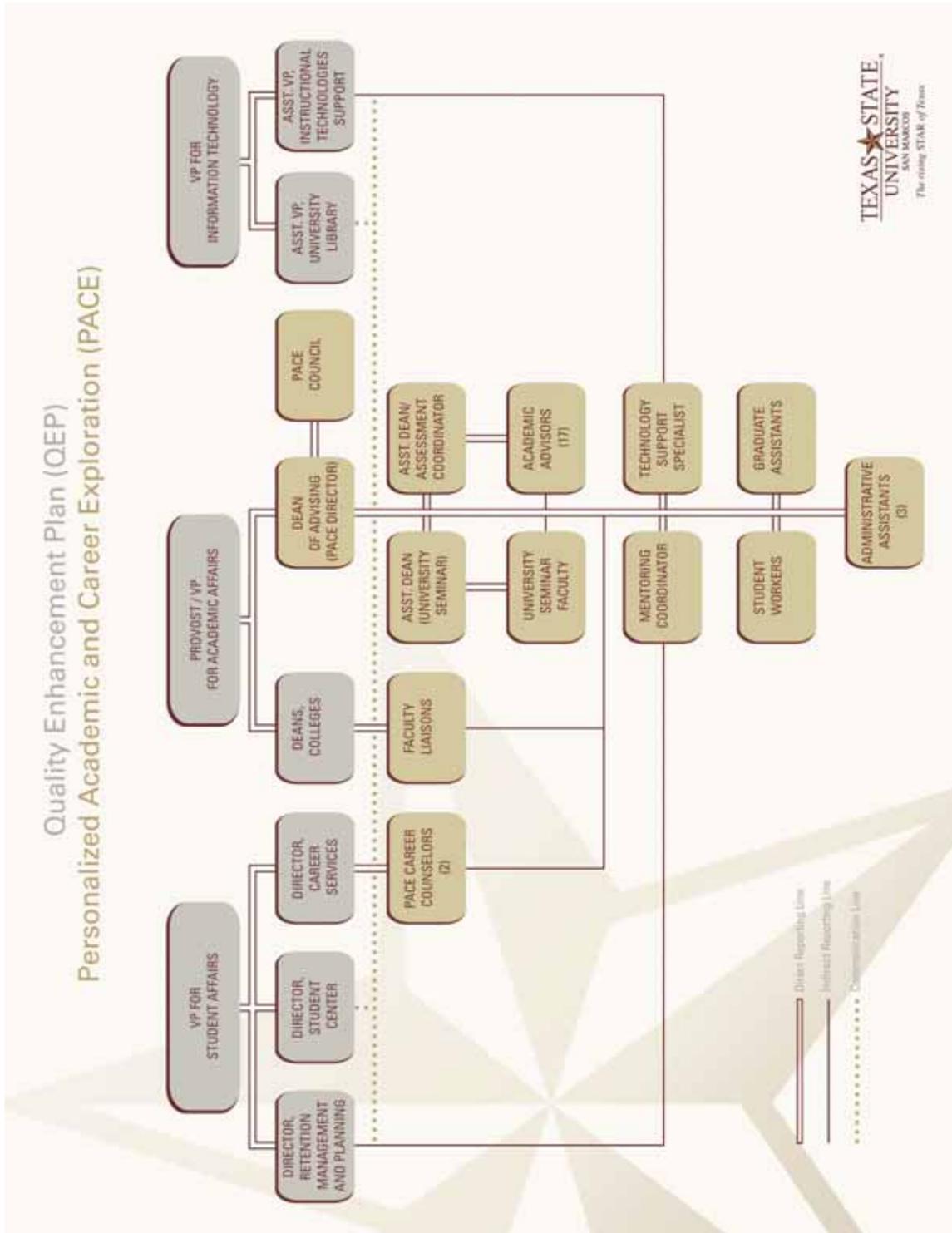


Figure: VIII.1: PACE Organization Chart

PACE Center

The Division of Academic Affairs provides leadership for the PACE initiative. The newly created PACE Center staffing, along with faculty from the seven colleges with faculty and the University College, serve as the core.

PACE Center Staff. To support the PACE Center efforts, an *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator*, three *Administrative Assistants*, a *Technical Support Specialist*, *Graduate Assistants*, and *Student Workers* will be hired. The *Assistant Dean* of University College, staff, and corresponding resources currently responsible for University Seminar will be re-assigned to the PACE Center. In addition to the support team, the *Dean of Advising* will hire a staff of 14 new *Academic Advisors* who, along with three of the existing University College Academic Advisors, will become the 17-member PACE *Academic Advisors*. (See Appendix X for examples of key PACE Center Job Descriptions on page 93.)

Academic Advisors. Academic advising services will be provided to all freshmen (estimated to be approximately 5,000 at the onset of the 2012-2013 academic year) at a desired ratio of 1 to 300. (See Appendix X for the Academic Advisor Job Description on page 95.) Several PACE *Academic Advisors* will be trained on requirements and expectations of the programs and policies in specific colleges with faculty and departments. For example, if there are approximately 600 freshmen with declared majors in Education, two advisors would be specialized in advising the Education freshmen. Remaining advisors would be trained in assisting freshmen with an “undeclared” major and expected to lead individual and group exploratory activities. All advisors would be familiar with various majors on campus and aid students, individually and collectively, in researching academic and career options regardless of students’ original declaration. PACE Center *Academic Advisors* will be responsible for general academic advising duties encouraging student success as well as the following actions specific to the QEP:

- discussing academic and career options associated with individual interests, values, personality type, and skills,
- providing students with information on various educational programs,
- giving degree requirements,
- discussing options with students and assisting students in making appropriate choices,
- providing guidance in selection of degree options and electives, and
- offering sample sequences and assisting students with sequencing classes.

Academic Advisors will also work with other campus personnel, including the *Mentoring Coordinator*, *Career Counselors*, and *College Faculty Liaisons* to

- provide estimation of scheduling of required courses,
- provide updates on educational programs, options, and electives,
- help identify appropriate experiential opportunities,

- guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in the portfolio,
- collaborate to provide updated information on registration requirements and scheduling,
- make lists of major-related organizations available and encourage participation,
- sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities, and assist with the development of application letters, résumés, and portfolios, and sponsor learning activities on impression management.

Mentoring Coordinator. A newly created staff position, *Mentoring Coordinator*, assigned to the PACE initiative, will connect new students with mentors, activities, and service opportunities to develop personal and professional skills and assist in the development of relationships with faculty, staff, and peers. (See Appendix X for the *Mentoring Coordinator* Job Description on page 97.) Housed in the PACE Center, the *Mentoring Coordinator* will expand services currently offered through the Mentoring Program and provide them to freshmen in a more visible setting. Meanwhile, the existing Mentoring Program can refocus on sophomores and upperclassmen. The PACE *Mentoring Coordinator* will also work with *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, and *College Faculty Liaisons* to guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and assist in monitoring the inclusion of reflective statements in the portfolio as well as list major-related organizations available and encourage participation. The *Mentoring Coordinator* will collaborate with the Campus Activities and Student Organizations office to provide opportunities for engagement between the faculty, staff, or peer mentors and mentees.

PACE Center Support from Student Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs provides a vibrant and diverse assortment of programs, services, and opportunities for student success. Programs and staff from Career Services and the Student Center have direct impact on the success of the QEP.

Career Services. Two new *Career Counselors* will be hired and dedicated to the PACE initiative while reporting to the existing Career Services office. (See Appendix X for the *Career Counselor* Job Description on page 96.) The PACE *Career Counselors*, while housed in the PACE Center, will assist students with their personalized career planning efforts, make assessment inventories and career planning resources available, and help identify informational interviewing and job shadowing opportunities. In addition, *Career Counselors*, working in conjunction with the *College Faculty Liaisons* will

- sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities,
- help identify appropriate experiential opportunities, including informational interviewing and job shadowing opportunities, and

- assist students with the development of application letters, résumés, and portfolios, and to sponsor learning activities on impression management.

Student Center. The Associate Director of the Student Center and staff of Campus Activities and Student Organizations currently offer a variety of programs to promote student success through student organizations, Greek organizations, special programs and services, and recognition programs. Opportunities offered through Campus Activities and Student Organizations celebrate diversity, promote retention, and foster leadership, civic engagement, and student development. Through the PACE initiative, freshmen will be encouraged to connect with Campus Activities and Student Organizations and to engage in the appropriate co-curricular activities. Campus Activities and Student Organizations will also support the efforts of *College Faculty Liaisons, Academic Advisors, Career Counselors,* and the *Mentoring Coordinator* in developing lists of major-related organizations and encouraging co-curricular participation.

University Seminar

University Seminar (US 1100), a one-credit, semester course required of all freshmen, will encourage Personalized Academic and Career Exploration through related instruction, activities, and guidance, and provide personalized attention to enrolled students. To enhance the academic and career exploration curriculum, the following infusion of staffing is needed.

Assistant Dean and Faculty. The *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* directs the *University Seminar*, a one-credit semester-long course required of all freshmen. (See Appendix X for the *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)* Job Description on page 95.) The course introduces students to the nature and aims of university education, with special emphasis on the value of broad learning. Instructors, hired from qualified university faculty and staff, will be assigned sections with enrollment of approximately 20 students (down from the existing ratio of 1:30). Several of the QEP actions will be delivered and monitored by *University Seminar* instructors. Through instruction and use of electronic portfolio software, students will be expected to complete assignments on:

- career readiness,
- career scenarios,
- career options based on personal assessments of interests, abilities, and values,
- exploration activities, and
- charting a career pathway.

