

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Wilkes • Ashe • Alleghany



EMPOWERING COMMUNICATION

Quality Enhancement Plan

By Wilkes Community College
Dr. Mike Rodgers, President
In Preparation for the On-Site Committee Review
September 15-18, 2025

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Letter from the President



June 11, 2025

Dear Members of the Reaffirmation Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC):

On behalf of Wilkes Community College, it is my pleasure to submit our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that is focused on workplace communication skills, titled "Empowering Communication." This plan represents our institution's commitment to enhancing student learning and development through focused, evidence-based strategies that will prepare our graduates to be effective communicators in the modern workplace.

Through an inclusive and collaborative planning process, Wilkes Community College and our stakeholders identified workplace communication as a critical area of need that aligns with our mission, institutional priorities, and the expectations of employers and community partners. The QEP outlines specific, measurable goals designed to improve students' professional communication skills in real-world contexts.

Ensuring the students' ability to convey their knowledge and skills to employers is vital to their success and this initiative reflects Wilkes Community College's dedication to student success and continuous improvement. We are confident that this plan will have a lasting impact on our students' readiness for the workforce and will further strengthen our role as a vital contributor to the economic and social development of our service region and beyond. We appreciate the guidance and support of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges throughout this process. We look forward to the feedback from the on-site review committee and to sharing the progress and outcomes of our QEP in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mike Rodgers

Dr. Mike Rodgers, President

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Executive Summary

Wilkes Community College (WCC) has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled Empowering Communication, which aims to enhance students' workplace communication skills. Extensive stakeholder feedback has shown workplace communication skills to be a critical employability requirement. While communication is already a key component of the WCC curriculum, we aim to enhance our students' success rates and seamless transitions into the workforce by focusing on improving their communication skills in a professional context.

Due to its relevance across industries and alignment with WCC's core values of learner-centered excellence, equity, and continuous quality improvement, the following goal was identified for this QEP initiative:

Goal: WCC will increase student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication.

The identified **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** that will guide the QEP's initiative are:

- 1) Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.
- 2) Students will compose clear, concise professional electronic communication.

The QEP will be embedded across the curriculum beginning with the following programs in fall 2025:

- Applied Engineering Technologies
- Associate in Arts Teacher Preparation (AATP)
- Associate in Science Teacher Preparation (ASTP)
- Automotive Systems Technology
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice
- Nursing
- Workforce Development and Community Education (WDCE) – HVAC and Residential Plumbing

Additional programs will be added in subsequent years until all WCC academic programs are involved. Curriculum mapping exercises have been completed with all first-year programs as well as general education courses to ensure that students are receiving consistent and appropriate workplace communication instruction throughout their time at WCC.

Each SLO will be assessed utilizing a rubric tool developed by the Rubric and Assessment team and evaluated with both formative and summative assessments. The student learning outcomes will be integrated throughout WCC's program curriculum, and an assessment of student communication skills will occur at three intervals in each two-year program to monitor development. The QEP assessment data will have no

impact on student grades as instructors will continue to assess these assignments separately in their classes.

All rubric assessors will be trained to ensure consistent and reliable data collection. Baseline data gathered during the spring 2025 semester will guide adjustments and improvements to QEP implementation. Faculty will receive professional development in curriculum mapping, teaching and assessing communication skills, and relevant technology such as Echo360 software that will support students and faculty in recording and evaluating presentations.

WCC has demonstrated its commitment to the QEP through generous resource allocation. This financial and strategic investment underscores WCC's dedication to enhancing student success and regional workforce readiness.

WCC's QEP focuses on equipping students with essential workplace communication skills to enhance employability and meet the needs of regional employers. By integrating these skills across programs and providing robust professional development for faculty, WCC aims to create a sustainable framework for student success in a dynamic workforce environment.

Figure 1: WCC students in the Poe Hall lobby on the Ashe Campus



Key Terms

- **A&S:** Arts and Sciences division
- **AATP:** Associate in Arts Teacher Preparation
- **ACA:** The ACA prefix stands for “Academic Related.” Under WCC’s current advising model, students are assigned an advisor through enrollment in the appropriate student success class, ACA 115 Success and Study Skills or ACA 122 College Transfer Success, where they create an academic plan to reach selected goals. This advisor is also the student’s ACA 115/122 instructor.
- **ACT:** Applied Career Technologies Division
- **ASC:** Academic Support Center
- **ASTP:** Associate in Science Teacher Preparation
- **BPST:** Business and Public Service Technologies Division
- **CCP:** Career and College Promise is a dual enrollment program which consists of high school students in the service area (Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes counties).
- **Echo360:** A video platform that is available to faculty, staff, and students to host, manage, and record academic media content.
- **FLC:** Faculty Learning Community
- **FT:** Full-time faculty
- **HS:** Health Sciences Division
- **HVAC:** Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning program at WCC
- **IR/IE:** Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness which collects and analyzes data to support institutional decision making and planning.
- **IT:** Information Technology
- **Moodle:** Learning management system
- **PD Day:** Professional development day scheduled at WCC
- **SBAR:** Situation, background, assessment, recommendations. This is a common tool used in healthcare settings for communication.
- **Student Portal:** WCC’s webpage for student access to college software platforms
- **WDCE:** Workforce Development and Community Education
- **WCC:** Wilkes Community College

Institutional Profile

Wilkes Community College (WCC), a proud member of the North Carolina Community College System, is a public, two-year, open-door institution dedicated to serving the people of Wilkes, Ashe, Alleghany counties, and beyond. Committed to providing accessible, high-quality education, WCC operates under an open-door admission policy, welcoming all individuals who are high school graduates or at least 18 years old, regardless of race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, or political affiliation. The college also admits high school and home school applicants to college credit and community education courses in accordance with North Carolina's Career & College Promise programs.

Figure 2. Thompson Hall on the main campus at WCC



Mission: Wilkes Community College empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills to transform lives and enrich our communities through accessible lifelong education, workforce development, and community engagement.

Vision: Wilkes Community College provides programs, resources, and services that create quality educational, economic development, and cultural opportunities. Wilkes Community College aspires to be an effective learner-centered educational institution and a dynamic learning organization.

Values: Wilkes Community College's mission and vision are guided by a culture of care and the values of learner-centered excellence, integrity and respect, compassion, equity and accessibility, continuous improvement, and collaboration and engagement. These principles drive us to create an exceptional educational experience that supports and respects every individual.

- **Learner-Centered Excellence:** Focusing on the needs and success of our learners in every aspect of our work.
- **Integrity and Respect:** Upholding the highest standards of honesty and treating all individuals with dignity and respect.
- **Compassion:** Understanding and empathizing with the experiences and needs of others, while actively providing support and kindness to reduce their challenges.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals to access and benefit from education and resources.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Embracing innovation and growth to enhance our educational practices and organizational effectiveness.
- **Collaboration and Engagement:** Fostering a supportive community through active partnerships and shared learning experiences.

Educational Opportunities: Wilkes Community College offers a wide range of educational and training opportunities for the local three-county service area and beyond, delivered through in-person, virtual, online, and hybrid courses. Whether students are pursuing college credit or community education, WCC strives to meet the diverse needs of learners through flexible delivery methods and high-quality programs.

Strategic Plan and Student Success: In 2018, Wilkes Community College implemented a five-year strategic plan with the primary goal of doubling its completion rate from 25% to 50% by 2023. Through a comprehensive focus on student success, program quality, and operational efficiency, WCC exceeded this goal, more than doubling its completion rate to 55% by 2024.

Workplace communication ties in directly with the labor market outcome goal and soft skills development of the strategic plan. Key initiatives from the Wilkes Community College Strategic Plan include:

- **Labor Market Outcome Goal:** Increase student employability in career tracks aligned with local and regional workforce needs that offer growth opportunities and family sustaining income.
- **Soft Skills Development:** Integrate soft skills systematically across all areas of the college to prepare students for today's work environment.
- **Guided Pathways:** Promoting clear program options, labor market outcomes, and awareness for students from high school through college.
- **Petro Kulynych Advising Program:** Offering intensive academic advising to support student success and program completion.

- **Robert L. Strickland Career Coach Program:** Providing career coaches in local high schools to foster relationships and guide students toward education and workforce opportunities.
- **Education Promise Scholarship:** A donor-funded, last-dollar scholarship available to all high school graduates in Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany counties, increasing access to education.

In addition to these programs, WCC focuses on embedding tutoring services, leveraging data analysis, aligning programs with labor market needs, and addressing non-academic barriers to student success through wraparound services.

Future Directions: Building upon the successes of the Wilkes Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan and the reaffirmation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Wilkes Community College has extended its strategic plan through 2025 to align with the upcoming reaffirmation and the launch of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). As of January 2025, WCC is in the initial stages of assessing priorities for its next strategic plan, with a focus on strategic enrollment management as a potential key area for development.

Wilkes Community College is committed to transforming lives through accessible, quality education and community engagement. With a focus on student success, workforce development, and lifelong learning, we are dedicated to meeting the evolving needs of our students and the communities we serve. As we look toward the future, we remain dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that our mission and vision guide our work for years to come.

Figure 3. Graphic Design Lead Instructor Amber Arnder in her classroom



Topic Identification and Development

Selecting the Topic

In August 2023, Wilkes Community College’s executive leadership initiated the process of identifying a topic for its 2026 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in preparation for reaffirmation. A Reaffirmation Leadership Team was established, consisting of Morgan Francis, Interim President; Kristen Macemore, Vice President of Instruction; Kim Faw, Vice President of Student Services and Instructional Support; Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts and Sciences; and Dr. Jody R. Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning. Notably, most of the personnel involved in the 2016 QEP—including the President, Vice President of Instruction, SACSCOC Liaison, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning, and former QEP Director—were no longer in those roles at WCC. To help ensure the success of the new QEP, the newly formed leadership team met with SACSCOC Vice President Dr. Jay Marr during this period to seek guidance and support.

During these initial discussions in August 2023, the team reviewed WCC’s 2016 QEP, the previous planning and implementation processes, and timeline. The best practices and lessons learned from the previous QEP as well as Five-Year Strategic Plan were taken into consideration for this next iteration of the QEP process.

The team developed a QEP survey for WCC’s employees to assess potential topics of interest for the 2026 QEP. The QEP Topic Survey was administered to all WCC employees and asked the following questions: “What Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) should WCC consider that would improve or enhance student learning and/or student success?” and “Measurability is an important concept within a QEP; if your suggestion were to become the next QEP, how might the impact on student learning and/or student success be measured?” Of the 142 employee responses, 83 were specific and relevant enough to be recorded and sorted into broad categories. The four categories, which captured over 56% of the total responses, included: Curriculum, Instruction, and Course Design; Developmental Education; Student Support, Development, and Resources; and Student Engagement and Success. Employability Skills were mentioned in a number of responses.

In September and October 2023, broad-based engagement of external stakeholders and program advisory committees was conducted via surveys asking equivalent questions to the WCC employee survey to better align the responses. The survey netted 48 responses from a pool of 240 potential participants. A significant portion of the respondents cited communication or soft skills as areas in need of improvement among WCC’s students.

The Reaffirmation Leadership Team developed a QEP Topic Selection Team in October 2023 comprised of multiple faculty members, staff, and college administrators. All survey results from employees, external stakeholders, and program advisory committees were shared with the QEP Topic Selection Team in advance of the December meeting to begin narrowing the potential topics. The meeting on December

7, 2023, provided productive discussion around the potential topics and the top choices. Discussions were tabled until February 2024 due to the holidays and selection of WCC's new president with the intention of incorporating feedback and perspective from the new leadership.

The QEP Topic Selection Team reconvened to revisit and review categorization of topics in February 2024. These meetings explored measurability and continued to refine topics from the 2023 survey results. Ultimately, four topic exploration teams were established. Each team was tasked with researching the viability of one of the four potential topics under consideration.

In March 2024, a QEP topic review and briefing was held with WCC's incoming president, Dr. Mike Rodgers, who officially began his duties on June 3, 2024. Following this briefing, team presentations were delivered to analyze each potential QEP topic. Developmental education emerged as a frontrunner, but employability skills and workplace communication were often referenced as a throughline in all the potential QEP topics. The support for workplace communication and career readiness from WCC's Faculty Senate helped further refine the QEP focus and prompted the final round of stakeholder input gathered from WCC's students.

Following this meeting, a QEP Student Survey ([Appendix A](#)) was developed and administered to the student body. The response rate was 4.19% (97/2,317), and the overwhelming majority of respondents chose communication, reliability, teamwork, and time and resource management. Based on this feedback, and combined with the previous survey results, the QEP Topic Selection Team finalized workplace communication as the topic while establishing the QEP Implementation Team to begin the planning phase.

Following this decision, the QEP Implementation Team was established with a confirmation of workplace communication being unanimously approved based on the previous survey results.

In October 2024, WCC's Board of Trustees unanimously approved workplace communication as the QEP topic ([Appendix B](#)).

Stakeholder Feedback

WCC Advisory Committee and Employer Feedback

Local employers were sent a survey in September 2023 requesting feedback and suggestions for attributes that would make WCC students more employable and attractive as potential hires to their organization. The most frequent responses included communication, customer service, and face-to-face communication skills (which we interpret as interpersonal communication skills).

In a review of WCC Program Advisory Committee minutes, communication was cited as a frequent point of concern, as demonstrated by the following comments:

- “We discovered that they were all in need of students with soft skills, customer service, communication skills.”
- “Communication needs to occur in a professional manner and students/graduates need to be able to talk to doctors using SBAR.”
- “Communication is key (email etiquette).”
- “Demonstrate effective communication and critical thinking skills in the business and professional environment.”
- “Oral and written communication skills continue to be an area of concern.”
- “Communicate effectively with clients, service providers, and other professionals.”
- “We are seeing graduates struggle in the area of communication skills, especially, appropriate therapeutic skills.”
- “Increase instruction in interpersonal communication skills with a strong focus on therapeutic skills and appropriate therapeutic interactions.”

WCC Faculty/Staff Feedback

In the QEP Topic Survey sent to faculty and staff, the following question was asked: “What Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) should WCC consider that would improve or enhance student learning and/or student success?” (responses below):

- “Employability skills is still a need that is often discussed by our local employers. It should be college-wide at least in some format with staff having a role. The focus could be on some of the primary skills listed such as communication, cultural sensitivity, and teamwork.”
- “Awareness and improvement of Employability Skills. We hear this from potential employers all the time. Our students may graduate with a degree at WCC where they have learned technical skills but are not always prepared for success as potential employees due to weak skills in areas such as reliability, dependability, time management, problem solving, and oral and written communication skills.”
- “Many employability skills can be tied to specific learning outcomes across various programs: Communication, teamwork, reliability/attendance, problem-solving self-management.”
- “Completion of professionalism course/unit (doesn't have to be a class, just something students must complete before graduating). Submission of emails/other items which reflect professionalism.”
- “Completion of mock interviews or interviews with Apprenticeship partners. Interviews with employers who hire WCC graduates.”
- “Emphasis on communicating with instructors when situations arise requiring students to miss a class. Just as one would do when employed, you just don't not show for work without notifying your employer. I realize this may be difficult to

measure but perhaps using attendance and some type of record of students that communicate when needing to be late or absent could potentially help measure this outcome.”

WCC Student Feedback

In the QEP topic survey sent to students, the following questions were asked (responses included):

- How important is it for your college education to equip you with strong oral and written communication skills for future employment opportunities?
 - 69% - Very Important
 - 27% - Important
 - 4% - Not Important
- Rate the significance of collaboration and teamwork abilities in the workplace.
 - 70% - Very Important
 - 29% - Important
 - 1% - Not Important
- Choose three (3) employability skills from the following list which are the most important to you.
 - “Communication” received the most votes (63).

QEP Development Process

The process used to develop the QEP focused on increasing student competency and readiness for workplace communication has been a collaborative, team-based effort that began in 2023.

Teams involved in QEP Development:

Implementation – Provides leadership and strategic direction for carrying out the QEP, ensuring effective coordination and progress throughout the process.

Topic Selection – Identifies a QEP topic that is both measurable and manageable, while creating collaboration and communication with colleagues across divisions during the selection process.

Best Information/Literature Review – Conducts thorough research to ground the QEP in current, evidence-based practices and scholarly literature relevant to the chosen topic.

Rubric and Assessment – Develops clear, measurable student learning outcomes aligned with identified needs, along with a comprehensive plan for evaluating achievement through effective assessment tools.

Curriculum Mapping– Aligns student learning outcomes with instructional methods and assessment strategies across WCC curriculum to ensure coherence and support QEP goals.

Professional Development for Faculty and Staff – Designs a proposed timeline and structure for faculty and staff development, establishing the foundation for future professional development content creation.

