

# QEP Impact Report

## TEXARKANA COLLEGE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (QEP) IMPACT REPORT

### I. TITLE AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TC QEP AS INITIALLY PRESENTED

Texarkana College's Quality Enhancement Plan for 2005-2010 was entitled **Keys to Student Success: A Plan to Enhance Student Learning in Developmental Studies**.

Texarkana College has an open-door admissions policy and strives to extend to all students an opportunity to be successful in the postsecondary phase of their education. As have other colleges with open-door admission policies, Texarkana College has seen a great increase in the number of students who enter college grossly under-prepared for collegiate-level work. In addition, Texarkana College instituted a Rising Star Scholarship in the fall of 2004, which provides full tuition and fees for a student whose family income is less than \$75,000, and who is not eligible for a full Pell Grant. A large majority of students who qualified for the scholarship were in need of some type of developmental education, as evidenced by scores achieved on placement exams (THEA, Accuplacer or Compass) mandated by the Texas Success Initiative required by the State of Texas.

The TC QEP implemented a comprehensive plan to assist those students who were designated as needing developmental education before advancing to college-level work. Two of the four components of the TC QEP were directed at the institutional framework: overall coordination of Texarkana College's developmental program and professional development for faculty members. The other two components of the QEP addressed programs aimed directly at developmental students.

The goal of the TC QEP was to achieve an increase in student success in developmental classes. Success was measured using criteria that indicated an increase in student learning as defined in the *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* published by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges as "changes in students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributable to the collegiate experience." Specific measures involved analysis of grade point averages and retention or persistence rates of students enrolled in the developmental classes for the First-Time-In-College (FTIC) population as well as the population of students receiving treatment according to the specific goals and measures stated below.

### II. SUCCINCT LIST OF THE INITIAL GOALS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES FOR THE TC QEP

Specifically, Texarkana College's QEP sought to enhance student learning through the development of four major components:

1. Creation of a Developmental Education Coordinating Committee (DECC) under the direction of a Coordinator of Developmental Studies.

#### INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- *Dean of Instruction performs the duties of Coordinator of Developmental Studies*
- *DECC meets once per semester for developmental education program oversight*

2. Provision of professional development for faculty in the area of developmental education. Faculty would be trained in years one and two of QEP implementation on strategies and techniques that have proven successful in enhancing student learning.

#### INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- *75% of general faculty trained during year one with 100% trained by completion of year two*
- *100% of developmental education faculty trained by completion of year one*

3. Establishment of a mentoring program to help ensure academic success among students who are

required to take developmental classes.

#### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- 75% of treated students respond positively to survey questions regarding involvement in the mentoring program
- 75% of faculty mentors respond positively to survey questions regarding involvement in the mentoring program
- Average increase of 0.1 on the GPA of students involved in the mentoring program over base-line year 2004-2005
- Average increase of 5% in the retention rates of students involved in the mentoring program over base-line year 2004-2005

4. Development of an orientation/skills class for students considered "at-risk."

#### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- Average increase of 0.1 on the GPA of students involved in the orientation/skills class over base-line year 2005-2006
- Average increase of 5% in the retention rates of students involved in the orientation/skills class over base-line year 2005-2006

### **III. DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES MADE TO THE TC QEP AND THE REASONS FOR MAKING THOSE CHANGES**

Texarkana College made adjustments to the intended outcomes related to mentoring due to two difficulties: 1) correlating the impact of an independent mentoring program on actual GPA and retention rates and 2) engaging enough volunteers to adequately serve the students. The DECC decided to embed the critical components of the mentoring program into the student success course. This replaced the one-on-one volunteer mentor program initially proposed. After collaboration with the TC Retention Specialist, the Counseling/Advising staff and Student Support Services, the DECC innovated another way to accomplish the mission of the mentoring program. Staff from these support offices hosted a Mentoring Fair for each of the student success classes and provided individual assistance to each student addressing several objectives of the mentoring program: career planning through a Career Cruising Inventory using [careercruising.com](http://careercruising.com), degree planning, and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) assistance. Another component of the mentoring program embedded within the student success course addressed campus and community involvement. Research by Vincent Tinto (Vincent Tinto, "Classrooms as Communities: Exploring the Educational Character of Student Persistence." *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 68 (6) 599-623, 1997.) asserts that student success rates are positively related to student engagement in campus life - both academic and social. In a more recent publication, Karp and Hughes (Melinda Mechur Karp and Katherine L. Hughes, "An Exploration of Tinto's Integration Framework for Community College Students." *Journal of College Student Retention*, Vol. 12(1) 69-86, 2010-2011.) state that community college students' success rates are impacted by student engagement in a classroom culture of collaborative learning. Based on this research, DECC and student success course faculty members (full- and part-time) incorporated a mandatory campus/community involvement component and integrated collaborative learning activities throughout the into the student success course curriculum.

