



COLUMBUS TECH

Student Online Success



**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

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Executive Summary

Columbus Technical College (CTC) is committed to providing workforce development and supporting student success. To ensure that the College is preparing the workforce in the Chattahoochee Valley area, CTC's Quality Enhancement Plan is to close the gap between face-to-face and online course completion. Regardless of instructional modality, CTC seeks to empower students with the confidence to succeed in all coursework from their first course through completion. The QEP, Student Online Success (S.O.S.), focuses on the improvement of online course design, the implementation of an online instructor training to prepare instructors to teach online courses, and a training to prepare students for the online learning environment.

Student success is at the heart of Columbus Technical College's mission. As the College began to emerge from the fully remote work environment necessitated by the pandemic, it became evident that remote learning was an increasingly integral part of the college learning environment. As part of the College's ongoing process of continuous improvement involved the identification of a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic, and to involve as many constituencies as possible, several surveys were administered to various populations for the purpose of topic selection and refinement. As we returned to campus, faculty and staff were solicited for ideas. A QEP Committee was formed to analyze survey feedback and available data regarding course completion rates and student persistence. Students and community stakeholders were surveyed to help select a topic most valued by our six-county service area. Columbus Technical College is committed to providing workforce development and supporting student success in alignment with our Strategic Plan. Student Online Success (S.O.S.) became the topic of our new QEP, which aligns with our Strategic Goal 1 Objective: Expand improvements and initiatives to address student readiness for online learning.

To refine the area we would focus on, students again were asked for their input, and a literature review was conducted to identify best practices to support student success online. Students overwhelmingly wanted more direction on how to be successful, and the research pointed to up-front training on how to prepare for and persist through the online course environment as keys to successful

course completion. Columbus Technical College's QEP seeks to help close the gap between face-to-face and online course completion rates. The College began to explore the development of an online training to orient students with what to expect in an online course. The training would outline the technical skills, study habits, time management, and other online success strategies such as test-taking that are crucial to success in this modality. To allow CTC to launch this training as quickly as possible, we partnered with a web-based orientation vendor to assist with the setup of the S.O.S. training on their virtual platform. A soft launch of S.O.S. began in July 2022. All students and faculty can complete the S.O.S. training via the College's single sign on portal, OKTA. Regardless of the instructional delivery method, CTC seeks to empower students with the confidence to succeed in all coursework from their first course through completion. Our QEP includes a focus on the improvement of online course design and the implementation of instructor training to better prepare those teaching online courses.

To assess the effectiveness of our new QEP, student success outcomes were identified for course completion rates, student self-efficacy improvement, and student performance on a training post-test. CTC aims for the online training to close the achievement gap between online and on-campus courses. Historically, the online success rate lags the on-campus success rate by 5% to 18%. Initial analysis of pilot data is focused on high online enrollment courses with high failure rates.

I. Topic Selection

Columbus Technical College (CTC) is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). CTC is an open-access institution and admits all applicants who meet the general admission requirements. The College's mission is as follows:

CTC, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public college that provides workforce development and supports student success by offering associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates; customized training; and adult education opportunities throughout the six-county region of Chattahoochee Valley.

CTC is located in the Chattahoochee Valley area and serves the following Georgia Counties: Muscogee, Harris, Talbot, Stewart, Quitman and Chattahoochee. From academic year (AY) 2019 to 2023, the College's five-year enrollment average was 4,561, with the highest enrollment being the 2019-2020 academic year (4,899). The Covid-19 pandemic occurred simultaneously with the College's record-high enrollment, affecting the latter end of the academic year. With approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the College temporarily relocated instruction to solely online from March 13 – July 11, 2020. During this same period, the TCSG Commissioner waived placement requirements, allowing each TCSG College to "continue to use reasonable measures to evaluate students' readiness for specific programs that are consistent with the academic standards applicable to the program. Any evaluation processes used by colleges will not discriminate in any college or program admissions in accordance with the State Board Policy on Equal Opportunity." This effectively changed the College's student body in that, although it reduced barriers to admission, it also led the College to admit a population of students with reduced college readiness.

Mission, Vision, and Values

CTC utilizes its mission statement to guide institutional actions and strategies. The mission, in conjunction with the strategic plan, forms the foundation for the College's annual institutional planning process across all divisions, departments, and educational programs. From 2015-2020, the College operated under the Strategic Plan titled "Framing Our Future: Student Success, Workforce Development

and Community Empowerment.” Due to significant institutional shifts, including changes in administration (a new President was named in 2019), the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, and modifications to the TCSG strategic framework, CTC embarked on a strategic planning initiative in 2021, resulting in the formulation of a new strategic plan set to guide the institution over the next five years. The College’s 2023-2028 Strategic Plan currently serves as the framework for institutional planning, including all aspects of the College and supports mission fulfillment.

The College’s mission statement was revised during the 2023-2028 Strategic Planning process. The purpose of the revision was to ensure that the mission statement reflected the educational programs and levels of degrees offered at CTC. It described the distinctiveness of CTC and its stated vision and values. CTC’s Vision Statement and Values are as follows:

Vision Statement

Columbus Technical College will be the educational gateway to community prosperity.

Values

- **Integrity:** We will maintain integrity through professionalism, confidentiality, ethical behavior, and being accountable and honest.
- **Respect:** We have mutual respect for each other’s time, resources and different perspectives. We listen with empathy, work as a team, don’t take things personally, and adhere to policy and rules. Everyone can contribute and give and receive feedback.
- **Philanthropy / Stewardship:** We have a culture of philanthropy, stewardship, and volunteerism where people give of their time, talents, and resources for student success and support community service. Resources are utilized in an efficient and effective manner and are shared for the good of the college and community.
- **Teamwork:** We have an environment of collaboration, unity, and investment dedicated to the greater good of the college and the communities we serve.
- **Passion for Learning:** We are dedicated to intellectual curiosity, a commitment to scholarship, personal and professional growth, and critical thinking that leads to lifelong learning.

- **Quality:** We adhere to the highest standards of teaching and learning to facilitate success for all students in achieving their academic and occupational goals.

To ensure that planning is both continuous and integrated, the College hosts two Professional Learning Days per year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Attendance is required for all full-time faculty and staff. Each session begins with an overview and update of College Wide Planning with topics including assessment and Strategic Planning, an update on institutional initiatives with a State of the College Presentation from the President, and time for divisional planning.

The College's first post-pandemic Professional Learning Day was held on March 19, 2021. At this meeting and during the President's "State of the College" presentation, an announcement was made regarding the College's submission of the QEP Impact Report (Appendix A). The report was successfully submitted and reviewed. The previous QEP, Computer Literacy is Critical Knowledge (CLICK), had been fully implemented; the CLICK Lab was transitioning to the College's Computer Support Lab with 24 computers staffed by a full-time coordinator and part-time staff to support student learning and success through various technological services. The President encouraged faculty and staff to begin thinking about a new QEP topic in support of the 2025 SACSCOC Reaffirmation.

Following the March 2021 Professional Learning Day, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) polled faculty and staff to identify topics of institutional importance (Appendix B) to begin Phase I of topic identification for the next QEP. The OIER analyzed the results and identified six themes: Beginnings, Career Entry, Community Engagement, Distance/Online Learning, Mentoring, and Tutoring/Academic Performance. This information was presented to a newly developed Topic Selection Committee comprised of faculty and staff across several academic and non-academic divisions, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: QEP Topic Selection Committee

Name	Title	Division
Carol Jean Fuller	Math Department and QEP Chair	Academic Affairs (General Studies)
Nicole Jackson	Dean of Business (former)	Academic Affairs
Will Burgan	Dean of General Studies and Academic Support (former)	Academic Affairs
Matt Dennis	Dean of Health Sciences and Nursing	Academic Affairs
Dahmon King	Dean of Professional & Technical Services	Academic Affairs
Art Beveridge	Director, Distance Learning (former)	Academic Affairs
Amelia Mills	Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness	Institutional Effectiveness and Research
Christopher Cunningham	Director, Institutional Effectiveness Research (former)	Institutional Effectiveness and Research
Dr. Kermelle Hensley	Vice President of Academic Affairs (former)	Academic Affairs
Ken Lockhart	Director, Student Activities	Student Affairs
Dr. Felicia Harris	Director, Academic Advisement Center	Student Affairs
Betsy Bishop	Marketing & Branding Manager (former)	Public Relations and Communications
Ashleigh Cofer	Instructional Librarian (former)	Library Services
Henry Gross	Human Resources Director (former)	Administrative Services
Crystal Waye	Instructor, Business Division	Academic Affairs
Denesha Jordan	Instructor, Business Division	Academic Affairs
Kris Jain	Instructor, General Studies	Academic Affairs
Kellie Wilkes	Instructor, General Studies	Academic Affairs
Nenia Hale	Instructor, Professional & Technical Services	Academic Affairs
Angela Moore	Instructor, Respiratory Care	Academic Affairs
Natalie Downs	Instructor, ADN	Academic Affairs
Martin Wolf	Instructor, Culinary Arts	Academic Affairs

An initial QEP meeting was held on May 24, 2021 (Appendix C), and the results of the post-planning day survey were discussed. To narrow the number of possible topics, the committee evaluated data used in the assessment of the College's progress towards mission fulfillment. This included the evaluation of student achievement metrics, student learning outcomes (SLOs), and any other metrics that would allow the College to better serve its students. Using the topics from the planning day survey, the following additional data points were used to support the narrowing of the topic: enrollment, fall to spring retention, advisement, course enrollment, types of instructional methods, student satisfaction data (course evaluations), and course competencies.

After the discussion and review of the results, the QEP Chair administered an internal poll asking members to identify their top choice based on the following options: Improving the Quality of Institutional Advisement, Distance and Online Learning, Success in Math Courses, Improving Reading and Writing/ Critical Thinking, and Improving Tutoring (Appendix D). All topics were in alignment with the College's 2021 Strategic Plan.

1. Improving the Quality of Institutional Advisement

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objective 1a.9: Prepare students for success in next steps:
postsecondary education and employment

2. Distance and Online Learning

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objective 1a.2: Increase enrollment in distance education courses by 10% in the next five years

3. Success in Math Courses

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objective 1a.1: Increase retention rates by 5% in the next five years

4. Improving Reading and Writing/Critical Thinking Skills

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objective 1a.1: Increase retention rates by 5% in the next five years

5. Improving Tutoring

2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objective 1a.1: Increase retention rates by 5% in the next five years

From July-November 2021, the Committee met monthly to focus on selecting the final QEP topic. The top three choices by the Committee were used to develop a survey to collect feedback from faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. From August 20-30, 2021, a QEP Final Topic Selection Survey was administered to faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. Table 2 shows the results of the survey by subpopulation. The results of the survey showed areas of importance by demographic. The Community (defined as external stakeholders to include members of program advisory committees and members of the College's Local Advisory Board) rated Option 1 – Improving Reading/Writing/Critical Thinking Skills as their top choice. Faculty and Staff rated Option 2 – Improving Quality of Institutional Advisement as their top choice. Students, with the highest rate of participation in the survey, rated Option 3 – Improving Success in Online Learning as their top choice. The College received 303 responses; however, there were 500 survey interactions, but a large share of those never completed it.

