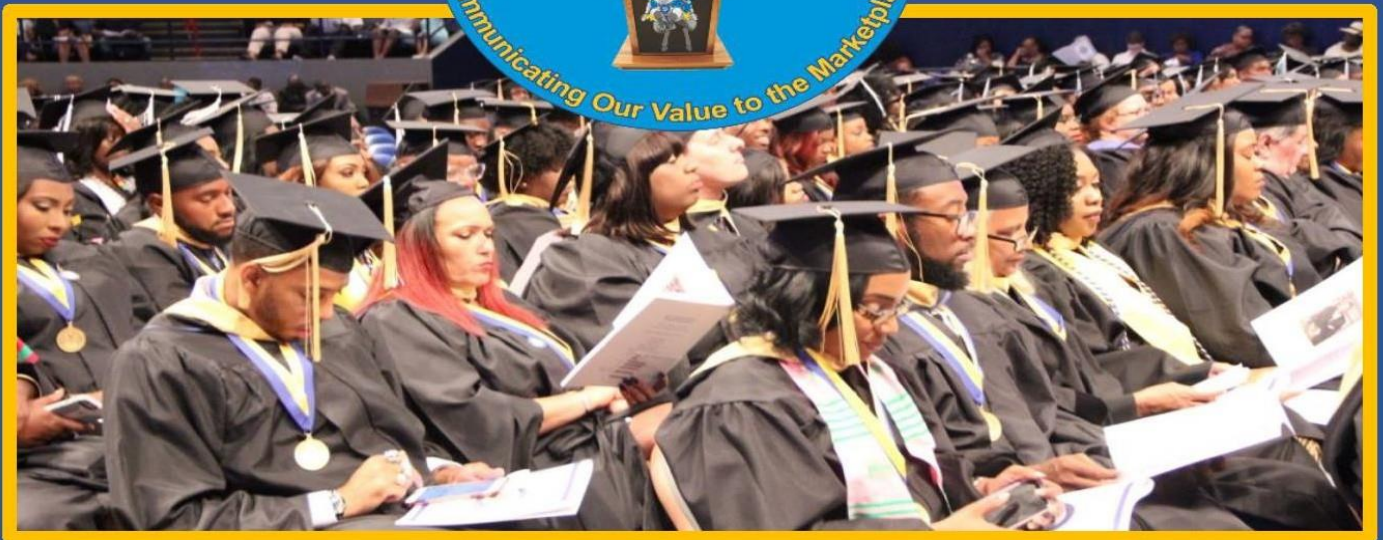


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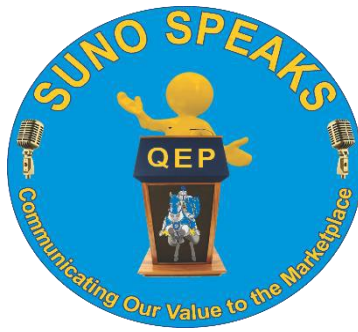


A Quality Enhancement Plan

to enhance oral communication skills for career success

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Executive Summary

The Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to enhance the career success of its student body by focusing on the broad-based development of soft skills (resume writing, professional attire, and interview skills) through formal curricula change and informal opportunities to learn and practice those skills. Soft skills are “the social, attitudinal, and self-regulatory competencies or traits that allow us to communicate effectively, work well with others, and persist in the face of adversity” (Hora, Benbow, & Smolarek, 2018) Soft skills also include but are not limited to abilities such as “teamwork, problem-solving, communication (formal and informal, verbal and written), interpersonal interaction, public speaking, and time management” (Low, Samkin, & Liu, 2013). The 2019 NACE Job Outlook further supports the existence of this gap in graduate and employer perspectives. According to the report, critical thinking/problem solving, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and oral/written communications remain as the top four most essential career competencies as rated by employers.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO #1: Students will acquire practical soft skills (resume writing, interview skills, and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.

SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

Work Plan/Implementation

1. SUNO will provide soft skills enhancement opportunities through the specific general requirement and discipline-specific courses.
2. Develop a list of courses (curriculum map) where soft skills are/should be emphasized and provide training to the instructors that are reflective of promising practices.
3. The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) job interview method will be emphasized in many communication classes as practical.
4. The Office of Career Placement will coordinate opportunities to enhance soft skills including oral and written communication with other campus resources.
5. Each student will be required to maintain a portfolio of soft skills enhancement activities (resume writing, professional attire, and interview skills) including courses completed and training activities completed.
6. In order to meet graduation requirements, the Office of Career Placement must certify that the student has completed soft skill enhancement activities as part of the Graduation Exit Interview process. A line of approval will be added to the Exit Interview form.
7. In order to be certified, each student will be required to provide evidence of three soft skill enhancement activities approved by their director/department chair and the Office of Career Placement.

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Assessment

1. The Office of Career Placement will create/maintain a database to keep track of the number of students that complete an interview session each semester.
2. The Office of Career Placement will survey employers that conduct interviews with our students each year to gauge students' understanding of soft skills. In addition, the NACE survey will be utilized to examine career readiness (Appendix A) (as the NACE survey allows students and employers to self-evaluate).
3. BigInterview will measure students' soft skills (interview skills and professional attire) (Please see the attached criteria for student success, an example) and Google Applied Digital Skills Platform (Appendix B). In addition, the software also compares the user's progress as well as growth over time.
4. The percentage of students employed six months after graduation will increase from 65% to 70% by Year 3 in increments of 3% per year minimum. (Graduate Data from Louisiana Board of Regents, Employment and Wage Data from Louisiana Workforce Commission's Unemployment Insurance (UI) records)
5. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Results will trend upward:
 - a. During the current school year, how often have you "Talked about career plans with a faculty member?"
 - b. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively?
6. Focus groups open to faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members will generate qualitative data suggesting an improvement in students' overall oral communication skills and their ability to articulate their career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

II. Overview of Southern University at New Orleans

Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) was founded as a branch unit of Southern University and Agricultural & Mechanical College in Baton Rouge (SUBR) on September 4, 1956, by Act 28 of the Extraordinary Session of Louisiana Legislature. On September 21, 1959, SUNO opened its doors on a 17-acre site located in historic Pontchartrain Park, a subdivision of primarily African American single-family residents in eastern New Orleans. Established as an open community of learners, classes began with 158 freshmen, one building, and a motivated faculty of 15. The university offered ten courses in four academic disciplines: Humanities, Science, Social Science, and Commerce. Currently, various degree programs are offered in the following areas: liberal arts and sciences, substance abuse, social work, business, and education, as well as graduate degree programs in Social Work, Criminal Justice, Computer Information Systems, and Museum Studies. The university's mission is to create and maintain

an environment conducive to learning and growth, promote the upward mobility of diverse populations by preparing them to enter into new and traditional careers, and equip students to function optimally in the mainstream of global society. Having served as a beacon light of inspiration to its constituency, SUNO continues to make a meaningful contribution to the upward mobility of the people of the community that it serves.

III. QEP topic identification and development process

SUNO aimed to identify a topic that would improve student learning outcomes and or success through multiple methods that were:

1. Aligned with its mission, vision, and strategic plan;
2. Inclusive of students, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, employers, and community;
3. Data-driven by information from quantitative and qualitative sources;
4. Research-based upon review of scholarly literature and other successful QEPs; and a
5. Deliberate process through discussions at QEP Task Force monthly meetings, other meetings with all constituents, attendance at conferences, and SACSCOC meetings.

After successful implementation of its previous QEP (2010 – 2015), SUNO began the process of developing a new topic in Fall 2016 by emailing university stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and the community) (Appendix C), placing suggestion boxes across campus for respondents to drop in their ideas on index cards or paper forms, and providing an electronic submission option available at QEP@suno.edu. In March 2017, due to the low response from stakeholders on a QEP topic choice, a university-wide QEP workshop was organized which featured an invited QEP consultant, Dr. Myrtes Green, of Lawson State Community College, Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Green gave a presentation on the overall purpose of the QEP, the process for its development, and the necessary steps in selecting its focus. These efforts generated 25 topic proposals by twenty-one faculty members, three staff members and two students. An ad hoc steering committee grouped them into eight themes.

In June 2017, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs established the QEP Task Force, charged with guiding the overall efforts to select and develop the QEP topic. The QEP Task Force included faculty and staff working in collaboration with Student Government Association leaders. QEP Task Force meeting dates are in Appendix D. It is important to note that preparations for the submission of the QEP began with an expected completion in time for an early 2020 SASCOG on-site visit delayed to April 2021 due to various reasons.

NAME	DEPARTMENT	POSITION
Dr. Diane Bordenave Chair	College of Education & Human Development	Assessment Coordinator Associate Professor Child Development and Family Studies
Mr. Benjamin Ashu	Division of Academic Affairs	QEP Director (Former)
Dr. David Alijani	College of Business & Public Administration	Professor Chair of Computer Information Systems
Mr. Peter Bonnee	Information Technology	Communications Technologist Information Technology Center Title III Program

Mr. Norbert Davidson	Arts & Humanities	Associate Professor English Chair of Arts & Humanities (Former)
Ms. Ada Kwanbunbumpen	Division of Academic Affairs	Director Center of Planning, Research and Evaluation (Institutional Effectiveness)
Dr. Douglas Marshall	Arts & Humanities	Associate Professor, Communication Chair Chair of Arts & Humanities (Current)
Dr. Igwe Udeh	College of Business & Public Administration	Dean College of Business and Public Administration Alvin James Lawson Endowed Professor of Business Co-Director of Accreditation, Reaffirmation and Review of Academic Programs

After reviewing the eight proposed QEP topics, the QEP Task Force developed a survey ([Appendix E](#)), and administered both online and in paper format. The survey was disseminated first to faculty and staff at the August 2017 University Conference, then by faculty to students at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester in their various classes and administered to alumni through the Office of Alumni and Community Affairs. Everyone was asked to review a list of the eight (8) possible topics and rank the QEP topics from one (1) to eight (8), with one (1) being the most desired and eight (8) being the least desired. Survey responses were collected from fifty (50) faculty; seven hundred fifty-six (756) students, forty (40) administration and staff members, fifteen (15) alumni, and one hundred seven (107) unidentified and multi-identified participants, e.g., those who did not identify their affiliation. The return rate for faculty (N=88) and students (N=2,546) equated to 57% and 30%, respectively, of Fall 2017 totals and were thought to be representative of the faculty and students. The results varied by stakeholder.

Table 1: Faculty and student responses

QEP Topic	Faculty count	% for 1 st choice	Students count	% for 1 st choice
Critical thinking across Curriculum	11	22.0%	93	12.3%
Oral Communication	5	10.0%	150	19.8%
Writing Communication	4	8.0%	46	6.1%
Post-Graduate Success	5	10.0%	162	21.4%
Student Mentorship	4	8.0%	75	9.9%
Improving Students' Analytical Skills	12	24.0%	50	6.6%
Technology-Enhanced Student Advisement & Retention	9	18.0%	54	7.1%
Infusing Real World Business Operations into Classroom	0	0.0%	126	16.7%
Total	50	100%	756	100%

As shown in Figure 1 below, the three top proposal topics were: 1) Post-Graduation Success, 2) Oral Communication, and 3) Infusing Real-World Business Operations into the classroom.