In addition, after analysis of the GPA and persistence data for cohort groups from the first several years of implementation of the QEP, the DECC recommended that TC expand the student success course from a one-credit-hour course to a three-credit-hour course, which allowed for more robust student involvement being implemented in Fall, 2010. Research by Gardner and Barefoot ([Achieving Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College](#), by Betsy O. Barefoot, et al. *College & Research Libraries* 67 (2006): 88.) demonstrates that as the length of the student success course increases, there is an accompanying increase in retention and success.

### **IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE TC QEP'S DIRECT IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING, INCLUDING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS AND OUTCOMES**

1. *Creation of a Developmental Education Coordinating Committee (DECC) under the direction of a Coordinator of Developmental Studies.*

#### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- *Dean of Instruction performs the duties of Coordinator of Developmental Studies*
- *DECC meets once per semester for developmental education program oversight*

The goal of the first component of the TC QEP was to create and institutionalize oversight of developmental studies at Texarkana College through an administrative position and committee involvement. The Dean of Instruction was given the additional title of Coordinator of Developmental Studies in 2005 as a direct result of the QEP. In 2010, the roles were permanently combined with a title change for the dean from Dean of Instruction to Dean of Academic Affairs and Developmental Studies. The DECC was formed according to TC QEP membership guidelines and met for the first time in Spring, 2005, with the Dean serving as chair. The DECC met once per semester through Fall, 2006, after which TC experienced a series of administrative changes resulting in several years of almost continuous academic reorganization, disrupting both the function and the membership of the DECC. The DECC began meeting with renewed vigor in December, 2009 with widespread involvement of faculty, administrators and staff. One significant change was that the chair of the Committee was appointed from the faculty and was given course release time for this involvement. The Committee met once or twice monthly throughout Spring and Fall, 2010, for the purpose of catching up on time lost implementing changes and evaluation in developmental studies related to the QEP. The committee met twice during Spring, 2011, and will resume meeting once per semester in Fall, 2011.

2. *Provision of professional development for faculty in the area of developmental education. Faculty would be trained in years one and two of QEP implementation on strategies and techniques that have proven successful in enhancing student learning.*

#### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- *75% of general faculty trained during year one with 100% trained by completion of year two*
- *100% of developmental education faculty trained by completion of year one*

Realizing the importance of qualified, trained, and motivated faculty for successful implementation of developmental education programs, in Spring, 2006, Texarkana College conducted an on-campus, half-day workshop for developmental education faculty followed by a two-hour seminar for general education faculty. Both of these professional development opportunities, presented by Dr. Jennifer Hurd (a national trainer for "Becoming a Master Student" by Dave Ellis), focused on successful classroom strategies and techniques for use with developmental education students. With these events, TC achieved and even surpassed the targeted goal of training 100% of full-time developmental education faculty and 75% of general faculty within the first year.

At the DECC meeting in January, 2010, a commitment was made to seek additional knowledge about developmental education strategies; at that point, TC joined the National Association of Developmental Educators (NADE). This membership gave TC the opportunity to send two faculty members (one representing mathematics and QEP oversight and one representing English and reading) – to the NADE annual conference in Columbus, Ohio in February. These faculty representatives shared with TC faculty and administrators information gained from attending the conference.

On-campus professional development was further promoted throughout Spring, 2010, through a series of developmental education webinars. The dates and topics are provided below.