Table 2: Final Topic Selection Survey Results by Subpopulation

Selection: Title	Total Count	Community Count	Comm. %	Students Count	Students %	Faculty & Staff Count	F&S %
Option 1: Improving Reading/Writing/Critical Thinking Skills	102	21	75.0	52	28.6	29	31.2
Option 2: Improving Quality of Institutional Advisement	72	3	10.7	35	19.2	34	36.6
Option 3: Improving Success in Online Learning	129	4	14.3	95	52.2	30	32.3
TOTALS	303	28	100.0	182	100.0	93	100.0

Based on the number of votes between all three subpopulations of stakeholders (129/303 = 42.60%), the QEP topic chosen was Option 3 – Improving Success in Online Learning. Phase II of the QEP Topic Selection process began at the September 27, 2021, QEP Committee meeting. The Committee aimed to determine what specific areas of online learning needed improvement and how to address those areas.

II. Support of Constituents

An evaluation of the previous Strategic Plan provided a historical snapshot of online learning from 2015-2020.

- Enrollment in distance education courses increased by 24.39%.
- The College launched a social media marketing campaign titled “Your Career Starts Here” in 2019. This increased advertising for online courses and programs.
- During the 2019 academic year, the College expanded student services to assist those students enrolled in the online environment. This included the implementation of a live chatbot, virtual enrollment services, online and virtual campus tours, social media-live workshops, and virtual student activities.

In November 2021, a survey was administered to students through the Blackboard Learning Management System and via email (Appendix E). Students were asked to select and rank the items which they believed would most improve their online courses. Students were asked to select at least four (4) items. However, nothing precluded students from ranking all eight (8). The rankings ranged from Most Important to Least Important. Two-hundred and sixty (260) students completed this section of the survey. Table 3 shows the rankings among students.

In April 2022, the committee solidified a focus on preparing students for success in the online learning environment using a student orientation designed for this purpose. CTC has ensured that all stakeholders had an opportunity to provide input and were engaged in the QEP topic selection process. Table 4 provides an overview of the methods used to maximize participation across all stakeholders in the selection of the QEP topic.

Table 3: Topic Narrowing Student Survey Results (Survey Section 3)

Category	Average Rank	Weighted Avg. Rank	Rank Score
Access to instructor/availability	1	1	1
Clearer instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)	4	3	3.5
More recorded sessions	3	4	3.5
More live sessions	2	6	4
Up-to-date info to explain course material	7	2	4.5
Clearer course design/navigation	6	5	5.5
Student technology training	5	7	6
Faculty technology training	8	8	8

Community partners are an integral part of the QEP process, from topic identification through plan implementation. Advisory Committees from various college programs were surveyed to garner their input on the most important QEP topics. These advisory committees include, but are not limited to, the Division of Business, the Division of General Studies, the Division of Health Science & Nursing, the Division of Professional & Technical Services, Economic Development, and the serviced K-12 School Districts in the College's six county service area.

Table 4: Methods Used to Involve Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Data Analysis	Planning Days	Surveys	Briefings
Faculty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administration		✓	✓	✓
Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students			✓	
Program Advisory Committees			✓	

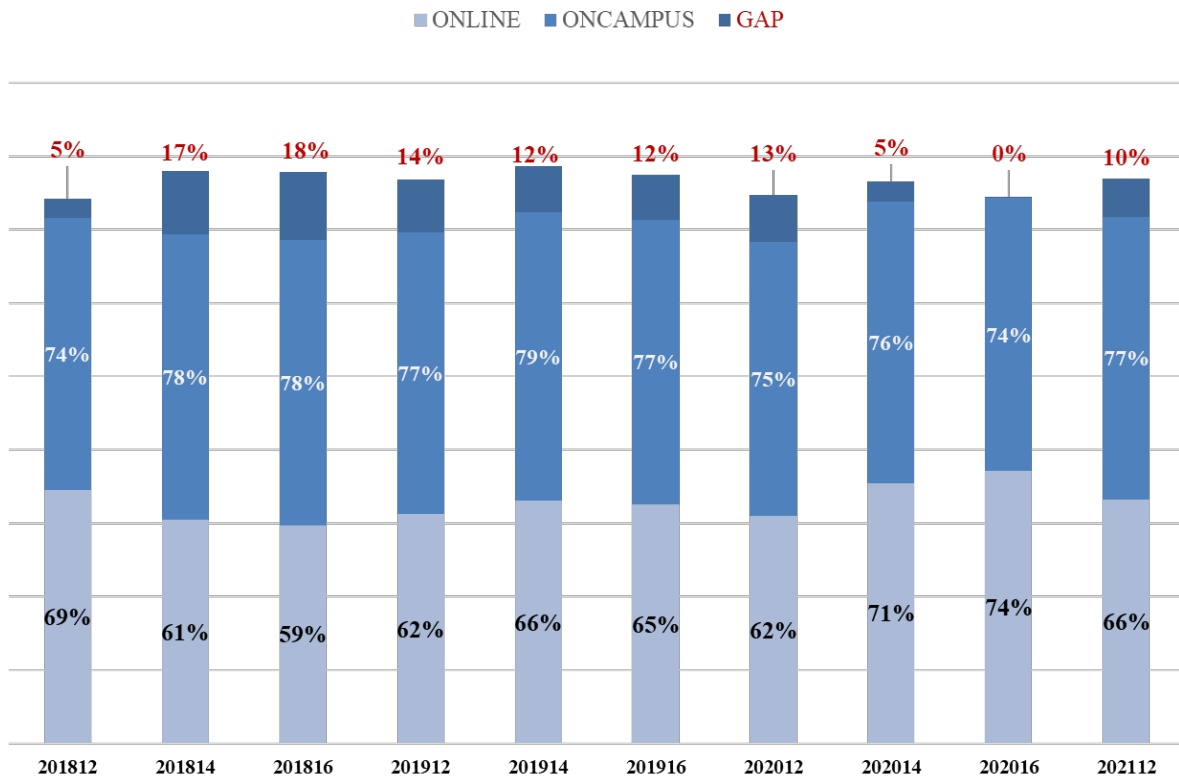
III. Focus

As the College began to move forward with the QEP topic focused on success in online learning, the College was also in the development phase of a new Strategic Plan. Using the previous strategic plan wrap-up, Online and On-Campus Completion rates, Student Survey Data, Course Evaluations, and stakeholder feedback, the College's new Strategic Plan identified Student Success as its top priority. Goal 1 is to "Provide quality, in-demand education and training that prepares students to add stackable credentials, enter the workforce, transfer credits, and progress in their career fields."

The QEP aligns with the following strategic objectives from the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan:

- **Goal 1 Objectives**
 - Increase academic program retention annually.
 - Support and expand the professional development of faculty and staff.
 - Expand improvements and initiatives to address student readiness for online learning.

CTC identified a gap in success between students who completed an online course and students who completed an on-campus course. An evaluation over a 10-semester period (from Fall 2017 to Fall 2020) shows an approximately 10.88 percentage point gap between the course completion rates of students who enrolled in courses online versus students who enrolled in face-to-face courses, with completion being defined as a student earning a C or higher; the QEP also defines successful completion as attainment of a course grade of C or better because there are some programs at CTC that will allow graduation with a grade of D in some courses, but not all programs allow this and not for all courses. All students in all courses who earn a grade of C or better are awarded credit towards graduation, so this definition will be used for all QEP analyses of this metric. Table 5 shows the gap between online and on course completion rates for this time period for all classes.

Table 5: QEP Baseline Data – Completion Rates

A detailed breakdown of online and face-to-face completion rates by course revealed the largest gaps in completion in the following courses: College Algebra (MATH 1111), Medical Terminology (ALHS 1090), Composition and Rhetoric (ENGL 1101), and Introduction to Computer Literacy (COMP 1000). Table 6 provides a breakdown of course completion by method of delivery for these courses over the same 10-semester period, with the largest gaps in ENGL 1101 and COMP 1000.

Table 6: QEP Baseline Data by Course

Time Period	MATH 1111	ALHS 1090	ENGL 1101	COMP 1000
Total 10 Semester Average	55.69%	67.37%	58.17%	70.50%
10 Semester Face-to-Face Average	54.59%	69.44%	59.22%	73.16%
10 Semester Online Average	59.58%	67.69%	51.95%	65.68%
Gaps in Performance *	-4.99%	1.75%	7.27%	7.88%

* Gap in Performance is calculated as Face-to-Face average minus the same period's Online average, so a positive gap means Face-to-Face is the higher average and a negative gap means Online is the higher.

The research data from the Literature Review combined with the College's own data on student performance gaps in online modality helped solidify the need to have an action plan to address the weaknesses defined in student support for online courses. With a new Strategic Plan, institutional support, and a QEP focused on Student Success, the QEP Committee, with approval from the President's Leadership Team (PLT), developed goals and outcomes to support student success in the online environment. These goals and outcomes were designed to support the College in identifying and removing barriers in online learning and to promote success for the growing population of students who were choosing to enroll in the online environment. From 2018 to 2024, the College experienced a 116% increase in online course offerings. As of academic year 2024, 70.55% of all students enrolled in at least one distance education course (defined as asynchronous and synchronous class type).

As a part of the College's mission, CTC aims to support student success in any capacity needed to achieve their goal of completing their program, and with the increase of online demand, this was a necessary area of focus. The College evaluated the training components that existed for students enrolled in distance education courses. Students were provided with information on logging into the Blackboard Learning Management System through their acceptance letter. Additionally, the College had an Online Learning/Distance Education webpage to introduce students to the online learning environment. The webpage provided information and external links to Blackboard Help videos and the Technical College System of Georgia's (TCSG) Georgia Virtual Technical Connection site. However, there was no consistent instructor involvement regarding training and instructors were not required to provide specific information in their online classes to support students in online courses to include technological requirements, online course expectations, and a general tutorial of navigating the Blackboard interface. Furthermore, students were unaware of the expectations required of online learners. For example, Table 7 demonstrates an earlier student survey administered by the OIER that revealed that students did not have a consistent understanding of what online learning consists of, which showed a need for the College to clearly define online learning for its students. (Note: students were allowed to select multiple items).

Table 7: Student Survey Identifying Online Learning

Question: What do you consider Online Learning?	Response Count	% of Completions
Remote learning via a computer with LIVE synchronous classes through Blackboard Collaborate/Webex, or Microsoft Teams	147	55.06
Self-paced remote learning via a computer with infrequent instructor interaction	142	53.18
Hybrid classes – part online, part in person	71	26.59
100% online classes with frequent instructor interaction	171	64.04

As the QEP began to take shape, faculty, staff, and students were provided with an opportunity to name the QEP. Of the three votes received, the name Student Online Success, shortened to S.O.S., received the majority vote for the final name. The logo with a life raft as a symbolic “lifesaver” for tools students can utilize for success in online learning was soon created thereafter.

Goals of the QEP

- Decrease the gap between online and face-to-face successful completion rates for the targeted courses by 2 percentage points annually. Successful completion is defined as earning a grade of C or higher.
- Improve students’ preparedness to take an online class. This goal is addressed with an online training to remediate student preparedness and increase student self-efficacy in the online environment.
- Implement online instructor training to prepare instructors to teach online more effectively. All instructors teaching QEP targeted courses will receive additional training.