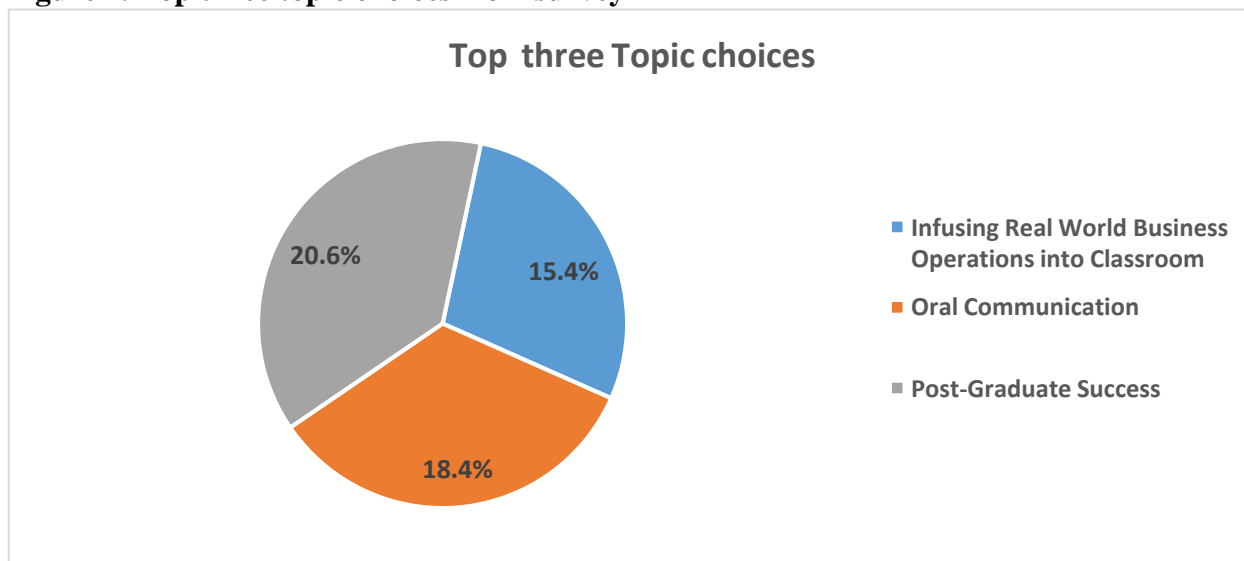
Table 2: Staff and alumni responses

QEP Topic	Staff count	% for 1st choice	Alumni count	% for 1st choice
Critical thinking across Curriculum	7	17.5%	5	33.3%
Oral Communication	5	12.5%	1	6.7%
Writing Communication	1	2.5%	3	20.0%
Post-Graduate Success	3	7.5%	3	20.0%
Student Mentorship	6	15.0%	0	0.0%
Improving Students' Analytical Skills	7	17.5%	0	0.0%
Technology-Enhanced Student Advisement & Retention	6	15.0%	0	0.0%
Infusing Real World Business Operations into Classroom	5	12.5%	3	20.0%
Total	40	100%	15	100%

Table 3: Summary of survey results from all respondents including participants with unidentified university affiliation

QEP Topic	Total number of respondents for topic Choice	percentage of choice
Critical thinking across Curriculum	133	13.7%
Oral Communication	179	18.4%
Writing Communication	61	6.3%
Post-Graduate Success	199	20.6%
Student Mentorship	97	10.0%
Improving Students' Analytical Skills	77	8.0%
Technology-Enhanced Student Advisement & Retention	74	7.6%
Infusing Real World Business Operations into Classroom	149	15.4%
Total	968	100%

Figure 1. Top three topic choices from survey



External Data

In addition to the above survey responses, the QEP Task Force examined multiple data sets provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness on the employment rate of SUNO students as a measure of Post-Graduate Success and a national survey of student engagement as a measure of Oral Communication skill. SUNO had not collected any identified data for evaluating the topic Infusing Real-World Business Operations into Classroom useful for this topic review. Job Placement Data (found at <http://www.suno.edu/page/student-achievement>) included the following graphic, which summarizes the Employment Rates by Degree Levels.

Employment Rates by Degree Level – 2nd and 6th Quarter Post Graduation

Degree Level	Number of Completers			Percent Employed 2nd Quarter post-Graduation			Percent Employed 6th Quarter post-Graduation		
	17-18	18-19	19-20	17-18	18-19	19-20	17-18	18-19	19-20
Associates	17	12	15	0%			0%		
Bachelors	296	283	254	67%			69%		
Masters	167	170	145	60%			56%		
Overall Completers	480	465	414	63%			63%		

The QEP Task Force examined the 2013-2014 & 2014-2015 academic years degree completers employment outcome report on the rate of employment of SUNO students by their fields of study. These were the only years available at the time of the review. As shown in Table 4 below, for the 2013-2014 academic year, 61% of the students were employed in their respective fields of study and X% were employed in their respective fields of study for the 2014-2015 academic year. The QEP Task Force was concerned with the percentage of students employed post-graduation and the decline of employment in their study field.

Table 4: Southern University at New Orleans Graduates by Academic Year 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 Employment Status 2nd and 6th Quarter Post Graduation

						Found in the 6th Quarter Post Graduating Term			
Graduation Year	Max Degree Level	2-Digit CIPCODE	2-Digit CIPCODE Description	TOTAL Completers	Original Cohort	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2015	Associates	51	Health Professions and Related Programs	16	4	3	75%	1	25%
	Associates Total			16	4	3	75%	1	25%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Baccalaureate	11	and Support Services	12	10	7	70%	7	70%
		13	Education	4	2	2	100%	2	100%
			Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	16	13	11	85%	10	77%
			English Language and Literature/Letters	7	5	2	40%	1	20%
			Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	22	13	8	62%	6	46%
		24	Biological and Biomedical Sciences	33	20	15	75%	9	45%
		26	Mathematics and Statistics	10	5	3	60%	3	60%
		27	Psychology	42	30	18	44%	8	44%
			Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Related	53	29	15	52%	15	52%
			Public Administration and Social Service Professions	50	15	11	73%	10	67%
			Health Professions and Related Programs	51	26	13	77%	7	54%
			Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services	52	32	19	59%	16	50%
		54	History	2	2	2	100%	2	100%
	Baccalaureate Total			310	177	113	64%	96	54%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Master's	11	and Support Services	19	17	11	65%	9	53%
		30	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	11	9	4	44%	3	33%
			Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Related	43	24	16	67%	14	58%
			Public Administration and Social Service Professions	44	115	103	70%	75	73%
	Master's Total			188	153	103	67%	101	66%
2015 Total				514	334	219	66%	198	59%

Graduation Year	Max Degree Level	2-Digit CIPCODE	2-Digit CIPCODE Description	TOTAL Completers	Original Cohort	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2016	Associates	51	Health Professions and Related Programs	14	1	-	0%	1	100%
	Associates Total			14	1	-	0%	1	100%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Baccalaureate	11	and Support Services	10	5	3	60%	4	80%
		13	Education	4	3	3	100%	3	100%
			Family and Consumer						
		19	Sciences/Human Sciences	19	16	14	88%	13	81%
			English Language and						
		23	Literature/Letters	6	5	2	40%	2	40%
			Liberal Arts and Sciences, General						
		24	Studies and Humanities	29	14	10	71%	9	64%
		26	Biological and Biomedical Sciences	28	15	8	53%	11	73%
		27	Mathematics and Statistics	7	4	2	50%	4	100%
		42	Psychology	44	25	16	64%	19	76%
			Homeland Security, Law						
		43	Enforcement, Firefighting, and Relate	46	27	15	56%	18	67%
			Public Administration and Social						
		44	Service Professions	48	24	19	79%	19	79%
			Health Professions and Related						
		51	Programs	27	12	9	75%	7	58%
			Business, Management, Marketing						
		52	and Related Support Services	51	34	27	79%	26	76%
		54	History	5	3	1	33%	2	67%
	Baccalaureate Total			324	187	129	69%	137	73%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Master's	11	and Support Services	24	21	6	29%	5	24%
		30	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	7	5	-	0%	-	0%
			Homeland Security, Law						
		43	Enforcement, Firefighting, and Relate	28	22	17	77%	16	73%
			Public Administration and Social						
		44	Service Professions	130	125	85	68%	99	79%
	Master's Total			189	173	108	62%	120	69%
2016 Total				527	361	237	66%	258	71%

Graduation Year	Max Degree Level	2-Digit CIPCODE DE	2-Digit CIPCODE Description	TOTAL Completers	Original Cohort	Found in the 6th Quarter PostGraduating Term			
						Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2017	Associates	51	Health Professions and Related Programs	17	1	-	0%	-	0%
	Associates Total			17	1	-	0%	-	0%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Baccalaureate	11	and Support Services	8	4	2	50%	3	75%
		13	Education	18	9	8	89%	8	89%
			Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	25	18	12	67%	15	83%
			English Language and Literature/Letters	4	4	4	100%	3	75%
			Liberal Arts and Sciences, General						
		24	Studies and Humanities	33	21	14	67%	14	67%
		26	Biological and Biomedical Sciences	14	12	5	42%	6	50%
		27	Mathematics and Statistics	10	6	4	67%	4	67%
		42	Psychology	36	21	9	43%	10	48%
			Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Related	47	35	29	83%	26	74%
			Public Administration and Social						
		44	Service Professions	43	15	12	80%	11	73%
			Health Professions and Related Programs						
		51	Programs	15	8	4	50%	3	38%
			Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services	40	30	18	60%	22	73%
		52	History	3	3	3	100%	3	100%
	Baccalaureate Total			296	186	124	67%	128	69%
			Computer and Information Sciences						
	Master's	11	and Support Services	20	18	2	11%	-	0%
		30	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	14	12	6	50%	6	50%
			Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Related	46	34	21	62%	21	62%
			Public Administration and Social						
		44	Service Professions	87	77	55	71%	52	68%
	Master's Total			167	141	84	60%	79	56%
2017 Total				480	328	208	63%	207	63%

Data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness from The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) measures college students' learning and engagement in Canada and the United States. SUNO administers the NSSE to first-year and senior-level students every spring semester. The QEP Task Force was interested in responses for engagement items; precisely, student-perceived gains in how their experience at SUNO has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively. Results indicated that students felt SUNO had contributed much to their experiences and knowledge in this area (see Table 5a below). However, compared to other public Louisiana Universities and Carnegie class data, the mean for first-year SUNO students had declined from 2015, which signaled that this measure could also improve with enhanced focus.