- **Best Practices for Student Success in Developmental Education: 2/25/2010**
- **Controversies and Research in Developmental Education - Planning for the Future: 3/12/2010**
- **Developmental Students: Using Hybrid Coursework to Improve Electronic Literacy: 4/01/2010**
- **The Nature of Developmental Writing: Insights on Instructional Strategies for Student Success: 4/08/2010**

- **Identifying and Reaching Unprepared Students: Strategies for Creating Success in the College Classroom:** 4/15/2010
- **Developmental Education: Using Assessment and ROI Models to Improve your Program:** 4/29/2010

In February, 2011, the Dean of Academic Affairs and Developmental Education, accompanied by faculty representatives from mathematics, college success, and English/reading, attended the annual NADE Conference. Instructional strategies and techniques as well as innovative program ideas learned at the conference became the focal point for additional faculty development.

3. *Establishment of a mentoring program to help ensure academic success among students who are required to take developmental classes.*

#### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- *75% of treated students respond positively to survey questions regarding involvement in the mentoring program*
- *75% of faculty mentors respond positively to survey questions regarding involvement in the mentoring program*
- *Average increase of 0.1 on the GPA of students involved in the mentoring program over base-line year 2004-2005*
- *Average increase of 5% in the retention rates of students involved in the mentoring program over base-line year 2004-2005*

Students completing the first student success course in Fall, 2006, entered the TC Mentoring Program in Spring, 2007. The mentoring program continued without interruption each subsequent year. Instructors of each student success course offered in fall semesters served as mentors to their students in subsequent spring semesters. Participating faculty members received a stipend and students participated on a voluntary basis. After the DECC began meeting again in January, 2010, it was immediately decided to implement a much more comprehensive mentoring program for Spring, 2010. The new program was identified as STARS (Students of TC Achieving Real Success). In addition to the student success course mentor, each student in the cohort group was assigned a developmental education faculty mentor (who also received a stipend). Although student participation was still voluntary, mentors were encouraged to actively reach out and engage student involvement in the program, and student incentives for participation were offered. Participation requirements for students included a more stringent attendance policy in developmental education courses, attendance in campus workshops for success and in student life activities, completion of career and degree planning components, and regular attendance at mentor meetings. To reward participation in the voluntary mentoring program, students were offered numerous incentives: meal coupons, a cookout with door prizes, and, for achieving all stated requirements, \$250 tuition vouchers.

Of the sixty-five (65) eligible students in the Spring, 2010, mentoring program, twenty-four (24) participated on a limited basis (37%) and seven (7) students completed the necessary requirements for the tuition voucher (11% of those eligible; 29% of those participating).

A STARS Mentoring Survey was conducted at the end of the Spring, 2010, semester. Only eight percent of the students surveyed responded; those responding were favorable. Possible contributing factors to the low response rate include online delivery and the timeline of administration during final exam week. Seventy-one percent of faculty mentors responded; all responded positively to questions in the survey.

Taking into account the mentoring program results from Spring, 2010, the DECC decided that mandating participation of cohort students in key components through the course would increase student success. After collaboration with the TC Retention Specialist, the Counseling/Advising staff and Student Support Services, the DECC decided to incorporate the primary objectives of the program into the course requirements for the student success course. Staff from these support offices hosted a Mentoring Fair for each of the student success classes with mandatory attendance requirements. Individual assistance was provided to each student regarding objectives important to student success: career planning through a Career Cruising Inventory using [careercruising.com](http://careercruising.com), degree planning, and FAFSA assistance.

Participation in the Mentoring Fair also required completion of an exit survey administered at the end of

the class session, thereby ensuring a high response rate. The average satisfaction rating was 3.67 out of 4 on a Likert scale. Overall, 97% of students participating in the Mentoring Fair responded positively on the survey. These results indicate achievement of the stated goal of 75% or more students responding positively to the mentoring program.

DECC and student success course faculty members (full- and part-time) also incorporated a mandatory campus/community involvement component into the student success course and integrated collaborative learning activities throughout the curriculum. Although assessment data regarding the effects of these components of the course are not yet available, Texarkana College conducted the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in Spring, 2011, and will conduct the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) in Fall, 2011, to establish a baseline for student involvement. In addition, more targeted institutional surveys will be administered to student success course sections in Fall, 2011, to determine the perceived impact of the campus/community involvement and the collaborative learning components.