Student Success Outcomes of the S.O.S.:

1. Students will apply strategies learned in the S.O.S. course to increase their success in online courses. Successful completion is defined as earning a grade of C or higher in identified courses.

2. Upon successful completion of the S.O.S. Training, students will increase their level of comfort with online learning on a Likert scale survey questionnaire given before and after the S.O.S. training.
3. Students enrolled in online courses with the QEP assignment will be able to identify the skills necessary to be successful in an online class as evidenced by successful completion of the S.O.S. knowledge check, which awards the S.O.S. certificate.

Literature Review

As the focus of the College's QEP began to solidify around improving student success in the online learning environment, a literature review was conducted to help identify the ways the College could help to improve student outcomes online. Student success can be influenced by many factors. Hatchey (2022) conducted an extensive integrated review that identified ten key student characteristics that can affect online enrollment and success: (1) G.P.A./academic preparation; (2) Ethnicity; (3) English as a Second Language (ESL); (4) Gender; (5) non-traditional status; (6) age; (7) family responsibilities; (8) employment; (9) student level; and (10) Socioeconomic status (SES).

Columbus Technical College serves a diverse student population that includes many non-traditional students new to college, with full-time or part-time employment and other responsibilities. Student success validates an intuition's ability to educate students and prepare them to be part of a dynamic workforce (McCormick & Lucas, 2014). Students may choose to leave school for various reasons, including lack of time or other problems, and those that stay may struggle to learn the material or find time to do the work needed to receive a good score (Lau, 2003). To increase success in online classes, administrators must create meaningful, mutually respectful learning environments that encourage students to accept responsibility for their role in learning (Lau, 2003).

Research suggests that one effective approach is a cooperative effort that involves various areas of the college working together to ensure that students have (and can find) the resources they need to be successful (McCormick & Lucas, 2014). The college provides resources for students that include academic support labs, a food bank, tutoring, library assistance, and student life activities, but the goal

was to increase awareness of those services for online students and provide other resources designed to increase their success in the online environment. Lau, et al. point out that many factors can affect student retention, but faculty roles are important to student success and persistence in a class (Lau, K. 2003, McCormich & Lucas, 2024). Students also have a role in their own success, but several factors can impact student performance in online classes, including the quality of the course design, faculty's competency, and the student's level of engagement (Amed et al., 2023). Factors that affect student retention can be varied and complex, so our literature review sought out success factors we could strive to address during their time on our campus.

Best practices have been identified in the research as the elements of an online experience that lead to student satisfaction, student success in terms of course completion, and retention of the student by the institution. Lockman and Schirmer's (2020) review of 104 online learning studies grouped effective institutional practices into five themes: (1) course design; (2) student support; (3) faculty pedagogy; (4) student engagement; and (5) student success factors. Several factors related to student success in the online environment were the same as those in the face-to-face classroom, with an orientation to online instruction being one of the student support factors unique to the online modality. Course design elements found to be effective in improving achievement and satisfaction included use of multiple learning resources, instructor feedback, and user-friendly online tools. Student interaction with online course content is reported as the engagement type most positively related to better grades and course satisfaction rather than interaction with instructors or peers, such as weekly activities in course modules, participation in tutoring, and posted videos. Lockman & Schirmer (2020) identified strong digital literacy skills (internet self-efficacy or readiness for e-learning) and strong motivation (personal self-efficacy) as student success factors and found that students needed to be trained in the technology required for online learning. Omotoy (2023) found self-efficacy, as associated with success in college, digital literacy, and reliable internet connectivity to have a positive influence. As they developed an instrument to measure online learning self-efficacy, Zimmerman & Kulikowich (2016) developed a measurement tool that focused on three subscales: learning online, time management, and use of technology.

Strategies for achieving success in online courses are in some ways like the traditional classroom but in some ways different. The absence of a scheduled class to attend can make estimating time commitment for classes difficult for students. They may also fail to plan for a time when they are free of distractions to study or complete assignments. Many of our online students may not be aware of the available support services, understand their purpose, or know how to access them. To further complicate their academic journey, navigating the Learning Management System (LMS) may be a new experience. Training that addresses gaps in a student's preparation for online instruction can increase self-efficacy, course completion, and semester-to-semester retention, all of which affect the college's mission of workforce development. The student success elements needed in an online orientation should be discussed and explained in a general overview of how to be a successful online learner. This short training will acclimate students to the LMS and get them ready for the demands of e-learning.

The impact of faculty on student performance and persistence in the online environment is well documented in the literature (Lau, 2003, McCormick & Lucas, 2014, Elliott & Oliver, 2016). Factors of influence that emerge from those studies include the need for focused teacher professional development to encourage innovative online course design and assessment strategies, instructor interaction, and prompt feedback (Van Dat, 2022, Lau, 2003). Effective professional development should be rooted in the institution's mission, become a part of the culture, and be supported by the administration (Elliott & Oliver, 2016). Faculty can take steps to improve the quality of their courses and enhance the relationship they have with their students. The relationship between faculty and students influences student engagement. When students are engaged, they are excited about learning, involved with their study materials, and interact more with their peers (Amerstorfer et al., 2021). Faculty can promote engagement by creating student-centered courses that make learning safe and fun and encourage a trusting relationship between faculty and students (Amerstorfer et al., 2021). Some practices instructors use to help students feel connected are establishing a presence in the class by creating a welcome video that reviews important information about the course, participating in discussions, providing feedback using personalized messages with relevant feedback, and using virtual feedback through video or audio (Hai-Jew, 2007).

Students also prefer to have the instructor's contact information, course rules, and consistent policies (Amerstorfer et al., 2021).

Students benefit from understanding what they are expected to learn and how they will be assessed (Taylor, 2009). Providing a course map increases students' level of independence in the course and their understanding of how to focus their time spent in the course to master what they should know or be able to accomplish (Taylor, 2009). Ensuring the alignment of instruction and tasks with the course objectives and creating assessments that are robust and reliable provides a structured documentation of the methods taken to teach, prepare, and test students enrolled in a course or program (Taylor, 2009). Students who use the syllabus regularly have a heightened sense of responsibility for their learning and can spend more time on the assignments instead of looking for information on what to do for each module (Mikolon, et al., 2022). Utilizing a course syllabus also enables a student to keep track of their course progress and what assignments are upcoming so that they may plan ahead and prepare.

In addition to ensuring an online student's sense of community in their courses, having a focus on inclusion is important in an online environment as students may come from a diverse background and struggle to read and understand content due to a lack of proficiency in the language, having cognitive problems, or not understanding the context because of cultural differences and backgrounds (Lowenthal & Lomellin, 2022). A current trend for students with disabilities is not to self-identify because they do not want to be singled out, meaning that faculty could have a student with a significant disability in their class and never know the problems the student encounters with the material. Maintaining a focus on selecting content that is accessible should be encouraged (Lowenthal & Lomellin, 2022). Likewise, students should be encouraged to approach their instructors about their learning disabilities and utilize campus resources. Keeping the course objectives in mind helps faculty resist the urge to include extraneous materials that can increase cognitive load, or the capacity of memory in terms of learning and instruction.

Researchers suggest that designers pay close attention to the cognitive load generated and align it with the desired outcomes. Current research indicates the need to consider how the experience of an activity or design feature can create cognitive load and yet still promote learning (Skulmowski & Xu,

2021). Experiences like virtual reality, immersive learning, and interactive media activities can reduce a learner's ability to absorb information because they may concentrate more on the experience than the material being presented (Skulmowski & Xu, 2021). Breaking long or complex material into three or four smaller segments can help improve short-term memory and make learning easier for students (Suppawittaya & Yasri, 2021).

IV. Implementation

In June 2022, a QEP Implementation Committee was organized to help design and roll out a student online readiness tool. Table 8 lists the members of the QEP Implementation Committee. A pre-pilot of the QEP started with a soft launch of the S.O.S. training and was introduced to faculty members in July 2022. Data from AY2023 was used to begin the QEP pilot in Fall Semester 2023 by comparing course completion between students in face-to-face and online sections of College Algebra (MATH 1111), Composition and Rhetoric (ENGL 1101), Introduction to Computer Literacy (COMP 1000) and Medical Terminology (ALHS 1090) as these were high enrollment, low completion rate online courses.

Table 8: QEP Implementation Committee

Name	Title	Department
Carol Jean Fuller	Math Department & QEP Chair	Academic Affairs
Will Burgan	Dean of General Studies and Academic Support (former)	Academic Affairs
Dr. Felicia Harris	Director, Academic Advisement Center	Student Affairs
Nenia Hale	Esthetics Instructor	Academic Affairs
Amelia Mills	Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness	Institutional Effectiveness
Leatha Cyprian	Criminal Justice, Program Director	Academic Affairs
Erika Shorey	General Education, Instructor	Academic Affairs
Denise Wells	Executive Director, Public Relations and Communications (former)	Public Relations and Communications
Chey Wilson	Executive Director, Enrollment Services	Student Affairs
Shelley Le	2022 Student of the Year (Graduate)	Student

A third-party software company with a staff instructional designer was hired to help the College design and deliver the training. S.O.S. training modules were developed to introduce students to the online learning environment. Within each module page that is not a survey or quiz there is an embedded video to watch, some brief text beneath the video that summarizes the key video points, and a sidebar

containing a Tip, Resource links, and Contact information related to this area of the training (Appendix F). Once developed, the modules were connected to the College’s single sign on platform for ease of access. An implementation timeline was developed as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: QEP Implementation Timeline

Key Activity	Pre-Plan 2022-2023	Pilot 2023-2024	Year 1 2024-2025	Year 2 2025-2026	Year 3 2026-2027	Year 4 2027-2028	Year 5 2028-2029
Milestone			SACSCOC On-Site Sept 2024				5 th Year Interim Report Due Sept 2030
S.O.S. Training (C. Fuller)	Development & OKTA App Launch	Add Self-Efficacy Survey; edit Knowledge Check	Update as needed	Update as needed	Update as needed	Update as needed	
Faculty Implement S.O.S. in targeted courses	Fall & Spring MATH 1111 ENGL 1101 COMP1000 ALHS 1090	Spring Add: PSYC 1101 SPCH 1101 MATH 1012	Fall & Spring add courses. pending OIER data analysis	Fall & Spring add courses. pending OIER data analysis	Fall & Spring add courses. pending OIER data analysis	Fall & Spring add courses. pending OIER data analysis	
Faculty PD (R. Clark)	Plan faculty training	Course Design Assistance	Course Design Assistance	Course Design Assistance	Course Design Assistance	Course Design Assistance	
Assess Data Identify Courses (A. Mills)	Create QEP assessment plan	Data analysis fall and spring semesters	Data analysis fall and spring semesters	Data analysis fall and spring semesters	Data analysis fall and spring semesters	Data analysis fall and spring semesters	

To begin the implementation process, data from MATH 1101, ENGL 1101, COMP 1000, and ALHS 1090 was collected during Fall Semester 2022. The President and the QEP Chair emailed instructors teaching online sections of these courses and asked them for their participation in the pilot.

Instructors were encouraged to ask their students to complete the S.O.S. training during the first few weeks of class and upload their certificates of completion to Blackboard.