Assistant Vice President, University Library. The Assistant Vice President, University Library oversees the library staff, who currently collaborate with both students and faculty to integrate information literacy (IL) concepts into class assignments. Such efforts will be modified for application to the academic and career exploration curriculum in the *University Seminar*. Through expanded instruction of information literacy, students will acquire skills for accessing and evaluating academic and career-related information, as they explore their options now and in the future.

College Faculty Liaisons

College Faculty Liaisons, designated from each of the seven colleges with faculty, are charged with assisting students in exploring academic and career pathways and assuring freshmen a smooth transition from the PACE Center to the academic college advising center. (See Appendix X for the *College Faculty Liaison Job Description* on page 98.) In doing so, they will lead a committee of liaisons representing each academic department in the college. The *College Faculty Liaisons* serve to coordinate and sponsor materials, activities, and events that will provide students with an awareness of academic and career options and opportunities within their academic college. Sponsored events could include such things as major fairs, student and professional organization exhibitions, alumni and professional networking, and career expositions. Liaisons will meet regularly, as a group with the PACE leadership, for development and coordination of efforts. Liaisons along with their half time graduate assistants will sponsor college major, career and / or organization fairs and related information sessions as well as link students with alumni contacts. Liaisons will also work with PACE center personnel to

- provide estimation of scheduling of required courses,
- provide updates on educational programs,
- provide information and updates on options and electives,
- sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities,
- help identify appropriate experiential opportunities,
- guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in the portfolio,
- provide updated information on registration requirements and scheduling,
- assist with the development of application letters, résumés and portfolios, and sponsor learning activities on impression management,
- make lists of major-related organizations available and encourage participation, and
- ease transition from PACE Center to college advising centers.

Enhanced Technology

Although Texas State currently provides state-of-the-art technology to the campus community, the addition of technology applications is essential to the long-term success of the QEP. The Division of Information Technology will provide valuable input to the PACE initiative through application of current and extended services.

Instructional Technologies Support Staff. The Instructional Technologies Support staff provides campus-wide training and technical support for academic software applications. The University recently acquired a fully-integrated student information system (SIS). Instructional Technologies Support is currently in the process of selecting a portfolio software appli-

cation for campus-wide use compatible with the new SIS. The portfolio software will become an essential part of the delivery and assessment of the QEP. In particular, students will be expected to retain academic and career self-reflection documents in the portfolio in the *University Seminar*. The repository of students' self-reflective documents will, in turn, become valuable starting points for academic and career advising conversations as well as for the overall assessment of the QEP. Additionally, Instructional Technologies Support staff will provide training, technical support, and assistance for the PACE Center *Technical Support Specialist*.

IX. Resources

The resources necessary to undertake the actions and initiatives of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) consist of human, financial, and physical. Because the Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) initiative involves a new, fully-staffed PACE Center, most resources will consist of new allocations rather than reallocations of existing campus resources. At Texas State, most of the expenditures for the QEP will be paid from the advising fee, rather than solely by appropriations and tuition. At their November 20, 2009 meeting, the Board of Regents, Texas State University System, approved a two-step increase in the Advising Fee from \$60 per student per semester to \$90 per student per semester. (See Appendix XI for the Confirmation Letter from the Chancellor on page 99.) Prior to the Regents decision, the Associated Student Government supported the advising fee revision. During the Regents meeting, the Student Regent forcefully favored the fee revision. This approved increase will fully fund the new expenditures associated with the PACE Center. For the purpose of the QEP, mainly allocation of new funds will be discussed.

Budget and Funding

A realistic budget for the newly allocated QEP funds has been estimated and funding required to cover the expenditures has been reviewed by the President's Cabinet. In Texas, state universities typically fund advising services through designated advising fees. Therefore, the PACE Center expenditures will come from advising fees, while *College Faculty Liaisons* and *University Seminar* salaries and development will be paid by appropriations and tuition. The use of designated advising fee monies to fund the QEP will ensure the sustainability of the PACE initiative beyond the startup years. Similarly, the President's Cabinet decided to permanently allocate appropriations and tuition monies for PACE-initiated faculty salaries and faculty development to ensure its sustainability. To fully fund the plan, the Board of Regents approved an increase in the advising fee. The \$30 increase in the advising fee per undergraduate student per semester is projected to fund the QEP, as well as on-going advising operations. The proposed budget and funding sources appear in the table below, with discussion following.

Quality Enhancement Plan

New Funding Projection for Fiscal Years 2012 – 2016

	Fall 2011					
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	
Funding from Advising Fee						
PACE CENTER						
Dean of Advising	\$120,000	\$123,600	\$127,308	\$131,127	\$135,061	
Assistant Dean / Assessment	70,000	72,100	74,263	76,491	78,786	
Career Counselors (2)	90,000	92,700	95,481	98,345	101,296	
Academic Advisors (14)	462,000	475,860	490,136	504,840	519,985	
Mentoring Coordinator	33,000	33,990	35,010	36,060	37,172	
Senior Administrative Assistant	35,000	36,050	37,132	38,245	39,393	
Administrative Assistant II (2)	60,000	61,800	63,654	65,564	67,531	
Technical Support Specialist	65,000	66,950	68,959	71,027	73,158	
Graduate Assistants (3)	33,708	34,719	35,761	36,834	37,939	
Student Wages (50 hrs x 49 wks)	17,763	18,295	18,844	19,410	19,992	
Percentage Benefits	141,185	145,421	149,783	154,577	158,905	
Insurance Benefits	194,970	214,467	235,914	259,506	285,456	
Desktop Replacement	45,500			45,500	45,000	
Career Inventories	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	
Travel	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	
M&O	89,000	90,780	92,596	94,448	96,336	
Cost of QEP	\$1,537,126	\$1,546,733	\$1,604,839	\$1,711,673	\$1,730,979	\$8,131,349

Incremental Funding Needed	\$8,131,349	
Number of Years	5	
Average Incremental Funding Needed	<u>\$1,626,270</u>	
Average Incremental Funding Needed	\$1,626,270	
Adjusted Undergraduate Headcount	57,735	Income on \$1 fee increase
Increase Needed to Fund QEP	<u>\$28.17</u>	

Funding from Appropriations and Tuition

Faculty Release						
(Faculty Liaisons) (7)	\$98,000	\$100,940	\$103,968	\$107,087	\$110,300	
Graduate Assistants (7)	87,500	90,125	92,829	95,614	98,482	
US 1100 (University Seminar)						
Faculty	137,800	137,800	137,800	137,800	137,800	
US 1100 Training & Development	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	
QEP Assessment	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	
Benefits	28,923	30,659	32,498	34,448	36,515	
	<u>\$392,223</u>	<u>\$399,524</u>	<u>\$407,095</u>	<u>\$414,949</u>	<u>\$423,097</u>	<u>\$2,036,889</u>

Human Resources. As with most educational endeavors, the primary costs associated with the PACE initiative are in the category of human resources. The activities of the proposed staff were discussed previously in Section VIII: Organizational Structure. All are new allocations, except for one of the two Assistant Deans and related staff, as well as three academic advisors being reallocated from the University College; these have not been included in the above budget. Only the reporting lines, not the duties, of these staff have changed. Faculty and staff appointments, including salaries and benefits, comprise the majority of the QEP budget. The new PACE Center staffing, the majority of the human resources allocation, includes a *Dean of Advising*, an *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator*, an *Assistant Dean (University Seminar)*, 17 (14 new) *Academic Advisors*, two *Career Counselors*, a *Mentoring Coordinator*, a *Technical Support Specialist*, three administrative assistants, three *Graduate Assistants*, and student worker positions. Other human resources costs are in the form of partial compensation to existing faculty to support the needed faculty numbers to reduce the class size of the *University Seminar* as well as *College Faculty Liaisons* for each college and the assistance of graduate students to aid in their endeavors.

In the implementation of the QEP, it was deemed important to provide resources for both professional staffing and student assistants. Consistent with the mission of the university, providing student worker positions / assistantships and associated learning opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students was considered a vital byproduct.

Maintenance and Operation. The formula used for existing advising centers was applied to derive allotted maintenance and operation funds for the QEP. Maintenance and operations funds are based on the number of employees in a particular sector, in this case the staffing of the PACE Center. Additionally, University Seminar will bring with its staff its existing maintenance and operation budget.

Development and Assessment. Funds specifically earmarked for staff and program development and assessment are assigned in the budget. Provision has been made to promote PACE Center staff development, including travel (such as to professional conferences). Likewise, additional new funds were allocated for the enrichment of the *University Seminar* and the ongoing development and training of the faculty. Funds were also apportioned for the overall QEP assessment, including data collection and analysis.