Marketing – Promotes awareness and engagement with the QEP across the WCC community and external stakeholders through consistent, clear communication.

Support Resource – Creates resources and instructional support aimed to strengthen students' workplace communication skills and enhance their overall success.

The members of each team are as follows:

Implementation Team

- Dr. Mike Rodgers, President, Wilkes Community College
- Kristen Macemore, Vice President of Instruction
- Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator/Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- Sherry Cox, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator
- Kim Faw, Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services (Retired May 2025)
- Michael Wingler, Vice President of Information Technology and Operations/Chief Information Officer (CIO)
- Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning
- Scott Johnson, Associate Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services
- Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts & Sciences
- Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services
- Curt Miller, Chair of Workforce Development
- Christy Earp, Director of Pardue Library/Librarian
- Mike Roope, Director of Student Support Services/Counselor
- Kim Bell, Director of Work Based Learning
- Dr. Sheneele Wagoner, Director of Advising
- Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
- Faith Elledge – Student Representative and SGA President

Topic Selection Team

- Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services
- Kim Faw, Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services (Retired May 2025)
- Dr. Caleb Marsh, Dean of Ashe Campus
- Morgan Francis, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration
- Michael Wingler, Vice President of Information Technology and Operations/Chief Information Officer (CIO)
- Adam Parsons, Data Analyst
- Marina Brannock, Director of Business & Specialty Careers
- Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Josh Carr, Lead Instructor of Math
- Lauren Boyles, Director of Radiography Programs
- Dr. Melonie Kilby, Chair of Technology & Public Service
- Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
- Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning
- Kristen Macemore, Vice President of Instruction
- MaryBeth Knight, Lead Instructor of Psychology
- Scott Johnson, Associate Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services

Best Information/Literature Review Team

- **Effective Communication in the Workplace**
 - Mike Roope, Director of Student Support Services/Counselor
 - Laurie Brintle-Jarvis, Director of Small Business Center
 - Kim Bell, Director of Work Based Learning
 - Kim Faw, Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services (Retired May 2025)
 - Curt Miller, Chair of Workforce Development
- **Best Practices Related to Assessment**
 - Dr. Larry Taylor, Lead Instructor of Communication (Retired May 2025)
 - Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
 - Kelly Pipes, Lead Instructor of Economics
 - Patty Parsons, Director of Marketing and Communications (Retired March 2025)
- **Professional Development**
 - Christy Earp, Director of Pardue Library/Librarian
 - Sherry Cox, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator
 - Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director

- **Methods of Teaching**
 - Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
 - Misty Bass, Librarian
 - Dr. Melonie Kilby, Chair of Technology & Public Service
- **Student Support**
 - Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services
 - Stephanie Darnell, Director of Academic Support Center (ASC)

Rubric and Assessment Team

- Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator, Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- Dr. Larry Taylor, Lead Instructor of Communication (Retired May 2025)
- Dr. Caleb Marsh, Dean of Ashe Campus
- Cindy Killian, Lead Instructor of Accounting
- Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts & Sciences
- Scott Johnson, Associate Vice President of Instructional Support & Student Services
- Kelly Pipes, Lead Instructor of Economics
- MaryBeth Knight, Lead Instructor of Psychology

Curriculum Mapping Team

- Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
- Dr. Sheneele Wagoner, Director of Advising
- Wanda Beck, Director of Alleghany Center (Retired May 2025)
- Curt Miller, Chair of Workforce Development

Lead Instructors from each pilot program:

- Meret Burke – Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education
- Matt Ham – Lead Instructor of Automotive Systems
- Bryan Hartzog – Lead Instructor of Industrial Engineering/Robotics, Automation and Mechatronics Technology
- Joey Phillips – Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Dr. Emily Orr – Director of Nursing
- Matt Baldwin – Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Valerie Bailey – Simulation Coordinator, Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- Amanda Wiles – Lead Instructor of Criminal Justice

Professional Development Team

- Sherry Cox, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator
- Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator, Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- MaryBeth Knight, Lead Instructor of Psychology
- Michael Wingler, Vice President of Information Technology and Operations Information Officer (CIO)
- Kristen Macemore, Vice President of Instruction
- Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts & Sciences
- Curt Miller, Chair of Workforce Development
- Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning

Marketing Team

- Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering, QEP Co-Director
- Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Patty Parsons, Director of Marketing and Communications (Retired March 2025)
- Ryan Case, Director of Marketing and Communications (Hired May 2025)
- Bethany Swaim, Instructor of Graphic Design
- Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator, Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- James Brandt, Graphic Design Student
- Jackson Brown, Student Activities Coordinator/Admissions Representative
- Christy Culbreth, Advisor/Counselor/ACA Instructor
- Talina Pipes, Director of Alleghany Center
- Riah Barfield, Marketing and Social Media Specialist
- Allison Phillips, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Executive Director, WCC Foundation
- Morgan Staley, Coordinator of Recruiting
- Amber Arnder, Lead Instructor of Graphic Design

Support Resources Team

- Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services
- Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary, QEP Co-Director
- Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator, Instructor of Nursing, QEP Co-Director
- Bobby Sprinkle, WCC Student
- Vada Bunker, Librarian
- April Teague, Student Support Specialist

- Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Advisory Committee member, Director – Appalachian State Writing Across the Curriculum Program and University Writing Center
- Mike Roope, Director of Student Support Services/Counselor
- Dr. Sheneele Wagoner, Director of Advising
- Christy Culbreth, Advisor/Counselor/ACA Instructor
- Stephanie Darnell, Director of Academic Support Center (ASC)

QEP Development Timeline

The information below describes events or activities deemed significant to the QEP development process.

August 2023: WCC's Administrative Council/Reaffirmation Leadership Team discusses how the new QEP ties into the strategic plan and institution's comprehensive planning process.

August 2023: WCC's Administrative Council/Reaffirmation Leadership Team discusses QEP and reaffirmation planning with SACSCOC VP Dr. Jay Marr.

August 2023: WCC's Reaffirmation Leadership Team reviews WCC's historical 2016 QEP documents for 2026 QEP survey planning.

September 2023: Reaffirmation Leadership Team designs QEP survey for assessing topic interests with WCC faculty and staff.

September 2023: QEP Topic Survey is administered to WCC faculty and staff. The survey asks, "What Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) should WCC consider that would improve or enhance student learning and/or student success?" and "Measurability is an important concept within a QEP; if your suggestion were to become the next QEP, how might the impact on student learning and/or student success be measured?"

September 2023: QEP Topic Survey open office hours held with IR/IE to answer any questions about the previous QEP, topics, etc.

September – October 2023: QEP Topic Survey is administered to WCC's external stakeholders including educational partners, chambers of commerce, and city and county government officials.

October 2023: QEP Topic Survey is administered to WCC's Program Advisory Committees. The survey asks for feedback on which attributes would make our students more employable and attractive as potential hires and how each employer would assess these attributes.

October 2023: The Reaffirmation Leadership Team organizes and reviews QEP Faculty and Staff Survey results. There were 142 responses out of a possible 596 surveys given for a 23.83% response rate. The major topic suggestion categories

include developmental education; curriculum, instruction, and course design; employability skills; student engagement and success.

October 2023: Reaffirmation Leadership Team organizes and reviews QEP Stakeholder and Program Advisory Committee survey results. External stakeholders responded at a rate of 100% (8/8). Program Advisory Committee members responded at a rate of 17.24% (40/232). A large portion of the respondents cited communication or soft skills as needing improvement.

October 2023: Reaffirmation Leadership Team establishes the QEP Topic Selection Team, which is comprised of diverse faculty members, staff, and college administrators.

October 2023: QEP Survey results from the QEP Faculty and Staff, QEP Program Advisory Committee, and QEP Stakeholders surveys are shared with the QEP Topic Selection Team in anticipation of December 7, 2023, meeting.

December 2023: Reaffirmation Orientation Class of 2026 – SACSCOC Annual Meeting.

December 2023: QEP Topic Selection Team reviews QEP survey results and agrees to reconvene with recommendations after the winter break.

February 2024: QEP Topic Selection Team reconvenes to revisit and review categorization of topics.

February 2024: QEP Topic Selection Team discusses measurability and potential further recategorization. Topic review teams representing the following four areas are established: embedded tutoring, developmental education, contextualized learning, and workplace communication.

February - March 2024: QEP topic review teams meet individually to re-categorize and further narrow QEP topics in response to the results of the surveys in fall 2023.

March 2024: QEP topic review and briefing with Dr. Mike Rodgers, incoming WCC President (June 3, 2024).

March 2024: Four QEP topic presentations are delivered by the topic review teams. Topics include embedded tutoring, developmental education, contextualized learning, and workplace communication. Developmental education is a frontrunner, but discussion about Faculty Senate support of workplace communication results in developing a survey for student feedback and input on the four potential topics.

March 2024: QEP Student Survey questions are drafted and finalized by the QEP Topic Selection Team.

April 2024: QEP Student Survey is administered to WCC student body.

May 2024: QEP Student Survey results are reviewed by the QEP Topic Selection Team. The response rate was 4.19% (97/2,317). The overwhelming majority of respondents chose communication, reliability, teamwork, and time and resource management.

May 2024: QEP topic selection is finalized, and the topic is identified as workplace communication.

May 2024: QEP Implementation Team is established.

June 2024: QEP Kick-off: QEP Implementation Team begins discussion of the QEP process, student learning objectives for implementation, and establishes a cadence of meetings. Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning, provides a recap of survey and data results.

July 2024: QEP Implementation Team begins discussion of WCC programs that will be included in the initial roll-out, and implementation team members take part in a communication activity.

July 2024: QEP Implementation Team begins discussion of QEP student learning outcomes, assessment, and measurement processes along with baseline data collection.

July 2024: QEP Implementation Team meets with Gateway Community College for discussion of their QEP focused on communication.

July 2024: QEP Administrative Team discusses QEP co-directors' role in the process, potential budget items, September 3rd PD day, and timeline for QEP process.

July 2024: QEP Implementation Team discusses the QEP co-directors, timeline, teams, and programs to be assessed during the first-year implementation as well as messaging to the WCC faculty.

July 2024: The following QEP co-directors are approved: Valerie Bailey, Simulation Coordinator and Instructor of Nursing; Matt Baldwin, Chair of Business and Culinary; and Joey Phillips, Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering

August 2024: QEP Literature Review Team initiates research on communication pedagogies. Kim Faw, VP of Instructional Support and Student Services, is the chair and assembles research for review.

August 2024: QEP Implementation Team begins discussion with QEP literature review update by Kim Faw. The group works on a timeline for QEP team meetings and discusses Dr. Marr's onsite visit to WCC in February 2025.

August 2024: QEP Implementation Team discusses QEP sub-teams and meeting timeline updates. Joey Phillips, QEP Co-Director, gives an update on the student learning outcomes. The team decides to focus on two SLO's instead of three.

August 2024: QEP co-directors present “What is the QEP?” at the fall 2024 faculty luncheon. The discussion includes information related to topic selection, student learning outcomes, pilot programs selected for implementation, and a list of teams currently in development to ensure QEP success.

September 2024: QEP Implementation Team discusses QEP-related professional development. The team discusses training needed to effectively teach and build workplace communication skills. Faculty will receive a self-efficacy survey towards the end of the semester to help develop workplace communication PD.

September 2024: Initial QEP Curriculum Mapping Team meeting focuses on first-year implementation programs and planning for the fall 2025 semester. Next steps include meeting with program directors and instructors in these programs to determine current strategies used to teach workplace communication and how often this is taught.

September 2024: QEP co-directors provide an update on the progress of the QEP during WCC’s professional development day. The discussion includes updates on the literature review, an introduction to curriculum mapping, assessment, and rubrics.

September 2024: QEP Assessment and Rubric Team reviews and discusses QEP goal and student learning outcomes.

October 2024: WCC’s Board of Trustees unanimously approves workplace communication as the college’s QEP topic for its 2026 reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC ([Appendix B](#)).

October 2024: QEP Implementation Team discusses the initial draft of the literature review and faculty self-efficacy survey to be sent out in November. Various QEP team meetings are rescheduled due to Hurricane Helene.

October 2024: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team discusses potential revisions to the self-efficacy survey as well as the SLO 1 oral presentation rubric and assessment scale.

October 2024: QEP Support Resources Team initial meeting discusses the completed literature review findings and examines research-based practices to improve communication skills. The team also identifies support services currently in place.

October 2024: QEP Professional Development Team discusses the self-efficacy survey distribution to faculty and timeline for completion. The team also considers options for January 2025 PD. The team will review the best foundational practices and self-efficacy survey results prior to completing the plans for professional development.

October 2024: QEP Implementation Team meeting begins with an update on the faculty self-efficacy survey draft, with the final survey to be sent to all faculty on November 4th for completion by November 14, 2024. The team discusses the percentage of completed faculty self-efficacy surveys expected and needed for validity.

October 2024: Initial QEP Marketing Team meeting focuses on potential slogans and initial design of the QEP theme. The team reviews several options for the QEP slogan and will submit these to the QEP Implementation Team for discussion. Valerie Bailey, QEP Co-Director, proposes having WCC graphic design students create logos.

October 2024: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team discusses scoring of the SLO 2 electronic communication rubric and clarifies the criterion of proficiency on the rubric.

November 2024: QEP Support Resources Team discusses current options for student support. Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services, suggests adding more communication specific student support services, such as peer tutoring and dedicated spaces for students to practice their communication skills.

November 2024: QEP Implementation Team discussion centers around the criteria and descriptions in the SLO 1 oral presentation rubric as well as appropriate scoring.

November 2024: QEP Professional Development Team meets to discuss WCC's January PD Day. Keynote speaker Dr. Alan Mueller is scheduled to present on workplace communication. Dr. Mueller will host a breakout session after lunch to go into greater detail on how to effectively implement the QEP. The team also discusses additional opportunities for QEP PD focusing on preparing faculty to use proper technology and develop more proficiency in teaching communication skills.

November 2024: QEP Marketing Team focuses on slogans and initial feedback from the Implementation Team. The team discusses meeting with instructors from the graphic design department to incorporate the logo as a class project for the second-year students in the spring. Matt Baldwin, QEP Co-Director, will meet with Amber Arnder and Bethany Swaim (graphic design Instructors) to discuss student involvement.

December 2024: QEP Implementation Team discusses professional development. The suggestion is made by Sherry Cox, Executive Director of HR, that faculty from the first-year implementation programs be strongly encouraged to attend Dr. Mueller's breakout session for the January professional development day. Rubric training will be held in early January 2025 for all assessors. The team also discusses curriculum mapping in the first-year programs.

December 2024: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team discuss artifact readers for rubric assessment for each SLO.

December 2024: QEP Administrative Team attends SACSCOC Annual Meeting in Austin, TX.

December 2024: QEP Support Resources Team meets to discuss a draft proposal of student and faculty support options.

January 2025: QEP Marketing Team meets to discuss the QEP logo and possible student involvement.

January 2025: QEP Implementation Team discusses the upcoming PD Day and all related events. A reminder is sent to relevant faculty to register for Dr. Alan Mueller's additional session. The team discuss items related to the current marketing plans, as well as scheduled rubric and technology training dates for spring 2025.

January 2025: WCC holds a professional development day for faculty and staff. QEP co-directors provide an update for faculty and staff. Dr. Alan Mueller presents with a focus on workplace communication and teaching these skills in the classroom. Faculty involved with the first-year programs for fall 2025 participates in a second session with Dr. Mueller that focuses on the QEP rubrics.

February 2025: The QEP Implementation Team meets with Dr. Marr to discuss and review the QEP. Dr. Marr provides positive feedback and pertinent questions that will need to be answered prior to the QEP submission in August.

February 2025: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team meets to review the final rubric drafts for each SLO. The team also discusses potential goals, which will be finalized after baseline data is collected in the spring 2025 semester.

February 2025: QEP Professional Development Team meets to discuss fall 2025 professional development related to workplace communication. The team decides to reach out to Dr. Mueller to potentially develop and oversee professional development for fall 2025.

February 2025: The QEP Implementation Team discusses including WDCE courses during the fall 2025 semester. Professional development will be available to WDCE instructors through administrators via previously recorded PD sessions.

February 2025: The QEP Rubric and Assessment Team participates in professional development with Dr. Larry Taylor, Lead Instructor of Communication, for SLO 1 rubric training. The training consists of reviewing the oral presentation rubric, tips on how to properly assess oral presentation videos when using the rubric, and common mistakes made when assessing an oral presentation. During the training session, team members are given an opportunity to practice assessing several oral presentation videos using the SLO 1 rubric with guidance from Dr. Taylor.