A July 2022 Faculty Meeting was held to introduce the implementation timeline to all faculty. Additionally, the QEP's marketing and communication plan was introduced. Faculty were introduced to the QEP modules and the training platform. The QEP Director encouraged faculty to log into the platform and complete the training and provide feedback. The pilot would be introduced and communicated to students during New Student Orientation, Student Advisement, Email Blast to all students, Campus Signage, and S.O.S. Swag.

A College-wide update was provided during the College's Fall Semester Professional Learning Day (2022). Once implemented a QEP Steering Committee (Appendix G) was identified to provide ongoing support in the continued development of the QEP. Four other QEP Sub Committees have been formed since that time. The purpose of each committee is as follows.

- **QEP Writing and Editing Committee:** This group is responsible for the writing and editing of the QEP narrative document.
- **Video Preparation Sub Committee:** Write Video Script, set a date, identify faculty and staff (IE will identify students from the QEP Focus Group)
- **Instructor Training Sub Committee:** This group is responsible for ensuring that there is a faculty recognition celebration for all faculty who have earned S.O.S. Instructor Badge and completed the faculty training.
- **S.O.S. Student Learner Improvements Sub Committee:** This group is responsible for evaluating and analyzing the S.O.S. content to determine the information that needs to be updated, videos that need to be re-recorded, and outdated language to be removed/edited. This group is also responsible for evaluating student feedback to improve the quality of the training.

Pilot

To assist with planning, the QEP Committee launched a pilot during the 2023-2024 academic year. A pre-planning phase occurred during the year prior (2022-2023). After completing the S.O.S. Training, students must complete a Knowledge Check assessment with an 80% success rate to earn the S.O.S. Certificate. Results presented in Table 10 are for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 for one of the 10 questions: What skills are necessary to be successful in an online class? The correct response is: All of the Above. Each response represents a module presented during the S.O.S. Training.

Table 10: S.O.S. Knowledge Check Results (Pilot)

What skills are necessary to be successful in an online class?	Count	%
Academic Skills	14	1
Basic Technical Skills	214	9
Organizational Skills	37	2
Time Management Skills	46	2
All of the Above	2111	87
Response Totals	2422	100

The goal is for 100% of students to correctly answer this question. Table 10 shows that 87% of students did correctly identify that all the skills listed are necessary for success in the online environment. This is a formative assessment of outcome 1: students will be able to correctly identify the skills needed to be successful in an online course after completion of the S.O.S. online learner training.

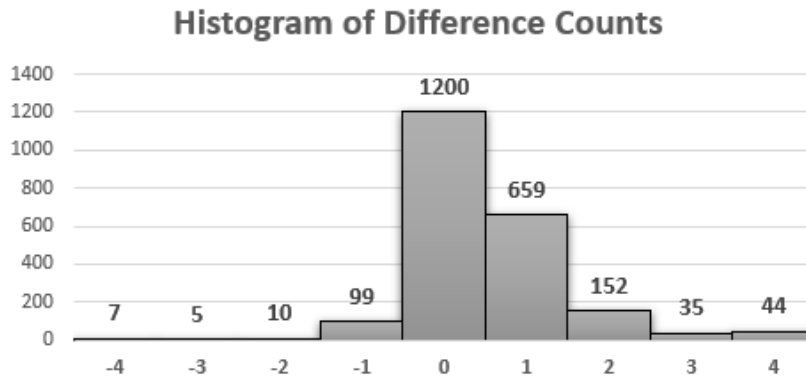
Students enrolled in the QEP pilot courses to include online sections of English Composition and Rhetoric (ENGL 1101), College Algebra (MATH 1111), Introductory Psychology (PSYC 1101), Introduction to Computers (COMP 1000), and Medical Terminology (ALHS 1090) were encouraged to complete the Student Online Success (S.O.S.) Training. To assess the following QEP outcome - Upon successful completion of the S.O.S. Training, students will increase their level of comfort with online learning, students were asked to rate their level of comfort with online learning. At the end of the training after completing the five (5) modules, students were asked once again to select their level of comfort with

online learning. The data presented here is from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters. Based on an analysis of pre and post test data, a matched pairs t-test indicates that students' performance on the pre and posttests increased at a statistically significant level Table 11.

Table 11: *S.O.S Pre-Post Test Self Efficacy Scores (Pilot)*

Statistic	Pre-Test	Post-Test
MEAN	3.930769231	4.419909502
STANDARD DEVIATION	0.9829482	0.720890671
OBSERVATIONS	2211	2211
DF	2210	2210
P(T<=t) TWO-TAIL	< 0.0001	

Of the 2,211 students who completed the pre and posttest, 40% reported at least a one-point increase in their level of comfort at the end of the training, 54% reported no change in their level of comfort, and 5% of students reported a decrease in their level of comfort after completing the training. The mean for the Pre-Test is 3.93 and the mean for the Post-Test is 4.42 (a 12.47% increase). There is more variation in the Pre-Test data with a standard deviation of 0.98 compared to the Post-Test standard deviation of 0.72 (a 26.65% reduction). A histogram of the difference count data shows a bell-shaped distribution which indicates the difference data is approximately normally distributed (see Table 12). The comfort level in the online learning environment is self-reported by the student before interacting with the S.O.S. online learner training and then again at the training's completion. The small percentage (5%) of students reporting a decrease in comfort level could be due to their now clearer understanding of what is expected in the online learning environment and a self-assessment of their readiness to meet those expectations.

Table 12: Histogram of Difference Counts Data

An analysis of pilot course pass rate data has been provided in Appendix G. The goal of a two-percentage point drop was not consistently met across the five subjects, but there is considerable evidence that (1) OL S.O.S. students did often catch up to the pass rate of F2F students, and (2) OL S.O.S. students often outperformed their OL non-S.O.S. classmates. There is substantial but not overwhelming evidence that the S.O.S. helped more students successfully complete their classes and helped lower the pass rate gap between online and F2F students.

Student Focus Groups

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) at Columbus Technical College (CTC) conducted three virtual focus groups in Spring Semester 2024 to better understand students' perceptions and experiences with the Quality Enhancement Plan's (QEP) Student Online Success (S.O.S.) initiative. These focus groups were designed to gather in-depth feedback from students who have engaged with the S.O.S. program, aiming to identify its strengths, areas for improvement, and the overall impact on student preparedness and confidence in navigating online courses.

The S.O.S. program seeks to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in an online learning environment. Understanding that online education can present unique challenges, the S.O.S. initiative offers a series of modules covering essential topics such as time management, study strategies, and the effective use of learning management systems.

There were five students who participated in the focus groups. The feedback collected through these focus groups is invaluable, offering insights directly from the student body. This analysis aims to synthesize the key themes, insights, and recommendations that emerged from the discussions, providing a comprehensive overview of the students' experiences with the S.O.S. program (Appendix H). Through this examination, the OIER seeks to enhance the effectiveness of the S.O.S. initiative, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving needs of students and supports their academic success in the online learning landscape.

V. Commitment of Resources

Recognizing that *Student Online Success* requires the support of a broad cross section of stakeholders, in addition to the QEP Steering Committee, Table 13 summarizes the various groups, organizations, and services involved in the overall QEP process, from topic identification to result assessment.

Table 13: Stakeholder Involvement in Quality Enhancement Plan Phases

Stakeholders	Identification	Development	Implementation	Assessment
Internal				
Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓
Faculty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advisory Committees				
Division of Business	✓			
Division of General Studies	✓			
Health Science & Nursing	✓			
Professional & Technical Services	✓			
Economic Development	✓			
Service Area K-12 School Districts	✓		✓	

The collaborative efforts of the full spectrum of stakeholders in the QEP process are described below for each plan phase. College administration has supported the development of the QEP administratively and financially since the pre-planning phase that began in AY 2022-2023 as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Budget

Item	Pre-Plan 2022-23	Pilot 2023-24	Year 1 2024-25	Year 2 2025-26	Year 3 2026-27	Year 4 2027-28	Year 5 2028-29	Totals
Innovative Educators	\$17,99	\$9,995	\$9,995	\$9,995	\$9,995	\$9,995	\$9,995	\$77,965
QEP Chair Partial Salary	\$49,000	\$37,138	\$25,276	\$25,276	\$25,276	\$25,276	\$25,276	\$212,518
QEP Promotional Items Swag)	\$3,563	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$24,563
Articulate 360		\$699						\$699
Video			\$5000					\$5,000
Data Analysis Vendor		\$5,000	\$5,000					\$10,000
Instructional Design		\$36,456	\$36,456	\$36,456	\$36,456	\$36,456	\$36,456	\$218,736
Faculty e-learning TCC (\$400 per faculty) *		\$6,800	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$12,800
Totals	\$70,558	\$99,588	\$86,427	\$76,427	\$76,427	\$76,427	\$76,427	\$562,281

**Spring 2024 there are 27 different online instructors; 17 of whom completed the S.O.S. course development training. Future years budget for 3 additional faculty TCCs annually.*

The College’s Director of Distance Learning provided valuable input to help streamline the amount of wording used within the S.O.S. training. She also developed a faculty training program for online instructors that will be structured as a Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in eLearning course design.

Faculty Professional Development

One gap identified while planning for CTC’s QEP implementation is the need for a professional development program for faculty that provides a framework for designing and teaching online courses and creating a positive and responsive learning environment. Faculty training is being developed to help

define and support the instructor's role in the success of the online courses at CTC. The training will focus on course design, student awareness of resources in an online course, and best practices to encourage engagement and motivation. The training will help faculty develop a syllabus complete with course and module objectives, a course map, and module overviews. Faculty members who complete the online training will receive a badge to mark their readiness to participate in the courses taught to the standards developed as part of CTC's QEP project. The first cohort of faculty completed the training in spring of 2023.

Figure 1 Student Online Success Digital Badge



Faculty Training Overview

The first part of the faculty training will introduce the QEP project and give the dates for important events in the project timeline. The Project Overview section of the training will describe the QEP requirements for instructors and a list of items that instructors will include in each course (Project deliverables). The overview section focuses on course design and will also provide detailed instructions for creating measurable course and module objectives and a course map that visually illustrates the alignment of the course and module objectives to the instruction, activities, and assessments in the course. Creating a course map helps instructors ensure that their course objectives align and gives a visual outline showing how the course objectives are taught and assessed.

Increasing student independence in a course is enhanced by providing a printable schedule, module overviews that help guide the student through the work, and a detailed syllabus to provide information about the course structure and scoring. CTC designed templates for the course map, module overview, printable schedule, and the syllabus to ensure consistency and provide students with the information they need to succeed in the class beyond the instructor's contact information. The syllabus template provides information about services, policies, and resources the students may need including an overview of the planned instruction, grading scheme, textbook and technology requirements. Faculty teaching S.O.S. targeted courses are asked to include a short welcome video to help students feel more connected to the class and less like they are working alone with no guidance.

Best Practices for Teaching Online

The next section of the faculty training covers best practices for teaching online that include how to select instructional material. Course designers are encouraged to select content that is relevant to the achievement of the course objectives and is as inclusive and accessible as possible with a focus on the student and how they will use the material to achieve each objective. Selected learning materials should help students get the information and practice needed to excel in their assignments and assessments. The training encourages faculty to think about the whole experience through the student's eyes to help them decide what delivery methods will work best in their classes and to break large lessons or complicated concepts into workable chunks for students.