Published Resources. Several published resources are needed to implement the QEP. Funds are allocated in the budget for the acquisition of career inventories to be used as self-assessment by the students. Many additional resources already exist, are maintained by various offices on campus, and can be tapped without incurring direct costs. For example, alumni databases, maintained by the Alumni Association, and the Bobcat Career Contacts, a Career Services database consisting of parents of current students and employers who recruit on campus, can be used at no direct cost to help students gather information and contacts related to career exploration. The University Library and Career Services maintain a collection of career specific books, publications, and online resources that will also be useful in the investigation and research of career options. Student Affairs developed a Bobcat Interest Inventory, administers the inventory to incoming freshmen, and analyzes and maintains a longitudinal database of the results. The interest inventory is a useful tool in guiding students toward appropriate co-curricular opportunities.

Equipment and Technology. The equipment and technology needed to implement the QEP include instructional technology consisting of hardware and software. The hardware needs are in the form of desktop computers for newly hired PACE Center staff as well as some general use terminals for student check-in, self-assessments, and academic and career information gathering. Funds have been allocated for the replacement of hardware, consistent with the university's three-year replacement cycle.

Software needs for the QEP consist of an advising scheduling and recordkeeping system as well as portfolio software. Currently, Texas State has no centralized advising scheduling and recordkeeping software that is systematically used university-wide. Most advising offices retain paper copies and files on students and use standard office software for scheduling appointments. One of the ten existing advising offices has purchased and uses commercially packaged advising software. Meanwhile, other academic college advising offices are just beginning to use a home-grown advising software system that retains student records and connects with the university-wide student information system (SIS), but does not currently have scheduling capabilities. As part of the phase-in of the SIS, the university will pilot and adopt an advising scheduling and recordkeeping system that will be made available to all advising offices, including the newly formed PACE Center. As noted above, QEP funds have been allocated to the PACE Center for a *Technical Support Specialist* to assist with the ongoing maintenance of the system.

Instructional Technologies Support is currently purchasing portfolio software. Investigation as to the most appropriate portfolio software commenced well before applications to the QEP were determined. The software will be purchased and ready for implementation by fall 2011. The portfolio software will have broader applications to academic programs and individual student use but will also play a vital role in assessment of the QEP student learning outcomes. Because the university already planned to support the portfolio software for broader applications, no additional funds are needed to use the portfolio software for QEP purposes.

Physical Facilities

The PACE Center, the hub of freshman advising, mentoring, PACE activities, and University Seminar requires a substantial amount of physical space. The PACE Center will effectively be a one-stop advising center for freshmen, where academic and career exploration can take place. It will afford students the opportunity to explore different academic directions, talk with advisors who specialize in various fields of study, meet with *Career Counselors*, browse academic and career resources, and connect with mentoring services. Thus, the space needs to be sufficient in size to house each of these various activities. Other requirements are that the space must be centrally located and accessible to freshmen as well as inviting to students. Space must also be available for the professional development activities for the faculty and staff associated with the PACE initiative.

A two-phase plan has been developed to address the facility needs of the QEP. First, the PACE staff and activities will be housed in the Academic Support Building North along with the University College Dean's and Advising Offices. Currently, the Athletic Academic Center, located just above the University College Dean's and Advising Offices, is slated to relocate,

freeing up approximately 2,500 square feet of space. Second, by the end of 2012, a new Undergraduate Academic Center (UAC) will be opened in the heart of campus, and the majority (approximately 10,770 square feet) of the first full floor will house the PACE Center. (See Appendix XI for the Confirmation Letter from the Chancellor on page 99.) The University breaks ground on the new construction in spring of 2010 in order to time the completion of construction with the first year of full implementation of the QEP. The floor plan for the first floor of the Undergraduate Academic Center with the PACE Center space allocation highlighted in pink is shown in the figure below:



Figure IX.1: Undergraduate Academic Center, First Floor Plan

X. Assessment

Assessment of the Personalized Academic and Career Exploration (PACE) program will be a multi-faceted approach, with responsibility led by the PACE Center administration and shared by faculty, academic and *Career Counselors*, mentors, as well as other student service providers. An Assessment Committee, a subgroup of the PACE Council, will be convened to oversee and guide activities. The *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator* will lead the Assessment Committee. The *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator* and Assessment Committee will assign specific teams to conduct assessments as needed.

A mix of quantitative and qualitative, direct and indirect, and formative and summative assessments will be employed to evaluate the ongoing success of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Both quantitative and qualitative methods are incorporated to give a measurable, yet broad-based understanding that can lead to continuous improvement of the program. The assessment strategy also includes both direct and indirect measures to gain an in-depth understanding of the achievement of student learning while simultaneously examining the success of the program. A formative assessment strategy will be implemented on an ongoing basis to measure program success and suggest / implement modifications. Similarly, a summative assessment strategy will provide a framework to measure and evaluate the overall success of the plan.

Components of the assessment plan include national assessments of career readiness, interests, personality, abilities, and self-efficacy; locally-designed rubrics to assess students' written responses to personal assessment and career exploration assignments; and a collection of student satisfaction and self-evaluation data on students' progress toward personal, academic, and career goals, using surveys, focus groups, and interviews. A major component of the assessment plan will be the implementation of an electronic portfolio system, which will serve as a repository for students' self-assessment results, written work, and a record of co-curricular activities, as well as a centralized system for use by faculty, *Academic Advisors*, mentors, and other student services providers to record and monitor progress toward the PACE goals and student learning outcomes.

Many of the documents uploaded to the electronic portfolio system require the development of a rubric (i.e., a scoring tool for subjective assessments) to ensure standardized evaluation according to specific criteria. A team of *University Seminar* faculty and PACE Assessment Committee members will develop rubrics that are linked directly to the learning outcomes of the *University Seminar* assignments. A key component of the effectiveness of the QEP assessment relates to its consequential validity (i.e., whether or not an assessment system achieves its intended purposes) (Khatti, Reeve, and Kane, 1998). Specifically, results obtained from the electronic portfolio system, career readiness assessments, personality attributes, self-efficacy, information literacy quizzes, and structured group interviews will be evaluated for content, ecological, and construct validity evidence (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999; Khattri, Reeve, and Kane, 1998). The types of measurement reliability to be evaluated includes inter-rater (i.e., for multiple raters / judges of portfolio materials) and internal consistency (coefficient alpha or split-half). Revisions will be incorporated into any and all rubrics, quizzes, or survey instruments to increase their effectiveness.

Details regarding ongoing formative, planned assessments for the achievement of the goals and student learning outcomes are presented below, followed by a description of the summative assessment plan.

Assessments for Goal I: To help students clarify their career goals

Outcome I.A.: Students will assess their future career opportunities.	
Action	Assessment
I.A.1. Students will take a career readiness inventory and write a reflective piece on their results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for career readiness inventory • Rubric for sample of reflective papers included in portfolio
I.A.2. Students will research careers and related educational expectations by applying knowledge of future studies and information literacy, conducting informational interviews, and attending major / career fairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz on information literacy for participating students • Survey random sample of students who attended major / career fairs • Rubric for sample of future career scenarios reports included in portfolio

In assessing future career opportunities, students are asked to complete a career readiness inventory and write a reflective paper on their results, research career options by applying information literacy as well as by attending major and career fairs, and write a future career scenarios report. Student participation rates in the online career readiness inventory will be electronically monitored and analyzed each long semester by the *Career Counselors* to determine usage and to suggest effective means of delivery. University Library staff will administer a short quiz that measures students' knowledge and application of information literacy concepts, provide an online or face-to-face lesson on information literacy, and then administer a post quiz. Results of the pre- to post-quiz analysis will identify concepts mastered and improvements needed in delivery. As students depart a major or career fair, they will be surveyed by *Career Counselors* or *College Faculty Liaisons* sponsoring the event. Results of the major or career fair survey will provide an indirect indication of the effectiveness of the event and suggest needed improvements or other venues.

University Seminar students' career-related assignments included in their portfolios, providing discussion on their perception of their career readiness and insight gained from their career research, will be evaluated by the instructor of the section during the semester. Results will guide subsequent class discussion, reinforce key concepts, and communicate means for improving student learning.

As a comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcome, "*Students will assess their future career opportunities,*" the PACE Assessment Committee will choose a stratified random sample of students and select their reflective papers and future career scenarios reports from their portfolios. A locally developed rubric will be used by the team to evaluate the degree to which students are able to assess their future career opportunities. The assessment will be conducted annually as a formative assessment and the aggregated results across several years will yield the summative data.

Outcome I.B.: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.	
Action	Assessment
I.B.1. Students will analyze a career option based on the results from assessments of their interests, abilities, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Sample of analyses of career options based on interests, abilities, and goals
I.B.2. Students will explore qualities needed to be successful in a particular career through mentoring relationships with faculty, staff, and / or alumni, informational interviews, and job shadowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates and survey results regarding mentoring activities • Rubric for sample of reflective writing pieces on exploration activities
I.B.3. Students will develop professional presentation / image and communication skills for application to future education / experiential activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and survey / quiz results from related workshops • Sample of résumés, correspondence, and portfolio content

To relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values, students are expected to complete the following tasks: a) take interest, abilities, and values self-assessments; b) analyze career options based on the results of their self assessments; c) explore qualities needed for success in a particular career through mentoring relationships; d) develop communication skills appropriate to their future career related activities; and e) draft documents representing their exploration and learning. Student participation rates in the online self-assessments such as the System of Integrated Guidance and Information (Sigi3), Strong Interest Inventory, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the NEO (Neuroticism-Extroversion-Openness) - Five Factor Inventory, and the Self-Efficacy Inventory (as described in the Actions section), will be electronically monitored and analyzed each long semester by the Career Counselors to determine usage and to suggest alternative applications. A survey of students participating in the Mentoring Program will be conducted by the *Mentoring Coordinator* at the end of each long semester. Results of the mentoring survey will give an indirect assessment of the perceived benefits of the mentoring relationship and suggest means for enhancing the experience.