Table 5a: Statistical comparisons (mean) of SUNO with other public Louisiana institutions and Carnegie Class

	2017			2018			2019		
	SUNO	Public LA Univ.	Carnegie class	SUNO	Public LA Univ.	Carnegie class	SUNO	Public LA Univ.	Carnegie class
First-year Students	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.7
Seniors	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed)

NOTE: SUNO has requested updated data from the Louisiana Board of Regents, who reports information from LA Workforce Commission for the GRAD act reporting requirement. BOR informed SUNO that they are asking LA Workforce Commission to up-date the data for the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 cohorts

The QEP Task Force met to discuss the data cited and consider the three top responses from the stakeholder survey to decide on the topic that will significantly impact student learning outcomes and SUNO students' academic success. There were persuasive arguments for each of the issues: post-graduate success, oral communication, and infusing real-world business operations into the classroom. To guide the decision and structure, SUNO scheduled a QEP facilitative conference call on October 10, 2017, with consultant Dr. Rudolph Jackson, who subsequently led a workshop on November 14, 2017. At that workshop, six QEP Task Force members considered institutional resources alignment, evidence of student learning outcomes, review of recurrent themes from Institutional Effectiveness, and implementation challenges.

These considerations and a review of institutional data and information (mission, vision, strategic plan) led the QEP Task Force to conclude that enhancing students' oral communication skills would improve students' abilities to present themselves and their ideas to potential employers effectively. A review of recently approved SACSCOC QEPS on their website <https://sacscoc.org/quality-enhancement-plans/> supported this topic as one identified in a broad gamut of universities such as The Art Institute of Houston, University of Miami, Sul Ross State University, American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, and Texas Lutheran University.

The topic was presented to and approved by the then Chancellor and the joint meeting of SACSCOC Leadership Team and Subcommittee chairs on May 02, 2018. Dr. James H. Ammons, Jr., as Interim Chancellor, approved the committee assignment of the QEP Task Force chair in a Memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Evening & Weekend Affairs/Accreditation Liaison on January 28,

2020, signaling approval of moving forward with the work previously completed on the QEP planning. The submission of this document to SASCO evidences the approval of the Chancellor of Southern University at New Orleans.

Internal Data

In addition to the external data, the QEP Task Force examined oral communication assessment data from the Colleges of Business and Public Administration, Education and Human Development, and School of Social Work that require discipline-specific courses on communication in their majors. As they are specialized courses not offered every semester, the tables represent the latest available grades at the time of planning.

Table 6: College of Business (BADM 490 – Strategic Management & Business Pol) oral assessment results fall 2020

	Number Meeting or Exceeding Expectations			
	Number of Presentations That Do Not Meet Expectations	Number of Presentations That Meet Expectations	Number of Presentations That Exceed Expectations	% of Presentations That Either Meet or Exceed Expectations
Good English				
Student uses correct English in his/her presentation.	2	7	8	88.23 %
Delivery				
Student makes good eye contact with audience.	5	6	6	70.58 %
Student speaks clearly.	2	7	8	88.23 %
Student delivers the subject matter with confidence.	4	7	6	76.47 %
Student make use of effective body language	6	4	7	64.70 %
Audio/Visual Aids				
Student makes effective use of audio/visual aids.	4	6	7	76.47 %
Content				
Student presents subject matter clearly.	4	6	7	76.47 %
Student demonstrates evidence of research/preparedness.	6	5	6	64.70 %
NOTE: Success benchmark for “% of Presentations That either Meet or Exceed Expectations” was set at 75%				

Table 7: College of Education (EDUC 212- Communication for Teachers) assessment results

GRADES

Semester	A		B		C		D		Total
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Spring 2017	5	29%	10	59%	2	12%	0	0%	17
Fall 2017	2	15%	6	46%	5	39%	0	0%	13
Spring 2018	2	22%	6	67%	1	11%	0	0%	9
Fall 2018	2	20%	3	30%	4	40%	1	10%	10
Fall 2019	4	28%	5	36%	5	36%	0	0%	14
Fall 2020	3	19%	9	56%	4	25%	0	0%	16

Table 8: School of Social Work (SOWK 241 – Communication Skills II) assessment results

Semester	Course section	Grades								Total
		A		B		C		D		
Spring 2017	01	13	52%	12	48%	0	0%	0	0%	25
	02	13	57%	9	39%	1	4%	0	0%	23
Spring 2018	01	9	35%	12	46%	4	15%	1	4%	26
	02	10	53%	7	37%	1	5%	1	5%	19
Spring 2019	01	13	59%	7	32%	2	9%	0	0%	22
	02	22	92%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	24
Spring 2020	01	15	65%	6	26%	8	9%	0	0%	23
	02	3	17%	8	44%	7	39%	0	0%	18

In Fall 2017, thirty-five (35) students were enrolled in SCOM210; 28% earned an “A” grade, and the same percentage earned a “B”; 10% of the students earned a “C,” 7% a “D” and 9% failed. 17% received an “FX,” indicating that the student never attended a class or submitted any work.

Fall 2017 Communication course Grade Distribution

SCOM	A		B		C		D		F		FX		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
10401	6	23%	10	38%	6	23%	0	0%	3	12%	1	4%	26
10402	6	23%	9	35%	1	4%	1	4%	3	12%	6	23%	26
10403	4	19%	9	43%	3	14%	3	14%	2	10%	0	0%	21
10404	6	21%	1	4%	3	11%	4	14%	3	11%	11	39%	28
10405	13	57%	6	26%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	3	13%	23
Total	35	28%	35	28%	13	10%	9	7%	11	9%	21	17%	124

In Fall 2018,

Fall 2018 Communication course Grade Distribution

SCOM	A		B		C		D		F		FX		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
10401	11	39%	6	21%	3	11%	3	11%	2	7%	3	11%	28
10402	13	50%	4	15%	5	19%	1	4%	0	0%	3	12%	26
10403	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
10404	7	27%	8	31%	6	23%	0	0%	0	0%	5	19%	26
10405	11	48%	7	30%	2	9%	0	0%	1	4%	2	9%	23
Total	42	41%	25	24%	16	15%	4	4%	3	3%	13	13%	103

In Fall 2019,

Fall 2019 Communication course Grade Distribution

SCOM	A		B		C		D		F		FX		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
10401	8	33%	6	25%	5	21%	0	0%	0	0%	5	21%	24
10402	12	50%	5	21%	4	17%	0	0%	1	4%	2	8%	24
10403	7	25%	10	36%	8	28%	0	0%	0	0%	3	11%	28
10404	4	19%	3	14%	6	29%	0	0%	1	5%	7	33%	21
10405	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	31	32%	24	25%	23	24%	0	0%	2	2%	17	17%	97

In Fall 2020,

Fall 2020 Communication course Grade Distribution

SCOM	A		B		C		D		F		FX		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
10401	6	29%	3	14%	1	5%	0	0%	1	52%	0	0%	21
10402	8	32%	2	8%	1	4%	1	4%	2	8%	1	44%	25
10403	6	22%	4	15%	4	15%	2	7%	0	0%	1	41%	27
10404	1	5%	5	28%	3	17%	0	0%	2	11%	7	39%	18
10405	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	2		1	15		10			1	17	2	32	
	1	23%	4	%	9	%	3	3%	5	%	9	%	91

Internal Qualitative Data

The QEP Task Force held a focus group to collect qualitative data to identify components of oral communication skills most needing enhancement in our student population. To that end, the QEP Task Force invited a diverse group of university stakeholders comprised of students, faculty, staff, alumni and employers via emails and posted flyers (Appendix F) to a focus group on March 9, 2018. The sign-in sheet indicated twenty-one people participated: eight faculty members, ten staff members, and three students. The video can be seen at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAXntG97OwI&list=PLITPFTeTW6kmAcXpDjDuvY2nqIvh8m-iC>.

Targeted questions were identified for students, faculty, employers and staff to guide the discussion.

- Students
 - What does “oral communication” mean to you?
 - Discuss deficiencies in oral communication
 - You and your peers
 - How has SUNO prepared you to become a better oral communicator?
 - What is a bigger problem when looking toward your future and starting a career? Interpersonal conversations or public speaking skills?
- Faculty
 - What feedback have you received in regard to our students’ abilities to speak?
 - What strengths and weaknesses have you seen in regard to students’ oral communication skills?
 - Does your course have a formal oral communication aspect? How important is it?
- Employers
 - When you employ current or former students, what is your general impression of their communication skills?
 - How are their interpersonal skills?
 - How are their public speaking skills?
 - In regard to employment, how important are the oral communication skills of a potential employee?

- How could SUNO better prepare graduates to be better oral communicators?
- Staff
 - What have you noticed about the oral communication skills of students on campus?
 - How could SUNO better prepare those students to communicate well?

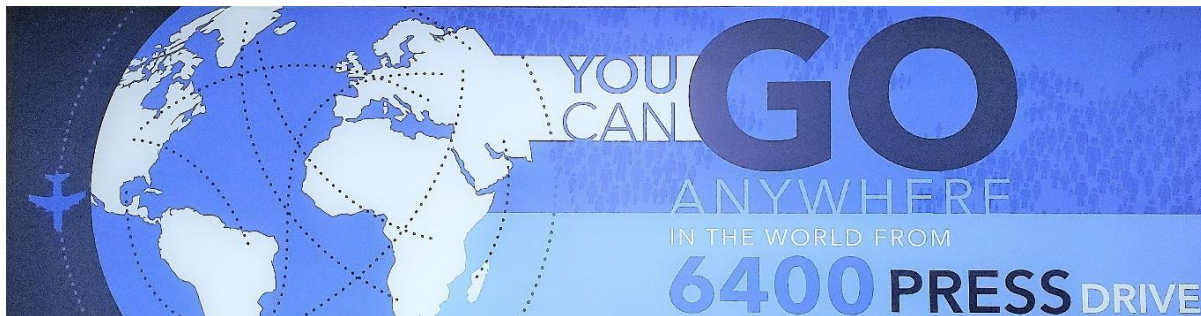
Written questionnaires targeted to the attendees' role as student, faculty, staff, or employer were also distributed. The questionnaires were intended to understand their general impression of the strengths and weaknesses of students when communicating on campus or in their workplaces. One student, six faculty members, and three staff members completed the questionnaire.

Analyses of the feedback from the focus group and written responses to the questionnaires helped the QEP Task Force focus on specific components of oral communication skills deemed most critical to post-graduate success; organization, content, and delivery (Appendix G). Specific suggestions from the participants on strategies to enhance students' oral communication included the following:

- a) Offer public speaking workshops.
- b) Work with the English Department to develop Student learning objectives (SLOs) in this area.
- c) Develop a university-wide assessment rubric for oral communication.
- d) Incorporate public speaking assignments in all disciplines.
- e) Provide opportunities for inter-disciplinary speaking engagements such as round tables.

Overall, course scores in the introductory communication course and discipline-specific communication courses showed that students are rated competent in oral communication. The QEP Task Force recognized from this feedback that enhancing the curricula and more opportunities for public speaking both inside and outside the classroom could improve oral communication skills and contribute to successful employment gains post-graduation.