The Teaching Environment

Creating a welcoming and safe environment for the student that builds mutual trust in an online class is enhanced by a variety of components that help students feel comfortable and connected to the class and the instructor. Students also want clearly established rules to help them understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from the instructor. Table 15 outlines the Faculty Training Components. During the training, faculty will learn about ways to establish trust and other best practices

that will help them teach online courses. The best practices presented in this training cover concepts that include:

1. Instructor Presence
2. Clear Expectations
3. Learning Objectives
4. Prompt Feedback
5. Engaging Students
6. Real World Experiences
7. Teaching Online

Faculty will take a comprehensive exam at the end of the training, and those passing the exam will earn a digital badge. The badge will be worth three educational credits and be available for the faculty member to add to his or her resume or digital badge collection.

Table 15: Faculty Training Components

Project Overview	Teaching Online	Teaching Environment
<p>Describes the QEP and the requirements for instructors.</p> <p>Instructions for creating a course map showing the alignment of course objectives, module objectives, instruction, and assessment.</p> <p>An explanation of items in the list of deliverables to be included in each of the QEP courses.</p> <p>List of Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllabus - Module overview - Printable schedule - Common S.O.S. assignment 	<p>Provides information about selecting course material.</p> <p>Suggestions for creating an inviting learning environment.</p> <p>Overview of accessibility/diversity concerns</p> <p>Suggestions to include a video welcome to the course.</p>	<p>Best practices for establishing trust and teaching online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructor presence - Real world application of course concepts - Teaching online students - Setting clear expectations - Creating actionable, measurable, and achievable course/module objectives - Providing prompt and engaging feedback - Engaging students online

During the Spring 2024 semester, seventeen faculty completed the QEP Faculty Training. Faculty responses to the end-of-training evaluation survey are shown in Table 16. Findings show that overall, faculty found the training to be helpful for effective online course development and implementation.

Table 16: Faculty End-of-Training Evaluation Survey Responses

Survey Question Number	Question Text	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
1	Training was an effective use of my time.	8	8	1	0	3.41
2	The training adequately explained the instructional design requirements for the QEP project faculty.	9	7	1	0	3.47
3	This course covered the right amount of material.	8	8	1	0	3.41
4	The training clearly explained the role and responsibilities of faculty who teach a course that is included in the QEP Project.	9	7	1	0	3.47
5	The pace of the training was just right.	8	9	0	0	3.47
6	The delivery mode used to complete the class was easy to use.	9	8	0	0	3.53
7	The content of the course was relevant to the responsibilities of the QEP project.	10	7	0	0	3.59
8	The material included in the course was just right.	8	9	0	0	3.47
9	I would recommend this training to others in my division.	7	9	1	0	3.35

VI. Assessment

Columbus Technical College is committed to assessing the extent to which QEP goals and outcomes have been achieved. The QEP Committee has identified multiple methods of assessment to include formative and summative assessments. To ensure that the assessment has been fully integrated into the College's Institutional Planning process, QEP Outcomes have been aligned to CTC 2023-2028 Strategic Planning objectives. The QEP Chair in collaboration with the OIER will be responsible for analyzing and presenting the data to the QEP Committee and the College. Goals 1 and 2 of the QEP, the corresponding QEP Student Success Outcomes, assessment methods, frequency of assessment, and the individuals responsible for ensuring that the assessment is occurring and analyzing the data are shown in Tables 17 and 18.

Student feedback on the Student Online Success training will be collected in an end-of-training survey before awarding a certificate to the completer. Student responses will be analyzed annually by the QEP director to identify needed changes to the training. Throughout the life of the QEP, online students will play an important role as they complete the Student Online Success training and their associated CTC online courses.

Faculty teaching online courses targeted for S.O.S. assessment will be introduced at the beginning of each semester, as early in the semester as possible, to assist faculty and the College in providing targeted interventions to help students with a successful course completion.

Table 17: Assessment Plan Overview QEP Goal 1

QEP Goal 1: Decrease the gap between online and face-to-face successful completion rates for the targeted courses by 2 percentage points annually. Successful completion is defined as earning a grade of C or higher.

CTC Strategic Goal	CTC Strategic Objective	QEP Outcome	Assessments	Frequency	Responsible Office or Individuals
CTC Goal 1: Student Success	Increase academic program retention annually.	Students will apply strategies learned in the S.O.S. course to increase their success in online courses. Successful completion is defined as earning a grade of C or higher in identified courses	Comparative analysis between face-to-face and online courses that are QEP participants (F2F vs Online).	Every Semester	OIER
			----- Student Satisfaction Survey	Every Spring	OIER
			----- Student Success Evaluation (Post-knowledge check survey).	Every Semester	OIER, QEP Committee
			----- Institution-wide comparative analysis of Face-to-face and Online completion over the life of the QEP.	Annual	OIER
			Course Evaluations	Every Semester	

Table 18: Assessment Plan Overview QEP Goal 2

QEP Goal 2: Improve students’ preparedness to take an online class. This goal is addressed with an online training to remediate student preparedness and increase student self-efficacy in the online environment.

CTC Strategic Goal	CTC Strategic Objective	QEP Outcome	Assessments	Frequency	Responsible Office or Individuals
CTC Goal 1: Student Success	Expand improvements and initiatives to address student readiness in online learning.	Students enrolled in online courses with the QEP assignment will be able to identify the skills necessary to be successful in an online class as evidenced by successful completion of the S.O.S. knowledge check, which awards the S.O.S. certificate.	CTC Student Online Success Knowledge Check Q: What skills are necessary to be successful in an online class? -----	Every Semester	OIER, QEP Committee
			S.O.S. Assignment (embedded in the pilot courses and graded by the instructor using a rubric)	Every Semester	Instructors
CTC Goal 1: Student Success	Expand improvements and initiatives to address student readiness in online learning.	Upon successful completion of the S.O.S. Training, students will increase their level of comfort with online learning on a Likert scale survey questionnaire given before and after the S.O.S. training.	Pre/Post Self-Efficacy Question in the S.O.S. module: Select the level of comfort you have with online learning at this time.	Every Semester	OIER, QEP Committee

The QEP assessment plan has a combination of formative and summative assessments to provide the QEP committee with the information to make continuous improvements at various intervals (semesterly and annually). The formative assessments are as follows:

- **S.O.S. Module Quizzes** – Throughout the S.O.S. training and at the end key modules, students are quizzed to assess their level of understanding on each module. The results of these quizzes do not affect students’ ability to move on to the next module. This direct assessment method Students are provided with feedback regardless of how they answer each question (Appendix I)
- **Pre- and Post- Test Self Efficacy Question-** Prior to the start of the S.O.S. training, students are asked to rate their level of comfort with online learning. At the end of the training, students are asked the same question. This direct assessment assesses students’ belief in themselves to be successful in the online environment.
- **S.O.S. End of Training Survey** – This indirect assessment provides students with an opportunity to provide feedback on the design and material included in the S.O.S. training. A reflection question has been included in this survey. Feedback from this survey will be reviewed at the end of each semester to ensure that students’ feedback has been reviewed, received, and used to make adjustments to the training as necessary (Appendix J)
- **Student Satisfaction Surveys** – The College administers an internal student satisfaction survey each spring semester. The results of this survey will be used to provide feedback on the College’s overall progress toward supporting students in the online environment. Additionally, this survey will provide information on students’ satisfaction and interaction with on-campus resources including but not limited to student support services to include tutoring, new student orientation, advisement, counseling, library services.

The summative assessments included in the QEP assessment plan are as follows:

- **S.O.S. In-Class Assignment** – Students in a QEP course are given an assignment within the first two weeks of the semester. This assignment is graded using the rubric shown in Appendix K. Students must complete the training, upload their certificate to an in-class discussion posting, and reply to two of their peers describing what they found to be most helpful about the S.O.S.

training. Students’ participation is graded and to receive full credit, they must create a thread and reply to two of their peers.

- **S.O.S. Knowledge Check Quiz** – This 10-question quiz is administered at the completion of the S.O.S. training. Students must score 80% or higher to earn the S.O.S. certificate (Appendix L).
- **Final Course Grades** – At the end of each semester a comparative analysis between face-to-face and online course success, specifically those courses that have been identified as high enrollment low success, will be conducted. Annually, an institution-wide comparative analysis will be completed to evaluate the goal of closing the gap between face-to-face and online course success.

An additional goal of the QEP that is not directly assessed through a student success outcome is to implement online instructor training to prepare instructors to teach online more effectively. All instructors teaching QEP targeted courses will receive additional training. An additional assessment plan has been created to support the addition of the faculty training as shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Assessment of Faculty Development Related to the QEP

QEP Goal 3: Implement online instructor training to prepare instructors to teach online more effectively. All instructors teaching QEP targeted courses will receive additional training.

CTC Strategic Goal	CTC Strategic Objective	Faculty Development Outcome Related to the QEP	Assessment	Frequency	Responsible Office/ Individuals
CTC Goal 1: Student Success	Support and expand the professional development of faculty and staff.	Implement a faculty training to prepare instructors to teach online more effectively	Faculty Completion of Internal and External Online Course Preparation (Badge Results) ----- Post-Training Faculty Evaluation	Annually ----- Every Semester	Director of Distance Learning and Academic Affairs

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APPENDIX A: March 19, 2021 Professional Learning Day Agenda**Planning Day Agenda March 2021**

Division	Business	Health Science	Prof & Tech.	Gen Ed	Student Affairs
Room	P315	P100	P202	L600	P407
8:30 A	FERPA Training Sylvia Dansby	State of the College and QEP Topic Discussion: Martha Ann Todd	Online Course Evaluation Rubric Discussion: Dr. Kermelle Hensley	Methods of Student Engagement for Instruction: Dr. Jean Ruffin	Divisional Updates and Planning
8:45 A					
9:00 A					
9:15 A					
9:30 A	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
9:45 A	Methods of Student Engagement for Instruction: Dr. Jean Ruffin	FERPA Training: Sylvia Dansby	State of the College and QEP Topic Discussion: Martha Ann Todd	Online Course Evaluation Rubric Discussion: Dr. Kermelle Hensley	Recruitment and Marketing Strategies in the New Normal: SA Leaders
10:00 A					
10:15 A					
10:30 A					
10:45 A	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11:00 A	Online Course Evaluation Rubric Discussion: Dr. Kermelle Hensley	Methods of Student Engagement for Instruction: Dr. Jean Ruffin	FERPA Training Sylvia Dansby	State of the College and QEP Topic Discussion: Martha Ann Todd	CSM & Target X
11:15 A					TEAMS Alert for Bus. Office, FA, Registrar's Office
11:30 A					
11:45 A					
12:00 P	Lunch (on your own)	Lunch (on your own)	Lunch (on your own)	Lunch (on your own)	State of the College and QEP Topic Discussion: Martha Ann Todd
12:15 P					
12:30 P					
12:45 P					
1:00 P	State of the College and QEP Topic Discussion: Martha Ann Todd	Online Course Evaluation Rubric Discussion: Dr. Kermelle Hensley	Methods of Student Engagement for Instruction: Dr. Jean Ruffin	FERPA Training Sylvia Dansby	Lunch (on your own)
1:15 P					
1:30 P					
1:45 P					
2:00 P	Title IX Training: Brannan Jones	Title IX Training: Brannan Jones	Title IX Training: Brannan Jones	Title IX Training: Brannan Jones	Title IX Training: Brannan Jones
2:15 P					
2:30 P					
2:45 to 5:00 PM	Divisional Planning	Divisional Planning	Divisional Planning	Divisional Planning	Divisional Planning