Upon completion of an online or face-to-face workshop about professional presentation and communication skills, students' knowledge and application of the content will be evaluated through a quiz or survey administered by the workshop providers in conjunction with the PACE Center staff. Results will identify concepts mastered, or perceived to be mastered, potential improvements, and other suggested programs.

As stated in the previous section, students enrolled in *University Seminar* are expected to include reflective papers in their portfolio. In one paper, students analyze a career option based on their interests, abilities, and values. In a second paper, students discuss their career exploration activities and synthesize their learning. Observations from instructors' evaluation of the assignments will be used to foster teaching and learning. Students are also expected to illustrate their ability to present and communicate professionally by providing evidence such as a letter of inquiry, a resume, or a video of a mock interview to be evaluated by University Seminar instructors.

The overall achievement of the student learning outcome, “*Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values,*” will be assessed by the PACE Assessment Committee. The assessment team will choose a stratified random sample of students and score their reflective papers using a locally developed rubric. Scores will reflect students’ ability to relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values and the extent to which the outcome has been achieved. Using a locally developed rubric, the assessment team will also score a sample of other evidence that students have developed professional image and communication skills. The assessments will be conducted annually as a formative assessment, and the aggregated results across several years will yield the summative data.

Outcome I.C.: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.	
Action	Assessment
I.C.1 Students will chart a career pathway consistent with their interests, abilities, personality type, values, and self-efficacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubric for sample of Career Pathway Charts
I.C.2. Students will participate in experiential learning activities such as volunteering, job shadowing, or part-time jobs to help design an appropriate educational and career path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in experiential learning • Sample of self-generated reports from experiential learning

Learning activities related to choosing an appropriate career pathway include expecting students to chart a career pathway consistent with their personal characteristics and encouraging students to participate in related experiential learning activities. In *University Seminar*, students will chart and justify their career pathway and post a summary to their electronic portfolio. *University Seminar* instructors as well as *Career Counselors* will review the pathways and direct students to resources to help them achieve their goals.

Students will be encouraged by *University Seminar* instructors, *Academic Advisors*, and mentors to participate in experiential learning activities such as volunteering, job shadowing, or part-time jobs to gain experience appropriate for their chosen educational and career path. As evidence of their participation, students will include a short report of their experiential learning in their portfolio. *University Seminar* instructors along with *Career Counselors* will tally student participation in various experiential learning activities and review student experiential learning reports which will enable them to provide personalized guidance.

To assess the overall achievement of the student learning outcome, “*Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world,*” the PACE Assessment Committee will choose a stratified random sample of students and select their career pathways and corresponding assignments from their student portfolios. The assessment team will use a locally developed rubric to assess and measure the extent to which students have met the learning outcome. The assessment will be conducted annually as a formative review and the aggregated results across several years will provide the summative data.

Assessments for Goal II: To assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan

Outcome II.A.: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.	
Action	Assessment
II.A.1. Students will analyze educational programs based on their career assessment results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Review random sample of inventory results in student portfolios
II.A.2. Students will define the most appropriate educational pathway based on their academic status, abilities, and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sample of advising records

To gain the ability to select an academic program consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals, students analyze educational programs based on their career assessments and define an appropriate educational pathway to achieve their goals. As previously detailed in the assessment plan for Outcome I.B., students will complete assessments of their interests, abilities, and values using instruments such as the Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and the NEO-FFI. Students' participation rates in the online assessments will be electronically monitored and analyzed each long semester by the *Career Counselors* to determine usage. *Academic Advisors*, *Career Counselors*, faculty, and mentors will use the results of the assessments to individually guide students as they judge the appropriateness of an academic program based on their personal characteristics.

Students will include assessment and inventory results as well as discussion on how the results were / will be used to analyze educational programs in their portfolios. Discussions should provide justification for the selection and narrowing of their chosen academic pathway. *Academic Advisors* will review entries made by their advisees prior to the students' scheduled advising appointments and compile results at the end of each semester.

As a comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcome, "*Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals,*" the PACE Assessment Committee will choose a stratified random sample of students and their portfolio entries pertaining to educational pathway selection and justification, and the same student's advising records. A locally developed rubric will be used by the team to assess the sample of portfolio entries and advising records to determine the extent to which students selected an appropriate educational pathway. The assessment will be conducted annually, and aggregated results across several years will provide summative results.

Outcome II.B.: Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion.	
Action	Assessment
II.B.1. Students will assess options and electives to enhance educational program based on their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in advising sessions • Survey random sample of students regarding advising experiences, including effectiveness
II.B.2. Students will develop a sequence for taking courses to efficiently complete educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample of advising records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Completion of degree according to schedule ◦ Proper sequencing • Participation rates in advising sessions

In the process of developing the skills to chart a sequence of courses for completing their academic program, students assess curricular options and electives to enhance their educational program and develop a sequence for taking courses in order to efficiently complete their academic program. Students will discuss and assess options and electives to enhance their educational program and career pathway as well as develop a sequence for taking courses with their *Academic Advisor* during their scheduled advising session. *Academic Advisors* will track student participation in advising sessions and make note of the participation rates of students in sessions in which academic options and electives and sequencing of courses were discussed. Results will be obtained on a monthly basis from electronic advising appointment records. At the end of each long semester, *Academic Advisors* will survey a random sample of students on the effectiveness of their advising sessions in teaching them to assess possible academic options and electives and properly sequence their courses. Academic Advisors will also select a random sample of students' electronically stored academic advising records to evaluate the extent to which students are making progress on their degree as scheduled and taking courses in the proper sequence.

As a comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcome, "*Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion,*" the PACE Assessment Committee will review the results of the previously described assessments and choose a stratified random sample of students and select their advising records and data recorded in the Degree Audit System (DARS). These records will be assessed using a locally developed rubric to determine the following: a) students' progress toward degree completion, and b) completion of courses in the proper sequence. The review of advising records and data will be conducted annually as a formative assessment. Aggregated results from annual reviews across several years will provide the summative results.

Outcome II.C.: Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.	
Action	Assessment
II.C.1. Students will be acquainted with and participate in professional organizations directly related to their educational and career focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness
II.C.2. Students will be acquainted with and participate in organizations / activities which will develop qualities and skills applicable to their educational and career goals as well as interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness

To choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their education and career, students are expected to be acquainted with and participate in professional organizations and other relevant organizations and activities. During PAWS Preview (a just-in-time orientation program that occurs the weekend prior to the start of classes), students complete the Bobcat Interest Inventory, a locally-designed survey about students' co-curricular interests and previous experiences. Results from this inventory are shared with appropriate campus organizations and student service offices, who reach out to students to encourage participation. *Academic Advisors, College Faculty Liaisons*, mentors, and other student service personnel will also use the results to connect students with appropriate activities. Student participation in co-curricular activities will be recorded in the co-curricular transcript associated with their electronic portfolio. Each semester the *Mentoring Coordinator* will conduct an audit of involvement of students in co-curricular organizations and activities. Annually, the *Mentoring Coordinator* along with the Associate Director of the Student Center will survey students on their co-curricular involvement and the effectiveness of the student activities.

To assess progress toward the outcome “*Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals,*” the PACE Assessment Committee will review the results of the previously described assessments and choose a stratified random sample of students' co-curricular transcripts. A locally developed rubric will be used by the team to assess the degree to which students are involved in appropriate co-curricular organizations and activities. In addition, the assessment team will conduct focus groups with students near the end of the first year to determine effectiveness of the interest inventory and referral system as well as the organizations and activities. The overall assessments will be conducted annually as a formative assessment. Aggregate annual results will be retained and will provide summative results.

Summative Assessment

The combined assessment efforts outlined above provide data from several cohorts over time on student success within each of the specific student learning outcomes of the PACE plan. In addition to those stated above, the PACE Center *Assistant Dean / Assessment Coordinator* will oversee the following assessments planned to ascertain the overall effectiveness of the QEP and add insight to broader implications such as matriculation, persistence, satisfaction, and efficiency of progression through the academic system:

- 1) Annual progression through the academic system and eventually graduation rates will be tracked for entering freshman cohorts, with the expectation that rates will increase as a result of implementing the PACE initiatives. In addition to calculating cohort rates, rates will be examined for subgroups based on levels of participation with components of the QEP.
- 2) Student focus groups will be conducted annually to determine the following: a) the degree to which students are achieving the student learning outcomes; b) the strengths of the actions in producing the desired outcomes; and c) areas for improvement.
- 3) Students will be surveyed in the spring semester every two years (odd numbered years) to assess their satisfaction with academic and career advising and instruction.
- 4) *Academic Advisors, Career Counselors*, mentors, and faculty will be surveyed on a bi-annual basis (even numbered years) to evaluate the efficacy of PACE programs and activities.