IV. Goal and desired student learning outcomes



The primary goal of the Quality Enhancement Plan is to develop the effectiveness of the Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) student soft skills (resume writing, interviewing skills, and professional attire) and enhance oral and written communication skills that ensure marketability for career readiness. The QEP's goal, in alignment with the University's 2018-2025 Strategic Plan, would assist SUNO in accomplishing the University's mission as a public, historically Black University to empower and promote the upward mobility of diverse populations of traditional and non-traditional students. SUNO is a premier, cutting-edge institution that endeavors to advance the educational standing of students by preparing them to participate in and contribute to a global society and the workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions.

"Humans are born with the ability to vocalize, but not with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that define communication competence. The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately is learned and, therefore, must be taught." (Morreale, Osborn & Pearson, 2000, p. 2).

LaBombard (2016) noted that employment markets have shifted in the last 30 years, explaining the growing demand for these skills. Between 1980 and 2012, a dramatic increase in the number of jobs requiring strong social skills, including leadership and critical thinking, has changed what qualities hiring managers are seeking from potential employees. These "career-readiness skills" transcend disciplinary borders, and most employers expect new graduates to possess these skills regardless of major, degree, certificate, or pathway. Students who excel at articulating their career readiness have a much easier time securing employment than those who do not (Deming, 2017). Furthermore, those who excel at applying their career readiness skills often earn more over their lifetime than those who focus on developing only "hard" skills (Liu & Grusky, 2013).

The qualitative data were less supportive and indicated areas of weakness. The QEP Task Force theorized that enhancing oral communication skills early in a student's academic program and providing students with opportunities to practice might improve the student's skills and confidence. This improvement would then ultimately lead to career success, as confirmed by research and SUNO students. Consequently, the Student Learning Outcomes developed by the QEP Task Force, following the implementation of the QEP, students will be able to:

SLO #1: Students will acquire practical soft skills (resume writing, interview skills, and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.

SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

The attainment of the Student Learning Outcomes will be measured in multiple ways. Students' soft skills will be evaluated by using varied software platforms to determine growth over time. In addition, faculty and the personnel from the Office of Career Placement will also teach soft skills as a result of professional development provided by the QEP.

V. Review of literature and best practices



A scholarly literature review helped to support the topic selection. In addition, the literature focused on relevant career-enhancing components of oral communication and other soft skills. Also, the literature review identifies effective methods to achieve the desired student learning outcomes and guides the design of the assessments employed to collect necessary data and analyze the results. Moreover, the scholarly literature review is used to enhance SUNO's delivery of instruction and career readiness. The following summaries provide relevant literature and research.

A. Topic selection

As noted in the literature cited below, effective soft skills (resume writing, interview skills and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, enhance employability. Key to these skills is the general overall ability of the student to speak with confidence and discipline specific knowledge not only in the initial interview process to obtain their first job, but also to continue to advance in their careers upon employment. Also noted from the literature review, employers expect universities to prepare students to demonstrate appropriate soft skills by providing opportunities in coursework and extracurricular activities.

Oral Communication Skills from the Career Perspective

The student body at Southern University at New Orleans is unique in that the challenges they face in gaining employment mirror those of their peers (Selingo, 2016). Oral communication skills are consistently ranked by employers as a top priority in career categories. "Effective high-quality communication has been linked to increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment" (Lear, Hodge, and Schultz, 2015, p. 66). In a survey of executives and hiring managers done by AAC&U in 2018, oral communication was identified as the number one skill desired by employers.

In 2019 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) lists oral communication skills as one of the eight major competencies for new college graduates' career readiness. The ability to effectively work in a team, make decisions, problem solve, and thoughtfully communicate with people both within and outside the organization were rated as more important than knowing exact technical knowledge of the job. In addition, they value more generalized skills that are not specific to majors and cited oral communication and critical thinking in particular. In their book, "Beyond the Skills Gap: Preparing College Students for Life and Work," by Matthew T. Hora, Ross J. Benbow, and Amanda K. Oleson, the skills they found that employers want include work ethic, problem solving, communication, interpersonal skills, and teamwork.

In 2018, a survey of 43 institutions of higher education in which approximately 32,000 students participated found that only about 34% of those students felt they were prepared to succeed in the career search process. While especially evident in minority students, a version of this lack of confidence appears in polling results of students from all backgrounds (Bauer-Wolf, 2018).

In a 2016 poll of recent graduates, 70% were either unemployed or working in non-professional jobs and half had only two job interviews within the last five months. In addition, in answering what the graduates thought were their main obstacles to more fulfilling employment, 75% responded that they do not know what positions are an appropriate fit, or “I don’t know what to do with my major” (46%) (LaBombard, 2016). While these results are alarming, 71% of respondents noted that they had visited their college’s career center two times or less, with 35% never visiting once.

Oral communication skills

Based on a large body of research, oral communication skills are essential to all aspects of a student's success – academically, personally, civically, and professionally. Over 20 years ago, Morreale, Osborn, and Pearson (2000) warned of the dangers of others in the community wrongly judging students who speak poorly as uneducated or poorly informed and form stereotyped expectations of low ability that may become self-fulfilling. This troubling perception of our non-traditional student body was an overtly expressed concern in the focus group based on some of our graduates' employers' feedback. In the marketplace, oral communication skills are considered essential for obtaining employment and successful job performance, not only in the United States (Associates, 2015) but also globally (Biemans & Mulder, 2015; Jackson, 2014; van Ginkel et al., 2017). Recognizing the impact of oral communication skills on student career success contributed to selecting "SUNO SPEAKS - communicating our value to the marketplace" as the key initiative in the QEP.

While 21% of SUNO students surveyed indicated “career success” as their topic of choice, students may not always appreciate the importance of career related soft skills to meet that aspiration (Cameron & Dickfos, 2014). Jackson’s (2014) literature review found that studies based on employer perceptions indicated that oral communication skills of graduates do not meet industry expectations; however, the literature also suggested that undergraduates are more likely to apply themselves to develop necessary skills if they fully appreciate their perceived importance to employers.

Researchers, employers, and accreditation bodies have all suggested that it is incumbent upon higher education to not only teach career focused soft and oral communication skills but also fill the gap in student's expectations and appreciation of the importance of these skills to their careers through relevant learning activities and assessment (Associates, 2015; Cameron & Dickfos, 2014; Dixon & Beverly, 2015). Emanuel (2016) made a convincing case for the necessity of communication courses in higher education curricula. Echoing numerous others, he stressed the importance of communication soft skills as teachable life skills and student learning outcomes essential to personal, academic, and professional success. The Job Outlook 2016 survey confirmed earlier verbal communication and teamwork ranking as the skills employers see as most needed in college graduates. The Association of American Colleges and Universities further explain that oral communication is an essential learning outcome.

B. Methodology

Implementation strategies were developed and refined with continuous input from scholarly research and institutional data collected to identify and define the topic. Student learning outcomes and strategies and specific activities relating to these outcomes were established. The implementation strategies involved broad-based support of constituents, including faculty, students, university resources, and community partners.

Embedding assignments and activities in multiple course curricula

A review of the literature found successful embedding of student presentations in multiple curricula, such as a final project in English (Sabalis, 2017) and health care (Fowler & Jones, 2015), and in the engineering curriculum (Berjano, Sales-Nebot & Lozano-Nieto, 2013). Bagwell (2017) listed several course activities and assignments useful in the oral communication course in business. Likewise, Brink and Costigan (2015) suggested business programs develop soft skills assessment and teaching practices needed for success in the workplace. Suggestions included leaderless group discussions, informal debates, interpersonal communication, discussions, conversations, and role-playing in the academic setting. Jackson (2014) analyzed recent business school graduates' online survey results and identified the learning activities they engaged in at the university to develop their oral communication skills. Activities measured varied in impact and included individual and group presentations, small group projects, simulations and role-plays, virtual online meeting tools, and case studies or discussion groups. Class debates and discussion and business competitions were minimally selected. She concludes that the number of pedagogical approaches matters less than the quality and effectiveness of a smaller number of critical activities.

Curriculum design changes can employ course portfolios, mapping strategies, embedding skill outcomes into core curricula either stand-alone or within a disciplinary context. These practices have contributed to student engagement in multiple studies. Shadinger (2016) noted the direct correlation between student engagement in the classroom and grades. A Toastmasters-inspired approach improved student participation. AlKandari (2012) surveyed students on their perceptions of the methods used by faculty members to enhance their participation in classroom activities. One of the fifteen variables measured, "encourages students to give presentations," had a mean response of 3.97 out of a 5-point scale and was the third-highest ranked by students. The two higher-ranked findings were "uses discussion methods in teaching" (m=4.35) and "encourages discussion by formulating groups (m=3.90). The author suggested that requiring students to give class presentations in front of their peers enhanced learning, research skills, and social relationships and should be encouraged. Kennedy (2007) suggested in-class debates as an instructional strategy that promotes active engagement.

Embedding assignments and activities related to soft skills have been found beneficial to both students and instructors. Sleigh (2013) reported on the results of an undergraduate biopsychology course that embedded a brief oral presentation that resulted in a more favorable attitude towards oral presentations and opportunities for students, including evaluating the quality of scientific resources, getting to know their classmates, and practicing respecting listening behaviors. The instructor benefited because student presentations kept the course current and relatable. The instructor benefited because student presentations kept the course current and relatable. Berjano, Sales-Nebot, and Lozano-Nieto (2013) found that incorporating public speaking approach in coursework facilitated teamwork and improved synthesizing capacity, assertiveness, listening skills, and positive critical thinking in students. For instructors, oral presentations made the course more dynamic and encouraged student participation. Students played an active role in the presentations, acting in multiple roles to prepare and deliver presentations to their group, provided critical feedback, and asked their peers questions.

Video and computer assisted learning strategies

Sterling et al. (2016), noting video's long history in teaching in multiple disciplines, found that video documentation enhanced student engagement in learning. They suggested that a combination of reviewing individual video presentations, followed by self-reflection, and feedback from professors provided the components which led to student success. They stated, "Practice, including watching effective communication as well as designing and implementing a presentation, provides students with a baseline for comparison and improvement and likely promotes increased self-efficacy," page 94.

Cameron and Dickfos (2014) evaluated the teaching and assessment of oral communication through authentic learning activities, defined as those practiced in a professional context, such as networking, speed interviewing, and presenting at an industry conference. They contend that these activities' success can influence a student's self-efficacy or confidence, resulting in college retention and willingness to enroll in courses that require oral presentations. In this study, an "elevator pitch" required students to deliver a speech in and timed to an elevator ride. The speech was videotaped and evaluated with a rubric measuring the introduction, content, organization, voice, pace, audience engagement, and conclusion by an instructor, peers, and the student. The student also reflected on their performance, responded to questions on their confidence in their abilities, the relevance of oral communication skills in relation to their careers, and participated in post-intervention interviews. Randomized tutorial spot checks were conducted, and online resources were provided.

Qualitative analysis revealed that video-recorded talks were crucial in the positive results in student confidence and self-efficacy. On page 146, the author's state: "the opportunity for students to review the presentation during and after the assessment facilitated greater self-awareness of elements of their oral communication skill that required improvement, most notably pace, voice, audience engagement, and the conclusion. During the follow-up interviews, students frequently mentioned body language and the use of "umms" and "aahs." They identified particular habits that detracted from the quality of their presentations. Unexpectedly, the results did not support their perception of the relevance of oral communication skills to their future work or career without pointed explanation by faculty.