APPENDIX B: Post-Planning Day QEP Topic Ideas Survey Results (March 2021)

President Martha Ann Todd gave a briefing to each division at Planning Day on March 19, 2021, regarding the QEP topic selection survey faculty and staff were to receive the following day. \

The office of OIER administered a topic idea survey to all faculty and staff in March 2021. If a proposed name was given the name is included. If no name was proposed, the proposed name box is blank:

I. Beginnings	
Proposed Name	Topic
	We need a Successful Start Center so we can put students on the path to succeed sooner from the start. Before students apply to our college, they need to be advised/educated/counseled more on financial aid especially the HOPE Grant/Career Grant. Students need to understand their path for success when it comes to picking a major and how it relates to their financial aid. The Admissions Office processes data and documents and does not advise/counsel. By the time a student is registering, it may be too late or too busy for them to be advised/counseled on changing their major to help them with their financial aid. It can also be a tiresome process to get their majors changed or they do not realize that they should be in a different major until after their first semester here. We need to catch them at the very beginning of the process, which would also help with retention. Students apply for admission and do their FAFSA but receive no training on how it will help them with their career goals. Students are choosing a major based on what they see on the admissions application, but they do not know how that relates to their financial aid. The general public is not aware of the HOPE Grant opportunities we offer. Everyone knows about HOPE Scholarship but not everyone qualifies for it. Potential students need more education on picking a CTC major and how it relates to their Financial Aid with us. How can we expect students to succeed sooner if they don't know the best way to get started?

II. Career Entry	
Proposed Name	Topic
	To offer more grants and career placement services
	Improving student career readiness through student engagement via career research, active and collaborative learning opportunities in the classroom, and career/soft skills practice.
ACE IT!	Achieve Careers Everlasting in Tech at Columbus Technical College!

III. Community Engagement	
Proposed Name	Topic
ICare	Conservation in our local parks
Collaboration Through	A campus donation-based food pantry for students and offers food for very affordable prices (or free based on need). Students from business tracks can volunteer their time and learn how to run a small-scale business by taking

III. Community Engagement	
Proposed Name	Topic
Compassion (CTC) Food Pantry	inventories, recognizing what products are needed the most, and conducting outreach for donations via advertising and networking. CTC could offer perks to students who volunteer in the food pantry. This would benefit students who are in need, provide a space for students to practice running a business, facilitate a spirit of giving, and create more of a sense of community on campus.

IV. Complaints, too broad or lacks focus	
Proposed Name	Topic
	The next QEP should include fully staffing the program areas. This allows students to receive instruction and help from another skilled instructor. This would also prevent burnout from one instructor as well as providing assistance within the program area.
	Develop better Instructors and staff to become better coaches to improve and enhance students' learning outcomes.
	More hands-on classes designed to have the students ready to work in their field. Also courses that engage the students in real life situations.
	Strengthening our community(workforce?), one student (graduate?) at the time.

V. Distance/Online Learning	
Proposed Name	Topic
	Academic integrity, specifically in the online learning environment and/or growth mindset for student success.
Strengthening engagement and instruction in virtual learning	Non-traditional teaching methods that strengthen student engagement and virtual learning

VI. Mentoring	
Proposed Name	Topic
Success through Mentorship	A formalized mentorship of all students to enhance engagement and academic success.
	Mentorship and career exploration as a means of improving the college experience and aligning student academic goals with student strengths.

VII.Tutoring/Academic Performance	
Proposed Name	Topic
T.U.T.O.R.	T--- Teaching/Teachers U --- Using T --- Tutoring to O --- Overcome R --- Repeating
Write About It: Columbus Technical College QEP goals are as simple as 1...2...3!	Goal #1: To develop students' ability to apply the rules of standard written English in writing assignments such as essays and research papers. Goal #2: To increase effective writing that addresses purpose, audience, and voice at the college level. Goal #3: To master the writing process as recursive: drafting, writing, revision, and editing, enforced through Learning Communities. Columbus Technical College's QEP topic is titled, Write About It! and focuses on improving students' writing skills through a series of interventions that will eventually lead to increased retention and graduation rates. (Texas College, 2021)

APPENDIX C: May 24, 2021, QEP Meeting

Attendance Roster, Minutes, Roster, and QEP Committee Report (Virtual Attendance)

CTC QEP Committee Meeting

928 Manchester Expressway, Columbus, GA 31904
 Room P-607, Monday, May 24th, 2021

Meeting Minutes
 May 24, 2021

Attendees:

Members Present:	Members Present Virtually
Carol Fuller	Matt Dennis
Nicole Jackson	Henry Gross
Will Burgan	Felicia Harris
Dahmon King	Kelli Wilkes
Art Beveridge	
Amelia Mills	Members Absent:
Christopher Cunningham	Betsy Bishop
Kermelle Hensley	Angela Moore
Ken Lockhart	
Betsy Bishop	
Ashleigh Cofer	
Crystal Waye	
Denesha Jordan	
Kris Jain	
Nenia Hale	
Angela Moore	
Natalie Downs	
Martin Wolf	

Next meeting: June 28th, 2021 at 2:00 P.M.

1. **No minutes from last meeting-** this is the first meeting.
2. **Review Quality Enhancement Plan Framework-** Located on X-drive, members reviewed the document
3. **QEP Committee Tentative Schedule-** Members reviewed a tentative schedule with a goal to have a QEP topic selected by close of summer term (August 3rd). Fall term would focus on establishing a timeline and gathering data about the topic; spring semester would begin the implementation of the QEP followed by an assessment of results in 2022-2025, and reporting in 2025.
4. **Review Suggested Topics-** Planning Day survey results discussed, no topic selected so far- topics must support the institution and be measurable. Subcommittees will be formed to further explore topic options and measurability of suggested topics. Dean Burgan discussed the last QEP

topic- Computer Literacy, and how that was implemented and measured. QEP topics ideally can continue to be used and improved upon after reports submitted (i.e. CLICK Lab, SEMN 1000 still exist and assist students).

5. **Review Tools of Measurement-** Assessment Plans, SLO data, Surveys, etc. are all measurable data collection tools that can be used. CTC has several tools that can be used to assist in implementation and data gathering for QEP- Mr. Cunningham and Institutional Effectiveness will assist with this.
6. **QEP Budget-** Members discussed the proposed budget. Natalie Downs made the motion to approve the budget, Will Burgan seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
7. **Members are encouraged to explore and brainstorm QEP topics for discussion at next meeting.** Once a range of topics are selected, a survey will be sent to faculty to vote and select the final topic from the list.
8. **Open Discussion-** no current items to discuss at this time
9. **Being that there were no further questions or concerns, the meeting adjourned.**

APPENDIX D: Topic Poll Results

This poll was taken as a Doodle Poll on July 12, 2021 (<https://doodle.com/poll/9ri8wxpnridkmxxn>).

Those surveyed selected their first choice from five potential QEP topics.

Survey Respondent Name (Last, First)	Improving the Quality of Institutional Advisement	Distance and Online Learning	Success in Math Courses	Improving reading and writing/ Critical Thinking Skills	Improving Tutoring
Beveridge, Art		OK			
Bishop, Betsy		OK			
Burgan, Will		OK			
Cofer, Ashleigh		OK			
Cunningham, Christopher	OK				
Dennis, Matt				OK	
Downs, Natalie	OK				
Fuller, Carol	OK				
Gross, Henry	OK				
Hale, Nenia		OK			
Harris, Felicia					OK
Hensley, Kermelle					OK
Jackson, Nicole		OK			
Jain, Kris	OK				
Jordan, Denesha		OK			
King, Dahmon				OK	
Lockhart, Ken	OK				
Mills, Amelia				OK	
Moore, Angela	OK				
Waye, Crystal				OK	
Wilkes, Kelli		OK			
Wolf, Martin					OK
Count	7	8	0	4	3

APPENDIX E: Student Topic Selection Survey Results**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN TOPIC SELECTION – PHASE 2
TOPIC REFINEMENT/NARROWING SURVEY**

Prepared by: Christopher Cunningham
 Director of Institutional Research
 Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research
 Columbus Technical College

NOVEMBER 2021

SUMMARY

The survey was distributed via Qualtrics to all students enrolled during the 2021 Fall Term (202212). There were 268 unique student responses, which represents 8.94% of all students. Since many (or most) students are enrolled in multiple courses, representation in CRNs is also shown below. A full breakdown of CRN responses is attached as Attachment 1.

Response Rate Summary			
Category	RSPNS	STDNTS	RSPNS RT
UNQ STDNTS	268	2999	8.94%
BY CRN	826	8150	10.13%

The survey was broken up into four (4) sections, with completion summaries shown below. A copy of the survey is attached as Attachment 2. As was expected from a short survey, attrition was low.

Completion Statistics			
Section	Description	Count	% of Total
-	Total - Unique Survey Access	286	100.00%
Section	Description	Count	% of Total
1	What do you consider Online Learning?	267	93.36%
2	As a student, what would you like to see more of in your online courses?	262	91.61%
3	Importance	260	90.91%
4a	During your time at Columbus Tech, have you taken a course that should not be offered online?	259	90.56%
4b	Comments	62	21.68%

SECTION 1

Students were asked to identify all items which they considered “Online Learning.” Two-hundred Sixty-Seven (267) students completed this section of the survey.

What do you consider Online Learning?		
Category	RESPONSE COUNT	% OF COMPLETIONS
Remote learning via a computer with LIVE synchronous classes through Blackboard Collaborate/Webex, or Microsoft Teams	147	55.06%
Self-paced remote learning via a computer with infrequent instructor interaction	142	53.18%
Hybrid classes - part online, part in person	71	26.59%
100% online classes with frequent instructor interaction	171	64.04%

SECTION 2

Students were asked to identify all items which they would like to see more of in online courses. Two-hundred Sixty-Two (267) students completed this section of the survey.

As a student, what would you like to see more of in your online courses?		
Category	RESPONSE COUNT	% OF COMPLETIONS
Live Sessions	122	46.56%
Pre-recorded videos	178	67.94%
Examples (PDFs, Word files, etc.)	190	72.52%
Rubrics to explain grading	95	36.26%

SECTION 3

Students were asked to select and rank the items which they believed would most improve their online courses. Students were asked to select and rank at least four (4) items. However, nothing precluded students from ranking all eight (8). Two-hundred Sixty (260) students completed this section of the survey.