February 2025: The QEP Curriculum Mapping Team participates in a professional development session led by Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language and Transfer Education. The team members include the QEP co-directors and program lead instructors for the first-year implementation group in fall 2025. The team begins planning QEP related assignments and assessments in their programs using the curriculum map template.

March 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call meet with Josh Carr, Lead Instructor of Math, to discuss data collection and organization. Mr. Carr handles SLO data for Arts & Sciences on an annual basis. The group discusses the number of student artifacts that will be needed for baseline data to be statistically significant as well as the process for collecting and organizing data.

March 2025: QEP co-directors meet with Caitlin Howell, Instructional Technologies Specialist, to discuss the use of Echo360 software for recording and storing oral presentations.

March 2025: QEP co-directors meet with ACA instructors to discuss the process for randomly selecting, submitting, and assessing emails as part of SLO 2 baseline data collection.

March 2025: QEP co-directors present QEP updates for faculty during the spring professional development day. Faculty members are given copies of the QEP SLO 1 and SLO 2 rubrics along with a curriculum map template to use during the PD session. QEP-related meetings are held with departments in the afternoon.

March 2025: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team discusses the Assessment section of the QEP along with updated rubric templates.

March 2025: QEP co-directors, graphic design instructors, and select members of the Implementation Team review the logo created by WCC student James Brandt.

March 2025: QEP Implementation Team meets to discuss QEP updates such as rubric and curriculum map training, professional development for the fall 2025 semester, and student involvement in various teams.

April 2025: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team practices reviewing a set of oral presentation videos and discusses scoring these videos.

April 2025: QEP Marketing Team finalizes the QEP logo.

April 2025: QEP Curriculum Mapping Team meets to check in with all first-year implementation programs and address any questions about the process. The goal of each program is to have a draft of the fall 2025 semester curriculum map completed by the end of the spring 2025 semester.

April 2025: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team reviews additional practice oral presentation videos. The team utilizes the guidelines from Dr. Larry Taylor's rubric training and discusses the presentations after being individually scored. This additional training is conducted to prepare for baseline data collection.

April 2025: QEP co-directors meet with ACA instructors to review sample emails to practice SLO 2 baseline data assessment.

April 2025: QEP Professional Development Team meets to review and finalize the QEP PD proposal from Dr. Mueller for fall 2025. The team also discusses potential participants in the fall, which would include instructors from all academic divisions along with individuals from student support and WDCE.

April 2025: QEP Rubric and Assessment Team finalizes the Assessment section of the QEP.

May 2025: QEP Support Resources Team meets and reviews a proposal drafted by Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services, which will help facilitate faculty and student needs during the QEP implementation. The proposal includes potential and expected support options, including the creation of a Communication Center within the Academic Support Center and expanded tutoring and technology assistance.

May 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call meet with Morgan Francis, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Dr. Rodgers, President of WCC, to review the QEP budget. Budget items will be presented to the WCC Administrative Council for approval in June.

May 2025: QEP Implementation Team meets to discuss QEP updates such as marketing, the budget, and content review.

May 2025: QEP Marketing Team meets to discuss marketing items for the QEP as well as formatting and printing of the QEP document.

June 2025: QEP co-directors attended Administrative Council meeting and proposed the QEP budget, QEP PD stipends, and creating the Communication Center. All were approved.

June 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call meet with Dr. Caleb Marsh to discuss baseline data and assessment.

June 2025: QEP Implementation Team meets to discuss an updated QEP timeline, professional development stipends, baseline data, marketing, and creating the Communication Center.

June 2025: QEP PD Team meets to discuss August 14th professional development.

July 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call meet with Ryan Case, Director of Marketing and Communications, to review QEP poster drafts.

July 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call attend SACSCOC Summer Institute.

July 2025: QEP Implementation team discusses the SACSCOC Summer Institute and submitting the QEP.

August 2025: QEP co-directors and Dr. Jody Call submit the QEP to SACSCOC.

August 2025: WCC Board of Trustees approve the QEP budget.

Desired Student Learning Outcomes

The WCC QEP will positively impact the entire institution and improve student learning while successfully preparing students to excel in the workplace. The QEP will include all curriculum programs at WCC. The QEP goals and student learning outcomes have been developed and established from the input of employers, students, faculty, staff, and the QEP Implementation Team.

Goal

The overarching goal has guided QEP development and remained constant throughout the process:

Goal: WCC will increase student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes are tied to the overarching goal of the QEP and reflect statements of what students should be able to apply and demonstrate as a result of QEP initiatives. The QEP student learning outcomes have evolved based upon continued analysis of survey and student learning data through the spring 2025 semester, conversations across QEP teams, consideration of measurability, and with the support of research and best practice. The outcomes are specific and measurable with rubrics having been developed to assess each (see [pp. 43-45](#)).

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will compose clear and concise professional electronic communication.

Each student learning outcome (SLO) is intentionally designed to align with the specific needs of individual academic programs. To assess SLO 1, many programs will incorporate standard classroom presentations, while some may utilize other methods, such as demonstrations or oral board interviews. For SLO 2, email will be a primary method of assessment, but other methods include SBAR reports (common tool used in healthcare settings for communication), service tickets, professional messaging platforms (such as Microsoft Teams), project management software, and a variety of written documents essential to professional fields. Details regarding the measures and targets for each SLO are provided in the Assessment section ([pp. 56-64](#)).

Literature Review and Best Practices

Importance of Communication in the Workplace

Rios et al. (2020) examined the 21st century skills that are most in demand by employers. The study analyzed approximately 142,000 job advertisements to identify the skills that employers seek in potential employees, focusing on those requiring a college degree. The authors highlighted the **need for professional oral and written communication**: “The most highly requested skill across all advertisements was oral communication (28%), followed closely by written communication (23%)” (p. 83). Rios et al. (2020) referenced additional findings which revealed that 47% of recent 2-year graduates and 28% of recent 4-year graduates are deficient in written communication. The authors noted another study by Hart Research Associates in 2018 in which a survey of 1,000 business executives and hiring managers found that only around 40% of recent college graduates had sufficient oral communication skills. This research indicates that **employers note significant skills gaps for both oral and written communication**. Rios et al. (2020) stated, “Clearly, to close this skills gap, it is vital that the U.S. higher education system adopt learning outcomes standards that emphasize these skills to improve workforce preparedness for college graduates” (p. 88).

McGunagle and Zizka (2020) identified the skills that are lacking in STEM graduates and provided recommendations for educational institutions to better prepare students for the workforce. The authors provided evidence supporting the **importance of communication skills in the workplace**. McGunagle and Zizka cited lack of communication as a primary example of employability skills gaps between what students are learning and what employers are looking for when hiring (p. 591). The authors concluded that educational institutions should integrate employability skills into their curricula to better prepare students for the workforce.

Coffelt et al. (2019) researched what communication skills mean to various employers. Their study included 22 participants who hired and/or supervised recent college graduates (pp. 423-424). The authors then divided these communication skills into four categories based on collected data:

- **Written communication**: types of documents and how to write and communicate with employers (p. 421).
- **Oral communication**: ranged from basic tasks such as talking to more complex tasks such as constructive feedback (pp. 421-422).
- **Visual communication**: included PowerPoint, charts, graphs, and other methods of visual communication (p. 422).

- **Electronic communication:** overwhelmingly focused on email as the primary communication method in this category. Nearly all participants in the study noted the importance of professional email use in their industries. Additional electronic communication mentioned included text messaging, social media, and web applications (p. 422).

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2023), 72.7% of the surveyed employers seek written communication skills and 67.5% seek verbal communication skills when reviewing candidates' resumes (p. 26).

Methods of Teaching

Baird and Parayitam (2019) suggested that higher education leaders “play a role in helping students develop their written communication, listening skills, interpersonal skills and presentation skills by embedding them into course learning objectives and assessing them more directly” (p. 631). The authors recommended that higher education institutions (HEIs) prepare their faculty through effective training to connect course and program content with relevant projects and outcomes that show students are learning necessary skills (p. 631).

Similarly, Johnson et al. (2015) confirmed the importance of teaching communication skills by developing the *Murdoch Communication Skills Framework* at Murdoch University. The authors referenced an increased belief that disciplinary study is where the development of communication skills occurs most effectively, which includes embedding these skills in the curriculum (p. 3). The authors discussed a set of best practices that includes promoting communication skills as a core competency, supporting all students in developing the necessary skills for success, and developing discipline-specific communication skills (p. 4). Examples of communication skills mentioned by Johnson et al. include summarizing arguments, interpersonal skills, and integrating diverse perspectives in written and oral forms (p. 7).

Some of the recommendations made by Murdoch University to implement university-wide communication skills included embedding at both major and unit levels through curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment practices; mapping across courses, majors, and units so that communication skills are developed progressively at different levels across courses (p.7); implementing institution-wide rubrics to promote a common language across the campus and support curriculum mapping (p. 11); and scaffolding communication skills across programs and degree levels through benchmark, milestone, and capstone experiences (p. 11).

Broeckelman-Post et al. (2023) stated that “students benefit from multiple, scaffolded opportunities to practice and develop communication skills throughout the academic career” (p. 41). Students need the opportunities to work on their communication skills in general education courses as well as their program specific courses.

Assessments

Johnson et al. (2015) developed a literacy rubric as part of their process “in response to the need for a common language to inform the development and assessment of literacy across the curriculum” (p. 6). The authors stated that “Communication skills should be explicitly assessed as part of disciplinary learning, for example through the use of assessment rubrics that clearly articulate communication skills criteria and standards (including minimum standards)” (p.7). The authors also recommended that institution-wide communication skills rubrics be implemented, similar to the American Association of Colleges and Universities *VALUE* rubrics (Appendix C). Institution-wide rubrics would help provide a common language for faculty/staff and students, regardless of discipline, as well as guidelines for the creation of specific learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, and the implementation of rubrics (p. 8).

Allen (2004) noted that rubrics can be used to score almost anything, including reports, portfolios, and oral presentations (p. 138). Rubrics could benefit faculty who are not comfortable teaching communication skills by helping them offer appropriate feedback and collect data for program assessment. A rubric can help faculty track student improvement if embedded in first- and second-year courses. Common rubrics can be created and shared amongst faculty; however, each may tailor the rubric to their specific program needs (p. 140).

Allen (2004) asserted that rubrics should be tested through a pilot program with assessors being “normed” or “calibrated” before implementing the rubrics (p. 142). The assessments that utilize these rubrics should be able to reveal student strengths and weaknesses. Conclusions can be found through objective application of the rubric (p. 143).

Similarly, Broeckelman-Post et al. (2023) observed that “grading across disciplines was almost universally done by rubric. Instructors found this the ‘fairest way to do it’” (p. 53). Instructors felt confident when grading content but significantly less so when grading communication-related aspects of student work (p. 53). This underscores the need for rubric scorer training along with a comprehensive professional development plan to support instructors and QEP leaders in the implementation and assessment of our QEP.

Professional Development

The success of this QEP will largely depend on the communication skills and effectiveness of WCC faculty and staff. As such, professional development is a critical component of this plan. A review of the literature surrounding communication across the curriculum supports the inclusion of professional development.

Murdock University’s institution-wide initiative to embed communication skills in learning, teaching, and assessment integrated professional development as a core

component. The university viewed this project as a situation in which both faculty and students required support. Murdock University asserts that communications faculty, faculty from the disciplines, and academic support personnel should collaborate to provide professional development opportunities in “curriculum design, assessment and teaching aimed at developing students’ communication skills” (Johnson et al., 2015, p. 7).

Johnson et al. (2015) noted that a successful plan will develop a common language around communication, provide professional development workshops and individual support for embedding communication skills into assessment and teaching, and provide an online community site to buttress professional development offerings and to provide additional resources (p. 8). The authors also stressed the delivery of professional development opportunities at different levels of the institution. For example, course-level workshops allow faculty to address course-specific skill requirements and gaps and share strategies for teaching and assessing those skills (p. 10).

Norander (2018) specifically addressed the unique issues surrounding communication-centered professional development for non-communication faculty. Norander identified ten best practices in designing and implementing such a program (Appendix D).

Adjunct faculty, who represent a significant number of the faculty roster at WCC, should not be neglected when it comes to embedding communication skills throughout the curriculum. Although these individuals are employed part-time, their frequently heavy course loads indicate that they play a significant role in student learning.

As part-time employees, adjunct faculty can be difficult to reach, and they often report feeling isolated (Buch et al. 2023). One method of reaching out to adjuncts is the creation of Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs). A cohort-based FLC consists of a group of faculty members who share a common characteristic, need, challenge, or goal, and are more likely to be sustained over time and to focus on developmental needs of its members. Thirty years of studies offer definitive evidence supporting the use of cohort-based FLCs in many settings. The most notable effects of FLCs include an enhanced sense of community with other faculty, an increased interest in teaching and exploring new teaching theories, and a welcomed opportunity to learn new skills from each other (Buch et al., 2023, p. 16).

Student Support

Several articles discuss the effectiveness of communication centers in supporting students. Research shows that these centers benefit students by reducing communication anxiety, providing communication skills development, building student confidence, and helping students view communication in a workplace context. Regarding the overall benefit of communication centers, Stewart et al. (2021a) state that “Communication centers provide interpersonal interactions with student clients, which

can help build rapport with increased interactions and supportive mentoring leading to stronger overall academic performance and persistence to graduation” (p. 308)

Stewart et al. (2021b) acknowledge that communication apprehension could be a difficult hurdle to overcome for some students. A communication center could provide support to address this issue while also helping students utilize their communication skills in other contexts (p. 57). Typical services provided by a communication center would include assistance with public speaking, interpersonal communication, visual aids, use of technology, as well as any other issues related to communication (p. 59). If effective, a communication center would help address any student apprehensions in classes and/or in real world settings (p. 66).

Davis et al. (2017) highlight the significant impact tutoring support can have in communication-related instruction. Students benefit from one-on-one tutoring services where a tutor is able to guide the student to critically assess their own communication (such as a speech) while providing feedback and a safe space for students to practice (p. 25). The authors’ findings support prior research that communication centers “helped student speeches become more coherent and cogent, thereby increasing the quality of academic performance” (p. 30).

Conclusion

Research strongly supports the need to improve workplace communication skills among college graduates. Employers consistently report significant skill gaps that impact job readiness. Studies recommend embedding communication across the curriculum, supported by rubrics, professional development, and student resources like communication centers. This evidence reinforces the need for WCC’s QEP to strengthen students’ communication skills for academic and career success.

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Actions To Be Implemented

Data/Evidence Supporting Actions to be Implemented

Once the topic was finalized, the QEP Implementation Team began to assess the capacity of the institution as well as specific feedback from employers to guide professional development activities to reach the stated QEP goals. The Implementation Team engaged in three data collection activities to meet the need. The first was a faculty self-efficacy survey gauging professional preparation within the topic. Next, a survey was sent to Wilkes Community College advisory committee members to help construct learning outcomes for students that would enhance their employability after graduation. Finally, baseline data was collected to benchmark the institution's existing progress toward QEP goals. This information will be vital to measuring student progress as the QEP is implemented.

Faculty Self-Efficacy Survey - Fall 2024

The QEP Implementation Team aimed to collect data assessing the self-perception of WCC faculty's ability to teach workforce communication skills to students. A faculty self-efficacy survey ([Appendix E](#)) was conducted with part-time and full-time faculty to evaluate confidence in teaching workplace communication skills as well as identify potential areas for professional development. The completion rate of this survey as seen in Table 1 represents the high response rate amongst full-time WCC faculty.

Table 1. Self-Efficacy Survey Completion

Division	FT Survey Completers	FT Faculty	FT% Completers
A&S	26	27	96.3%
ACT	16	20	80%
BPST	16	16	100%
HS	9	17	52.9%
WDCE	15	19	78.9%
Total	82	99	82.8%

In total, 98 WCC faculty members (82 full-time and 16 part-time) completed the self-efficacy survey. This information, coupled with data collected from WCC's advisory committees and community members, will help guide professional development decisions and activities in the full implementation of the QEP.

In question 14 of the self-efficacy survey, respondents were asked about their perceived needs regarding professional development and were offered five potential responses. "Teaching Communication Skills in the Classroom" was the most commonly selected choice while the other four received similar response rates. Table 2 below displays the frequency recorded for each of the five potential professional development options.