Dixon and Beverly (2015) suggested various strategies for improving communication competence, including a three-part activity where students video recorded a story in class recounting to their peers, reflecting on their speech, and then identifying a single bad habit needing improvement (for example, filler words). The authors suggested hands-on experiences using PowerPoint presentations, attending seminars, and opportunities to practice oral communication in authentic settings.

Knight, Johnson, and Stewart (2016) found that students' self-reported reduction in anxiety was related to practice. The most effective practice was practicing out loud in front of a mirror. Video recorded sessions were found less useful, but the limitations of this study were attributed to the small sample (n=2), leading the authors to suggest additional research into the use of videotaping with larger sample populations. The authors hypothesize that recording speeches can have some of the same benefits on confidence and skill development as practicing in front of a mirror, especially when augmented with tutoring and self-reflection.

Assessment Strategies

Other studies have also stressed the importance of rubrics and specifically designed them at the college level to target standards and measure areas of needed program improvements (Jackson, 2014) and advocated for their use (Biemans & Mulder, 2015; van Ginkel et al., 2017). Tsang (2018) stated, "It is irrefutable that facilitating learners' development of oral presentation skills is a pressing concern and the crux of the matter lies in how to effectively bring about such enhancement in classrooms." His study promoted self-regulated learning evaluation through a detailed inventory of oral communication skills and awareness through reflection and feedback. Positive results were confirmed using pre and post-self-evaluation, interviews, and observation. He suggested that these methods can be adapted in settings outside of the classroom as well.

Alkandari (2012) also stressed the importance of grading oral communication activities in college classrooms. In Sterling et al. (2016), students completed pre-and post-course surveys of student confidence and content knowledge. Faculty scored student performance using a rubric evaluating components of effective oral presentations. The oral communication rubric developed for this study included dimensions related to organization, content, comprehension, delivery, visual aids, and time. Student self-assessment was measured pre-and post-teaching on a 5-point Likert scale consisting of three

questions rating students' self-confidence of their oral communication skills. Students improved their performance between 24% and 40% within a single semester. In this study, students reviewed a video of their presentation at home when scoring their performance. Students also wrote reflections on their experience. The research study found a gain in students' self-confidence and communication skills. The gains that occurred indicated that practicing oral communication coupled with reflection on the experience bolstered student learning and equipped them with needed skills to prepare them for future careers. It is important to note that Sterling et al. (2016) found a significant difference in outcomes based on the intensity of teaching intervention. However, better results for those students whose instructors explained the importance of oral communication were found. In addition, an advanced rubric would better measure student's skills.

In the Cameron and Dickfos (2014) study, an explanatory mixed method design examined oral communication in a business degree program. The researchers' self-designed rubric measured student perception of the organization and student confidence in their oral communication skills (self-efficacy). Thirdly, to measure student's perception of the relevance of oral communication, the rubric asked the student to rate "How relevant do you consider oral communication skills" would be to your future work or career.

Faculty development

Studies stressed that developing the faculty's competence in pedagogical practices and assessment are essential to embed communication soft skills in discipline-specific course curricula (Johnson, Veitch, and Dewiyanti, 2015; Knight, Johnson, and Stewart, 2016). Obstacles for implementation included differences in teaching, funding and resources, power relations, and institutional priorities. Solutions included professional development workshops, a community site providing specific online resources for teaching and assessment, and collaborative practices such as rubrics, diagnostic assessments, signature assignments, and online resources for students. Mowbray and Perry (2015) found that providing public speaking training to instructors improved their perception of their lecturing ability and improved students' learning in their courses. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the students achieved a C or higher grade than the last term in the same courses, with the same lecturers and the same class duration. These findings demonstrated that professional development for university educators could improve lecturing skills and student learning outcomes. This training can be especially beneficial to universities like SUNO who employ many instructors from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Hebbani & Hendrix, 2014).

While some existing programs and courses require oral communication and promote career focused readiness, the university does not require all undergraduate degree programs to include an oral communication component. Previously, SUNO did not track or assess oral communication efforts across all disciplines. The QEP Task Force administered a survey to all full-time faculty members who taught undergraduate courses in fall 2019 (Appendix H). The 56 respondents represented multiple campus departments (Arts & Humanities, Business & Public Administration, Computer Information Systems, Education & Human Development, Forensic Science, Health Information Management Systems, Natural Sciences, Social Work, and Social Sciences). The results provided baseline data of the number of courses faculty included oral communication as a Student Learning Objective (44.74%); required formal oral presentations (42.86%); evaluated oral presentations using a rubric (28.7%) and included informal oral communication opportunities (75.68%). Their examples of informal oral communication included class discussion, group projects, and demonstrating lab processes. Although SUNO students have ample informal opportunities to practice oral communication skills in the classroom, Sterling et al. (2016) found a significant difference in outcomes for those students whose instructors explained the importance of oral communication to the student's future career and used a rubric to measure skills. Knight, Johnson, and Stewart's (2016) literature review of effective communication instruction and its impact on student success found a lack of training and foundational knowledge in communication theory and practice among non-communication faculty. They cited a common theme in the literature that student learning outcomes can provide evidence of student competence and provided the framework for the

implementation of strategies in the classroom. They proposed that unless it is required and built into the course design, students will not necessarily practice helpful strategies, even if they appreciate their value in improving oral communication skills.

Ninety-eight (98%) percent of faculty surveyed believed oral communication soft skills were important to a student's career success after graduation, and 48% were interested in more information or training to incorporate oral communication soft skills in their courses. The QEP seeks to enhance the intensity of teaching soft skills such as oral communication by increasing the number of faculty including soft skills as student learning objectives (requiring formal oral presentations and other career readiness assignments, and using a rubric to evaluate those soft skills.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO #1: Students will acquire effective soft skills (resume writing, interview skills and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.

Several studies using instructor-rated rubrics and student self-reflection surveys confirmed that students could be taught to demonstrate effective oral communication skills such as organization, content, and delivery (Fowler & Jones, 2015; Sabalis, 2017). Rubrics ranking categories on a Likert scale were a standard assessment tool. Results often indicated an increase in perceived self-effectiveness in peer and/or evaluator assessment of overall presentation skills. Alwi and Sidhu (2013) compared self-perceived and instructor's assessment of oral presentation skills in an undergraduate oral communication course. A 5-point Likert scale measured organization, content, delivery, and language. They found overall, students were confident of their oral presentation skills, and their perceptions of their competence exceeded that of the instructor's evaluated performance. Specifically, students rated themselves as more capable than instructor ratings in delivery and language skills and underestimated their organizational skills competence. There was no significant difference in the scores on content. The authors contend that these discrepancies are essential to understanding students learning needs in designing courses.

Dunbar, Brooks, and Kubicka-Miller (2006) developed a rubric to evaluate videotaped student performances in a general education communication course. The findings were that students performed higher on the following competencies: choosing a topic, communicating the purpose and materials, and organization; but, were significantly below the mid-point on the scale on providing supporting materials, using appropriate language, employing vocal variety, using proper pronunciation, articulation and grammar, and employing nonverbal behaviors that support the verbal message. These results underscored the need for rigorous evaluation by academic departments aided by using reliable and valid rubrics to assess education course offerings.

Dixon and Beverly (2015) found that universities should better prepare students for their careers by educating them on the components of a quality presentation; such as knowing their audience (size, demographic information, knowledge level), logistics, available technology, message, or goal of the presentation (content), outline, and delivery (attire, body language, tone, volume, and tempo). In their opinion, students should be exposed to oral presentations early in their collegiate careers rather than as a late capstone experience to have the time to develop communication skills and reduce fears common to students when delivering speeches.

SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

Several studies in multiple disciplines showed that students could learn to confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology. SUNO has three colleges and one (1) school (College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Administration, College of Education and Human Development, and the School of Social Work), emphasizing the importance of oral communication in its motto and standards and teaching communication courses specific to their major graded by a rubric.

Confidence

A review of relevant research found that although students tend to rate their oral communication skills highly, there is often a disconnect found between student self-perception and teacher ratings as well as industry perceptions, partly attributable to fear or anxiety (Jackson, 2014). Knight, Johnson, and Stewart (2016) cited research that shows that a significant percent, ranging from 61% to 70%, of all people experience anxiety over public speaking. Through their literature review of communication apprehension, the authors sought to identify strategies that develop oral communication skills deemed critical for personal, academic, and professional success by investigating the correlation between tutoring and perceived confidence, and actual improvement in public speaking experiences.

Data were collected on student confidence using a self-reporting standardized measure. Their study found significant differences in four areas, notably in comparison to this study, with content and language (grammar, vocabulary, and usage) but decreased proficiency in nonverbal skills (eye contact, posture, gestures, movement, facial expression). Overall, speech tutoring decreased anxiety. Their study confirmed that the opportunity to practice communication skills improves oral communication skills and overall academic achievement and, as a result, reduces the anxiety associated with giving public speeches. Oliver et al. (2017) suggested that the oral communication skills needed as a social work professional are the same skills necessary for social work students in the classrooms, which is to articulate their values and perspectives when advocating for their clients' needs and rights. In their study, practicum and field-based settings modeled difficult conversations, included reflection, and other learning activities to develop confidence and competence. The authors also noted a reduction in anxiety and fear in speaking up because of these practices.

Discipline-specific terminology

Dannels and Housley Gaffney (2009) provided background on Communication Across the Curriculum (CXC), which they define as "an umbrella term for a variety of activities incorporating communication skills into a particular course, creating speaking lab, facilitating faculty development activities for incorporating communication into courses, and implementing an established program focused on taking communication skills across the entire curriculum" (pp. 125-126). Their analysis of CXC scholarly literature showed a developmental transformation from "establishment and justification (1983-1995)" to "reinvention and empiricism (2001-present)" that now supports discipline-specific communication theoretical framework and assessment. Johnson, Veitch and Dewiyanti (2015) articulated the need for communication skills to be taught "within the meaningful context of discipline-based learning to accommodate particular disciplinary priorities and student needs", defined as contextualization within disciplines. Dunbar, Brooks, and Kubicka-Miller (2006) suggested that each field of study may demand oral communication competencies requiring the development of discipline-specific rubrics for evaluation.

Research in business, education, and social work provided examples of oral communication's importance. Brink and Costigan (2015) confirmed the overall alignment of the workplace and AACSB-accredited business programs. Their research indicated that workplace and AACSB-accredited business programs prioritize oral communication skills, evidenced by the fact that 76% of the business programs had an oral presentation learning goal. Bagwell (2017) tested an interactional course model requiring two-way participant interaction and feedback. External evaluators assessed student presentations using a rubric measuring content, voice quality and pace, mannerism, body language, professionalism and appearance, rapport with the audience and media use. Data indicated that the course successfully taught oral communication and listening skills to MBA students, and student experiences were positive. Mutlu (2018) investigated interrater consistency between twenty-one freshman student teachers' self-assessment and teacher assessment of public speaking performance in an Oral Communication Skills Course. Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Findings revealed a significant difference between the ratings at the end of the five weeks. In Boath et al. (2017), the authors emphasized the importance of effective communication skills and helping social work students develop confidence in their communication skills at the beginning of their university training.