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XI. Appendices

Appendix I: QEP Development Timeline

To develop the Quality Enhancement Plan, the following timeline was established.

Date	Action
Fall 2007	Determine best approach and timeline for QEP topic selection Introduce the QEP concept to constituents through an e-mail sent by the Provost Develop QEP website
Spring 2008	Meet with constituent groups to introduce QEP Identify initial QEP Team to narrow topic Accept proposals for QEP topics Outline written report Hold Open Forums for widespread participation E-mail soliciting ideas sent from Provost QEP Topic Development Team meets regularly Identify criteria for topic selection Research possible topics QEP Team narrows topics
Summer 2008	QEP Co-Chairs attend SACS Summer Institute Leadership Team finalizes topic and President announces topic at Fall Convocation QEP task force and planning groups established to determine course of action QEP task force expanded as necessary to develop plan
Fall 2008	QEP Task Force meets regularly QEP Planning Groups meets regularly QEP Executive Task Force named QEP Executive Task Force meets regularly Develop framework for QEP
December 2008	Representatives attend SACS Annual Meeting Consultant from NACADA visits campus
Spring 2009	QEP Task Force meets regularly QEP Executive Task Force meets regularly Define student learning outcomes Determine key initiatives

Date	Action
Summer 2009	Research best practices Identify actions to be implemented including related organization / structure, resources, and assessment Establish timeline for completion Draft document outlining plan
Fall 2009	Nominate individuals to serve as the QEP Evaluator on On-Site Review Team Finalize QEP document Prepare for On-Site Review
Spring 2010	Submit QEP for review six weeks prior to scheduled on-site visit On-Site Review (March 23-25, 2010)
Fall 2010	Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Approval of QEP at SACS Annual Meeting
Spring 2011	Begin implementation of plan
Fall 2015	Prepare QEP Impact Report
Spring 2016	Submit QEP Impact Report

Appendix II: Leadership Team

Dr. Denise Trauth	President, Chair of Leadership Team
Dr. Cathy Fleuriet	Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, SACS Liaison
Dr. Robert Gratz	Special Assistant to the President
Dr. Perry Moore	Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. William Nance	Vice President for Finance and Support Services
Dr. Cynthia Opheim	Professor-Political Science, Faculty Representative
Ms. Becky Prince	Vice President for University Advancement
Dr. Nico Schüler	Professor-Music, Quality Enhancement Plan Co-Chair
Dr. Joanne Smith	Vice President for Student Affairs
Dr. Larry Teis	Director-Athletics
Dr. Beth Wuest	Director-Academic Development and Assessment, Quality Enhancement Plan Co-Chair
Dr. C. Van Wyatt	Vice President for Information Technology

Appendix III: QEP Initial Correspondence from Provost

The following message was e-mailed to all Texas State faculty, staff, and students on March 19, 2008:

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students:

We hope that you will take this opportunity to participate in identifying a theme for the Texas State Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) by sending in your suggestions to the website below.

During the past few months, co-chairs of the QEP have held two open forums and met with various groups on campus and in our community as part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaffirmation effort. These meetings provided an overview of the nature of the QEP and the themes that may be appropriate to address. The QEP must speak to student learning and must have a well-defined theme (topic). Information about themes proposed so far can be found at our website: <http://www.sacs-qep.txstate.edu/>.

All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to send their suggestions or comments on already proposed QEP themes to SACS-QEP@txstate.edu by March 31, 2008.

Sincerely,

Dr. Perry Moore

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

This message was sent to all members of a conscribed mailing list established and maintained by Texas State University-San Marcos. Your inclusion in this list results from your relationship and status with the University and is not optional.

Appendix IV: Schedule of Introductory Meetings with Constituent Groups in 2008

Council of Academic Deans	January 15	1:30	JCK Regents Room
Council of Chairs	February 7	3:30	Derrick 111
College Councils			
Applied Arts	January 16	9:00	Agriculture 300
Business	January 23	10:00	McCoy 530
Education	January 23	3:00	Education 1028
Fine Arts	January 17	9:30	Old Main 102C
Health Professions	January 16	1:30	Health Profess. 309
Liberal Arts	January 23	2:00	Flowers 313
Science	January 9	2:00	Centennial 201
Faculty Senate	February 13	5:10	JCK 880
Division Councils			
Athletics	February 25	12:00	End Zone
Finance and Support Services	March 4	2:00	JCK, Reed Parr (11th)
Information Technology	January 22	9:00	JCK, Reed Parr (11th)
Student Affairs	January 29	1:30	LBJSC 3-8.1
University Advancement	March 4	1:00	JCK 962
Staff Council	March 18	10:00	202 Lampassas
Association of Student Government	February 4	7:00	LBJSC 3-14.1
All-Greek	March 25	5:00	LBJSC 3-14.1
Student Volunteer Connection	March 18	5:20	LBJSC 3-9.1
Non-Traditional Student Organization	February 11	3:30	LBJSC 4-3.1
Non-Traditional Student Organization	February 12	3:30	LBJSC 4-3.1
Student Organizations Council	February 21	6:30	LBJSC 4-9.1
Student Association for Campus Activities	March 18	5:00	LBJSC 4-4.1
Bobcat Build	March 18	5:40	LBJSC 3-5.1
Leadership Exchange	February 23	9:30	LBJSC Ballroom
Graduate House	February 8	1:00	LBJSC 3-12.1
Alumni Association	April 10	6:00	Alumni Center
City of San Marcos (City Officials)	February 7	2:00	City Hall

Appendix V: QEP Topic Development Team

The Quality Enhancement Topic Development Team is composed of representatives from a variety of constituent groups. Each group provided their representative as listed below.

Co-Chairs

Dr. Nico Schüler, Professor, School of Music

Dr. Beth Wuest, Director, Academic Development and Assessment

Academic Affairs

Applied Arts

Dr. Ani Yazedjian, Assistant Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences Business

Dr. Robert Hill, Associate Professor, Management

Education

Dr. Michelle Pope, Associate Professor, Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

Fine Arts and Communication

Dr. Roseann Mandziuk, Professor, Communication Studies

Health Professions

Ms. Sue Biedermann, Program Chair and Associate Professor, Health Information Management

Liberal Arts

Dr. Mark Busby, Program Director, Center for the Study of the Southwest Science

Dr. Vedaraman Sriraman, Chair and Professor, Technology

Faculty Senate

Dr. Gary Winek, Professor, Technology

Divisions

Athletics

Mr. Christopher Elrod, Director, Athletic Academic Center

Ms. Tracy Shoemake, Associate Athletic Director, Athletics

Finance and Support Services

Mr. Gordon Thyberg, Director, Budgeting

Information Technology

Ms. Joan Heath, Assistant Vice President, University Library

Student Affairs

Dr. John Garrison, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Mr. Curtis Schafer, Director, Career Services

University Advancement

Ms. Becky Prince, Vice President, University Advancement

Staff Council

Ms. Tina Schultz, Director, Disability Services

Associated Student Government

Mr. Daniel Palomo, ASG Student Senator

Student Association of Campus

Activities

Ms. Ashley Wolford, SACA President

Graduate House

Ms. Sheila Bustillos, ASG Graduate House Leader

Alumni Association

Ms. Johanna Haley, President, Alumni Association

City of San Marcos

Mr. Daniel Guerrero, Mayor Pro Tem

Appendix VI: QEP Task Force

The Quality Enhancement Planning Task Force is composed of representatives from a variety of constituent groups.

Co-Chairs

Dr. Nico Schöler, Professor, School of Music
 Dr. Beth Wuest, Director, Academic Development and Assessment

Overall Planning

Mr. Brett Baker, 2008-2009 President, Associated Student Government
 Dr. Cecilio Barrera, Interim Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Equity and Access
 Ms. Jennifer Beck, Director for Retention Management and Planning
 Dr. Sherri Benn, Assistant Vice President and Director of Multicultural Student Affairs
 Ms. Sara Boysen Supervisor, College Academic Advising, Health Professions Advising Center
 Dr. Brock Brown, Professor, Geography
 Dr. Stanley Carpenter, 2008-2009 Chair, Council of Chairs
 Mr. Christopher Covo, 2009-2010 President, Associated Student Government
 Ms. Antoinette Curl, Supervisor, College Academic Advising, Education Advising Center
 Dr. Carol Dochen, Director, Student Learning Assistance Center
 Mr. David Falleur, Program Chair, Clinical Laboratory Science
 Dr. Debra Feakes, Chair, Faculty Senate
 Ms. Melanie Ferrari, 2009-2010 President, Residence Hall Association
 Mr. Robert Flowers, Associate Director, Athletic Academic Center
 Dr. Laurie Fluker, Associate Dean, Fine Arts and Communication
 Ms. Mariko Gomez, Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships
 Dr. Paul Gowens, Professor, Finance and Economics
 Ms. Jennifer Grant, Supervisor, College Academic Advising, Liberal Arts Advising Center
 Ms. Joan Heath, Assistant Vice President, University Library
 Dr. Jaime Hernandez Mijangos, Assistant Professor, Technology
 Ms. Michelle Lopez, Associate Director, Student Center / Campus Activities
 Mr. Tomas Luna, 2008-2009 President, Residence Hall Association and 2009-2010 Vice President, Associated Student Government
 Mr. Jason Moore, 2008-2009 Vice President, Associated Student Government
 Mr. Christopher Murr, Associate Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships
 Mr. Terence Parker, Assistant Director, Retention Management and Planning
 Mr. Daniel Reed, Associated Student Government Graduate House Leader
 Ms. Kristi Rickman, Student Service Coordinator, Round Rock Higher Education Center
 Mr. Brian Robinson, Academic Advisor II, McCoy College of Business Administration
 Mr. Curtis Schafer, Director, Career Services
 Dr. Stephen Springer, Program Chair, Occupational Education
 Dr. Elizabeth Strand, Supervisor, Instructional Design Support
 Ms. Rebecca Swindal, Supervisor, College Academic Advising, Applied Arts Advising Center
 Dr. Debbie Thorne, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
 Mr. Bricio Vasquez, Academic Advisor I, College Academic Advising, University College Advising Center
 Dr. Paula Williamson, Associate Dean, The Graduate College
 Dr. Pamela Wuestenberg, Assistant Dean, University College

