

## Executive Summary of ACCESS

### Title of Quality Enhancement Plan:

Academy's Center for Collegiate Excellence and Student Success (ACCESS)

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Overview of the Quality Enhancement Plan – ACCESS: The Academy is unique insofar as virtually all of its credit-bearing courses are delivered to its students through online distance learning utilizing an asynchronous, computer-mediated model. This model places a premium on the student's ability to effectively communicate with written language skills. Through a process of assessment under the aegis of the Academy's Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the consensus emerged that a program to build language and writing skills have the most far reaching and overall impact on educational outcomes for the institution. A secondary beneficial outcome would be to increase the consistency of faculty grading of student writing assignments.

The faculty has developed grading rubrics for both written assignments and term papers (research papers at the graduate level) that have been embedded in every online course offered by the institution. Concurrently, a faculty writing group developed 50 writing tutorial lessons divided into broad categories including 1) basic English and writing skills such as grammar, sentence structure, language mechanics and the general writing process; 2) two sets of tutorials for academic writing including plagiarism, citations, primary and secondary sources, bibliographies, etc.; 3) professional and technical writing such as letters, job descriptions, memoranda and white papers; and lastly, 4) job searches such as preparing resumes, letters of application, etc.

Insofar as the Academy already had in place an extensive technological infrastructure for the delivery of its online courses, the primary costs for developing ACCESS were personnel related, including faculty costs for the development of the rubrics and tutorials and that of the technological staff for embedding these in the Academy's Course Management System (CMS) and developing the underlying databases. Additionally, the Academy added to its Table of Organization an individual whose function is to grade student submissions in ACCESS and provide data on the same to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee thereby ameliorating faculty loads by relieving them of this added assignment.

The Academy's CMS operates entirely out of databases that capture huge amounts of information with respect to student and faculty activity in satisfying the academic demands of the various degree programs. As such, there are a number of mechanisms available for the collection of data associated with the implementation of ACCESS and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee has developed procedures and reports to be rendered on a systematic basis to gauge the effectiveness of the ACCESS plan in enhancing learning outcomes for the Academy's students.