

## Executive Summary

New River Community College's faculty, staff, and students have embraced a campus- and community-wide collaborative, data-driven process to develop and plan our Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan is a natural, deliberate, and strategic next step in our student success initiatives that have been developing for many years. Drawing on experiences and research internal to the college and from the broader literature on student success, the development and design process involved a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, the current plan has been approved and affirmed at many different levels of the college and wider community. Groups engaged in these processes range from our feeder high schools to new and returning students to college staff/faculty/administration and community business leaders.

NRCC's QEP is consistent with the core of the NRCC mission statement, "We give everyone the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened." The QEP goal is to improve student performance, persistence, retention, and, ultimately, graduation rates through goal setting/tracking and community building in the students' first semester. These themes and related student learning outcomes will be incorporated into several aspects of the students' first semester at NRCC. QEP components include, but are not limited to, an online pre-orientation module, an in-person orientation session, an open house kick off (for students and their supporters), and a four to nine credit first semester seminar (co-enrolled combination of two to three common first semester courses) - as well as faculty/staff professional development and strategies to support first-generation college families.

The plan grows out of prior student success initiatives at NRCC that have applied incremental, independent approaches to improving student success such as revisions to the developmental math program and broader efforts to make college more affordable through courses with low- or no-cost materials. Although these efforts have led to some improvement, the NRCC community concluded as it discussed and developed its QEP focus that chipping away at the edges of student success was never going to achieve the desired results. Formal and informal feedback from staff, faculty and students showed a consensus around the notion of the need for a cohesive approach to student success that the college could apply at scale with all students. Employing locally-developed technology and removing unnecessary siloes separating departments and functions at the college, NRCC's QEP represents a comprehensive and evolutionary approach to supporting students. NRCC calls this approach the intentional engagement model and the QEP – the First Semester Experience – is how it will be introduced in a meaningful way to students before they ever step foot on campus.