Table 2. Survey Responses Related to Perceived Professional Development Needs

Response Option	Frequency	Percent
Curriculum Mapping	33	33.67%
Teaching Communication Skills in the Classroom	49	50%
Reflecting on Instructor/Individual Communication	36	36.73%
Communication Rubrics and Assessment	37	37.76%
Technology (such as Echo360 to record presentations)	37	37.76%

Advisory Committee Survey – Fall 2024

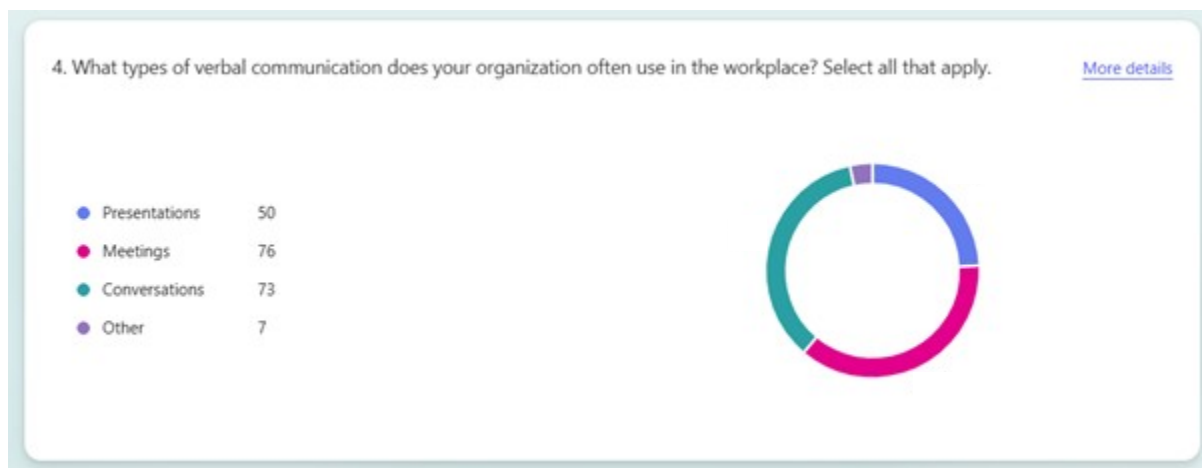
The QEP directors sent a survey to program advisory committee members across the college during the fall 2024 semester ([Appendix F](#)). This survey was developed to help determine the student learning outcomes based on common types of communication utilized by employers in our service area. Eighty advisory committee members responded from a wide range of programs, such as Automotive, Business Administration, Collision, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Graphic Design, Nursing, and Radiography. Figures 4 and 5 indicate several key factors used in the development of the QEP student learning outcomes:

- 50 respondents (62.5%) reported they often used presentations in the workplace, which relates to SLO 1 on oral presentations.
- All 80 respondents (100%) reported they often used email in the workplace, which relates to SLO 2 on electronic communication.

Figure 4. Advisory Committee Survey Results for Electronic Communication



Figure 5. Advisory Committee Survey Results for Presentations



Baseline Data Collection

After a thorough review of the current literature and a synthesis of the needs of our faculty and community partners, the QEP Implementation Team developed two student learning outcomes:

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will compose clear and concise professional electronic communication.

Student artifacts submitted between the fall 2023 and spring 2025 semesters were collected from a variety of courses. The rubrics (see [pp. 43-45](#)) developed to measure each student learning outcome were used to assess these artifacts. Each rubric uses a 3-point rating scale.

SLO 1 Baseline Data Artifacts: Presentations from programs in each academic division were recorded and submitted to the QEP co-directors. These programs include Nursing, Business Administration, Applied Engineering Technology, and English, psychology, and communications classes in the Arts & Sciences division. For these artifacts, students delivered oral presentations for approximately 2-5 minutes on a relevant class topic. These presentations were recorded with Echo360, which is WCC's standard video capture software. Two hundred fifty (250) recorded presentations were collected by the QEP co-directors and assessed by the QEP Rubric and Assessment Team using the SLO 1 rubric (see [p. 44](#)). Each submitted artifact was reviewed by two assessors since this is the standard practice at WCC for similar types of data collection.

SLO 2 Baseline Data Artifacts: All degree-granting programs at WCC require students to take one of two courses designed as first-year student success coursework. Under WCC's current advising model, students are assigned an advisor through enrollment in the appropriate student success class, ACA 115 Success and Study Skills or ACA 122 College Transfer Success. Both classes have course outcomes related to professional communication, which is assessed through proper email etiquette. WCC currently has 10 full-time ACA instructors, and each instructor submitted 25 randomly selected emails from currently enrolled students, for a total of 250 student artifacts for SLO 2. Each ACA instructor assessed 25 emails submitted by a different instructor using the SLO 2 rubric (see [p. 45](#)). Each submitted student artifact was assessed by one assessor.

Establishing Statistical Power: During the fall 2024 semester, the QEP co-directors met with Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts & Sciences, and Josh Carr, Lead Instructor of Mathematics, to determine the number of artifacts needed to exceed a power coefficient (β) of 0.80 with a goal of achieving a 90% confidence interval when estimating the population mean of students' scores according to each SLO rubric. The results of that power analysis indicated that evaluators would have to collect and score no fewer than 247 artifacts during the baseline data period for each SLO. Furthermore, to ensure representativeness of all college divisions and locations, courses submitting baseline artifacts were randomized according to programs across the college, learning modality, and campus location. This baseline data was used to create the performance targets for assessment 4 related to SLO 1 and assessment 5 related to SLO 2 (see [pp. 61-64](#)).

SLO 1 – Baseline Data

The baseline data for SLO 1 is listed below by individual criterion (such as Enunciation, Conversational Pace, etc.) as well as the section and overall averages. A score of 2.0 is considered college-level proficiency. Additional information about each statistical data point listed:

- **Average** – The average calculated for each individual criterion. The highest individual criterion average score (and only one over 2.00) was in Content Appropriate to Audience with a 2.03. The lowest individual criterion average score was Extemporaneous Delivery with a 1.56.
- **# of Artifacts** – 250 student artifacts were collected.

- **Standard Dev.** – Standard deviation indicates the variability amongst student scores. For all criteria, the standard deviation ranged from 0.20 – 0.51.
- **Margin of Error** – The maximum likely difference between our criteria sample means and the population mean of students' scores.
- **Confidence Interval (90%) Lower** – The lower bound of the 90% confidence interval for each criterion.
- **Confidence Interval (90%) Upper** – The upper bound of the 90% confidence interval for each criterion.
- **Not Proficient** – The percentage of students scoring less than a two.
- **Proficient** – The percentage of students scoring greater than or equal to a two.

Table 3. SLO 1 Rubric - Clarity of Speaking Individual Criterion

	(1) Clarity of Speaking					
	Enunciation	Conversational Pace	Tone/ Volume	Content Focus	Content Appropriate to Audience	Content Organization
Average	1.84	1.67	1.81	1.93	2.03	1.89
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.38	0.42	0.41	0.29	0.20	0.31
Margin of Error	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.03
Confidence Interval (90%)						
Lower	1.80	1.62	1.77	1.90	2.01	1.86
Upper	1.88	1.71	1.85	1.96	2.05	1.93

Table 4. SLO 1 Rubric - Phys. Pres., Ext. Delivery, and Vis./Aud. Aid Individual Criterion

	(2) Physical Presentation			(3) Ext. Delivery	(4) Vis./Aud. Aid
	Physical Presentation	Facial Expression	Posture & Negative Movement	Extemporaneous Delivery	Visual and/or Auditory Aid
Average	1.58	1.68	1.60	1.56	1.62
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.42	0.41	0.39	0.51	0.48
Margin of Error	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05
Confidence Interval (90%)					
Lower	1.53	1.64	1.56	1.50	1.57
Upper	1.62	1.72	1.64	1.61	1.67

SLO 1 – Baseline Data (cont.)

Table 5. SLO 1 Rubric - Section Averages Baseline Data

	Section Averages				
	(1) Clarity of Speaking	(2) Physical Presentation	(3) Extemporaneous Delivery	(4) Visual and/or Auditory Aid	Overall Average
Average	1.86	1.62	1.56	1.62	1.66
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.21	0.32	0.51	0.48	0.26
Margin of Error	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.03
Confidence Interval (90%)					
Lower	1.84	1.59	1.50	1.57	1.64
Upper	1.88	1.65	1.61	1.67	1.69
Proficiency					
Not Proficient	68.0%	79.2%	63.6%	56.0%	89.6%
Proficient	32.0%	20.8%	36.4%	44.0%	10.4%

SLO 2 – Baseline Data

The baseline data for SLO 2 is listed below by individual criterion (such as Clear and Concise, Accurate and Relevant, etc.) as well as the section and overall averages. A score of 2.0 is considered college-level proficiency. Additional information about each statistical data point listed:

- **Average** – The average calculated for each individual criterion. The highest individual criterion average score was in Audience Appropriateness with a 1.75. The lowest individual criterion average score was in Professionalism with a 1.34.
- **# of Artifacts** – 250 student artifacts were collected.
- **Standard Dev.** – Standard deviation indicates the variability amongst student scores. For all criteria, the standard deviation ranged from 0.57 – 0.62.
- **Margin of Error** – The maximum likely difference between our criteria sample means and the population mean of students' scores.
- **Confidence Interval (90%) Lower** – The lower bound of the 90% confidence interval for each criterion.
- **Confidence Interval (90%) Upper** – The upper bound of the 90% confidence interval for each criterion.
- **Not Proficient** – The percentage of students scoring less than a two.
- **Proficient** – The percentage of students scoring greater than or equal to a two.

Table 6. SLO 2 Rubric - Clarity Section Individual Criterion

	(1) Clarity			
	Clear and Concise	Accurate and Relevant	Audience Appropriateness	Organization
Average	1.66	1.74	1.75	1.49
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.60	0.57	0.57	0.62
Margin of Error	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Confidence Interval (90%)				
Lower	1.59	1.68	1.69	1.42
Upper	1.72	1.80	1.81	1.55

Table 7. SLO 2 Rubric - Professionalism Section Individual Criterion

	(2) Professionalism		
	Tone and Formality	Professional Presentation	Grammar and Punctuation
Average	1.53	1.34	1.51
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.62	0.57	0.60
Margin of Error	0.06	0.06	0.06
Confidence Interval (90%)			
Lower	1.47	1.28	1.45
Upper	1.60	1.40	1.57

Table 8. SLO 2 Rubric - Section Averages Baseline Data

	Section Averages		
	(1) Clarity	(2) Professionalism	Overall Average
Average	1.66	1.46	1.56
# of Artifacts	250.00	250.00	250.00
Standard Dev.	0.48	0.52	0.47
Margin of Error	0.05	0.05	0.05
Confidence Interval (90%)			
Lower	1.61	1.41	1.51
Upper	1.71	1.52	1.61
Proficiency			
Not Proficient	68.0%	76.8%	80.8%
Proficient	32.0%	23.2%	19.2%

Actions to be Implemented

Professional Development

Wilkes Community College recognizes that professional development is essential for the growth and success of both faculty and staff. By investing in professional development opportunities, WCC establishes a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence, ensuring that faculty and staff are well-equipped to provide the highest quality of education and service. This commitment to growth ultimately supports the success of the institution, enriching the academic experience for all members of the community. Following this commitment, WCC plans to offer a wide array of professional development regarding the QEP, including faculty learning communities and ongoing PD led by experts in the field of workplace communication. The literature review supports our perspective about the importance of professional development. Faculty were asked to complete a self-efficacy survey to determine specific professional development needed upon QEP implementation. Half of the survey respondents replied that teaching communication in the classroom was an area of interest (see [p.34](#)).

In January 2025, WCC hosted a faculty and staff PD day led by Dr. Alan Mueller, who served as the keynote speaker. Dr. Mueller also hosted breakout sessions for first-year implementation program faculty to provide specialized professional development focused on workplace communication.

Curriculum mapping and rubric assessment professional development began in the spring 2025 semester as well. Dr. Larry Taylor, Lead Instructor of Communication, led a series of training sessions for the SLO 1 Assessment Team. During this session, Dr. Taylor provided critical information to help evaluators clarify scoring within each rubric criterion. The team also reviewed presentation videos while applying the rubric to practice assessment techniques. The SLO 1 Assessment Team convened multiple times throughout the semester to practice scoring recorded presentations and to discuss scoring discrepancies with the goal of ensuring inter-rater reliability.

Figure 6. Dr. Alan Mueller presents to WCC faculty and staff.



Targeted professional development was also provided specifically for the SLO 2 Rubric Assessment Team. Led by the QEP co-directors, the training focused on ensuring consistent and accurate scoring of each criterion within the SLO 2 rubric. During the session, participants practiced applying the rubric by reviewing and discussing several anonymous student emails, analyzing scoring variations to enhance inter-rater reliability and improve assessment consistency. Moving forward, the English department will provide additional training on the SLO 2 rubric.

First-year implementation programs received curriculum mapping professional development, led by Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education. This group met multiple times during the spring 2025 semester. More details are shared later in this section (see [pp. 46-47](#)).

Professional development for the first-year programs will start in the fall of 2025 utilizing a professional learning community model. The PD learning community model will consist of six training sessions held throughout the fall semester. This PD will be named WCC's Empowering Communication Professional Development Series. The first session will be led internally by the WCC Information Technology department. The remaining five sessions will be provided and facilitated by Dr. Alan Mueller. Training in subsequent years will be structured similarly through professional learning communities, but sessions will be led by internal presenters. In 2026 and beyond, the first session will be led by WCC Information Technology, and the remaining sessions will be led by the QEP co-directors, who will be trained by Dr. Mueller. Part-time faculty are highly encouraged to attend. It is expected that program lead instructors will help facilitate QEP implementation in courses taught by part-time faculty. Participants will receive a \$300 stipend upon completion of all professional development requirements, including submission of SLO data, reflection statements, and full attendance. Summaries of the learning outcomes for the fall learning communities are as follows:

Session 1: Technology and Tools

- Identify and describe key technology tools (e.g., Echo360, mobile tech, in-class cameras) that support effective communication.
- Set up and operate classroom recording technology to capture short presentations.
- Use mobile and AI-based tools to enhance the quality and delivery of presentations.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different technologies in improving communication skills in academic or professional contexts.

Session 2: Foundations of Professional Communication

- Apply effective strategies for teaching professional communication skills to diverse student populations.
- Demonstrate active listening techniques that support meaningful and respectful communication.

- Analyze audience needs and tailor communication approaches to various professional contexts.
- Recognize and address cultural differences in communication styles to promote inclusivity and clarity.

Session 3: Receiving and Giving Constructive Feedback

- Apply feedback strategies that promote growth-oriented dialogue, including reframing techniques.
- Evaluate the impact of word choice, tone, and delivery on how feedback is perceived and internalized.
- Facilitate and navigate difficult conversations with professionalism and empathy.
- Teach students foundational feedback skills they can apply in academic and post-college environments.

Session 4: Written Communications Best Practices

- Identify and apply best practices for achieving clarity, coherence, and conciseness in written communication.
- Model professional and context-appropriate writing for students across various settings.
- Design writing assignments and activities that support learning outcomes in diverse disciplines.
- Evaluate the use of AI tools in teaching, supporting, and assessing written communication.

Session 5: Oral Communication Best Practices

- Identify and demonstrate effective non-verbal communication techniques, including body language, facial expressions, and professional appearance.
- Apply public speaking strategies such as voice modulation, pacing, and tone to enhance clarity and audience engagement.
- Develop inclusive communication strategies that support neurodiverse students and promote awareness among all learners.
- Incorporate techniques to reduce public speaking anxiety and encourage active audience participation through discussion and interaction.

Session 6: Assessment

- Understand and correctly apply written and presentation assessment rubrics.
- Practice evaluating sample assignments using the written assessment rubric.
- Practice evaluating sample presentations using the presentation assessment rubric.
- Utilize backward planning methods to align rubrics and assessments with learning outcomes for effective course sequencing.

Technology

Technology will play a critical role in supporting student learning and assessment during Wilkes Community College's QEP. To facilitate this, WCC is implementing the use of Echo360 software to record and store student presentations that will be assessed for QEP data collection.

Echo360 provides a reliable and centralized platform for video management, allowing students and faculty to record and access presentation videos from both classroom and non-classroom environments. All recorded presentations will be housed on the Echo360 platform, where they can be securely accessed by QEP assessors.

To accommodate presentations that occur outside of traditional classroom settings, WCC has developed a mobile pack solution through the IT department. Each mobile pack includes a tablet, microphone, and tripod, allowing for high-quality video recordings in classrooms without synchronous technology capabilities. A practical example of this is in the automotive technology lab, where a student may be recorded demonstrating a hands-on skill, such as how to change brake pads on a car. These mobile packs empower students in various disciplines to showcase their communication skills in authentic, applied learning contexts.

