



Executive Summary

Best Start: First Year Experience Initiative

The mission of the Lone Star College System's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to enhance the learning environment for first-time-in-college (FTIC) students by helping them address two key issues that influence their sustained success in college: 1) clarifying an academic goal, and 2) addressing an identified barrier to achieving that goal.

The QEP focus was derived from broad-based input across the college system. Insights from this input revealed two critical principles about the first year experience (FYE) that guided the QEP development:

- Specific student needs emerged as key FYE focus areas:
 - Establishing a personal connection to college;
 - Developing an academic plan;
 - Recognizing and addressing challenges to success.
- Scalable strategies needed to be incorporated to engage more first-year students.

The initial phase of this plan will embed Best Start activities into existing student success courses, enhancing the expected student learning outcomes of those courses, with a specific portion of the institution's FTIC population being required to take one of the student success courses. An intrusive advising model will be incorporated into the student success courses and wide-scale training will take place for instructors and advisors.

The QEP will be evaluated utilizing quantitative and qualitative assessment instruments and techniques. The data gathered will determine how Lone Star College System will make adjustments and decisions about the plan. The institution's goal is to impact students' persistence in college, motivation to succeed, and completion of a degree.

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