IMPORTANCE				
Category	RESPONSE COUNT	% OF COMPLETIONS	AVG. RANKING	ST. DEV
Student Technology Training	89	34.23%	2.640	1.326
Access to instructor/availability	168	64.62%	2.423	1.227
More Live sessions	118	45.38%	2.559	1.393
More recorded sessions	153	58.85%	2.601	1.179
Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)	160	61.54%	2.638	1.121
Clearer course design/navigation	155	59.62%	2.658	1.220
Up-to-date info to explain course material	183	70.38%	2.678	1.250
Faculty Technology Training	51	19.62%	3.118	1.767

Restating the same information from most to least important, according to the average rankings:

	Category	AVG. RANKING	ST. DEV
Most Important	Access to instructor/availability	2.423	1.227
	More Live sessions	2.559	1.393
	More recorded sessions	2.601	1.179
	Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)	2.638	1.121
	Student Technology Training	2.640	1.326
	Clearer course design/navigation	2.658	1.220
Least Important	Up-to-date info to explain course material	2.678	1.250
	Faculty Technology Training	3.118	1.767

In order to account for items identified more frequently, the Average Rankings were weighted according to their % of Completions. **Weighted Average = Average Ranking / Percent of Completions.** Therefore, items which may have been ranked Most Important on a small number of responses are moved further down due to their relative unimportance to the sample.

	Category	Weighted Average Ranking
Most Important	Access to instructor/availability	3.749
	Up-to-date info to explain course material	3.804
	Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)	4.286
	More recorded sessions	4.421
	Clearer course design/navigation	4.459
Least Important	More Live sessions	5.639
	Student Technology Training	7.714
	Faculty Technology Training	15.894

Summarizing these two together:

Category	Average Rank	Weighted Average Rank
Access to instructor/availability	1	1
Clearer course design/navigation	6	5
Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)	4	3
Faculty Technology Training	8	8
More Live sessions	2	6
More recorded sessions	3	4
Student Technology Training	5	7
Up-to-date info to explain course material	7	2

These three items were ranked fourth or lower on both lists:

- Access to instructor/availability
- Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)
- More recorded sessions.

SECTION 4 - COMMENTS

Students were asked if any of their courses should not be offered online. If they responded Yes, they were then given the opportunity to give additional information. Two-hundred Fifty-Nine (259) students completed this section of the survey. Sixty-Two Students then provided additional comments. The comments represented five general themes: communication, course design, structural, unprepared faculty, and unprepared students.

Results are as follows:

During your time at Columbus Tech, have you taken a course that should not be offered online?		
Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	62	23.94%
NO	197	76.06%

CONCLUSION

There is significant data to support a Quality Enhancement Plan, with many opportunities on which to focus.

ATTACHMENT 2 - SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Through feedback from Students, Faculty & Staff, and the Community, Distance Learning and Online Education has been selected as our area of focus for the next QEP at Columbus Tech.

Now, we are in the process of refining that topic down to determine what item (or items) upon which we should focus. As we want buy-in from all at Columbus Tech, we'd like just a little more feedback from you.

1. What do you consider online learning? (Select all that apply.)
 - Remote learning via a computer with LIVE synchronous classes through Blackboard Collaborate/Webex, or Microsoft Team
 - Self-paced remote learning via a computer with infrequent instructor interaction
 - Hybrid classes – part online, part in person
 - 100% online classes with frequent instructor interaction

2. As a student, what would you like to see more of in your online courses? (Select all that apply)
 - Live Sessions
 - Pre-recorded videos
 - Examples (PDFs, Word files, etc.)
 - Rubrics to explain grading

3. What do you believe would most improve your online courses? Select and rank the items below from Most Important (1) to Least Important (8).

For the item you believe Most Important, write the number one (1) in the blank item. For the item you believe next most important, write the number two (2) in the blank next to that item. Repeat this till you reach your last item. (You should rank at least four items. However, you can rank all eight items.)

- ____ Student Technology Training
- ____ Access to instructor/availability
- ____ More Live sessions
- ____ More recorded sessions
- ____ Clearer Instructions for graded activity (rubrics/examples)
- ____ Clearer course design/navigation
- ____ Up-to-date info to explain course material
- ____ Faculty Technology Training

4. During your time at Columbus Tech, have you taken a course that should not be offered online?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If you select "Yes", please explain below: _____

APPENDIX F: Student Online Success Training Outline and Overview

Within each module page that is not a survey or quiz there is an embedded video to watch, some brief text beneath the video that summarizes the key video points, and a sidebar containing a Tip, Resource links, and Contact information related to this area of the training.

Module 1. Introduction to Online Learning

- Welcome to Online Learning (Survey)
- What is online learning like?
- Is online learning right for me?
- Introduction to Online Learning (Quiz – 80% required)

Module 2. Technical Requirements

- What do I need to get started?
- What computer skills and plug-ins do I need?
- CTC Technical Resources (four expandable part of a table)
- OKTA Portal Setup
- Using Blackboard
- Technical Requirements Quick Check (Quiz – 80% required)

Module 3 Study Habits

- How do I study for an online course?
- What makes a good study space?
- What is procrastination?
- Student Support
- Student Resources (six flip cards)

Module 4 Time Management

- How do I manage my time effectively?
- How do I use time on tasks effectively?
- How do I set SMART goals?
- S.O.S. Time Management Quick Check (Quiz – 80% required)

Module 5 Online Success Strategies

- What is academic integrity?
- How do I communicate effectively online?
- What makes a great discussion post?
- How do I take tests online?

Module 6 Next Steps

- Next Steps – List of Action Items
- Student Online Success Knowledge Check (Quiz – 80% required)
- Student Online Success Evaluation (Survey)
- FAQ's

APPENDIX G: Pilot Data by Course

The following comparative analysis between online (OL) and face-to-face (F2F) course completion for the QEP Pilot courses provides an early indicator of the impact of the S.O.S. training on student online success. The pilot phase is the two-year period AY2023 through AY2024. The gap rate will be compared to the pre-pilot year AY22, before the S.O.S. was fully implemented in the pilot courses. This comparison will show the impact of the S.O.S. training during the pilot phase.

ENGL 1101 - The pass rate gap was 12 percentage points in favor of F2F students in AY22. For OL S.O.S. students in AY23, the gap fell to 4%. It rose slightly to 6% in AY24. Compared to the AY22 level, the gap was reduced by 6 percentage points. It's worth noting that OL S.O.S. students in AY23 were much more likely to successfully complete ENGL 1101 than OL non-S.O.S. students.

MATH 1111- The pass rate gap was 9 percentage points in favor of F2F students in AY22. For OL S.O.S. students in AY23, the gap rose to 12%, then fell to 4% in AY24. Over the two-year pilot period the gap was reduced by 5 percentage points from the AY22 level. OL S.O.S. students were more likely to successfully complete MATH 1111 in AY24 than OL non-S.O.S. students.

PSYC 1101 - The pass rate gap was 6 percentage points in favor of F2F students in AY22. The gap was 2% in favor of OL S.O.S. students in AY 23 and 3% in favor of F2F students in AY24. Over the two-year pilot period, the pass rate gap fell by 3 percentage points.

COMP 1000 – The pass rate gap was 2 percentage points in favor of OL students in AY22. For OL S.O.S. students in AY23, the gap rose sharply to 11 percentage points in favor of F2F students. It rose again slightly to 13% in AY24. Over the two-year pilot period, the gap rose by 15 percentage points. However, OL S.O.S. students in AY24 were a little more likely to successfully complete COMP 1000 than OL non-S.O.S. students. It is worth noting that for all OL students, the gap was 9% and 16% in favor of F2F students in AY23 and AY24, respectively.

ALHS 1090 – The pass rate gap was 9 percentage points in favor of OL students in AY22. In AY23 OL S.O.S. students continued to strongly outperform F2F students; the gap was 13 percentage points in their favor. However, the gap swung back in favor of F2F students in AY24, at 21 percentage points. For the two-year pilot period, the gap rose a full 30 percentage points (from 9% in favor of OL to 21% in favor of F2F). It is important to note that the large changes in the gap over time are due in part to the small number of students taking ALHS 1090 in the F2F format. For example, in AY22, 55% of students were F2F, in AY23 this fell to 38% of students, and in AY24 the F2F format was almost eliminated with only 18 students (3%) taking the class F2F, and those students all successfully completed the class. It's also worth noting that OL S.O.S. students in both AY23 and AY24 were a little more likely to successfully complete ALHS 1090 than OL non-S.O.S. students.

The information below is provided to give context to the comparative analysis showing the impact of the S.O.S. training as it compares to the overall OL success rate for the pilot courses. The data includes the percentage of students taking each course in the OL format and the completion rate of S.O.S. for OL students. This shows that almost all OL students in these courses are participating in the online learner training developed for CTC's QEP during AY24.

Pilot Course	AY22 Baseline	AY23 Pilot Year 1	AY24 Pilot Year 2
ENGL 1101			
OL Percentage of Students	59%	56%	58%
OL vs F2F Gap	12.0%	12.3%	6.2%
OL SOS vs F2F Gap		4.4%	5.5%
OL SOS Completion Rate		65.9%	97.2%
MATH 1111			
OL Percentage of Students	50%	47%	55%
OL vs F2F Gap	9.0%	15.6%	4.4%
OL SOS vs F2F Gap		12.1%	3.9%
OL SOS Completion Rate		86.9%	95.2%
PSYC 1101			
OL Percentage of Students	84%	71%	76%
OL vs F2F Gap	5.7%	-0.4%	4.2%
OL SOS vs F2F Gap		-1.5%	2.9%
OL SOS Completion Rate		48.1%	86.8%
COMP 1000			
OL Percentage of Students	79%	71%	84%
OL vs F2F Gap	-2.4%	8.9%	15.8%
OL SOS vs F2F Gap		11.1%	12.7%
OL SOS Completion Rate		33.6%	88.2%
ALHS 1090			
OL Percentage of Students	45%	62%	97%
OL vs F2F Gap	-8.8%	-9.6%	22.8%
OL SOS vs F2F Gap		-13.1%	21.1%
SOS Completion Rate		35.3%	92.2%

APPENDIX H: S.O.S. Student Focus Groups

Student Focus Groups Analysis

The analysis of the S.O.S. program as part of the QEP initiative, revealed several key themes:

1. **Familiarity and Preparedness:**
 - a. Students had varying levels of familiarity with the S.O.S. program before participating, but those who engaged with it found it helpful in preparing them for online learning. The S.O.S. modules enhanced students' understanding of the resources available to them, both online and on-campus, and provided essential study tips and skills necessary for success in an online environment.
2. **Impact on Anxiety and Confidence:**
 - a. The program effectively reduced students' anxiety about online classes by increasing their preparedness. For instance, one student mentioned going from a comfort level of 4 or 5 to 7 or 8 (on a scale of 1 to 10) after completing the S.O.S. modules.
 - b. The specific areas of improvement that were mentioned by students after taking S.O.S. include notetaking, time management, and navigation through the college's learning management system (e.g., Blackboard), leading to better organization and planning.
3. **Comparison of Learning Environments:**
 - a. Some students expressed a preference for online learning over traditional face-to-face classes due to the flexibility it offers, especially for those with busy schedules. Students also indicated that there was equal or more resources provided for the online courses, particularly as it related to the accessibility of the S.O.S. modules. The S.O.S. program played a role in facilitating this transition and preference by demystifying the online learning process.

Student Focus Group Questions Asked:

These questions were asked in some capacity. Some of them were combined into one question, but each of these were covered.