WCC was awarded an Echo360 grant in May 2025 to expand this initiative, enabling the college to purchase additional equipment. The grant was awarded in recognition of the comprehensive planning and effective use of funds detailed in the grant proposal, reinforcing the college's commitment to innovative, technology-enhanced learning.

To support the successful adoption of Echo360 across campus, WCC's Information Technology Department has produced instructional videos tailored for both students and instructors. These resources provide step-by-step guidance on how to use the Echo360 platform effectively, ensuring all users are confident in recording and submitting presentations.

Through the integration of Echo360 technology and mobile packs, Wilkes Community College is enhancing student experience, supporting meaningful assessment, and creating real-world communication skills aligned with the goals of the QEP.

Rubrics

During fall 2024, the QEP Rubric and Assessment Team was created to develop a separate rubric for each SLO. The team utilized the expertise of Dr. Larry Taylor, Lead Instructor of Communication, to create the oral presentation rubric for SLO 1 (see Figure 7). Dr. Taylor has a PhD in communication and taught at the university level prior to WCC. He has taught interpersonal communication and public speaking for over a decade at WCC. His expertise has played an instrumental role in the rubric creation and assessment processes. Additionally, the team used a similar process and formatting to create the electronic communication rubric for SLO 2 (see Figure 8). The team applied these rubrics during baseline data collection in the spring 2025 semester. Based upon preliminary data, there may be additional refinement of the rubrics, skills, and/or outcomes. See the Assessment section ([pp. 56-64](#)) for additional information.

Figure 7. SLO 1 Rubric

Professional Workplace Communication: Oral Presentation Assessment

Date: _____

Skill	Desired Outcome	Score (1-3)
❖ Category One: Clarity of Speaking		
Enunciation	Consistently clear enunciation that does not hinder understanding.	
Conversational Pace	A conversational flow that is easy to understand.	
Speaking Tone & Volume	Limited but appropriate use of tone and volume that establishes emphasis on message meaning and does not create distraction.	
Content focus clarity	Speaker has a clearly declared purpose.	
Content appropriate to audience	Vocabulary, sentence structure, and complexity of information are appropriate and do not hinder audience understanding.	
Content organization	Information points flow with transitions in a logical manner appropriate to reinforce the declared purpose.	
❖ Category Two: Physical Presentation		
Physical Presentation	Speaker movements support or enhance points with movements that do not create a distraction or hinder understanding.	
Facial Expression	Speaker's use of facial expression reinforces tone and meaning.	
Posture & Negative Movement	Speaker maintains professional posture that does not interfere with content delivery.	
❖ Category Three: Extemporaneous Delivery		
Extemporaneous Presentation	The speaker may occasionally refer to notes but maintains a smooth flow, quickly reengaging with the audience without causing distraction.	
❖ Category Four: Visual and/or Auditory Aid Use		
Visual/Auditory Aid Use	Speaker uses visual/auditory aids to supplement and guide speech when appropriate. Aids are clear and enhance the presentation without distracting from its purpose.	

ASSESSMENT SCALE:

- 3 – Exceeds general college-level competency expectations.
- 2 – Meets general college-level competency expectations.
- 1 – Does not meet general college-level competency expectations.

Total Score: _____

Scoring Average: _____

Figure 8. SLO 2 Rubric

Professional Workplace Communication: Electronic Communication Assessment

Date: _____

Skill	Desired Outcome	Score (1-3)
❖ Category One: Clarity		
Clear and Concise	The message is clear, specific, and to the point.	
Accurate and Relevant	The facts and content of the message are accurate and relevant. All parts of the document support the purpose effectively.	
Audience Appropriateness	The writer considers the needs, knowledge, and point of view of the audience.	
Organization	Document follows a clear organizational pattern which logically supports the purpose.	
❖ Category Two: Professionalism		
Tone and Formality	The message conveys a suitable and considerate tone appropriate for the recipient.	
Professional Presentation	The document looks polished and professional with appropriate and consistent formatting.	
Grammar and Punctuation	Document is free of pervasive errors in English usage which interfere with clear communication. Such errors may include grammatical errors such as fragments or comma splices, spelling errors including capitalization	

ASSESSMENT SCALE:

- 3 – Exceeds general college-level competency expectations.
- 2 – Meets general college-level competency expectations.
- 1 – Does not meet general college-level competency expectations.

Total Score: _____

Scoring Average: _____

Program Implementation Schedule

The QEP will begin implementation in specific programs from each academic division, along with Workforce Development and Community Education (WDCE). First-year programs were identified by the QEP Implementation Team through analysis of student enrollment by program. When selecting first-year programs, the goal was to ensure each academic division and WDCE was represented, while including approximately 20% of the student body. Additionally, the three QEP co-directors also included their respective programs in the first year implementation.

The first-year programs for fall 2025 are:

- Applied Engineering Technologies
- Associate in Arts Teacher Preparation (AATP)
- Associate in Science Teacher Preparation (ASTP)
- Automotive Systems Technology
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice
- Nursing
- Workforce Development and Community Education (WDCE) – HVAC and Residential Plumbing

The Applied Engineering Technology program includes both the specialty in Electronics and Computer Engineering and Industrial Engineering. WDCE will include HVAC 1 and HVAC 2 along with Residential Plumbing. All other programs listed above are single-track programs.

Additional programs will be added each year for the next five years until all curriculum and WDCE programs have implemented the QEP. After second-year programs have implemented the QEP, approximately 40% of WCC's student body will be directly involved.

Tentative second-year programs beginning in fall 2026 are:

- Accounting and Finance
- Associate in Science
- Building Construction Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Emergency Medical Services
- Radiography
- Welding
- Workforce Development and Community Education (WDCE) – Phlebotomy and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Curriculum Mapping

The Curriculum Mapping Team, led by Meret Burke, Chair of Communication, Language, and Transfer Education, was formed to implement a standardized curriculum mapping template as a process for integrating the QEP across all WCC curricular programs.

The team chair and QEP co-directors have worked closely with directors and lead instructors from first-year programs to facilitate understanding, consistency, and clarity in the development of their curriculum mapping. The focus of these sessions has been to evaluate and plan effective curriculum mapping for each program, ensuring alignment between the courses, student learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment methods to meet the goals of the QEP.

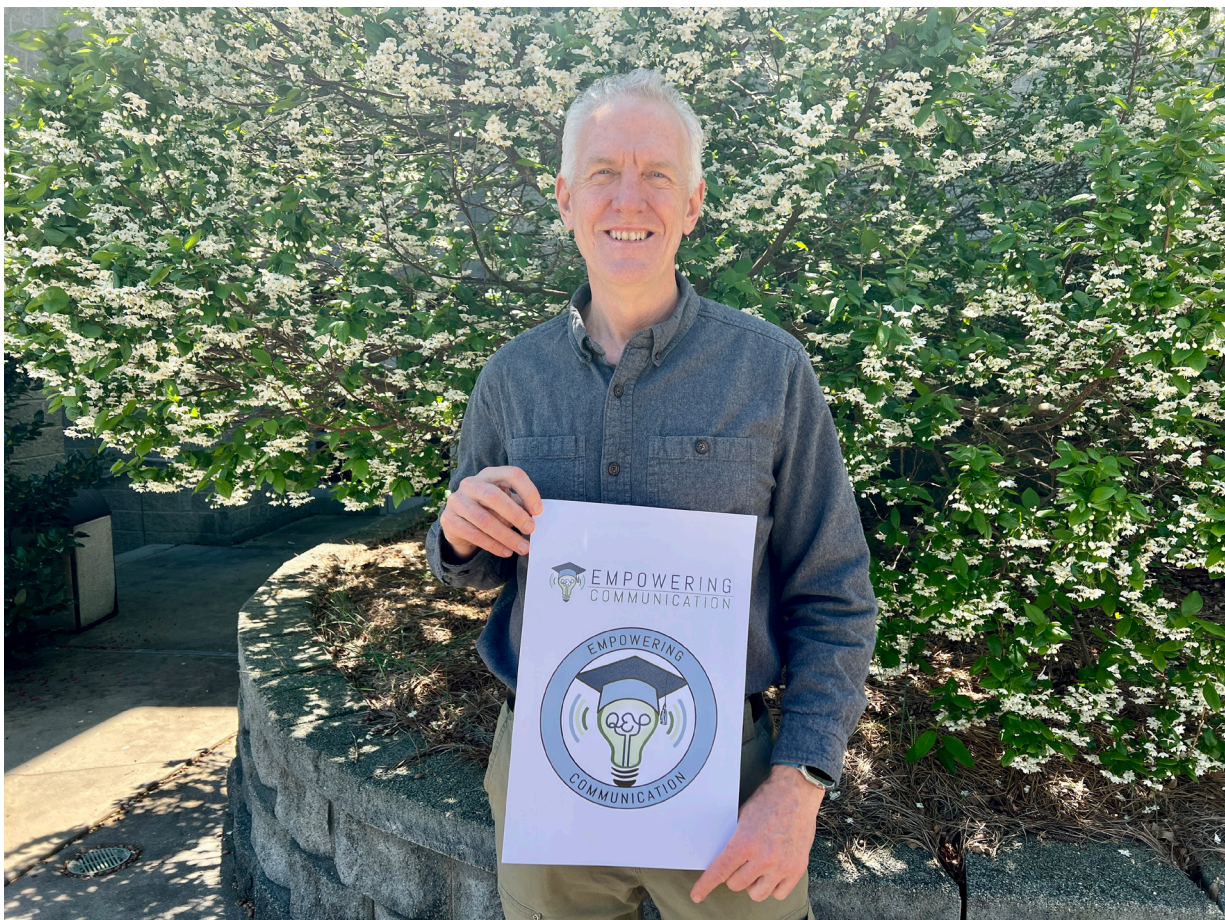
The team has concentrated on curriculum mapping and assessment identification, aiming to align these key elements across all WCC curriculum programs. This alignment ensures that student learning outcomes are systematically integrated with the appropriate instructional strategies and assessment tools, supporting the overarching goal of the QEP. Through this approach, the team is striving to create a cohesive, backward design framework for improving student learning experiences and outcomes across the institution. Each program will collect QEP data points three times during the average two-year degree cycle. However, it is imperative that students practice identified skills in additional classes that are not collecting QEP data as well. WCC recognizes that students are more likely to develop workplace communication skills when they have substantive and ongoing opportunities to improve throughout their respective programs of study.

By the end of the 2024-2025 academic year, directors and lead instructors for first-year programs will have an overall program curriculum map completed ([Appendix G](#)) as well as a specific plan for implementing and assessing the QEP for the fall 2025 semester. All first-year implementation programs will create a QEP Course Rubric Map ([Appendix H](#)) for each course that will collect QEP data. The course rubric map will highlight the SLO-specific rubric components that will be assessed along with plans for the assignment(s) to accomplish this. We realize these plans are tentative and may change as we implement the QEP and review the data. Professional development will be provided to all program of study areas on how to develop the curriculum map.

Marketing

The QEP Marketing Team was created in the fall 2024 semester. During discussions with both the Marketing Team as well as the larger QEP Implementation Team, the decision was made to incorporate student input into the creation of marketing materials. WCC has a strong graphic design program with state-of-the-art equipment and software available for students to use. Amber Arnder, Lead Instructor of Graphic Design, and Bethany Swaim, Instructor of Graphic Design as well as a former member of the WCC Marketing Department, created an assignment for second-year students in the program's capstone portfolio class, GRD 280 – Portfolio Design, to create a title, logo, and slogan for marketing materials for WCC's QEP. Mrs. Arnder and Mrs. Swaim created a "QEP – Creative Brief" ([Appendix I](#)) to guide students during the process while simulating a real-world interaction with a customer. Graphic design student James Brandt designed the logo that was ultimately selected for the QEP (see Figure 9; [Appendix J](#)). Mr. Brandt is also the recipient of the 2025 Wilkes Community College Academic Excellence Award, which is the highest academic honor the North Carolina Community College System bestows upon its students. During this process, the title and slogan merged into one phrase: "Empowering Communication." The QEP Marketing Team will use this logo and variations to create posters, flyers, apparel, and other marketing materials related to the QEP. Posters will be placed in each building in classrooms, offices, and hallways. Flyers will be distributed to the college community while apparel will be presented to faculty and staff who complete the Empowering Communication Professional Development Series.

Figure 9. WCC student James Brandt with his QEP logo design.



Student Support

The Instructional Support Services division encompasses a wide range of resources designed to assist both faculty and students. As part of the QEP, Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support, has developed a student success plan ([Appendix K](#)) that outlines several key components aimed at strengthening communication across the curriculum.

Instructional Support Services plans to establish a Communication Center, coordinated through the Academic Support Center (ASC). This new center will be developed in conjunction with the already-established Writing Center, expanding the range of communication support available to students. The newly named Communication and Writing Center will offer targeted assistance for communication-based assignments, with tutors available to assist students in developing and strengthening both oral and written communication skills. Students will have the flexibility to schedule sessions with academic support tutors through the tutoring booking site, available on the student portal, or through the Moodle learning management system. Additionally, students will be able to submit assignments for asynchronous review, ensuring access to support regardless of location or course modality.

The ASC is exploring the implementation of peer group support, available both in-person and online. These peer groups will promote connection, collaboration, and mutual feedback on oral presentations and electronic communication.

To support the use of technology in communication, the Academic Support Center will offer instructional videos and tools for using Echo360 technology and Echo360 workshops for students. Students will also have access to reservable spaces for practicing and recording oral presentations, podcast microphones, and upgraded computer technology to meet their academic needs.

Furthermore, Instructional Support Services will collaborate with Career Services to provide faculty with additional instructional resources that promote effective workforce communication. These resources will be accessible through the learning management system to enhance faculty support and instructional practices across disciplines.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, Instructional Support Services aims to create a cohesive, campus-wide culture of communication excellence that extends beyond the classroom and into students' professional lives. By integrating academic support, technological resources, peer collaboration, and faculty development, the QEP creates an environment where communication is consistently emphasized and effectively practiced. This approach not only reinforces the institution's commitment to student success but also ensures that graduates are equipped with the essential communication skills required to thrive in diverse workforce settings.

Syllabus Statement

To support the QEP, the statement below will be included in the Moodle syllabus template for every WCC course.

Wilkes Community College (WCC) is committed to continuous improvement and student success, as reflected in its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). A key component of the reaffirmation of accreditation process, the QEP focuses on enhancing workplace communication skills, specifically oral and electronic written communication. Through extensive stakeholder feedback, effective communication was identified as a critical employability requirement across industries. While communication is already an integral part of WCC's curriculum, this initiative seeks to further strengthen students' ability to convey ideas clearly and professionally, increasing their competency and readiness for the workforce.

To achieve this goal, WCC has established specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that guide the QEP initiative. Students will develop the ability to deliver well-organized oral presentations and compose clear, concise professional electronic communication. These skills align with WCC's core values of learner-centered excellence, equity, and continuous quality improvement, ensuring that students are better prepared to succeed in professional environments.

QEP Implementation Timeline

Table 9. QEP Implementation Timeline

QEP Implementation Timeline							
	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	
Implementation							
QEP Co-Director Selections	✓						Implementation Team
Create QEP Teams	✓						Implementation Team
Select Programs to Implement the QEP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Implementation Team
Curriculum Mapping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Curriculum Mapping Team and Designated Programs
Begin Implementation for Selected Programs		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	QEP Co-Directors and Designated Programs
Rubric and Assessment							
Draft SLO 1 and SLO 2 Rubrics	✓						Rubric and Assessment Team
Gather and Assess Baseline Data	✓						SLO 1 and 2 Assessment Teams
Evaluate Rubric Effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Rubric and Assessment Team
Revise Rubrics if Necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Rubric and Assessment Team
Gather and Assess Student Artifacts		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	SLO 1 and 2 Assessment Teams
Professional Development							
Create and Administer Self-Efficacy Survey	✓						Professional Development Team
Rubric Scoring Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Professional Development Team
Keynote Speaker - Workplace Communication	✓						Dr. Alan Mueller
Workplace Communication PD Series		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	QEP Co-Directors

QEP Implementation Timeline (cont.)							
	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	
Student Support							
Establish Communication Center	✓	✓					Support Resource Team
Purchase Recording Equipment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ASC
Create Communications Resources in ASC Moodle		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ASC
Create "How-To" Videos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ASC
Implement Peer Tutor Support			✓	✓	✓	✓	ASC
Review and Give Feedback on Student Artifacts		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ASC Tutors
Marketing							
Draft Creative Brief	✓						Graphic Design Program
Develop Student Created Logos	✓						Graphic Design Program
Create and Distribute QEP Marketing Materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Marketing Team
Send Updates to the College Community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Marketing Team

Institutional Support and Resources

The team-based organizational structure that has guided the QEP development since 2022 will continue throughout QEP implementation. Team membership has grown and evolved through the development phase. The majority of faculty, staff, and administrators who served on the initial topic selection team will continue to serve on various teams during implementation. The process will be managed by the QEP co-directors who report to Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning. Administrators and deans are among the members of the QEP Implementation Team to ensure support and collaboration during the process.

