

Foothill College Quality Focus Essay

Introduction

Foothill College's Quality Focus Essay (QFE) was developed from its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). The QFE provides the college with an opportunity to delve more deeply into areas of improvement that are aligned with its mission in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes.

Topics for the QFE were identified during an accreditation leadership summit held November 25-26, 2016, which was attended by approximately 75 faculty, staff, administrators, and students. During the summit, teams reviewed accreditation standard findings and developed themes, which were then presented and discussed with the entire group. At the conclusion of event, the group agreed on several possible themes. The accreditation steering committee worked to further refine the themes and presented them to summit attendees at a meeting on January 18, 2017. After robust discussion, the group agreed to move forward with two topics. The topics were presented to the college's central governance group, the Planning and Resource Council (PaRC) on February 2, 2017, and the Board of Trustees of February 6, 2017. PaRC also had the opportunity to review the draft QFE and provide feedback in May 2017.

Background

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) states in its QFE guidelines that institutions are to identify two or three “action projects” for further study and action that have good potential for improving student outcomes. The projects should be related to the accreditation standards, emerge from the institution’s examination of its own effectiveness in accomplishing its mission in the context of student learning and student achievement, be based on the institution’s analysis of data collected, and identify areas of needed change, development, and improvement. QFE action project components should include identification of the projects, desired goals and outcomes, timeline, responsible parties, resources, and assessment. In general, the QFE is meant to:

“Provide the institution with multi-year, long-term directions for improvement and demonstrate the institution’s commitment to excellence. The areas identified in the essay will become critical focal points for the institution’s Midterm Report.”

Standards Related to Institutional Plans for Future Action

Participatory Governance

- I.B.1. The institution demonstrates a sustained, substantive and collegial **dialog** about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement.
- I.B.7. The institution **regularly evaluates** its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes **to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission.**
- IV.A.5. Through its system of board and institutional governance, the institution ensures the **appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives**; decision making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and **timely action** on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations.
- IV.A.7. Leadership roles and the **institution's governance and decision-making** policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated **to assure their integrity and effectiveness**. The institution **widely communicates** the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

Educational Pathways

- II.A.5. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, **course sequencing, time to completion**, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)
- II.A.6. The institution **schedules courses** in a manner that allows students **to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time** consistent with established expectations in higher education. (ER 9)
- II.A.7. The institution effectively uses **delivery modes**, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, **in support of equity in success for all students.**
- II.C.6. The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. The institution defines and advises students on **clear pathways** to complete degrees, certificate and transfer goals. (ER 16)

Foothill College Mission, Vision and Educational Master Plan Goals Related to QFE Topics

Mission

- Empower students to achieve their goals.
- Obtain equity in achievement of student outcomes.

Vision

- Students master content and skills which are critical for their future success.

Related Educational Master Plan Goals

- Create a culture of equity that promotes student success, particularly for underserved students.
- Strengthen a sense of community and commitment to the College's mission; expand participation from all constituencies in shared governance.

Related Educational Master Plan (EMP) Strategies

- Implement activities to improve achievement of student outcomes among those population groups experiencing disproportionate impact.
- Enhance support for online quality and growth for (internet/web-based) instruction and student services.
- Reduce barriers and facilitate students' ease of access across the District and region.
- Encourage student participation in leadership and activities outside the classroom (including service/work-based learning) that engages students with the College and the community.
- Provide effective onboarding, support and professional development for all college employees.
- Encourage employee participation in leadership and activities that engages them with the College and the community.
- Promote consistent and clear communication in order to create a more informed, cohesive and engaged community.
- Increase lifelong learning opportunities for our community.
- Promote decision-making that respects the diverse needs of the entire college community.