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

The literature review confirmed that formal and informal public speaking opportunities are also beneficial for developing and practicing oral communication and other career related soft skills. Several studies demonstrated the effectiveness of formal and informal opportunities, including electronic media, for students to practice oral communication skills through the activities proposed in SUNO's Quality Enhancement Plan. SUNO's QEP seeks to teach these essential skills and dispositions by meeting student learning objectives by focusing on formal and informal learning and practice opportunities.

The plan envisions a deliberate, carefully crafted integration of oral communication into the student's curricular and co-curricular experiences to facilitate a process of professional and career preparation. Campus-sponsored events promoting either oral communication or career development were documented for two academic years (2018-2019 and 2019-2020) to identify opportunities for partnership, expansion, or gaps that could provide students with informal and formal practical oral communication skills.

Outside the classroom:

Thurneck (2011) is one of many researchers who have advocated incorporating student presentations inside and outside the classroom. Lefebvre, Lefebvre, and Allen (2018) suggested that audience responses accounted for students' greatest fears of public speaking in an introductory communication course which shows the limitation of relying on this typical pedagogical higher education course requirement. Instead, they promoted opportunities outside of the course to practice public speaking to a more varied audience to build confidence and alleviate fears. Sindelar (2016) promoted experiential (co-curricular or service-learning) activities into college-level general education public speaking courses. Jackson (2014) found that increased time in a workplace environment helps students realize the importance of oral communication skills and tempers their self-perceptions of confidence. As a result, she encouraged undergraduates to gain both life and work experiences during their degree studies, which will, in turn, reflect on skill portfolios and resumes more favorable to employers.

Skill and tutoring labs

In their study of anxiety in social work students when communicating face to face and by telephone in direct practice preparation, Boath et al. (2017) provided students with an opportunity to practice their communication skills in a skills lab. Forty-five (45) social work students received a 15-minute lecture and then used a lab technique to reduce their anxiety and enhance public speaking. The qualitative and quantitative analysis found an anxiety reduction. Skill labs in a master's in nursing curriculum (Fowler & Jones, 2015) and training residents in medical school (Hill, Jimenez, & Cohn, 2018) also reported positive results.

Knight, Johnson, and Stewart (2016) offered tutoring as a strategy to improve student oral communication. The tutors were trained on public speaking pedagogy and best practices, using technology and course requirements. Their role was to serve as the audience for students practicing public speeches and provide feedback for improvement. Training consisted of three 90-minute sessions. They reported that implementing strategies to reduce anxiety and develop communication skills through speech tutoring in a communication lab using peer tutors provided benefits to both student and instructor in a context outside of the classroom.

Communication labs have become the focus of recent research and guidance on best practices in higher education to impact student learning outcomes and retention. Activities common to communication labs include one-on-one tutoring, group consultations, and interactive workshops. Communication labs may also house multimedia production centers that allow students to digitally record their practice sessions for review, evaluation, and feedback.

VI. Program Design

SUNO's QEP, *SUNO Speaks communicating our value to the marketplace*, is a five-year plan that will engage students in intentional curricular and co-curricular career exploration and planning activities. The purpose is to focus on the broad-based development of soft skills (resume writing, professional attire, interview skills and effective written and oral communication skills) with the intent to develop career goals that leads to employment upon graduation. The QEP includes a comprehensive review of the literature related to career exploration and planning themes. Promising practices were identified that could be implemented in order to accomplish the QEP program goal(s) to help students achieve the learning outcomes.

Program Outcomes:

1. Students will possess skills to effectively deliver formal and informal presentations.
2. Students will develop soft skills (resume writing, interviewing and dress for success) to enhance career readiness.
3. Students will develop knowledge, skills, character & fitness, and judgement around communication.
4. Students will be able to communicate orally and in writing.

The Southern University at New Orleans' Office of Career Placement will be the hub for implementation of this QEP by providing students and alumni with soft skills training (resume writing, professional attire, interview skills and effective written and oral communication skills), comprehensive services and programs to help them navigate career exploration, experiential learning, internships/externships, and job development/coaching/placement. The Office of Career Placement is committed to providing practical, future-focused educational offerings inclusive of a wide range of learning opportunities, career development resources and real-world experiences to help students and alumni develop their skills and meaningful connections to work, succeed and contribute to the global community. The Office of Career Placement will be aligned with the goals and student learning outcomes of the QEP and will focus on the following 6 strategies:

- **Integrating Career into the Student Experience for Undergraduate Engagement**
Our approach to undergraduate engagement will continue to revolve around designing and implementing a customized student experience. We will need to take into account student developmental phases as well as students' needs and interests. As part of the internal assessment and communications, we must provide career development content in a way that is engaging and specific to students' preferred communication and learning styles.
- **Graduate Student and Alumni Engagement**
The Office of Career Placement will become a hub for all graduate students served by providing continuity of service, understanding their unique needs, coaching them to become their own career development advocates and access to timely relevant career resources. In addition, a goal to enhance alumni connections to leverage their experience within the SUNO community in ways that assist current students (both undergraduate and graduate) in their professional development. Finally, we would like to provide industry specific resources to empower alumni seeking career advancement.
- **Strengthening Relationships with Stakeholders**
While establishing a culture where employer engagement is a central aspect of all staff roles and expectations, we must strengthen our relationships with external stakeholders by building open communication channels that create positive and effective engagement strategies. Through the

efforts of a diverse, skilled, and industry-informed team, employers will be connected to a well-prepared pool of SUNO talent to support successful outcomes via partnerships and direct service.

- **Defining and Building Employability Skills**

A career is more than just a job; it is a lifelong decision-making progression that incorporates one's talents, strengths and purpose. A career-ready person is able to identify, articulate and create connections between education and employment. By providing students with an understanding of what career readiness means and resources to become career-ready, we are empowering students to successfully secure employment that is meaningful and relevant to them.

- **Provide and Expand Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students**

The Center will seek Internships and the Experiential Learning practicum partnerships, which promotes development of student professional, personal and academic skills in an applied learning environment.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

Cultivate a culture of assessment and program evaluation that is data-driven, strategic and purposeful and maintains the integrity of the SUNO brand.

The first five areas of focus pertain to key stakeholders to ensure our continued growth and success, and the final area relates to broader operational strategies that apply across these stakeholders to maximize our collective impact.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO #1: Students will acquire practical soft skills (resume writing, interview skills, and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.

SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

Support Plan

To promote student success and development of communication and soft skills for career readiness, the following serves as support mechanisms for the QEP:

Activities in the Office of Career Placement

Students will be introduced to the following resources through the Office of Career Placement:

1. Development of a Four-Year Career Plan (Appendix H) that is inclusive of mock interviews, resume writing, character and fitness, and the development of employment profiles on LinkedIn and other social media platforms. In addition, students will attend business professional attire workshops, complete career assessments to identify interests, work values, and personality preferences that are critical factors in the career decision process. Students will also explore graduate or professional school opportunities.
2. Students will also gain knowledge of the usage of web-based platforms such as: BigInterview, HandShake and Google Digital Skills to gain entrée to career opportunities and to enhance one's career readiness.
3. Students will also participate in workshops and seminars that focus on resume writing, interviewing skills, professional attire for the world of work, time and money management seminars, study skills workshops, life skills seminars, written and oral communication activities, and exploration of college academic majors activities.

4. Students will engage within their discipline-specific courses to gain entrée to internships and job shadowing experiences.
5. The Office of Career Placement will host seminars, workshops and career fairs that will allow students to network with industry professionals.

These opportunities will be ongoing beginning with first year to graduation. Students will be required to visit the Office of Career Placement at least three times within a semester and must complete at least four modules in BigInterview and attend at least two workshops, seminars or job fairs each year.

In order to meet graduation requirements, the Office of Career Placement must certify that the student has completed soft skills (resume writing, professional attire, interview skills and effective written and oral communication skills) enhancement activities as part of the Graduation Exit Interview process.

Academic/Classroom-based learning

Within the second year of their collegiate studies, students will take the following course to enhance their effective oral and written communication skills:

COMM210- This course is a study and application of the basic principles of effective extemporaneous speaking, methods of informing, interesting and motivating an audience with emphasis upon selection, organization, and development of ideas. Students deliver, listen to and criticize expository and persuasive speeches.

In addition, there are a host of courses offered at the university that highlight soft skills and some are delineated in the faculty involvement in implementation section.

In the Junior and Senior years, instructors in capstone classes will assign various assignments requiring presentations and oral speeches and continue to emphasize interviewing, resume, and professional attire skills. Combined with the Office of Career Placement activities, students will have multiple opportunities to master soft skills and oral and written communication skills.

VII. Implementation strategies

Implementation strategies were developed and refined with continuous input from scholarly research and institutional data collected to identify and define the topic, student learning outcomes, and strategies and specific activities relating to these outcomes to reach the QEP goal of enhancing oral communication skills for career success. The implementation strategies involved broad-based support of the University stakeholders, including faculty, students, staff, university resources, and community partners.

Goal: The Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to enhance the career success of its student body.

Student Learning Outcomes	Key Activity and Timeframe
<p>SLO #1: Students will acquire effective soft skills (resume writing, interview skills and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.</p>	<p>Development of 4-Year Career Plan:</p> <p>Often students enter college not knowing what they want to pursue as a career when they graduate from Southern University at New Orleans. The Career Placement Center will help the student through self-discovery, identifying their skills and interests, exploring different career paths, and helping them develop a plan moving into the future. Students will be required to work with the Career Placement Center to create specific steps for executing their career plan. No matter what, the key to having a plan upon graduation is to begin preparing as early as possible. Students will not have to identify a specific career path during the first year or by senior year. However, students should work with the Career Placement Center to identify interests, build skills, make connections, explore opportunities, and develop the professionalism they will need to succeed in any career path.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beginning in the first year, students will prepare a 4-year career plan that helps identify interests, build skills, make connections, explore career choices, and develop the professionalism they will need to succeed in class and in any career path they choose. 2. Students will receive log-in credentials for BigInterview to complete a series of modules that introduce them to varied soft skills and career readiness opportunities and also Handshake to learn about internship as well as employment opportunities. <p>For example, modules within BigInterview consists of:</p> <p>Part 1 Big Interview – Interview Basics – The first module will give students the information needed on the interview basics such as types of interviews, what to wear, how to stay calm, and more. (10 video lessons)</p> <p>Part 2 Big Interview – Acing Common Interview Questions - 11 video lessons on how to ace an interview.</p> <p>Part 3 Big Interview – Behavioral Interview questions – 7 video lessons on the most common behavioral questions including modules on teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution.</p> <p>Part 4 Big Interview – Playbooks for common challenges (11 video lessons) of job-seekers, including being a new graduate, transitioning to the workforce from the military, and more.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. At the end of each module, students will print certificates of completion to be filed in their 4-Year Career Plan file. Students will attend various career seminars, workshops and job fairs hosted in-house and facilitated by industry partners, small businesses, non-profits and the local Job Career Centers to prepare resumes,

participate in mock interviews, learn dress for success tips, and seeking internships and employment.