Wilkes Community College has dedicated significant resources to support the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP focused on increasing student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication. In the section “QEP Development Process” (see [pp. 13-18](#)), each team created to implement the QEP is listed, which shows the lines of responsibility and institutional involvement of faculty, staff, students, and administrators from across the college. This involvement is an indicator of broad-based QEP support from across WCC.

The college employs three QEP co-directors who are also full-time faculty in different academic divisions.

- Matt Baldwin – Chair of Business & Culinary in Business and Public Service Technologies
- Joey Phillips – Lead Instructor of Electronics and Computer Engineering in Applied Career Technologies
- Valerie Bailey – Simulation Coordinator/Instructor of Nursing in Health Sciences

Each co-director receives a stipend and course load reduction (or monetary equivalent). Each co-director’s position may temporarily be backfilled by full-time, part-time, or adjunct faculty to ensure adequate attention can be allocated to the implementation of the QEP. The primary consideration is to ensure a balanced workload for the individuals assigned to this position. The co-directors’ roles and responsibilities are defined in the QEP co-director job description. Annual one-on-one reviews are conducted with the QEP co-directors by the Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning to evaluate the individual contributions and responsibilities and adjust for the upcoming annual cycle. A key consideration of these annual reviews is to evaluate release time and the potential impacts on teaching responsibilities and to make adjustments to mitigate these impacts.

To further support the QEP initiative and ensure full representation of each academic division during its implementation in fall 2025—and recognizing that the QEP co-directors represent distinct academic areas—Dr. Natasha Harris, Dean of Arts & Sciences and former QEP Director, will serve as a dedicated point of contact for her division. In this role, she will promote timely communication and provide ongoing support to faculty within the Arts & Sciences division.

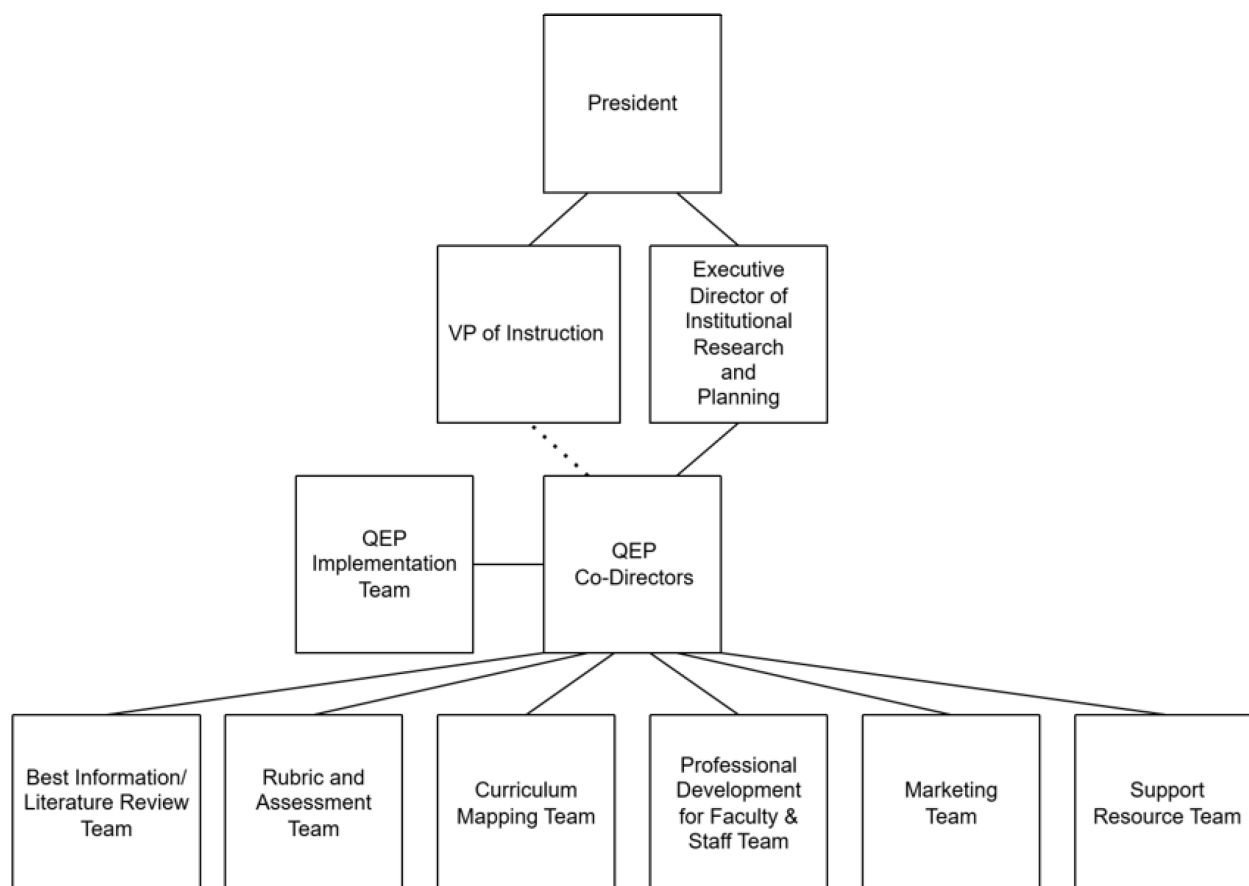
This QEP is focused on two major initiatives to improve students' workplace communication skills: professional development and student support. The budget supports both initiatives. Professional development has already begun with speaker Dr. Alan Mueller presenting for a college-wide professional development in January 2025. In March 2025, QEP co-directors provided professional development during a faculty PD day. Dr. Mueller is preparing an extensive, multi-session professional development for fall 2025. This multi-session PD will include all instructors involved with the QEP during the first-year implementation, along with staff from WDCE and Instructional Support and Student Services (see [pp. 40-42](#)).

Angela Roten, Dean of Instructional Support Services, formulated a proposal ([Appendix K](#)) to assist faculty and students with communication resources during QEP implementation. The proposal includes potential and expected support options, including the creation of a Communication Center within the Academic Support Center and expanded tutoring and technology assistance.

Wilkes Community College's organization chart as it relates to the QEP is below.

WCC Organizational Structure Supporting the QEP

Figure 10. WCC Organizational Chart



QEP Implementation Budget

WCC's Administrative Council is supportive of allocating funds to implement the QEP. Morgan Francis, Senior Vice President of Administration and Chief Financial Officer, will be responsible for the oversight and allocation funds during the QEP process. See Table 4: QEP Budget. Information about each budget item is below:

- **QEP Co-Director Stipends, Summer Contract Extensions, and Benefits** – Each QEP co-director was moved from a 10-month to a 12-month contract as needed. This amount also includes the additional benefits during the summer and the stipend each co-director received during their standard 10-month contract.
- **QEP Director Course Reduction Equivalent** – Each QEP co-director was offered a one course reduction in both the fall and spring semesters. The amount listed is based on the standard WCC adjunct pay.
- **Revising & Editing Services** – WCC engaged a consultant who supported the QEP planning process as well as other reaffirmation activities.
- **Self-Efficacy Survey Gift Cards** – Faculty completed a self-efficacy survey during the fall 2024 semester. The academic department with the highest completion percentage received gift cards for each faculty member.
- **Faculty & Staff Stipends** – Faculty & staff who complete the workplace communication professional development series will receive a one-time \$300 stipend dependent on meeting specific deliverables.
- **Workplace Communication Keynote Speaker** – Dr. Alan Mueller presented to all WCC faculty and staff during the college-wide PD day in January 2025.
- **Workplace Communication: Professional Development Series** – Dr. Alan Mueller collaborated with WCC's QEP Co-Directors to create the customized Empowering Communication Professional Development Series.
- **Conference Travel** – Includes travel to and participation in the SACSCOC Annual Conference and SACSCOC Summer Institute.
- **Graphic Design Gift Cards** – WCC awarded two gift cards to graphic design student James Brandt for his winning QEP logo.
- **QEP Signage** – WCC projected costs for posters, flyers, and orientation packet inserts related to the QEP.
- **QEP Faculty & Staff Shirts** – WCC faculty and staff who complete the workplace communication professional development series will receive a t-shirt.
- **ASC Equipment** – The Academic Support Center purchased equipment related to the QEP, such as tripods, cameras, tablets, and/or microphones.
- **Mobile Packs** – Each mobile pack will include a tablet, tripod, and microphone for instructors to use when recording presentations in classrooms that are not equipped to record. WCC was awarded an Echo360 grant of \$2,000 to purchase equipment for mobile packs during the spring 2025 semester.

Table 10. QEP Budget

QEP Budget						
	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Administrative						
QEP Co-Director Stipends, Summer Contract Extensions and Benefits	\$51,130	\$51,130	\$25,565*	\$25,565*	\$25,565*	\$25,565*
QEP Director Course Reduction Equivalent (Adjunct Pay)	\$10,326	\$10,326	\$10,326	\$10,326	\$10,326	\$10,326
Consultant Fees	\$4,125	—	—	—	—	—
Self-Efficacy Survey Gift Cards	\$160	—	—	—	—	—
Administrative Totals	\$65,741	\$61,456	\$35,891	\$35,891	\$35,891	\$35,891
Professional Development						
Faculty & Staff Stipends	—	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Workplace Communication Keynote Speaker - 01/2025	\$3,010	—	—	—	—	—
Workplace Communication Professional Development Series	—	\$12,500	—	—	—	—
Conference Travel	\$15,200	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
Professional Development Totals	\$18,210	\$37,000	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500
Marketing						
Graphic Design Gift Cards	\$100	—	—	—	—	—
QEP Signage	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
QEP Faculty & Staff Shirts	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Marketing Totals	\$2,100	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Support Resources						
ASC Equipment	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Mobile Packs	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Student Support Totals	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Contingencies						
Contingencies	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Annual Totals	\$95,551	\$107,456	\$65,391	\$65,391	\$65,391	\$65,391

*Years 2 - 5 totals will be re-evaluated each year

Assessment

Wilkes Community College has an effective culture of assessment in which faculty and staff regularly collect and analyze data to support continuous improvement efforts. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are defined for each program and assessed each semester. Program directors and lead instructors track and evaluate this data to inform future decisions. These entrenched practices will carry over to the QEP assessments.

Goal: WCC will increase student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication.

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will compose clear and concise professional electronic communication.

The scope of the QEP including all WCC programs necessitated reasonable assessments that could be consistently scored. The QEP co-directors, the QEP Rubric and Assessment Team, and Dr. Jody Call, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning, have worked together to create the QEP assessments.

Overall, WCC's Empowering Communication QEP assessments focus on:

- Faculty completing a workplace communication professional development series.
- Curricular revision to ensure sufficient instructional opportunities related to SLO 1 and SLO 2.
- Assessing student artifacts related to SLO 1 and SLO 2 using rubrics and trained assessors.

Assessment teams will be assigned for each SLO. Based on fall 2024 enrollment, it is anticipated that approximately 100 randomly selected student artifacts will need to be assessed to achieve a 90% confidence interval. This number will be finalized when fall 2025 enrollment numbers are complete. Additional faculty and staff will be trained as assessors for either SLO as needed. The number of artifacts assessed, and therefore number of assessors needed, will increase over the next five years as all WCC programs implement the QEP. WCC will complete formative and summative evaluation of the QEP to ensure the project is increasing student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication. An assessment of student communication skills will occur at three intervals in each two-year program to monitor development. The QEP assessment data will have no impact on student grades as instructors will continue to assess these assignments separately in their classes while implementing components of each SLO rubric into their own grading. Each of the five assessments is provided on the subsequent pages.

Assessments

Assessment 1 – Professional Development

WCC will provide quality professional development for instructors in the designated implementation programs. Dr. Alan Mueller will create and present the first round of WCC's Empowering Communication Professional Development Series ([pp. 40-42](#)) during the fall 2025 semester.

QEP co-directors plan to assume responsibility for presenting the professional development series beginning in the fall 2026 semester. All instructors in first-year programs will participate in this professional development series in the fall 2025 semester, along with some WCC staff who anticipate having a significant role in the implementation of the QEP, such as academic support staff and career counselors.

The year one performance target is for at least 20% of WCC full-time faculty to complete the PD series during the fall 2025 semester. All full-time WCC faculty will complete this professional development series by 2030. New faculty will complete the PD at an appropriate time based on their program's implementation. Part-time faculty will have the opportunity to complete this PD; however, it is expected that program lead instructors will help facilitate QEP implementation in courses taught by part-time faculty, especially for those unable to complete the PD. QEP co-directors will track faculty and staff completion of the professional development series.

Table 11. Assessment 1 - Professional Development

Assessment 1 - Professional Development						
GOAL: WCC will increase student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication						
Time Period	Action	Group	Measure	Baseline	Performance Target	Responsibility
Fall 2025	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	Designated faculty (1st year) and staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	20% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team
Fall 2026	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	Designated faculty (2nd year) and staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	40% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team

Assessment 1 - Professional Development (cont.)

Fall 2027	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	Designated faculty (3rd year) and staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	60% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team
Fall 2028	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	Designated faculty (4th year) and staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	75% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team
Fall 2029	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	Designated faculty (5th year) and staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	90% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team
Fall 2030	WCC will provide quality workplace communication professional development for faculty and staff	New faculty & staff	Quantitative Indirect Summative	N/A	100% of WCC full-time faculty will have completed workplace communication PD series	QEP Co-Directors & QEP PD Team

Assessment 2 – Instruction Implementation (SLO 1)

WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in each program's curriculum, which includes both general education and program specific courses. Each implementation program will have a detailed overall program curriculum map completed as part of the planning and professional development process (see [pp. 46-47](#)). Each program will use their curriculum map to ensure students are receiving substantial workplace communication instruction along with ample opportunities to develop these skills while at WCC.

WCC will implement the QEP in stages within each program, beginning with first-year classes. The performance target is that by the end of the second year of implementation, programs will have implemented QEP related workplace communication instruction and assignments in at least 50% of the classes in the program, which includes both general education and program specific courses.

Table 12. Assessment 2 - Instruction Implementation (SLO 1)

Assessment 2 – Instruction Implementation (SLO 1)						
SLO 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.						
Time Period	Action	Group	Measure	Baseline	Performance Target	Responsibility
2025-2027	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	1st Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	15% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2026-2028	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	2nd Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	30% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2027-2029	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	3rd Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	50% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2028-2030	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	4th Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	70% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2029-2031	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	5th Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	90% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 1 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty

Assessment 3 – Instruction Implementation (SLO 2)

Similar to Assessment 2, WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of the classes in the program, which includes both general education and program specific courses. Each implementation program will have a detailed overall program curriculum map completed as part of the planning and professional development process (see [pp. 46-47](#)). Each program will use their curriculum map to ensure students are receiving substantial workplace communication instruction along with ample opportunities to develop these skills while at WCC.

WCC will implement the QEP in stages within each program, beginning with first-year classes. The performance target is that by the end of the second year of implementation, programs will have implemented QEP related workplace communication instruction and assignments in at least 50% of curriculum classes.

Table 13. Assessment 3 - Instruction Implementation (SLO 2)

Assessment 3 – Instruction Implementation (SLO 2)						
SLO 2: Students will compose clear and concise professional electronic communication.						
Time Period	Action	Group	Measure	Baseline	Performance Target	Responsibility
2025-2027	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	1st Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	15% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2026-2028	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	2nd Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	30% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2027-2029	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	3rd Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	50% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty

Assessment 3 – Instruction Implementation (SLO 2) (cont.)

2028-2030	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	4th Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	70% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2029-2031	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	5th Year Implementation Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	90% of all WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2030-2032	WCC will implement instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	New Programs	Quantitative Indirect Formative	N/A	All WCC programs have implemented instruction and assignments related to SLO 2 in at least 50% of classes in the curriculum	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty

Assessment 4 – SLO 1 and Assessment 5 – SLO 2 (Student Artifacts)

Baseline data for Assessments 4 (SLO 1) and 5 (SLO 2) based on student artifacts was collected and assessed during the spring 2025 semester, prior to any QEP implementation. Baseline data and performance targets are presented below in Table 14 and Table 15.

Over the next five years, as the QEP is implemented in each program, data will be collected at three intervals throughout the course of a standard two-year degree for Assessments 4 and 5. The QEP assessment data will have no impact on student grades as instructors will assess these assignments separately in their classes.