Identification of the Projects

I. Develop more clearly defined educational pathways, resulting in reduced time for students to complete their goals.

Desired Goals/Outcomes

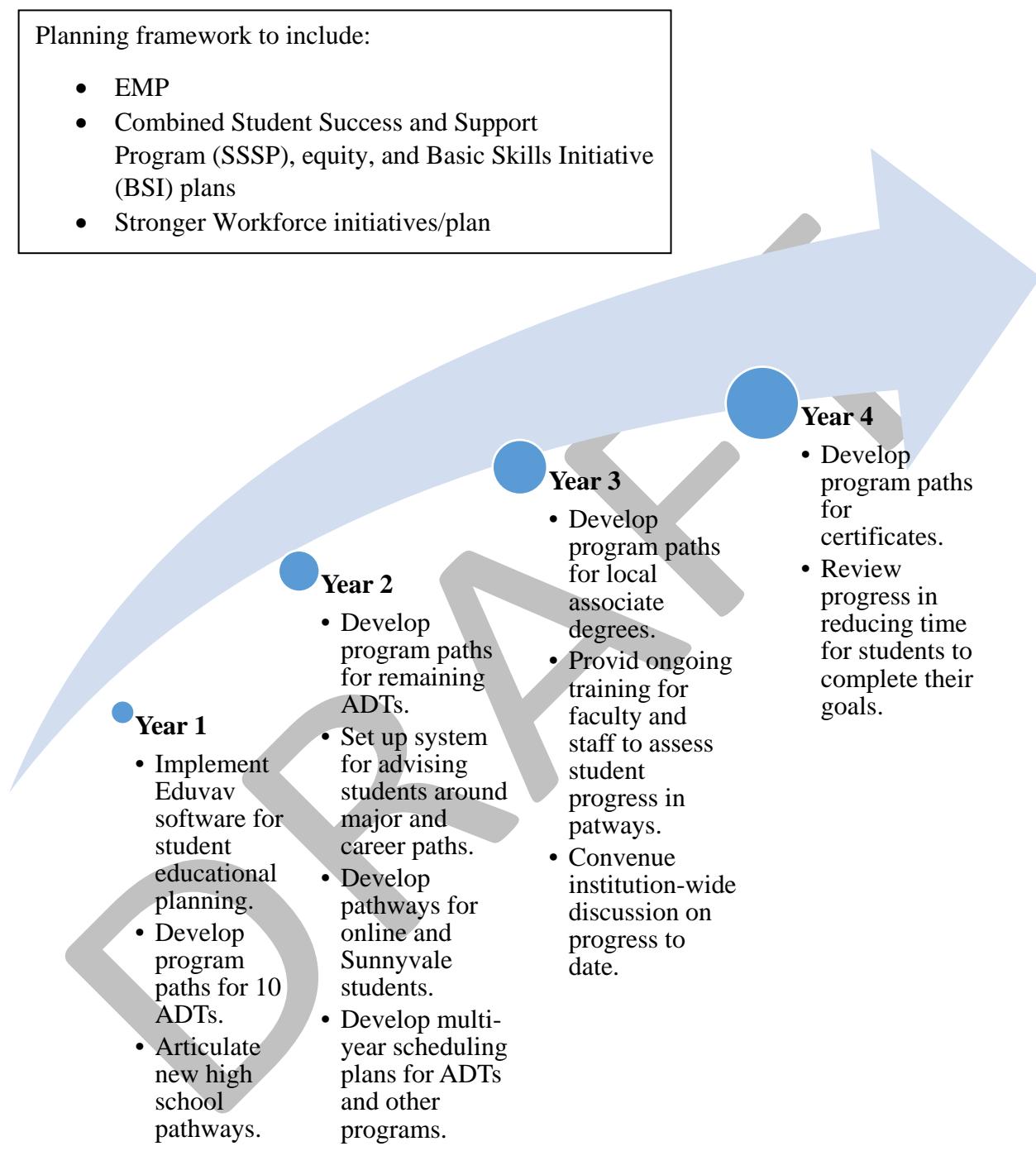
1. Develop and publish clear, structured academic program maps (suggested courses for each term) for all academic programs, beginning with associated degrees for transfer (ADT), that will allow students to complete within two years.
2. Develop one and two year scheduling plans to support the structured academic program maps that allow students to complete within two years.
3. Offer additional faculty mentoring, student counseling, support and academic service opportunities through multiple media and instructional methodologies, which help all students make an informed choice of major and/or career goal.