Assessment Planning

Dr. Larry Price, Professor, Educational Administration and Psychological Services
Dr. Gail Ryser, Director, Testing, Research-Support, and Evaluation Center
Ms. Susan Thompson, Research Analyst, Institutional Research

Budget Development

Dr. Ronald Brown, Dean, University College
Mr. Mark Hughes, Assistant Vice President, Technology Resources Administration
Ms. Nancy Nusbaum, Associate Vice President, Finance and Support Services Planning
Mr. Gordon Thyberg, Director, Budgeting

Marketing

Mr. James Buratti, Supervisor, Education Technology Center and Webmaster
Ms. Diana Harrell, Director, University Marketing
Ms. T. Cay Rowe, Assistant Vice President, University Advancement
Dr. Mary Ann Stutts, Professor, Marketing

An Executive Task Force, a representative group from the larger Quality Enhancement Planning Task Force, was also formed to conduct preliminary tasks.

Co-Chairs

Dr. Nico Schüler, Professor, School of Music
Dr. Beth Wuest, Director, Academic Development and Assessment

Advising

Ms. Jennifer Grant, Supervisor, College Academic Advising, Liberal Arts Advising Center
Ms. Kristi Rickman, Student Service Coordinator, Round Rock Higher Education Center
Mr. Brian Robinson, Academic Advisor II, McCoy College of Business Administration

Mentoring

Dr. Brock Brown, Professor, Geography
Dr. Laurie Fluker, Associate Dean, Fine Arts and Communication
Dr. Paul Gowens, Professor, Finance and Economics
Dr. Pamela Wuestenberg, Assistant Dean, University College

Student Support

Ms. Jennifer Beck, Director for Retention Management and Planning
Mr. Terence Parker, Assistant Director, Retention Management and Planning
Mr. Curtis Schafer, Director, Career Services

Students

Mr. Christopher Covo, 2009-2010 President, Associated Student Government

Assessment Planning

Dr. Gail Ryser, Director, Testing, Research-Support, and Evaluation Center

Budget Development

Dr. Ronald Brown, Dean, University College

Marketing

Dr. Mary Ann Stutts, Professor, Marketing

Appendix VII: Example of Candidate Topic Summary

Learning Beyond the Classroom: Preparing Students for Life

Brief Description

Texas State will establish a Learning Beyond the Campus (LBC) Center that provides a comprehensive experiential learning program for all students. Off-campus learning opportunities will create enthusiastic and motivated students, enhance their academic and career decision-making skills, and produce graduates who are well equipped to establish themselves as productive citizens of a rapidly changing world.

This initiative emphasizes that students' interactions with faculty and external mentors during their university careers elevate and provide invaluable experiences for their professional careers. Networking opportunities via internships, student research, and study abroad experiences strengthen the university's long-term relationships with students, alumni, and external constituents, thereby supporting and establishing a legacy of giving back.

Goals

- Integrate service learning across the curricula; student learning to include more skills and knowledge related to common job opportunities in their fields
- Expand and coordinate internship and externship opportunities; students gain practical work skills
- Expand and promote international study, international exchange and National Student Exchange programs; increase student learning in terms of international / global life and work skills and knowledge, as well as languages
- Organize and train all advisors to integrate experiential learning opportunities into the academic plans of all students
- Expand the mentoring program to include alumni, parents, and other off-campus mentors; as a result, students' learning benefits from experienced professionals
- Create a co-curricular transcript or portfolio in the new Student Information System
- Secure a Ronald McNair grant to encourage our undergraduates from underrepresented groups to attend graduate school
- Provide an exceptional undergraduate experience (university shared value)
- Offer opportunities to interact with a diversity of people and ideas (a university shared value); increase diversity in student learning
- Cultivate (and increase student learning in terms of) character and model integrity, respect and ethical behavior, beyond the boundaries of the classroom (a university shared value)
- Provide exposure to potential life-careers; students gain deeper knowledge about their career options

- Recruit and retain students who are attracted to this enhanced learning program
- Solidify external relations and support

Strategies for Implementation

Much of the foundation for this initiative is in place. There now needs to be a concerted effort to focus talents, time, and resources to coordinate the existing efforts and begin the new programs that will not only create this LBC Center but bring it to state, national, and international prominence. Concerted efforts must be made to identify participants of focus groups representing alumni (corporations), students, and faculty. These focus groups will buy in to the “Learning Beyond the Classroom” QEP and build the implementation model.

Student Learning Outcomes

There is much research to support the power of off-campus experiences to complement and enhance student learning. Knowledge, skills, work habits, and attitudes are all subject to being positively impacted after even the briefest volunteer or job shadowing experience. The effects of this type of learning are often greater and longer-lasting influences in a student’s career and life. There will be more engaged teaching and learning, a stronger commitment to public service, more collaborative planning, and evaluation, all of which facilitate a more seamless transition of students into their next life pursuit.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will contrast common job opportunities in their fields based on the required skills and knowledge gained through career advising, job shadowing, and possibly internships. (possible assessment methods: paper, essay question on exam, and the like)
2. Students will increase in certainty of their academic / professional direction and confidence in their career decision-making skills through analysis and reflections on their experiential activities. (possible assessment methods: paper, essay, pre-post tests, feedback from academic advisors)
3. Students will construct a resume appropriate for a job opportunity and / or an application for post-graduate work in their field based on required skills and knowledge gained through faculty advising, academic advising, career advising, job shadowing, and other experiential activities. (possible assessment methods: resume, essays, applications, test)
4. Students will demonstrate practical work skills and behaviors appropriate to entry level positions in their field and / or graduate-professional schools through service and experiential learning components and internships. (possible assessment methods: portfolios / papers, internship supervisor’s assessments, observations of performance)
5. Students will improve their personal presentation skills relative to their chosen professional field, including appropriate appearance, communication skills, etiquette, networking and self-marketing.(possible assessment

methods: academic / faculty advisor observations, supervisor's assessments, pre-post tests)

6. Students will integrate diversity, integrity, respect, and ethical behavior in problem solving (possible assessment methods: case studies, attitude surveys, pre-post tests)

Justification of the Topic

- Service learning efforts have suffered from a lack of campus-wide attention and resources.
- Internships and other experiential programs are well done and well funded in some departments but non-existent in others.
- Volunteer activities abound but they are not coordinated and not consistently recorded
- There are relatively low participation rates in the current international study / exchange programs and NSE.
- All academic, career, and organizational advisors should be well-versed in the value of experiential learning opportunities in order to encourage the integration of such activities into the lives of their students. Advisors are often the staff members most responsible for 1-1 interactions with students, so their understanding and training is critical to the success of these efforts.
- Off-campus mentors, particularly professionals from the affinity groups of alumni, parents, and potential employers, will not only provide students with encouragement and assistance in their academic endeavors, but also in their career pursuits.

In summary, building and maintaining relationships with alumni and external constituents is best accomplished through the interaction and involvement of our primary products, the students. Through focused experiences our students gain insight into life after their university careers. These experiences leverage them competitively, placing them at an advantage to secure a career position or pursue further education upon completion of their Texas State degree. The success of this strategy also positions the university competitively among its peers, providing an edge in the recruitment of students.

Benefits to the Institution and Students

Students:

- Increased service learning
- Greater enthusiasm about their education as it becomes more relevant
- Increased awareness of self and broader view of the world around them
- More certainty in career direction
- Increased educational and career networking opportunities

Institution:

- Graduates are more well-rounded and better prepared for next pursuits
- Enhanced relationships with community, state, alumni, parents, employing organizations, and the like
- Enhanced reputation with potential students and feeder schools. Texas State seen as “actively making a difference” in the lives of students and those with whom they come in contact
- Re-engagement and maintenance of relationships with alumni.
- Collaborative opportunities with corporations.
- Building a philosophy of “paying it forward” – with success, those individuals who experience success as students are more likely to be engaged with their alma mater as mentors to future students
- Increased retention

Evaluation and Assessment Strategies

Measure increase of student service learning via pre- and post-tests and questionnaires across the disciplines

- Measure progress on the establishment of the LBC Center and the assimilation of current programs and activities
- Pre-assess all existing services and programs related to this topic in order to establish baselines for student participation rates; compare participation rates in these activities throughout the establishment phase of the LBC Center and beyond
- Create goals for student participation rates with academic advisors serving as monitors
- Pre-assess present learning outcomes in each department currently hosting any of these programs; compare outcomes in subsequent years
- Establish learning outcomes goals and assessment strategies for all new programs

Description of How the Selection Criteria, as well as the University Mission and Goals, will be Met

All of the selection criteria appear to be met by this topic. Specifically, this initiative directly supports the University’s mission of serving the educational needs of the diverse population of Texas and the world beyond. Other relevant principles include engaged teaching and learning, based in dialogue and student involvement and the free exchange of ideas; intellectual growth and professional development and collaboration, planning, and evaluation to meet the changing needs of who we are and those whom we serve.