- 1) QEP Data Point #1** – The first QEP data point in any program will be collected during a first-year class in the fall semester where the majority of students are in their first semester at WCC.
- 2) QEP Data Point #2** – The second data point in any program will be collected during the second semester (spring for first-year students) or third semester (summer or fall for second-year students) of the program as a midpoint check to gauge improvement from data point #1.
- 3) QEP Data Point #3** – The third and final data point in any program will be collected during the fourth semester (spring for second year students) where the majority of students are in their final semester and preparing for graduation.

QEP co-directors will be responsible for gathering, organizing, and distributing randomly selected student artifacts pertaining to each SLO for Assessments 4 and 5. The number of artifacts collected for each QEP data point will be based on the current student enrollment at that time in the program to ensure a 90% confidence interval when estimating the population mean of students' scores according to each SLO rubric. WCC will use the North Carolina Community College System enrollment data for each program to calculate the number of artifacts needed.

The QEP has been designed to allow programs to implement assessments specific to their programs. Examples of assessments and subsequent student artifacts that may be collected:

- **SLO 1 (presentations)** – PowerPoint presentations, oral board interviews, demonstrations, role-playing customer interactions, SBAR (oral), etc.
- **SLO 2 (electronic communication)** – Emails, SBAR (written), memos, invoices, etc.

The performance target is a 10% increase in both the assessed rubric overall average as well as the section averages for student artifacts collected. The rubric overall average is calculated based on the section averages in the rubric.

- **SLO 1 Sections** – (1) Clarity in Speaking, (2) Physical Presentation, (3) Extemporaneous Delivery, and (4) Visual and/or Auditory Aid
- **SLO 2 Sections** – (1) Clarity and (2) Professionalism

This target was determined through feedback from faculty who have previously implemented similar assignments. The goal is to set a target that is attainable for both students and faculty while focusing on making noticeable improvements.

Table 14. Assessment 4 - Student Artifacts (SLO 1)

Assessment 4 - Student Artifacts (SLO 1)						
SLO 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.						
Time Period	Action	Group	Measure	Baseline	Performance Target (10% Increase)	Responsibility
2025-2030	Program specific electronic communication related to SLO 1 will be assessed by the QEP rubric assessment team	All WCC Programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Overall Average 1.66	Overall Average 1.83	QEP Co-Directors & QEP Rubric Assessment Teams

Assessment 4 - Student Artifacts (SLO 1 - cont.)						
2025-2030	Program specific electronic communication related to SLO 1 will be assessed by the QEP rubric assessment team	All WCC Programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Clarity of Speaking 1.86	Clarity of Speaking 2.05	QEP Co-Directors & QEP Rubric Assessment Teams
2025-2030	Program specific electronic communication related to SLO 1 will be assessed by the QEP rubric assessment team	All WCC Programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Physical Presentation 1.62	Physical Presentation 1.78	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2025-2030	Program specific electronic communication related to SLO 1 will be assessed by the QEP rubric assessment team	All WCC Programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Extemporaneous Delivery 1.56	Extemporaneous Delivery 1.72	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty
2025-2030	Program specific electronic communication related to SLO 1 will be assessed by the QEP rubric assessment team	All WCC Programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Visual and/or Auditory Aid 1.62	Visual and/or Auditory Aid 1.78	QEP Co-Directors & WCC Faculty

Table 15. Assessment 5 - Student Artifacts (SLO 2)

Assessment 5 - Student Artifacts (SLO 2)						
SLO 2: Students will compose clear and concise professional electronic communication.						
Time Period	Action	Group	Measure	Baseline	Performance Target (10% Increase)	Responsibility
2025-2030	Student artifacts related to electronic communication will be assessed using the SLO 2 rubric	All WCC programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Overall Average 1.56	Overall Average 1.72	QEP Co-Directors & QEP Rubric Assessment Teams

Assessment 5 - Student Artifacts (SLO 2 - cont.)

2025-2031	Student artifacts related to electronic communication will be assessed using the SLO 2 rubric	All WCC programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Clarity 1.66	Clarity 1.83	QEP Co-Directors & QEP Rubric Assessment Teams
2025-2030	Student artifacts related to electronic communication will be assessed using the SLO 2 rubric	All WCC programs	Quantitative Direct Summative	Professionalism 1.46	Professionalism 1.61	QEP Co-Directors & QEP Rubric Assessment Teams

Plan Adjustments

WCC plans to establish a task force composed of instructors and students from each participating program at the start of each QEP implementation cycle. The primary goals of each task force are to identify challenges encountered during the implementation process, offer actionable recommendations for improvement, and provide comprehensive feedback to the QEP Implementation Team. Task force members will be invited to attend implementation meetings and will serve on a biennial term aligned with their program's initial implementation.

Changes are anticipated as data is collected, assessed, and evaluated throughout QEP implementation. QEP data collected during implementation will be evaluated in each semester to inform future decision-making.

Areas where potential changes are anticipated:

- 1) **Rubrics** – SLO 1 and SLO 2 rubrics were utilized for the first time during baseline data collection in the spring 2025 semester. Feedback from assessors stated the potential redundancy in scoring some categories. The most notable example of this is related to content appropriate to audience, content focus clarity, and content organization criteria in Category 1: Clarity of Speaking in the SLO 1 rubric on presentations. This concern will be discussed early in the fall 2025 semester prior to the collection and assessment of QEP data point #1.
- 2) **Assessments/Assignments** – Assessment data will be evaluated each semester to analyze the effectiveness of implementation actions. Adjustments will be made as necessary to ensure students and faculty are making progress towards each assessment performance target.
- 3) **Professional Development** – Feedback from participants in the professional development series will be reviewed annually. Changes will be made to assess deficiencies in the series and to support faculty and staff.

- 4) **Student Support** – The QEP Implementation Team and Support Resources Team will review tutoring data. Tutoring effectiveness will be evaluated each semester and adjustments will be made as necessary.
- 5) **Technology** – Outdated and/or ineffective technology will be replaced as needed. The effectiveness of classroom synchronous technology, instructor mobile packs, and students' personal devices when recording will be evaluated each semester.
- 6) **Curriculum Mapping** – Programs will complete a draft of a comprehensive curriculum map prior to implementing the QEP. Programs are anticipated to adjust their curriculum maps and QEP related assignments, both for data collection and for general student benefit, as the instructors complete the professional development series and implement the QEP.
- 7) **Student Artifacts** – The collection and storage of student artifacts will be reviewed each semester. Changes will be made as necessary.

Figure 11. Applied Engineering students in the machine shop.



Conclusion

After a comprehensive review of institutional data to identify key areas for enhancing student success, Wilkes Community College engaged in an inclusive and collaborative process to determine a focused and impactful topic for the QEP. This process was guided by both evidence and a shared belief that workplace communication skills are fundamental to student development and long-term achievement. The resulting QEP, centered on improving workplace communication, reflects a strategic investment in the personal, academic, and professional growth of WCC's students.

The decision to emphasize workplace communication was rooted in the understanding that effective communication skills are not only essential for academic performance but are also a critical determinant of success in both career and life. Clear, effective communication empowers students to engage meaningfully in classroom discussions, collaborate with peers, seek academic support when needed, and develop positive relationships with faculty and staff. These interactions contribute to a greater sense of belonging and promote a growth mindset, particularly among first-year students who are navigating the transition into college life.

Beyond academic settings, workplace communication is one of the most sought-after competencies by employers across industries. The ability to articulate ideas clearly, listen actively, write professionally, and present information in a structured and compelling manner enhances employability and sets students apart in competitive job markets. These skills contribute to career advancement, job satisfaction, and the ability to build professional networks—key elements in achieving long-term career goals. Moreover, effective communication is essential for success in leadership roles, conflict resolution, and team collaboration, making it a lifelong asset.

To ensure that the QEP leads to measurable outcomes and meaningful change, WCC has allocated financial resources and designated personnel to support its initiation, implementation, and completion. The plan also aims to create institutional changes that create a more supportive environment for all students, with targeted strategies to help them progress smoothly through their academic programs.

WCC's Empowering Communication QEP directly aligns with the criteria established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for Quality Enhancement Plans as well as WCC's institutional planning process and strategic plan. This QEP not only addresses an area of improvement identified through institutional research and comprehensive planning but also represents a proactive step toward equipping students with skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Wilkes Community College is in compliance with Standard 7.2 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Evidence of QEP Indicator Compliance

Table 16. Evidence of QEP Indicator Compliance

Indicator	Evidence
Topic Selection A clear and well-defined topic is directly related to – and arose out of – institutional planning processes. Topic selection involves a wide range of constituents. Selection of topic determined by a representative process that considers institutional needs and viability of plan.	- The QEP topic was identified through an ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process, including WCC's strategic plan. - A Reaffirmation Leadership Team was established to lead a data-informed and reflective topic selection process. - A detailed topic survey was distributed to all WCC faculty and staff. - A QEP Implementation Team was formed to review all compiled survey data and analyze topic measurability and impact. - The QEP Topic Selection Team refined the most promising ideas, demonstrating an iterative and collaborative approach to topic refinement. - A student survey confirmed strong interest in communication, with faculty senate supporting the topic.
Broad-Based Support QEP identifies important constituent groups engaged in developing and initiating the plan. Stakeholders are well-informed and appropriately engaged in the implementation and assessment of the plan.	- A detailed topic survey was distributed to all WCC faculty and staff. - A targeted student survey identified key skills. - WCC surveyed external stakeholders and program advisory committees. - In October 2024, WCC's Board of Trustees unanimously approved workplace communication as the QEP topic.
Focus QEP is focused on important outcomes related to student learning and/or student success. Outcomes are specific and measurable. Baseline data is present and has been analyzed. Targets for improvement are appropriate.	The QEP focuses on strengthening students' workplace communication skills to improve their readiness and transition to employment. - Student learning outcomes (SLOs) will be evaluated using a rubric. Baseline data was collected and analyzed from randomized courses prior to QEP implementation. Performance targets are appropriate.

Institutional Resources Human and financial resources are clearly identified for all stages of implementing and completing the plan. Institutional stakeholders are involved in ongoing planning and evaluation to adjust the resources as the plan proceeds, if necessary.	• The QEP Implementation Team was established to lead the implementation process, comprising representatives from multiple departments. • Several teams are responsible for planning and implementing the QEP while having clearly defined roles and responsibilities. • The assessment plan includes input from the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research (IE/IR), QEP co-directors, and the Rubric and Assessment Team. • A comprehensive five-year budget has been developed, with dedicated funding allocated to support all aspects of implementation and assessment.
Assessment Outcomes are specific, measurable, and clearly related to student learning and/or student success. Assessments are appropriate and directly assess the outcomes. The plan includes both formative and summative assessments. Institutional personnel responsible for gathering and analyzing assessment data are identified and appropriately supported. A timeline for interim formative analysis and plan adjustments is outlined.	• Workplace communication was selected as a measurable goal due to its strong link to student success. • Direct assessments have been established for both the primary goal and each SLO. • The assessment plan incorporates both formative and summative assessments to ensure continuous improvement. • Clearly defined roles have been assigned for the collection and analysis of assessment data. • Financial resources have been allocated to support all assessment related activities. • A detailed timeline guides the implementation and review of assessments, including periodic formative evaluations and necessary adjustments. • Potential plan adjustments have been considered based on expected formative analysis.

Appendices

Appendix A: WCC QEP Student Survey

Question 1: How important is it for your college education to equip you with strong oral and written communication skills for future employment opportunities?

Answers: Very Important, Important, Not Important

Question 2: Rate the significance of collaboration and teamwork abilities in the workplace.

Answers: Very Important, Important, Not Important

Question 3: Would a course specifically targeted to reach skills you will need when seeking employment be beneficial during your time at WCC?

Answers: Yes, No

Question 4: Choose three (3) employability skills from the following list which are the most important to you.

Answers: Communication, Reliability & Dependability, Teamwork, Cultural Sensitivity, Critical and Analytical Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making, Time and Resource Management, Interpersonal Skills

Question 5: Are you aware that WCC offers free tutoring?

Answers: Yes, No

Question 6: Have you utilized WCC tutoring services?

Answers: Yes, No

Question 7: If you have attended one or more tutoring sessions with an Academic Support Center or ThinkingStorm Tutor, did you find it helpful?

Answers: Very Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Not Helpful

Question 8: Have you submitted a paper electronically to be reviewed through WCC Paper Review or ThinkingStorm?

Answers: Yes, No

Question 9: If you submitted a paper through the electronic portal for review, did you find the feedback helpful?

Answers: Very Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Not Helpful

Question 10: If you had an embedded tutor in your course, did you find it helpful?

Answers: Very Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Not Helpful, I did not have an embedded tutor in my course

Question 11: What was your cumulative high school GPA?

Answers: > 4.0, 4.0 – 3.5, 3.4 – 2.8, 2.7 – 2.2, Less than 2.1

Question 12: Reflecting on your college experience at WCC, how well prepared were you for college-level reading comprehension?

Answers: Well prepared, Sufficiently prepared, Somewhat prepared, Not prepared

Question 13: Reflecting on your college experience at WCC, how well prepared were you for college-level writing skills?

Answers: Well prepared, Sufficiently prepared, Somewhat prepared, Not prepared

Question 14: Reflecting on your college experience at WCC, how well prepared were you for college-level math skills?

Answers: Well prepared, Sufficiently prepared, Somewhat prepared, Not prepared

Question 15: I understand why college English and Math courses are important to my career preparation.

Answers: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Question 16: Real-life examples in English and Math help me understand difficult topics.

Answers: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Question 17: I find learning English and Math easier when my assignments relate to my program of study.

Answers: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Appendix B: Board of Trustees Endorsement

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 17, 2024

Alleghany Center

Refreshments- 4:45 p.m.

Pre-Meeting- Alleghany Center Presentation

Annual Fund Drive- 5:00 p.m.

Business Session- 5:45 p.m.

Redacted to only include QEP approval

The following board members were present:

Shelmer Blackburn, Jr.	Arnold Lakey
Terry Bumgarner	Susan Murphy
John Cothren	Josh Roten
Keith Elmore	Kelly Vannoy
Bert Hall	Jay Vannoy
Evan Handy (Virtual)	Kim Walker
	Tammy Whitworth

The following college personnel were present:

Dr. Mike Rodgers	Kristen Macemore
Wanda Beck	Greg Minton
Jody Call	Talina Pipes
Sherry Cox	Allison Phillips
Kim Faw	Beverly Talley
Morgan Francis	Mike Wingle
Carrie Hodges	

Wilkes Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan – Endorsement and Approval by the Board of Trustees

Mr. Evan Handy presented the Board of Trustees with the proposed Quality Enhancement Plan for WCC's SACSCOC 2026 reaffirmation. Planning for Wilkes Community College's SACSCOC 2026 reaffirmation involves developing a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP incorporates continuous student learning, improvement, and success. Per SACSCOC's 2024 Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement:

Recommendation: The Program and Planning Committee recommends the board endorse and approve Wilkes Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan as presented.

Action: Upon a motion made by the Program & Planning Committee, the vote was unanimous to endorse and approve Wilkes Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan as presented.

Appendix C: Oral Communication VALUE Rubric



RUBRICS

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

For more information, please contact value@aacu.org



Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.


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Appendix D: 10 Best Practices

Summary of Norander (2018) Best practices for facilitating communication-centered professional development for non-communication faculty:

1) Foreground Communication Theory and Praxis (p. 125)

Introduce faculty to the four principles of the communication-in-the-disciplines (CID) model: (1) oral and written genres are sites for disciplinary learning; (2) communication is a situated practice; (3) communication competence is locally negotiated; and (4) learning to communicate is a context driven activity. Provide participants with examples of each principle as seen in different disciplines. Acknowledge the challenges of teaching communication skills in non-communication courses. Emphasize that **“non-communication faculty are the experts in communicating in their fields”** (p. 125) and that the professional development facilitator’s role is to support those faculty in creating learning experiences to develop relevant communication skills for that field.

2) Identify Specific Institutional and Faculty Needs (p. 125)

Conduct a needs assessment to identify specific needs among non-communication faculty and to design training responsive to those requirements. The needs assessment is also an effective means of creating awareness of the QEP and discovering faculty interest in specific delivery formats. The author provides sample survey questions and suggests gathering information from respondents concerning courses taught, academic departments, and teaching experience.

3) Create a Flexible and Personalized Learning Environment (p. 126)

Take faculty time and location constraints into consideration when planning professional development opportunities. Strategically use technology to create a learning environment that gives participants the flexibility to participate remotely or in person. Consider providing prerecorded lessons or learning modules to faculty who need to adjust the pace of their learning.