4. Develop information systems and staffing support to track students' progress in their education plans; identify students at risk of not progressing in a program; and intervene promptly with advising, academic, and other support to help those students resume progress or revise their education plan.
5. Develop reports using student educational planning data to project student course needs to facilitate obtainment of degree attainment and transfer. Track progress on related EMP metrics.
6. Review program requirements, starting with ADTs, to develop program pathway options unique to fully online students and for students taking all classes at the Sunnyvale Center.
7. Develop and implement professional development for pathway programs that provides tools to facilitate discussions within and between instructional and student services divisions and departments on removing barriers to program completion for students.
8. Collaborate with K-12 and 4-year partners to define new educational pathways to and from Foothill College.

Responsible Parties

The College's associate vice presidents (instruction, student services, and finance), presidents of the academic and classified senates, and the dean of equity programs will form a council to implement the actions outlined above. The council will work in conjunction with the Office of Equity, the Student Success and Retention Team, and the Student Learning Outcomes Committee.

Timeline for Implementing Educational Pathways (2017-18 to 2020-21)



II. Create a new college participatory governance system that actively involves a majority of college employees and is recognized by learning and dialogue about how to achieve college goals.

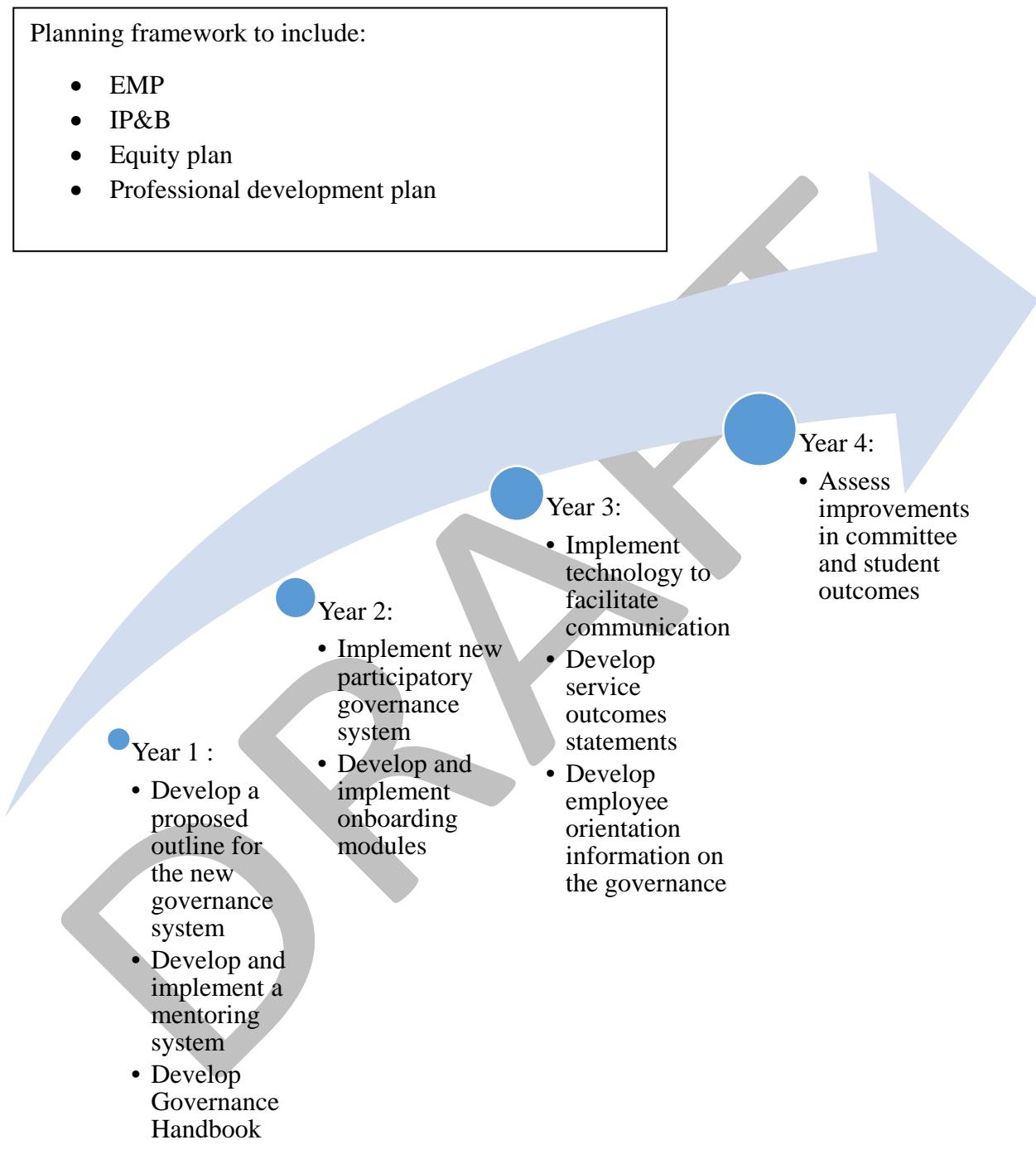
Desired Goals/Outcomes

- 1) Redesign participatory governance system that includes integrated planning that is the **common denominator for promoting equitable student outcomes**. Use the participatory governance meetings held in spring 2016 as a starting point. See minutes:
http://www.foothill.edu/president/parc/parc_archive2015-16.php
- 2) Develop a more efficient participatory governance system that allows deeper involvement, including:
 - a) Student voice
 - b) Discussion of student learning and achievement information