- Are you a first-time online student?
- Can you describe your level of preparedness to take online classes before participating in the S.O.S. program?
- What aspects of online learning were you most concerned about before taking the S.O.S.?
- How has your perception of your preparedness for online learning changed after completing the S.O.S.?
- Can you identify specific areas of online learning where you feel more prepared because of the S.O.S.?
- What elements of the S.O.S. contributed most to any increase in comfort?
- Which areas of online learning do you feel more comfortable with after completing the S.O.S. (e.g., technology use, communication with instructors, time management)?
- How does your experience completing online courses compare to face-to-face courses, especially in terms of the support received through the S.O.S.?
- What additional topics or resources could the S.O.S. include to further improve student preparedness for online learning?
- What could be added to the S.O.S. to make students feel even more comfortable and confident in the online learning environments?

- How likely are you to recommend S.O.S. to other students, and why?

Students' Suggestions for Improvement

While the feedback on the S.O.S. program was overwhelmingly positive, students suggested that including more serious tones or emphasis on the importance of S.O.S., particularly around the modules related to time management and organizational skills could be beneficial.

Students recommended introducing the S.O.S. resource before classes start to better prepare them and set expectations for the online learning experience. Students would also advise their peers to take their time, use the available resources, and relax. These suggestions would help better prepare students to be successful in their online courses.

Takeaways and Recommendations for QEP S.O.S. Analysis

1. **Enhance Pre-Course Communication:** Informing students about the S.O.S. program before their courses begin could alleviate initial anxieties and improve their readiness for online learning.
2. **Focus on Essential Skills:** Continue emphasizing time management, organization, and familiarization with digital platforms as these are critical areas where students felt more confident after completing the S.O.S. modules.
3. **Personalize the Learning Experience:** Including welcome videos from instructors or feedback from peers who have successfully navigated online courses could further engage and reassure new students.
4. **Adjust Module Tone:** Consider incorporating elements within the modules and by instructors that emphasize the seriousness and importance of the content without sacrificing the approachability and engagement of the current format.
5. **Expand on Existing Successes:** Building on the areas where S.O.S. has been most effective, such as demystifying the college's learning management system and providing practical study tips, will continue to enhance its impact on student success.

This analysis indicates that the S.O.S. program is fulfilling its goal of supporting students in their transition to and success in online learning environments, with room for minor adjustments to maximize its effectiveness and reach. It will be imperative for instructors to emphasize the importance of S.O.S. and administer the modules at the beginning of class to maximize S.O.S. effectiveness.

APPENDIX I: Current QEP Committees

The QEP Core Team provides institutional support to the full QEP committee on an as-needed basis.









QEP Core Team Committee		
President Martha Ann Todd	President	
David Kuipers	Vice President of Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs
Carol Fuller	QEP Chair	Academic Affairs
V. Renee Clark	Director of Distance Learning	Academic Affairs
Amelia Mills	Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Institutional Effectiveness and Research

QEP Committee Members & Subcommittee Assignments		
Video Preparation Sub Committee		
Joseph (Chey) Wilson	Executive Director of Enrollment Management	Student Affairs
Christina McClung	English Instructor	Academic Affairs
Cassandra Montseclaros	Dual Enrollment Coordinator	Student Affairs
Evelyn Willis	Dean of Library Services	Academic Affairs
Dr. Tara Askew	Vice President of Student Affairs and Communications	Communications and Public Relations/ Student Affairs
Writing and Editing Committee		
Mark Thorne	Program Director, Respiratory	Academic Affairs
Susan Sealey	Executive Director of Advancement	Institutional Advancement
Leslie Schorr	English Instructor	Academic Affairs
Instructor Training and Recognition		
V. Renee Clark	Director of Distance Learning	Academic Affairs
April Hopson	Vice President of Adult Education and General Education	Adult Education/ Academic Affairs
Daniel Sagan	Math Instructor	Academic Affairs
S.O.S. Student Learner Improvements		
Amanda Talley	Allied Health Sciences Instructor	Academic Affairs
Joseph Hancock	Computer and Related Instructor	Academic Affairs
David Kuipers	Vice President of Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs
Sherri Masterson	Adult Education Coordinator	Adult Education

APPENDIX J: S.O.S. Module Quizzes (Formative Assessment)

Module 01	Intro to Online Learning	Survey
No.	Question	Answer Choices
0 (added fall 2023) *	Please select the level of comfort you have with online learning at this time.	A. Very Comfortable B. Comfortable C. Unsure D. Somewhat Not Comfortable E. Not Comfortable
Module 01	Intro to Online Learning	Quiz
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
1	I am aware that an online class may require as much or more time than a face-to-face class.	TRUE/FALSE
2	I understand that I need access to a desktop or laptop computer.	TRUE/FALSE
3	I understand that I need access to the internet as that will allow me to meet course deadlines.	TRUE/FALSE
Module 02	Technical Requirements	Quick Check
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
1	I have a Windows 8 or newer computer OR a Mac OSX 10.6 or newer computer.	TRUE/FALSE
2	I am aware that I should check my student email account and Blackboard at least once a day.	TRUE/FALSE
3	I know how to contact my instructor should I have questions about course requirements.	TRUE/FALSE
Module 03	Study Habits	No Assessment
Module 04	Time Management	Quick Check
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
1	I am aware that I will need to dedicate at least 10 hours a week for one 3-hour course.	TRUE/FALSE
2	I know how to contact the Student Support Labs should I need assistance, tutoring or other technical assistance.	TRUE/FALSE
3	I know how to find my assignments and assignment due dates in Blackboard.	TRUE/FALSE
Module 05	Online Success Strategies -	No Assessment

APPENDIX K: S.O.S. In-Class Assignment Rubric

Name	Discussion Rubric		
Description	General rubric to assess student's participation in Discussion topics.		
Active Goals			
Actions	ID	Goal	Goal Set Name Category
 		G.E.O.1: Apply critical and creative reasoning, including diverse perspectives to address complex problems. (PSYC, SOCI, EMPL, POLS, HIST) (TCSG Area II) (USG Area E)	GEO.828 General Education Outcomes (Revised)
 		G.E.O.2: Demonstrate mathematical and statistical knowledge through solving equations, interpreting graphs, and being able to work with other forms of numeric data. (MATH) (TCSG Area III) (USG Area A2 / D)	GEO.828 General Education Outcomes (Revised)
 		G.E.O.3: Apply scientific and technological skills, individually, and collaboratively, to critically evaluate existing or alternative explanations, solve problems, and make evidence-based decisions in an ethical manner. (BIOL, ALHS, CHEM, PHYS) (TCSG Area III) (USG Area D)	GEO.828 General Education Outcomes (Revised)
 		G.E.O.4: Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in both written and oral formats utilizing information from a variety of sources. (ENGL, SPCH, ARTS, MUSC, HUMN) (TCSG Area I / IV) (USG Area A1 / B / C)	GEO.828 General Education Outcomes (Revised)

Rubric Detail

Criteria	Levels of Achievement		
	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Original Post	2 Points Student's original post addresses the topic completely.	1 Points Student's original post address the topic to some degree.	0 Points No original post.
Replies to Others	2 Points Student replies to at least two other student's posts.	1 Points Replies to one other student's post.	0 Points No replies to other student's posts.

APPENDIX L: S.O.S. End of Training Survey

Module 06 Next Steps		End of Training Survey
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
1	The information I received from this online module was valuable to me as a new online student:	A. Strongly Agree; B. Agree; C. Disagree; D. Strongly Disagree
2	I feel more prepared for online learning as a result of taking this training.	A. Strongly Agree; B. Agree; C. Disagree; D. Strongly Disagree
3	The length of this training for online learning was:	A. Just Right, B. Too Short; C. Too Long
4	I have learned about success resources that can help me with online learning at CTC.	A. Strongly Agree; B. Agree; C. Disagree; D. Strongly Disagree
5 (changed fall 2023) *	Please select the level of comfort you have with online learning at this time.	A. Very Comfortable B. Comfortable C. Unsure D. Somewhat Not Comfortable E. Not Comfortable
6	What additional information could we have provided that would have been helpful?	Free Answer

APPENDIX M: S.O.S. Knowledge Check Assessment (Summative Assessment)

Module 06	Next Steps	S.O.S. Knowledge Check (Quiz)
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
1	What skills are necessary to be successful in an online class?	A. Basic Technical Skills, B. Academic Skills, C. Organizational Skills, D. Time Management Skills, E. All of the above
2	What is the Learning Management System that I must log into daily at CTC to check assignment due dates and my grades?	A. Canvas, B. Blackboard , C. Moodle, D. Adobe Captivate Prime
3 (changed fall 2023) *	Which time management strategy is the best way to keep up with your assignments in an online class?	A. Do my online class work whenever I find some free time, B. Stay up all night before assignments are due to get everything turned in, C. Watch TV as much as possible and never keep a To Do List D. Block off time for lessons, record all due dates and commitments, set SMART goals and build in flexibility.
4 (changed fall 2023) *	Which personal study habit or learning approach is best suited to success in the online learning environment?	A. Put things off until the last minute and expect someone to remind you whenever an assignment is due, B. Don't bother your teacher with questions unless you have a really good reason, C. Be an independent learner, confident using a computer and confident communicating through writing. D. Those who prefer hands-on learning and must be physically active, such as in a lab setting, to learn new things.
5 (changed fall 2023) *	I have confidence in my ability to control my motivation and behavior effectively so I can be successful in an online class.	TRUE/FALSE
6	As a distance education student, I have access to the same/equivalent learning resources as on-campus students.	TRUE/FALSE
7	Which single sign on platform does CTC utilize to access Blackboard, Banner Web, and student email?	A. ASAP, B. Facebook, C. OKTA , D. YouTube
8	How much time should you plan to spend in each online class for which you are registered?	A. 25 minutes per class, B. 20 hours per week per class, C. 45 minutes per

Module 06	Next Steps	S.O.S. Knowledge Check (Quiz)
No.	Questions	Answer Choices
		class, D. 10 hours per week per class
9	Who should you contact for technical support in an online class?	A. bookstore@columbustech.edu ; B. library@columbustech.edu ; C. aac@columbustech.edu ; D. computerhelp@columbustech.edu
10	Which of these activities is necessary for me to be successful in an online class?	A. Actively engage in class activities and discussions.; B Complete assigned readings and tasks before assignment submission.; C. Seek help and answers, communicate with the instructor, attend office hours or tutoring sessions.; D. Exceed minimum requirements.; E. All of the above.

APPENDIX N: Glossary

CTC – Columbus Technical College

ESL – English as a second language which refers to non-native English speakers.

F2F – Face-to-face class is any class designated in Banner as CA – On Campus ($\leq 50\%$ online);
or BL – Blended ($> 50\%$ to $< 100\%$ online); F2F results are disaggregated by course type
(CA on Campus and BL Blended).

GPA – Grade point average

OIER – Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

Online – Classes designated in Banner as either OA – Asynchronous (100% online) or OS –
Synchronous (100% online but meets virtually on specific days/times).

QEP – Quality Enhancement Plan

SES – Socioeconomic status which is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is
often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation.

S.O.S. – Student Online Success; refers to the online training element developed for our QEP.