After each workshop, seminar and job fair, students will be given a certificate of attendance to be filed in their 4-Year Career Plan file.

These activities will be ongoing during the Fall and Spring semesters until graduation. Students must visit the Office of Career Placement at least 3 times per semester; complete 4 modules/per semester from BigInterview, and participate in at least 2 career development workshops or seminars and 2 job fairs.

SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

Fundamentals of Public Speaking (COMM210):

- I. At the beginning of the semester, students will complete a QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation of their oral presentation skills, rating strengths, and weaknesses; as well as rating their satisfaction with their choice in major, availability of university-wide resources, and if the oral communication assignment and campus-wide oral and career resources better prepare them for their future careers (pre-assessment).
- II. Students will then be instructed on effective oral communication skills (organization, content, and delivery) by the course instructor during the semester.
- III. Mid-semester, students will be assigned an Informative Career Speech: a 4-5-minute extemporaneous presentation on a topic of their career choice that will include an introduction, body, and conclusion, and specifically address the following questions: (1) Why did you choose your major? (2) What career do you plan to pursue after graduation and (3) Here we are asking you to consider your prospective career choice and any challenges to succeeding in that industry/discipline/field. What are those challenges, and how can you prepare to turn those challenges into opportunities? The course instructor will evaluate the student's performance on their informative speech in-class or on video recording for online students using the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric (direct assessment). Students will reflect on their presentation and identify goals for improvement of performance.
- IV. At the end of the semester, students will complete a QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation of their oral presentation skills, rating their strengths and weaknesses; as well as rating their satisfaction with their choice in major, availability of university-wide resources, and if the oral communication assignment and career resources better prepare them for their future careers (post-assessment).

These activities will occur during the Fall and Spring semester annually.

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

The QEP Taskforce has identified several opportunities to provide students practice of oral communication skills through increased formal and informal opportunities, These strategies are detailed below and include:

- I. Working with each degree-granting program, to organize a yearly departmental Apprenticeship/Internship week where students can apply professional (discipline-specific) oral communication skills in an authentic setting.
- II. Faculty members from various disciplines will promote oral communication essential for career success through campus-based trainings and enhanced opportunities for public speaking presentations within their selected courses, e.g. Educational Studies Capstone Course.
- III. Each semester mock interviews, resume writing workshops as well as guest lecturers, experts in the field, and Human Resources professionals will address the students regarding the importance of communication skills, resume writing, interviewing and dressing professional throughout the internship and career exploration process.
- IV. Students participating in internships will be evaluated on communication skills, written and oral and their attire at mid-point and at the completion of their experience.

These activities will at least occur once during the Fall and Spring semester yearly.

Faculty involvement in implementation:

While some existing programs and courses require oral communication, the university does not require all undergraduate degree programs to include an oral communication component. Previously, SUNO did not track or assess oral communication efforts across all disciplines. The QEP Task Force administered a survey to all full-time faculty members who taught undergraduate courses in Fall 2019 (Appendix I). The 56 respondents represented multiple campus departments (Arts & Humanities, Business & Public Administration, Computer Information Systems, Education & Human Development, Forensic Science, Health Information Management Systems, Natural Sciences, Social Work, and Social Sciences). The results provided baseline data of the number of courses faculty included oral communication as a Student Learning Objective (44.74%); required formal oral presentations (42.86%); evaluated oral presentations using a rubric (28.7%) and included informal oral communication opportunities (75.68%). Their examples of informal oral communication included class discussion, group projects, and demonstrating lab processes So, although SUNO students have ample informal opportunities to practice oral communication skills in the classroom, Sterling et al. (2016) found a significant difference in outcome for those students whose instructors explained the importance of oral communication to the student's future career and used a rubric to measure skills. Knight, Johnson and Stewart (2016) literature review of effective communication instruction and its impact on student success found a lack of training and foundational knowledge in communication theory and practice among non-communication faculty. They cited a common theme in the literature that student learning outcomes can provide evidence of student competence and provide the framework for implementation of strategies in the classroom. They proposed that unless it is required and built into the course design, students will not necessarily practice helpful strategies, even if appreciating their value in improving oral communication skill.

Ninety-eight percent of faculty surveyed believed oral communication skills were important to a student's career success after graduation, and 48% were interested in more information or training to incorporate oral communication in their courses. These results signaled faculty support of the QEP and will form the baseline as one measure of SUNO students participating in oral communication opportunities within their various disciplines in addition to their exposure in COMM210. The QEP seeks to enhance the intensity of teaching oral communication skills by increasing the number of faculty including oral communication as a student learning objective, requiring formal oral presentations and using a rubric to evaluate those skills. To ensure our initiative's success, the QEP provides for the professional development and necessary resources to allow faculty and staff to support our students in enhancing their oral communication skills and achieving their career goals, including through academic advising. The QEP will support two faculty members per year to attend conferences related to their pedagogy and learn best practices for implementing oral communication strategies and develop assessment rubrics. The QEP will also provide learning modules on its Learning Information Management System, currently Moodle, for interested faculty. Faculty will be encouraged through contests and other activities to participate in these learning opportunities and increase the number of courses offering communication development as a student learning outcome and measured by a rubric.

This section aims to address training and development implementation strategies that guide faculty and staff development efforts for integrating and assessing career-related activities into the curriculum. We have drafted six implementation strategies designed to address these vital needs cautiously.

Implementation Strategies:

<p>1. To identify faculty leaders teaching soft skills/career readiness and form a committee to help educate and implement this training in classes across the curriculum.</p>
<p>The QEP taskforce will engage in dialogue with deans, directors, and chairs to locate faculty members who are already embracing the focus outlines by our QEP. These faculty leaders will be selected to form a sub-committee (or advisory committee) to share promising practices, pedagogical philosophical considerations, and practical methods for inclusion of teaching soft skills and career readiness in courses across the curriculum. This committee will present a guide of promising practices that educates SUNO faculty members about soft skills/career readiness and how to embed the material into classes across the curriculum successfully</p>
<p>2. To have at least one course in every academic major that introduces soft skill training and career readiness.</p>
<p>The primary intention of this goal is to create a university-wide mandate that each academic major should include at least one course within their curriculum that specifically covers soft skills training and career readiness. This does not need to be the only focus of the course but should include one major lesson/graded assignment that can be evaluated and tracked. It should be noted that this may coordinate with SUNO's standing Curriculum Committee as specific programs may propose entirely new courses and/or curriculum changes to meet the proposed requirement. Additionally, programs that already include the soft skills/career readiness material will be encouraged to work closely with the QEP Taskforce to ensure that their course provides the most timely and relevant information and training to their students.</p>

3. To provide faculty-driven promising practices/state-of-the-art training to faculty once a semester on incorporating soft skills and career readiness in classes.

This goal seeks to provide a permanent opportunity with a captive audience of faculty to provide them with the tools to bring this material to life within their classes. While this will reinforce the value of the QEP and educate faculty on how to best present and insert the general content into their specific courses, it will also help to keep the SUNO community focused and united on a standard task. This training could be included as part of the university professional conference at the launch of the Fall and Spring semester.

4. To engage with external consultants to establish virtual and/or on-ground training sessions for SUNO faculty on soft skills/career readiness trends and design delivery methods to make the material relevant for classes across the curriculum.

While the internal collaboration is beneficial, it is also vital to employ the services of organizations outside of the local scope of SUNO. This goal will task the QEP Taskforce and SUNO administration to secure consultants who can provide training from an outside and a more global perspective. This training will take place once an academic year and will be open to all SUNO faculty.

5. To create a faculty workspace in Moodle only focused on the QEP and related skill development issues.

This goal calls for establishing a permanent Moodle group for Faculty training and communication regarding all issues connected to the QEP. The QEP Taskforce will work in conjunction with E-Learning and ITC to create a space in which concentrated information can be shared with faculty and provide a place for faculty members to quickly discuss their efforts in providing the training required to support a successful QEP.

6. Focus groups with community business leaders and hiring managers to periodically gain feedback about what folks look for during the interview and resume processes.

This goal seeks to conduct an annual focus group with business leaders and hiring managers to uncover real-life feedback on current needs, strengths, and deficiencies regarding soft skills and career readiness. This will help the QEP Taskforce maintain the most up-to-date information to communicate to SUNO faculty to tailor their courses to meet existing workplace necessities.

An essential part of the implementation of the QEP is faculty development. All faculty will have the opportunity to participate in a series of development activities to improve pedagogy and assessment soft skills and career readiness. When surveyed in Fall 2019, most faculty members indicated they are currently providing students with formal and informal opportunities to speak in class or are interested in doing so in the future. An additional inquiry in Summer 2021 provided evidence that soft skills and career readiness training are present across the curriculum. The QEP plans to offer training and guidance to faculty members and increase the number of courses that include soft skills, career readiness, and oral communication student learning outcomes, and that formally evaluate those skills using rubrics or other formal measures. Also, SUNO seeks to inspire and model strong communication and career readiness planning that will be a constant conversation and expectation during the student's academic experience.

The QEP will collaborate with other campus resources, such as the library, Student Support Services, and the Comprehensive Communication Lab, to build expected outcomes and activities to support the QEP.

The activities relating to these outcomes will include:

1. Modification of an oral presentation assignments in SCOM 201 to a specific topic on the student’s career choice (assessed using the GEP developed Oral Communication rubric) and their perceived confidence in delivering oral presentations (self-evaluated by a QEP developed survey);
2. Expansion of formal curricula changes and oral communication assessment and infusion of presentation and other opportunities for communication skill growth in courses other than SCOM 201; and
3. Expansion of campus-wide and web-based informal opportunities through activities such as Skill Building Workshops and Seminars, including resume writing assistance and basic interviewing skills

These QEP efforts, when fully implemented, will better prepare SUNO students for careers that will contribute to an equitable, diverse, and productive workforce locally, nationally, and internationally.

Examples of Courses Currently Utilizing Soft Skills Training

College	Department	Course	Skills Taught
Arts & Sciences	Interdisciplinary Studies	IDST 400N	Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills
Arts & Sciences	HIMS	HIMS 380	Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills
Arts & Sciences	HIMS	HIMS 360	Interviewing Skills
Arts & Sciences	HIMS	HIMS 320	Time Management

Arts & Sciences	HIMS	HIMS 420	Dress for Success, Professionalism in the Workplace
Arts & Sciences	HIMS	HIMS 495	Dress for Success, Professionalism in the Workplace
Arts & Sciences	Arts & Humanities	ENGL 260	Resume Writing
Arts & Sciences	Arts & Humanities	SCOM 101	Interviewing Skills
Arts & Sciences	Natural Sciences	Program Wide	Embedded in seminar courses, research internships, professional conference participation and presentations.