#### 4. Development of an orientation/skills class for students considered "at-risk."

#### INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Average increase of 0.1 on the GPA of students involved in the orientation/skills class over base-line year 2005-2006
- Average increase of 5% in the retention rates of students involved in the orientation/skills class over base-line year 2005-2006

Texarkana College initiated a one-credit- hour student success course in Fall, 2006, as the fourth component of the QEP. Academically underprepared students were targeted for participation in the course. Specifically, students placing into all three developmental education programs – reading, mathematics and English – were identified and required to take the student success course. Challenges in advising and proper placement resulted in a portion of that target population failing to enroll in the course, hence becoming an accidental control group for comparison. TC tracked GPA, persistence and successful course completion rates for the treated population (those students in all three developmental education programs and enrolled in the success course), the non-treated population (those students in all three developmental education programs but not enrolled in the success course), and all First-Time-in-College (FTIC) students. Although the three stated populations above are necessary and sufficient for fair comparison, TC also tracked the treated-passing population (those students in all three developmental education programs, enrolled in the success course and successfully completing the student success course) for the purpose of distinguishing trends for those successfully completing the course. TC offered the student success course in pilot form for a limited population in Fall, 2006, and progressively increased enrollment of the target population into the course over time. Although a slow but steady increase in enrollment occurred in the success course, there was a corresponding steady increase in the population size of the non-treated group which indicated a problem in the advisement and placement process. In Fall, 2010, TC expanded the scope of the success strategies course by implementing a three-credit-hour course in place of the existing one-credit-hour course and designed with more extensive expectations and more robust requirements for student participation. At the same time TC aggressively refined the advisement and placement process to insure that a higher percentage of the intended target population were properly placed into the course for the purpose of improving student success. The table below provides the populations sizes for each group over time.

#### ENROLLMENT POPULATION SIZES

Year	FTIC Students	Treated	Treated-Passing	Non-Treated
2006	1161	32	27	59
2007	1339	38	33	72
2008	1538	44	36	109
2009	1456	67	60	129
2010	1218	114	68	58

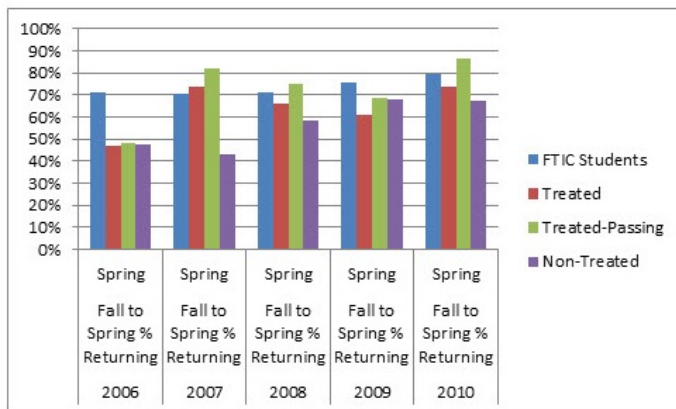
## FALL TO SPRING PERSISTENCE RATES

Analysis of the Fall to Spring Persistence Rates revealed that the treated cohorts -both the full group and the smaller treated-passing group - consistently showed higher persistence rates than the non-treated cohorts. Furthermore, the persistence rates of the treated passing population for Fall, 2010, was 87% compared to the FTIC rate of 79%, providing validation for the collective changes to the course implemented in Fall, 2010. A table and graph (Table 1, Graph 1) of the five-year study of Fall to Spring Persistence Rates is provided below. The data appear to indicate that the student success course positively impacts retention. In fact, the stated goal of increasing retention rates by 5% overall compared to the baseline year of implementation was far exceeded (39%) for the treated passing cohort.

