

Geaux Pro: Improving Professional Communication Skills for Success in College and Careers
Nunez Community College

Katherine Lemoine, Director of Quality Enhancement Plan- klemoine@nunez.edu

Nunez Community College has identified and selected Improving Professional Communication for Success in College and Careers as the focus of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Through a college-wide conversation about student learning and professional success, a careful analysis of assessment data, and a review of feedback from employers, Geaux Pro: Improving Professional Communication for Success in College and Careers will empower and encourage Nunez students to improve their oral/verbal, written and digital communication skills through participation in high impact practices.

In reviewing research and best practices in planning Geaux Pro, it became clear that communication skills are formed for professional use within higher education experiences (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991). Digital, oral, and written communication skills are a necessity according to employers, who prefer to hire college completers who have spent time in developing their communication skills (Hart Research Associates 2013). When targeted skills are embedded throughout the curriculum using High Impact Practices, such as capstone courses, students are able to not only better relate to the key content but are also able to perceive the importance of the learning experience (Brownell & Swaner 2009). Through meaningful experiences with important key concepts students will experience a greater level of skill mastery and be better prepared for future career and academic aspirations.

Three aspects drive the QEP: student learning, professional development, and assessment. The plan incorporates written, oral and digital communication opportunities for practice and feedback in targeted courses across all academic programs of study. The assessment plan is at the pulse of the QEP wherein student learning and professional development initiatives will be directly and indirectly measured to determine improvement and inform instruction. By supporting faculty as they develop new pedagogical skills and apply these to targeted courses, Nunez will positively impact the success of students, develop mentors on campus, and support a culture of professional communication across the institution.