4) Start With Course Design (p. 126)

Communication faculty serving as professional development leaders, should assist non-communication faculty in redesigning their courses to define course learning outcomes that are relevant, clear, specific, and measurable. Faculty can then develop communication-related assignments to assess these outcomes.

5) Cultivate a Sense of Community (p. 127)

Design professional development activities around the communication expert as facilitator, rather than as lecturer. Encourage peer learning and emphasize that the facilitator is there to learn what is important about communication in the participants’

disciplines. Cultivate a culture of sharing, where faculty feel comfortable sharing assignments with one another for inspiration and feedback.

6) Make Reflection Central to Professional Development (p. 128)

Use reflection prompts to help participants think through their assumptions about communication, think about how communication is important to their disciplines, and consider how to help students understand the norms and expectations surrounding communication in those disciplines.

7) Support Faculty Through Implementation of Changes in Teaching Practice (p. 128)

Continue professional development sessions throughout the implementation process. According to Norander (2018):

Faculty who are supported through both the design and implementation phases of communication intensive courses are likely to experience an increase in their comfort level with integrating oral and written communication. And, providing support through implementation provides facilitators with invaluable feedback on how a situated communication pedagogy works across various classroom environments. (p. 128)

8) Provide Explicit Instruction and Feedback on Communication Assignment Design (p. 129)

Assist faculty with aligning communication assignments to course outcomes and developing clear assignments. Norander (2018) suggests using Dannels, Gaffney, Kedrowicz, and Roth's (2014) model for planning communication assignments to help faculty through this process.

9) Gather Meaningful Feedback (p. 130)

Gather feedback throughout the professional development process that tracks faculty learning and engagement and that assesses their feelings about the QEP. Use this information to improve ongoing training and inform future training.

10) Offer Incentives and Champion Faculty Efforts (p. 130)

Incentivize participation as the budget allows. Common incentives include stipends, encouragement to present at conferences about their experiences, recognition at campus gatherings, and features on the college website.

Norander, S. (2018). Best practices for facilitating communication-centered professional development for non-communication faculty. *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, 1, 124-131. <https://doi.org/10.31446/JCP.2018.20>

Appendix E: Faculty Self-Efficacy Survey

Wilkes Community College QEP Faculty - Communication Self Assessment

Question 1

This survey is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the challenges, perceptions, and perceived obstacles that create difficulties for instructors when incorporating activities related to workplace communication skills, such as oral presentations and electronic communication.

This is an anonymous survey that will help determine professional development needs for faculty.

Question 2

Do you teach any workplace communications skills in your curriculum?

- ☐ (1) Yes
- ☐ (2) No

• Response options as vertical

Question 3

How many years have you taught? (Enter as a number).

Question 4

What is your employment status with WCC?

- ☐ (1) Full-time
- ☐ (2) Part-time

• Response options as vertical

Wilkes Community College
QEP Faculty - Communication Self Assessment

Question 5

Please select the division in which you primarily teach.

- ☐ (1) Applied Career Technologies
- ☐ (2) Health Sciences
- ☐ (3) Arts & Sciences
- ☐ (4) Business and Public Services Technologies
- ☐ (5) Workforce Development & Community Education

• Response options as vertical

Question 6

Please rate **how certain you are in teaching the tasks listed below** by writing the appropriate number after the question with **(1) being the least certain** and **(5) being the most certain**.

Question 7

Clarity in speaking – Clear enunciation, good conversational flow, proper tone and volume, and organized with a clearly intended purpose.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) 1 | (2) 2 | (3) 3 | (4) 4 | (5) 5 |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

• Response options as horizontal

Question 8

Physical presentation – Facial expression, physical movement, posture, and dressed professionally.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) 1 | (2) 2 | (3) 3 | (4) 4 | (5) 5 |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

• Response options as horizontal

Wilkes Community College
QEP Faculty - Communication Self Assessment

Question 9

Extemporaneous delivery – Occasionally refers to notes but maintains consistent speaking flow and audience engagement.

(1) 1

☐

(2) 2

☐

(3) 3

☐

(4) 4

☐

(5) 5

☐

• Response options as horizontal

Question 10

Visual and/or auditory aid use – Being able to use visual or auditory aids to help guide and enhance the speaker's purpose of their message.

(1) 1

☐

(2) 2

☐

(3) 3

☐

(4) 4

☐

(5) 5

☐

• Response options as horizontal

Question 11

Clarity in written communication – Writing is clear and organized, main purpose is easy to understand, and proper detail is provided.

(1) 1

☐

(2) 2

☐

(3) 3

☐

(4) 4

☐

(5) 5

☐

• Response options as horizontal

Question 12

Professionalism in written communication – Addressing the audience appropriately while using correct grammar and punctuation.

(1) 1

☐

(2) 2

☐

(3) 3

☐

(4) 4

☐

(5) 5

☐

• Response options as horizontal

Wilkes Community College
QEP Faculty - Communication Self Assessment

Question 13

Please share additional information about your ability to teach workplace communication.

Question 14

Please select any Professional Development requests you may have related to teaching workplace communication.

- ☐ (1) Curriculum Mapping (communication in each program)
- ☐ (2) Teaching Communication Skills in the Classroom
- ☐ (3) Reflecting on Instructor/Individual Communication
- ☐ (4) Communication Rubrics and Assessments
- ☐ (5) Technology (such as Echo 360 to record presentations)

Question 15

Please add any additional Professional Development requests you may have.

Appendix F: Advisory Committee Survey

Advisory Committee - QEP Survey - Fall 2024

QEP Related Survey for Advisory Committee members

1. Name

Enter your answer

2. Organization

Enter your answer

3. What types of written communication does your organization often use in the workplace? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Instant Messaging/Live Chat
- ☐ Memos
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Other

4. What types of verbal communication does your organization often use in the workplace? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Presentations
- ☐ Meetings
- ☐ Conversations
- ☐ Other

5. How could WCC better prepare students to communicate in the workplace?

Enter your answer

Appendix G: Curriculum Mapping Sample (Business Administration)

Program: Business Administration (Seated Track)		SLO 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.			
Class	Introduced	Developed	Assessed	QEP	Assignment
Fall 1st Year					
ACA 115 - Success and Study Skills					
CIS 110 - Intro to Computers					
BUS 110 - Intro to Business	✓	✓			
BUS 115 - Business Law I	✓	✓	✓	✓	Case Studies
ACC 120 - Prin. of Financial Acc.					
ENG 111 - Writing and Inquiry	✓				
Spring 1st Year					
ACC 121 - Prin. of Managerial Acc.					
BUS 121 - Business Mathematics	✓	✓	✓		Shark Tank
CTS 130 - Spreadsheet					
MAT 152 (110 or 143 not covered)	✓	✓	✓		TBD
HUM/Fine Arts Elective - HUM 110	✓				
Fall 2nd Year					
ENG 112 - Writing/Research in the Disc.	✓	✓	✓		Career
BUS 139 - Entrepreneurship I	✓	✓	✓		Business Plan (1)
BUS 153 - HR Management					
BUS 225 - Business Finance	✓	✓	✓	✓	Business Plan (2)
ECO 251 - Prin. of Macroeconomics					
MKT 120 - Prin. of Marketing	✓	✓	✓		Global Marketing
Spring 2nd Year					
BUS 137 - Prin. of Management	✓	✓	✓		Business Profile
BUS 240 - Business Ethics					Current Events
BUS 260 - Business Communication	✓	✓	✓		
BUS 270 - Professional Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	Resumes
ECO 252 OR PSY 150	✓				
WBL 111 - Work-Based Learning I					

Appendix H: Curriculum Mapping – QEP Course Map Sample

QEP Rubric Course Map

BUS 115 - Business Law 1		SLO #1	QEP #1 - Fall 1st Year
I = Introduced: Discussed as part of course content, but students not expected to demonstrate			
D = Developed: Explicit instruction and students given opportunities to practice			
A = Assessed: Explicit instruction and students will be assessed			
Q = QEP Assessment: Explicit instruction and students will be expected to demonstrate proficiency			
SLO 1: Students will deliver clear, well-organized presentations.			
Category 1: Clarity of Speaking			
Enunciation	Conversational Pace	Tone/Volume	Content Focus Clarity
✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Content	Content Organization		
✓	✓		
Category 2: Physical Presentation			
Physical Presentation		Facial Expression	Posture & Negative Movement
✓		✓	✓
Category 3: Extemporaneous Delivery		Category 4: Visual/Auditory Aid Use	
Extemporaneous Delivery		Visual/Auditory Aid Use	
✓		✓	

The QEP Course Rubric Map will also include instructions for assignments within the class that correlate to the QEP. The course instructional activities and requirements are below for BUS 115, the course listed on the previous page in the QEP Course Rubric Map.

QEP Rubric Course Map - Course Instructional Activities/Requirements

- 1) Students will receive instruction on how to effectively create and present to the class on various relevant case studies. Students will be in groups in the seated version of the class which will be dependent on the enrollment of the class. Online students will be present independently.
- 2) Students will practice presenting cases to each other in the semester.
- 3) Groups will be assigned case studies to research and present to the class.
- 4) Students will be given a list of questions to answer and topics to cover when presenting the case.
- 5) Each student will present for a minimum of one minute.
- 6) The instructor will provide a list of cases that will be assigned and questions that will be answered. Potential cases:
 - a. Bad Fog Brewery Inc. v. New York State Liquor Authority (potential practice case early in the semester)
 - b. Hasbro, Inc. v. Internet Entertainment Group, Ltd.
 - c. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act
 - d. Should a surviving member of Lynyrd Skynyrd abide by a thirty-year-old consent decree?
 - e. The Problem with “Contract Cheating”
 - f. Kent State University vs. Ford
 - g. Taxing Web Purchase
 - h. Jones v. Star Credit Corp.
 - i. Total Quality Logistics, LLC v. Balance Transportation, LLC
 - j. All the Way Towing, LLC v. Bucks County International, Inc.
 - k. Fitl v. Strek
 - l. Pay with Your Smartphone

Appendix I: Marketing Creative Brief

QEP Logo Graphic Design Creative Brief - DRAFT 1.10.25

QEP stands for Quality Enhancement Plan. This is a college initiative to help improve student learning. Developing and implementing a QEP is part of the process for maintaining accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges or SACSCOC.

GOAL:

WCC will increase student competency and readiness for professional workplace communication.

POTENTIAL SLOGANS: *note, none of these have been decided on. Come up with your own – it must align the GOAL of the QEP.

- Empowering students for success: Mastering Workplace Communication
- Empowering Communication, Enabling Futures
- Empowering Futures: Master Communication for Success!
- Empowering Students Today for Confident Communication Tomorrow
- Creating Workplace Communication Champions

CREATION OF TITLE: A title for the QEP should be created to go along with the logo and slogan. This title should align with the goals of the QEP and should convey at-a-glance the overall "idea" behind the QEP goals.

AUDIENCE:

WCC will use the logo and slogan to promote and market the QEP goal. Audience will be mainly WCC students, faculty, and staff. We will promote the QEP program on social media, so the marketing materials will be forward facing to our community.

Logo and slogan should utilize WCC colors.

Wilkes Community College colors

The dark blue and dark green colors must be the predominant colors in marketing materials that reflect the college, especially on one-page documents and the cover of a multi-page document.

Secondary colors, accent colors, and tint screens of the dark blue and dark green can be used to enhance the overall design if needed.

PRIMARY COLORS



Pantone 7701

CMYK: 100; 28; 0; 53

RGB: 0; 86; 119

Hex: #005677



Pantone 7742

CMYK: 39; 0; 49; 53

RGB: 72; 119; 61

Hex: #48773D

SECONDARY COLORS



Pantone 580

CMYK: 8; 0; 23; 16

RGB: 197; 213; 165

Hex: #C5D5A5



Pantone 551

CMYK: 23; 6; 0; 17

RGB: 163; 198; 211

Hex: #A3C6D3



Pantone 308 U

CMYK: 73; 22; 0; 49

RGB: 35; 102; 130

Hex: #236682

NOTE: When printing on UNCOATED paper, use Pantone 308U for the blue. All other colors are as specified on this page.

SUPPORTING ACCENT COLORS



Pantone 7536

CMYK: 0; 5; 19; 35

RGB: 167; 159; 136

Hex: #A79F88



Pantone 7527

CMYK: 0; 2; 9; 16

RGB: 215; 210; 196

Hex: #D7D2C4

**ADA compliance -
Use high contrasting color combinations.
Examples:



Logo and slogan should be in color and reverse (all white). The logo should be able to sit on a field of color, so create a color logo, a white logo, and a logo sitting on a field of color in order to demonstrate versatility.

Questions for students to consider:

1. Who are you designing for?
2. What is their mission?
3. What do they do?
4. Who is their competition?
5. What type of events do they promote?
6. What colors do they want to use?
7. Who is their audience?
8. What type of positive response might be desired from their audience?

Make a list of 30 descriptive words: Think about the key words in the above brief – COMMUNICATION, READINESS, WORKPLACE. Use a thesaurus to find additional words that mean the same thing and/or come up with your own.

Sketch (on paper!) 12 logos that visually represent the Goal of the QEP. Think about your 30 words above and design something that will get the message across “at a glance”. You can incorporate a combination logo (logo & slogan) or do a logo design only if you plan to have your slogan as a stand-alone element in your design. Next steps: Submit your designs to the forum for this project. Reply to at least 3 students about their designs and give feedback. What could be done better? What elements of their designs do you find most appealing? Based on the feedback from your instructor and classmates, choose your best 3 designs to take into Illustrator and create digital color designs. We will then do another forum round and you will refine and take your best design to the final stage for submission.

Appendix J: Marketing Logo



Appendix K: QEP Support Plan

Tutoring

Students can:

- **Schedule tutoring appointments for communication.**
 - Creating a Presentation – PowerPoint/Computer Help – 45 minutes
 - Creating a Presentation – Writing and Research – 45 minutes
 - Electronic/Professional Written Communication – 45 minutes
 - Resume or Cover Letter Writing – 45 minutes
 - Practice a Presentation with a Tutor – 45 minutes
 - Using Echo360 – 45 minutes
- **Submit artifacts such as resumes, electronic communication drafts, or Echo360 videos for asynchronous review.**
 - Tutors will review documents and send back with comments similar to the WCC Paper Review.
 - The ASC will work with Career Services for training on resumes, cover letters, etc.
 - For video review, the tutor will send transcript notes or a follow-up video.
 - The booking system does not support upload of videos; however, students can provide a link to their Echo360 video. We will provide a how-to video via the ASC Moodle.
 - The ASC can also offer a submission portal for Echo360 videos via the ASC Moodle course if helpful.
- **Reserve a location for oral presentation practice.** (Email or call – some rooms reservable via the Tutoring icon)
 - Wilkes Campus
 - Multipurpose Room
 - Large Group Study Room
 - WW 1110
 - Designated classrooms (work with Tracy Lowder to arrange available locations at the start of the semester)
 - Ashe Campus
 - Pardue Library Nook
 - Designated classrooms (work with Dr. Caleb Marsh to arrange available locations at the start of the semester)
 - Alleghany Center
 - ASC (Room 103)
 - Designated classrooms (work with Talina Pipes to arrange available locations at the start of the semester)

- **Reserve recording/sound equipment**
 - Podcast microphones available for checkout at each campus ASC
 - Tripod phone holders
 - Webcams
 - Yealink technology is available in several reservable locations

Additional Student Benefits

- **Peer tutor support**
 - 2nd year students as available tutors for various communication related requests
 - Provide audience for online presentations (i.e., requirements for audience in COM 231)
- **ASC Moodle – communication resources**
 - ESAP communication information
 - Resume builder template
 - Cover letter template
 - Reminder that ASC offers synchronous and asynchronous support
- **Student help desk ticket dropdown option**
 - Available for students to request support for communication technology such as Echo360 videos, visual aid support, etc.
- **Echo360 link on the student portal with how-to videos**
- **Promotion of current services**
 - Book a Librarian for communication research
 - Career Services with focus on scheduling individual sessions
 - Counseling Services for processing through social interactions

Classroom/Instructor Supports

- **Don't Cancel That Class offerings**
 - Updated for communication support specifically
- **Career services support**
 - Embedded into course offerings
 - Students may work with Career Services as a recommended part of coursework in identified courses
- **Library research guides**
 - Instructors can work with librarians to curate helpful resources for students
- **QEP resources section in the instructor Moodle course.**

Wilkes Community College provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, Wilkes Community College complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities.

Wilkes Community College prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of Wilkes Community College's employees to perform their job duties may result in discipline up to and including discharge.