**TABLE 1: FALL TO SPRING PERSISTENCE RATES**

Year	FTIC Students	Treated	Treated-Passing	Non-Treated
2006	71%	47%	48%	47%
2007	70%	74%	82%	42%
2008	71%	66%	75%	59%
2009	76%	61%	68%	68%
2010	79%	74%	87%	67%

**GRAPH 1: FALL TO SPRING PERSISTENCE RATES**



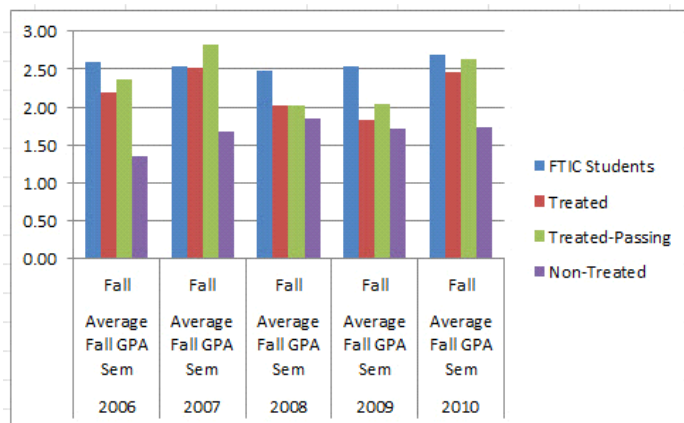
## FALL GPA

Analysis of Fall GPA results for each cohort over time shows FTIC students with a five-year average of 2.56 while treated students hold an average of 2.2 (with notable exceptions in 2007 and 2010 where the GPA was approximately 2.5) and non-treated students hold an average of 1.67. Isolation of the treated passing population reveals a higher five-year average GPA of 2.38 with the most recent cohort of Fall, 2010, at 2.64 – a separation of only .04 from their FTIC counterparts at 2.68. We believe this is an indication that the success course--especially in its new format--does provide significant momentum to academically underprepared students to move closer in performance to their academically prepared FTIC peers. The stated goal of increasing the GPA of the target population by 0.1 over the baseline year was achieved (actual increase of 0.28).

**TABLE 2: FALL GPA**

Year	FTIC Students	Treated	Treated-Passing	Non-Treated
2006	2.59	2.20	2.36	1.35
2007	2.53	2.51	2.83	1.67
2008	2.47	2.02	2.03	1.85
2009	2.54	1.83	2.04	1.72
2010	2.68	2.47	2.64	1.74

**GRAPH 2: FALL GPA**



**SUCCESSFUL COURSE COMPLETION RATES**

Although the original TC QEP only included measurable outcomes for the stated goals of increasing GPA and persistence, the DECC undertook analysis of several other indicators of student success. Successful course completion (defined as receiving a grade of A, B, or C) rates for enrollment in other developmental and credit courses were reviewed.

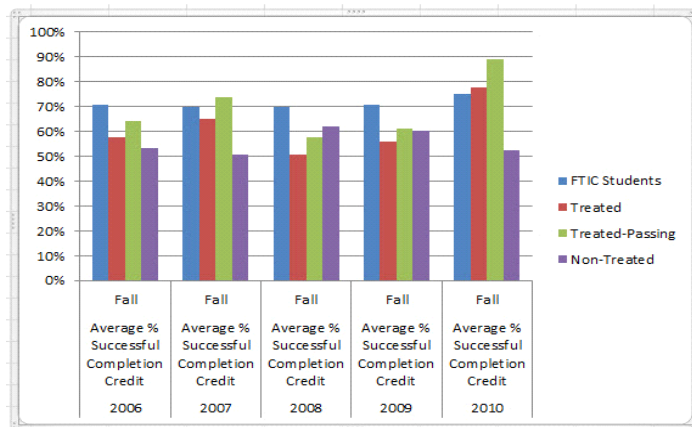
Baseline data from 2006 showed both treated and non-treated cohorts achieving basically the same successful completion rate of approximately 55% in college credit courses while the FTIC cohort was approximately 71%. In 2007, the treated cohort showed improvement, moving to a successful completion rate of around 65% (74% for the treated passing group), with FTIC at 70%, and the non-treated cohort dropping down to 51%. However, in 2008-2009, TC experienced a dramatic administrative transition and the QEP lost a degree of functionality during this transition. During these years, the treated populations dropped back in performance, showing successful completion rates similar to or lower than their non-treated counterparts while FTIC students remained consistent at around 71%. With the administrative transition complete, the QEP given new leadership, and the implementation of several changes to the course such as the increase to a three semester credit hour course, the 2010 results show promise. In Fall, 2010, the treated cohort achieved a successful college credit course completion rate of 78%, while FTIC was at 75% and the non-treated cohort dropped to 55%. The treated passing population achieved the highest successful completion rate in 2010 at 89%. Again, these results indicate that participation in a college success course by academically underprepared students provides significant opportunity for these students to rise to a similar or even higher level of success than their FTIC

academically prepared counterparts.