Appendix VIII: Texas State Mission, Values, and Goals

Our Mission

Texas State University-San Marcos is a public, student-centered, doctoral-granting institution dedicated to excellence in serving the educational needs of the diverse population of Texas and the world beyond.

Shared Values

In pursuing our mission as a premier institution, we, the faculty, staff and students of Texas State University-San Marcos, are guided by a shared collection of values. Specifically, we value

- An exceptional undergraduate experience as the heart of what we do;
- Graduate education as a means of intellectual growth and professional development;
- A diversity of people and ideas, a spirit of inclusiveness, a global perspective, and a sense of community as essential conditions for campus life;
- The cultivation of character and the modeling of honesty, integrity, compassion, fairness, respect, and ethical behavior, both in the classroom and beyond;
- Engaged teaching and learning based in dialogue, student involvement and the free exchange of ideas;
- Research, scholarship, and creative activity as fundamental sources of new knowledge and as expressions of the human spirit;
- A commitment to public service as a resource for personal, educational, cultural and economic development;
- Thoughtful reflection, collaboration, planning, and evaluation as essential for meeting the changing needs of those we serve.

The noblest search is the search for excellence.

—Lyndon B. Johnson,
Thirty-Sixth President
of the United States,
1963-1969, Texas State
University Class of 1930

Goal Statements

Goal 1: Promote academic quality by building a distinguished faculty, developing the university culture of research, and managing enrollment.

Goal 2: Expand access to public university education and contribute to the economic and cultural development of Texas.

Goal 3: Provide a premier student-centered, educational experience that fosters retention and success and is built on academic programs with clearly defined learning outcomes and a rigorous level of academic challenge.

Goal 4: Expand educational opportunities, emphasizing doctoral program development, applied scientific and technical programs, and other programs that address critical state needs.

Goal 5: Enrich our learning and working environment by attracting and supporting a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body.

Goal 6: Develop and manage human, financial, physical, and technological resources effectively, efficiently, and ethically to support the university's mission.

Appendix IX: Goals, Outcomes, Actions, Structure, Resources, and Assessments

Goal I: To help students clarify their career goals

Outcome I.A.: Students will assess their future career opportunities.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.A.1. Students will take a career readiness inventory and write a reflective piece on their results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make career readiness inventory available • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign reflective writing piece about career readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career readiness inventory • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for career readiness inventory • Assessment of sample of reflective papers included in portfolio
I.A.2. Students will research careers and related educational expectations by applying knowledge of future studies and information literacy, conducting informational interviews, and attending major / career fairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>University Library</i> staff to assist with information access and literacy • <i>College Faculty Liaisons / Career Counselors</i> to sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities • <i>University Seminar</i> to assign future career scenarios exercise and report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio • Collection of career specific books, publications, and online resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz results on information literacy for participating students • Survey random sample of students who attended major / career fairs • Rubric for sample of future career scenarios reports included in portfolio
Outcome I.B: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.B.1. Students will analyze a career option based on the results from assessments of their interests, abilities, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make assessment instruments available • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign future scenarios exercise and report • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to discuss options associated with individual interests, values, personality type, and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Electronic portfolio • Collection of career specific books, publications, and online resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Sample of analyses of career options based on interests, abilities, and goals

Outcome I.B: Students will relate career requirements to their personal interests, abilities, and values.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.B.2. Students will explore qualities needed to be successful in a particular career through mentoring relationships with faculty, staff, and / or alumni, informational interviews, and job shadowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mentors</i> to assist with the development of relationships with faculty, staff, and alumni • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to link students with alumni contacts • <i>Career Counselors</i> to help identify informational interviewing and job shadowing opportunities • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign a reflective writing piece about information gleaned from exploration activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio • Alumni databases • Bobcat Career Contacts database – Parents of current students and employers who recruit on campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates and survey results regarding mentoring activities • Rubric for sample of reflective writing pieces on exploration activities
I.B.3. Students will develop professional presentation / image and communication skills for application to future education / experiential activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Career Counselors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to assist with development of application letters, résumés, and portfolios, and to sponsor learning activities on impression management • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty and <i>Academic Advisors</i> to assure that communication documents have been included in portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and survey / quiz results from related workshops • Sample of résumés, correspondence, and portfolio content

Outcome I.C: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.C.1 Students will chart a career pathway consistent with their interests, abilities, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>University Seminar</i> faculty to assign exercise on charting a career pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubric for sample of Career Pathway Charts

Outcome I.C: Students will choose appropriate career pathways, based on self-assessment and analysis of the work world.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
I.C.2. Students will participate in experiential learning activities such as volunteering, job shadowing, or part-time jobs to help design an appropriate educational and career path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>College Faculty Liaisons, Academic Advisors, and Career Counselors</i> to help identify appropriate experiential opportunities • <i>Faculty in Academic Departments / Schools / Colleges</i> to arrange experiential learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in experiential learning • Sample of self-generated reports from experiential learning

Goal II: To assist students in developing and implementing an educational plan

Outcome II.A: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.A.1. Students will analyze educational programs based on their career assessment results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide information on various educational programs • <i>Career Counselors</i> to make assessments available • <i>Academic Advisors, Mentors, and College Faculty Liaisons</i> to guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in the portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigi3, <i>Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI</i>, and other assessments • Electronic advising records • Electronic portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates for Sigi3, Strong Interest Inventory, MBTI, and other assessments • Review random sample of inventory results in student portfolios

Outcome II.A: Students will select an academic program that is consistent with their interests, abilities, and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.A.2. Students will define the most appropriate educational pathway based on their academic status, abilities, and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide degree requirements • <i>Academic Advisors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to provide estimation of scheduling of required courses • <i>Academic Advisors</i> and <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to provide updates on educational programs • <i>Academic Advisors</i> discuss options with students and assist students in making appropriate choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sample of advising records

Outcome II.B: Students will chart a sequence of courses for academic program completion.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.B.1. Students will assess options and electives to enhance educational program based on their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide guidance in selection of options and electives • <i>Mentoring</i> to assist with assessment of options and electives • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> and <i>Academic Advisors</i> collaborate to provide information and updates on options and electives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in advising sessions • Survey random sample of students regarding advising experiences, including effectiveness
II.B.2. Students will develop a sequence for taking courses to efficiently complete educational program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Advisors</i> to provide sample sequences and assist students with sequencing classes • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> and <i>Academic Advisors</i> collaborate to provide updated information on registration requirements and scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic advising records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample of advising records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Completion of degree according to schedule o Proper sequencing • Participation rates in advising sessions

Outcome II.C: Students will choose co-curricular opportunities to enhance their educational and career goals.			
Action	Organization / Structure	Resources	Assessment
II.C.1. Students will be acquainted with and participate in professional organizations directly related to their educational and career focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic Department faculty, Academic Advisors, Mentors, and Campus Activities and Student Organizations Associate Director</i> to make lists of major-related organizations available and encourage participation • <i>College Faculty Liaisons</i> to sponsor College organization fairs and related information sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic transcript of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness
II.C.2. Students will be acquainted with and participate in organizations / activities which will develop qualities and skills applicable to their educational and career goals as well as interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Campus Activities and Student Organizations Associate Director</i> to help connect students with appropriate activities • <i>Mentors</i> to connect students with activities and service opportunities to develop personal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bobcat Interest Inventory • Electronic transcript of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of student involvement • Survey of student activity effectiveness

Appendix X: PACE Center Job Descriptions

Dean, Advising

Job Code xxxxxxxx

General Description

Responsible for providing overall leadership and administration to the PACE Center plan and personnel.

Examples of Duties

Advise the Provost and VPAA on matters related to Academic Affairs policies, faculty personnel programs, and academic budgeting policies.

Serve as a member of the Council of Academic Deans.

Oversee the freshman academic advising and University Seminar.

Direct and evaluate performance of Assistant Deans.

Lead PACE Council in developing and implementing overall PACE Center direction.

Coordinate activities of College Faculty Liaisons and provide input on annual performance appraisal of College Faculty Liaisons.

Ensure the accuracy and quality of all publications originating within the PACE Center.

Ensure the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the PACE Center.

Supervise PACE Center budgets and salary review.

Serve as a representative of the PACE Center to colleges and division within the University and constituencies outside of Texas State.

Make recommendations on personnel actions.

Meet with students, parents, and potential students to encourage and assist them with any issues or problems they may be having within the PACE Center.

Ensure center and programs comply with accreditation standards.

Develop and implement policies and procedures related to the PACE Center operations.

Oversee the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the PACE Center.

Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: University policies; of academic programs

Skill in: providing leadership to PACE Center; in working with Council of Deans (CAD) members and others in effective manner; in interacting with parents, students, faculty, staff, and others; in developing and implementing policies.

Ability to: understand and interpret University requirements; to prepare correspondence and reports; to perform basic math; to track budgets; to speak to both individuals and groups of people; to ensure effective allocation of resources; to manage diverse groups of staff, faculty, and students; to serve on and lead committees.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Doctoral degree.

Assistant Dean and Assessment Coordinator, Advising

Job Code xxxxxxxx

General Description

Responsible for assisting the Dean of Advising in the overall direction and coordination of PACE Center projects and initiatives and for overseeing PACE plan assessments.

Examples of Duties

- Assist Dean with oversight of the provision of freshman academic advising.
- Assist Dean with development and implementation of strategic plan and budget.
- Explain evaluations, interpret transcripts, and act as a liaison with academic departments.
- Hire, train, and supervise PACE Center staff.
- Assist undeclared students in their academic progress by monitoring overall advising process.
- Implement advising initiatives and conduct group and individual advising sessions.
- Provide academic information and guidance to all new students during the Orientation process.
- Ensure that academically suspended students are processed in accordance with University PPS.
- Serve as a representative of the PACE Center to colleges and division within the University and constituencies outside of Texas State.
- Serve as primary contact point for students, parents, and potential students with PACE Center, academic-related questions, comments, or complaints.
- Interpret and implement policies and procedures related to the PACE Center operations.
- Coordinate and interpret PACE assessments.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: the content, intent, application and interpretation of all policies related to academics.

Skill in: explaining academic requirement and majors, in enforcing and interpreting policies; in giving public presentations; providing leadership to PACE Center; in interacting with parents, students, faculty, staff, and others.

Ability to: understand University PPS, University Catalog, schedule of classes, transcripts, and degree outline-summary; to write catalog copy, policy proposals, correspondence, and reports; to calculate individual GPAs and statistical parameters for aggregate GPA and interpret complex academic documents; to develop, read, understand, and interpret quantitative and qualitative research; to speak to both individuals and groups of people; to manage diverse groups of staff, faculty, and students; to serve on and lead committees.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Master's degree.

Assistant Dean (University Seminar), Advising

Job Code xxxxxxxx

General Description

Responsible for assisting the Dean of Advising in the overall coordination of University Seminar curriculum, faculty, as well as University Seminar initiatives and assessment.

Examples of Duties

- Assist Dean with oversight of University Seminar.
- Assist Dean with development and implementation of strategic plan and budget.
- Act as a liaison with academic departments.
- Hire, train, and supervise University Seminar faculty.
- Assist new students during the Orientation process.
- Serve as a representative of the PACE Center to colleges and division within the University and constituencies outside of Texas State.
- Serve as primary contact point for students, parents, and potential students pertaining to University Seminar -related questions, comments, or complaints.
- Interpret and implement policies and procedures related to the PACE Center operations.
- Coordinate and interpret University Seminar assessments.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: the content, intent, application and interpretation of all policies related to academics.

Skill in: developing curriculum; in enforcing and interpreting policies; in giving public presentations; providing leadership to PACE Center; in interacting with parents, students, faculty, staff, and others.

Ability to: understand University PPS, University Catalog, schedule of classes, transcripts, and degree outline-summary; to write catalog copy, policy proposals, correspondence, and reports; to interpret complex academic documents; to develop, read, understand, and interpret quantitative and qualitative research; to speak to both individuals and groups of people; to manage diverse groups of staff, faculty, and students; to serve on and lead committees.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Doctoral degree.

Academic Advisor I

Job Code 50011417

General Description

Responsible for providing quality undergraduate advising to majors and pre-majors and to serve as an advisor and resource to prospective students and their parents.

Examples of Duties

- Provide undergraduate academic advising for majors and pre-majors.
- Approve course majors for each semester.
- Assist students in interpreting degree outlines.
- Maintain transcripts and files of majors.
- Provide preliminary advising to prospective students and their parents.
- Talk with students who are having problems with their major about options.
- Coordinate with other academic departments regarding questions or problems students are experiencing.
- Attend college days and orientation meetings to provide preliminary advising and give group presentations.
- Provide clerical and administrative assistance to office.
- Provide data regarding number of students advised and other information as requested.
- Assist undeclared students in their academic progress by monitoring overall advising process.
- Conduct group and individual advising sessions.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: policies related to academics.

Skill in: working as a team member on most tasks of jobs, in interacting courteously with students, parents, and others; in explaining concepts clearly.

Ability to: understand and interpret department, school, and University requirements; to prepare correspondence and reports; to perform basic math.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Bachelor's degree.

Career Counselor

Job Code 00001447

General Description

This position will assist the Assistant Director / Dean, primarily in counseling students in their career development and decision-making, and contributing to the marketing of those services.

Examples of Duties

- Counsel students on career decisions using personal counseling, standardized career tests, and the Career Library.
- Compile and maintain case files on students seen.
- Maintain statistics on students to provide insight on effectiveness of program.
- Promote the department by making presentations.
- Assist in the training and appraisal of student workers and graduate students.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: counseling and career development theories; referral resources.

Skill in: preparing and editing clear, concise, and grammatically correct memos, letters, proposals, case notes, and articles; establishing rapport with a variety of clients; prioritizing workload; developing a plan to carryout career decision-making process; and coordinating events.

Ability to: interpret and explain standardized tests results; provide feedback and ideas to maximize people's career decisions; make presentations; perform basic math statistics; use computer software and email, produce documents and databases, and access the internet.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Master's degree.

Mentoring Coordinator

Job Code xxxxxxxx

General Description

Responsible for coordinating mentoring activities between students and faculty, staff, alumni, professional, and peer mentors.

Examples of Duties

Organize and promote mentoring opportunities for freshmen.

Conduct group and individual mentoring sessions.

Recruit potential faculty, staff, alumni, professional, and peer mentors.

Coordinate with other academic departments to recruit and train mentors.

Provide preliminary mentoring information to prospective students, current students, and their parents.

Attend college days and orientation meetings to provide information regarding mentoring activities.

Provide data regarding number of students and mentors engaged in mentoring activities and other information as requested.

Collaborate with other PACE Center personnel and with academic departments.

Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: mentoring theories and concepts.

Skill in: working as a team member on most tasks of jobs, in interacting courteously with students, parents, and others; in explaining concepts clearly.

Ability to: understand and interpret department, school, and University requirements; to prepare correspondence and reports; to perform basic math.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

Bachelor's degree.

College Faculty Liaison

General Description

Responsible for assisting students in exploring academic and career pathways and assuring freshmen a smooth transition from the PACE Center to the academic college advising center.

Examples of Duties

- Meet regularly with other liaisons and PACE leadership.
- Lead a committee of liaisons representing each academic department in the college.
- Coordinate and sponsor materials, activities, and events intended to develop an awareness of academic and career options and opportunities with the college.
- Provide estimation of scheduling of required courses.
- Provide updates on educational programs.
- Provide information and updates on options and electives.
- Sponsor major / career fairs and other means of gathering information related to career and educational opportunities.
- Help identify appropriate experiential opportunities.
- Guide students in identifying optional programs, assist students with aligning options to their interests and career goals, and monitor the inclusion of reflective statements in student portfolios.
- Provide updated information on registration requirements and scheduling.
- Assist students with the development of application letters, résumés and portfolios, and sponsor learning activities on impress management.
- Make lists of major-related organizations available and encourage participation.
- Ease transition from PACE Center to college advising center.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Knowledge of: University and academic policies.

Skill in: working as a team member on most tasks of jobs, speaking to both individuals and groups of people; managing diverse groups of staff, faculty, and students; serving on and leading committees; and interacting courteously with students, parents, and others; and explaining concepts clearly.

Ability to: understand and interpret department, school, and University requirements; prepare written materials, correspondence, and reports; and perform basic math.

Experience and Education

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Other Requirements

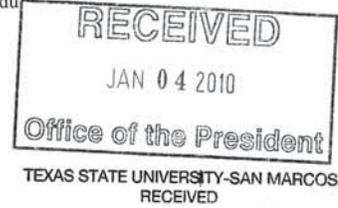
Terminal degree in academic field.

Appendix XI: Confirmation Letter from Chancellor



THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
Founded 1911

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Lamar State College-Port Arthur
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December 16, 2009

Dr. Denise M. Trauth
Texas State University-San Marcos
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Denise:

I understand that you are completing the preparation of your Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of your forthcoming Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' On-Site Committee Visit and that you are seeking formal confirmation regarding two items acted on at the November 2009 meeting of the Texas State University System Board of Regents.

Although the official minutes of the November 2009 Board of Regents Meeting will not be released for several weeks, I am writing to confirm that at that meeting the Board of Regents approved the two attached motions related to Texas State University's QEP:

1. Approval of the Design Development Documents for the Undergraduate Academic Center Project (Board of Regents Agenda, pages 288-289), and
2. Tuition and Fee Increase (Board of Regents Agenda, pages 129-130).

At the November meeting the Board of Regents approved both of these requests without modification, and these approvals will be included in the approved minutes when they are posted on the System Website at a future date.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles R. Matthews
Chancellor

CRM: cs

Enclosure: Board Orders (2)

JAN 06 2010

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST



Undergraduate Academic Center

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