 - c) Standard meeting times for committees and department discussions
 - d) Meeting times when classes are not meeting
 - e) An examination of incentives to promote involvement
 - f) Development of service outcomes for the committees and a rubric for ongoing assessment
 - g) A process that integrates college planning and allocation efforts based on Educational Master Plan goals and metrics.
- 3) Develop information to be added to employee orientation (faculty and staff) on the governance structure and employee groups can participate
- 4) Create Online/Hybrid competency-based training modules for governance committee onboarding
- 5) Develop an online communication system by creating a “community of practice” around participatory governance committees
- 6) Develop a mentoring system for participatory governance to share institutional knowledge and effective practices
- 7) Review and revise our Governance Handbook to articulate each committee’s charge, membership and communication responsibilities.

Responsible Parties

The Associate Vice Presidents, Presidents of the Academic and Classified Senates, and the Dean of Equity Programs will form a council to implement the actions outlined above in conjunction with the Integrated Planning and Budget Committee, the Program Review Committee, and the Professional Development Committee.

Timeline for Implementing Participatory Governance Improvements (2017-18 to 2020-21)



Quality Focus Essay Projects

Resources

The college will use existing human, technological, physical and financial resources to meet the goals outlined in the QFE. Funding from the state's Student Equity program, the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) and Stronger Workforce will be allocated to this purpose when available and appropriate.

Assessment of Action Projects

Foothill College Institutional Research and Planning will annually evaluate progress in meeting the goals of the QFE, as well as its progress in meeting goals and timeline for the Action Projects. The college will assess the effectiveness of the plans, timeline, responsible parties and outcomes. Progress reports will be made to PaRC each quarter. PaRC will be responsible for annually reviewing the QFE goals in connection with Foothill's institutional metrics and the Educational Master Plan.