**TABLE 3: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION RATES – CREDIT COURSES (FALL SEMESTER)**

Year	FTIC Students	Treated	Treated-Passing	Non-Treated
2006	71%	57%	64%	53%
2007	70%	65%	74%	51%
2008	70%	51%	58%	62%
2009	71%	56%	61%	60%
2010	75%	78%	89%	53%

**GRAPH 3: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION RATES – CREDIT COURSES (FALL SEMESTER)**



The trends for successful completion rates in developmental education (DE) courses were similar to credit courses but at a lower percent of success. All cohort groups ranged in the 30-40% successful completion rate until Fall, 2010, when the treated passing cohort made a significant jump to a rate of 68% successful completion in DE courses. This improvement, when correlated with the significant changes to the success strategies course and mentoring approach implemented in Fall, 2010, provides promise for future enrolling cohorts.

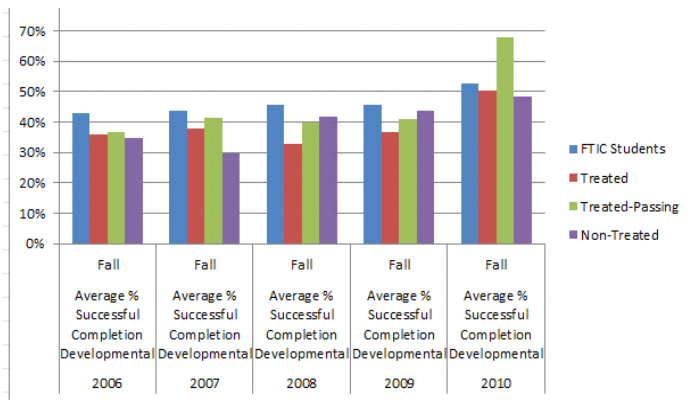
**TABLE 4: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION – DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES (FALL SEMESTER)**

Year	FTIC Students	Treated	Treated-Passing	Non-Treated
2006	43%	36%	37%	35%
2007	44%	38%	41%	30%
2008	46%	33%	40%	42%
2009	46%	37%	41%	44%
2010	53%	50%	68%	48%

**GRAPH 4: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION – DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES (FALL SEMESTER)**







## CONCLUSION

In Summer, 2010, TC was selected as one of a select group of community colleges nationwide to participate in Achieving the Dream – a forward-thinking, data-driven initiative focused on improving student success (especially for developmental education students). As a result of the five-year implementation and analysis of the TC QEP, TC decided to include a progressive scale-up of the success strategies course initiative as one component in the TC Achieving the Dream implementation proposal that was submitted in May, 2011. A first step was achieved in June, 2011, when the success strategies course was moved from pilot status into a permanent part of TC course management by designating the course as part of the Social Sciences Division, thereby institutionalizing the course and providing permanency. In addition, select Social Sciences faculty assuming leadership roles for the course participated in intensive professional development in July/August, 2011. Plans are in place for this team to train all full- and part-time faculty teaching the success strategies course in the strategies and techniques acquired. Another component of the TC AtD plan for the student success course is to progressively bring the course to scale for students placing into two or more developmental education courses, then one or more developmental education courses, and, finally, for all entering students. These steps will ensure that the work initiated in the TC QEP will continue to grow and positively impact student success well into the future.

The positive impact of the success strategies course on the lives of participating students was presented to faculty, staff, administrators and a group of students in May, 2011, using a multimedia presentation. This presentation afforded those present an opportunity to hear first-hand, the voices of students directly impacted by our QEP and to understand how beneficial it has been and will continue to be for TC students.