Staff university and community-based resources involvement in implementation: The QEP will develop and enhance partnerships with existing university and community-based resources, all of which have similar missions or supportive oral communication activities, to achieve the goal and student learning outcomes proposed.

- Research Day is held yearly to allow undergraduates and master level students to present their research to an audience outside of their courses and outside of their disciplines. Part of their program includes a peer evaluation of the research presentations. The Research Day committee shared their data from their April 2018 evaluation forms (N=20). The Evaluation Form consists of eleven questions. Of these, three questions related to oral communication components being investigated by the QEP Task Force were isolated for analysis. The data show that while the reviews were generally positive, QEP strategies could help presenters better prepare and deliver their speeches.

Questions		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total
Content	The presenter was knowledgeable on the topic	0%	0%	9.9%	37.2%	52.9%	100%
Organization	The material was presented in an organized manner	0%	1.7%	4.1%	28.1%	66.1%	100%
Delivery	The presenter was an effective communicator	0%	0%	5.8%	32.2%	62%	100%

- The Grad Fair is a semi-annual graduation planning event that includes information on services provided to SUNO students and graduates who are ready to get a job and start their career or continue their education. The QEP will develop strategies to embed in the Grad Fair to advance its student learning outcomes.
- The Center for Comprehensive Communication (CCC) is a holistic, comprehensive support system that promotes academic excellence through a core of student learning services that prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed for excelling in school and in their chosen careers. The CCC is staffed by academic tutors and offers students the use of the computer lab. The QEP will seek to expand the CCC Lab to include oral communication support with equipment and space for students to practice, record, review, and improve their oral communication skills.
- The Leonard S. Washington Memorial Library offers on site services and access to electronic resources for the curricular, research, reference, recreational, and distance learning needs and interests of students, faculty, and staff of [Southern University at New Orleans](https://www.suno.edu) and the local and wider communities. The link at <https://www.suno.edu/page/additional-resources> provides students with information they need to make informed decisions about how their aptitudes and values align with specific career paths. Students will be able to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and experiences in relation to future career goals through participation in a computer assisted career guidance system. Working with the Library Director, the QEP will request expanded library resources as well as increased visibility of library resources that inform career choices to achieve success through oral communication strategies.
- The Office of Career Placement will assist students with preparing the 4-Year Career plan which serves as a road map to career development. The Center also provides help with career decisions through individual counseling sessions and job referrals to SUNO students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In addition, the office sponsors, maintains, and disseminates information on activities, programs, and workshops for people seeking career advancement opportunities, including workshops on interviewing, resume writing, and “dressing for success.” The Office of Career Placement routinely sponsors Job and Career Fairs. The QEP will collaborate to schedule additional fairs so students can use these opportunities to learn more about future careers and discuss employment using career-appropriate communication skills that articulate their knowledge, experiences, skills and qualifications to diverse audiences outside of the university.
- The Student Government Association (SGA) has participated in QEP planning activities as well as sponsored activities such as Town Hall Meetings, Professional Do’s and Don’ts, Political Science



Who would have ever thought years later that I would become the Student Government Association (SGA) Vice President and then SGA President? But I tell you the most frightening thought for me in this position was would I be able to talk in front of people (small or large settings) without choking up. One thing I've learned in school is that you must practice, practice, practice to develop skills in areas that you struggle in, so I made sure I took additional classes like the Public Speaking and Small Group Communication courses because I knew I was going to have to make a few speeches. The best advice he shared with me was, “Jamaal, just tell a story, you don't have to worry about whether or not you're talking in the vernacular that shows that you are this prolific grandiloquent orator that can spew out fancy words, just write down a brief introduction, transitional words and phrases, beginning of a story or two and a conclusion”. If was because of that advice, I was able to find a voice inside that felt comfortable to talk plain and hopefully connect with the listeners. Jamaal Williams, SGA President, in his own words.

Debate/Election Forum, and public speaking contests on a specific theme or quotation. The SGA has also sponsored Town Hall Meetings in departments and colleges and school across the university. The QEP will continue to rely on their support in initiatives such as reviving the Communication Club with open membership to all SUNO students.



- Student Support Services (TRiO) already sponsors multiple events such as the Guest Speaker Series, Discussion Panel, Night with the Pelicans, and College Career Fair/Resume Sessions. The TRiO Director met with the QEP Task Force at its monthly meeting on September 13, 2018, and as a result, included the following goals in the document submitted and approved by the Department of Education for the 2020-2025 grant years. It states. “Through various workshops, activities, one on one sessions and group sessions the SSS Academic Coaches, Study Skills Coordinator and Director assist students in setting personal goals, exploring career options, problem solving, workshops on developing oral and written communication skills (SUNO QEP), monitoring academic progress, managing calendars on their smart phones, and securing internships and employment opportunities. The Student Support Services fully supports SUNO’s QEP and has committed to assisting students in improving their oral and written communication skills. All students, who are SSS participants, can receive feedback on their oral presentations prior to the student’s official class presentation. Also, all SSS participants have the opportunity of a mock interview in order to improve their interviewing skills.”
- Periodically, external or community-based activities have been held on SUNO’s campus, including an FBI 2019 Honors Internship Program & Collegiate Hiring Initiative; #Reason I Speak: Suicide Prevention Discussion Panel sponsored by the Student Development Center with guest speaker Shenetha Ramsey (360 Resource Project); Franklin Avenue’s (Church) SUNO Fall Semester Conversations Series at SUNO; NEX Navy Exchange Open Interview Day, and a Watoto Festival Free Family Event with story time and other activities. The QEP will seek to develop outside partnerships with external or community-based businesses, agencies, or non-profits to expose our students to diverse audiences and their demands and expectations, and the services offered that assist with their academic and career advancement.

The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center (LaFHAC) is pleased to support SUNO's efforts to enhance the oral communication of its students. In 2018, I gave a presentation on Fair Housing to a class and found the students to be wonderful - they were incredibly engaged, knowledgeable, and asked very insightful questions. Since that time, I have invited SUNO students to attend LaFHAC's annual fair housing conferences and have worked with SUNO's administration to ensure that students are aware of their fair housing rights.



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VIII. Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes	Assessment
<p>SLO #1: Students will acquire effective soft skills (resume writing, interview skills and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The percentage of students employed six months after graduation will increase from 65% to 70% by Year 3 in increments of 3% per year minimum. (Graduate Data from Louisiana Board of Regents, employment and Wage Data from Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) records) 2. Mock interviews at the end of each academic year will gauge student’s readiness and Professional Attire will assess the student’s understanding of proper attire for the world of work. 3. Students resume writing abilities will be evaluated by the instructor, the Office of Career Placement, or Big Interview, Google Applied Digital Skills, and/or Handshake Platforms. In addition, the software also compares the users progress as well as growth overtime.
<p>SLO #2: Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.</p>	<p>Micro (Formative) Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oral presentation assignment scores (direct) <p>Macro (Summative) Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Self-reflection survey scores (indirect)
<p>SLO #3: Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employers will evaluate students who are participating in internships on written and oral communication skills and attire at mid-point and at the completion of the internship experience. 2. Throughout the curriculum, as noted above, assignments will be given through which they will be assessed for resume writing, interviewing skills and dress for success (assignment scores) <p>3. Micro (Formative) Assessment</p> <p>Satisfaction survey scores (indirect)</p> <p>4. Macro (Summative) Assessment</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of oral communication and career-based events and activities (direct) • Number of courses taught across disciplines including an oral communication student learning outcome and scored using a rubric (direct) • Number of faculty participating in professional development (direct) • Comparison to external data (direct) • Qualitative measure (focus group) of university-wide constituents (indirect)
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Rubric development

The direct assessment of student oral communication skills is collected through a rating scale designed by SUNO’s QEP Task Force. The rubric was constructed to measure demonstrated achievement of the student learning outcomes during speaking engagements or presentations by:

- Effectively presenting well-organized, content relevant information with accurate references and excellent transitions and grammar.
- Using no distracting fillers or pauses.
- Consistently engaging the audience
- Confidently articulating and communicating career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

The rubric was adapted and modified using multiple resources on fundamental methods of oral communication assessment. The QEP Task Force also considered internal oral communication rubrics used in the College of Business and Public Administration (The Oral Communication Rubric); College of Education and Human Development (EDUC 310 Educational Psychology Rubric); and the School of Social Work (SW 241- Communication Skills/Interview Course). The rubric underwent several revisions throughout its development, mainly because of testing its reliability (discussed below). The final QEP SCOM 201 Rubric (Appendix J) rating scale consists of nine items labeled as Organization; Content; Verbal Delivery Sub-Dimensions of Language and Terminology; Confidence Sub-Dimensions of Passion, Voice and Fillers; and Nonverbal Delivery Sub-Dimensions Dress and Eye contact/Notes. The items are scored in a 3-point Likert Scale as Does not meet Expectation (1 point), Meets Expectation (2 points), and Exceeds Expectation (3 points).

Validity was established by comparing the dimensions of SUNO’s QEP SCOM 201 Rubric to oral communication rubrics used in peer-reviewed studies or established by multiple reputable relevant organizations. For example, SUNO’s QEP SCOM 201 Rubric had comparable items as on the Association of American Colleges and Universities Oral Communication VALUE Rubric (www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/OralCommunication.pdf); Central Michigan University CBA BSBA Oral Communication Rubric (<https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/cba/students/Documents/Oral%20Communication%20Evaluation%20Form.pdf>); the University of California Mercer Rubric for Capstone Presentation (<https://assessment.ucmerced.edu/node/57>); Knight, Johnson, & Stewart (2016) Appendix A; and the Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Rubric (Morreale, 2007).

Inter-rater reliability was calculated through a series of steps: 1. A QEP Task Force member and Associate Professor of Communication (expert) identified five YouTube videos of college-level informative speeches on the topic of career choice. 2. He then coded the speeches using a draft of the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric under development by the QEP Task Force. 3. At a regularly scheduled monthly meeting on 10/26/2018, this QEP Task Force member explained his scoring of the oral communication components measured by the rubric. 4. The rest of the QEP Task Force then viewed and scored multiple videos using the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric. 4. Results were analyzed, and items with an inter-reliability rating of less than 70% were discussed and reviewed by video. The unresolved discrepancies in scoring resulted in revisions to the rubric. For example, an earlier draft of the rubric included a dimension for "confidence" that was omitted after a reliability quotient of >82 (percent of agreement among raters) could not be obtained after two separate training sessions. As noted in Knight, Johnson, & Stewart (2016), measuring student confidence levels is exceptionally challenging. Their finding of a reduction in student anxiety when communicating was based on pre-and post- self-assessment perceptions at the end of the semester using a survey developed by the researchers. Because of the lack of reliability and relying on precedence in previous studies, the QEP Task Force decided to measure confidence indirectly through the sub-dimension of passion, voice, and use of fillers evaluated on the COMM210 Rubric. (Confidence was measured directly by a self-reported measure on the QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation (Item #9 as discussed below). 5. The process was repeated until all dimensions had an inter-rater reliability quotient of $>.82$.

The QEP SCOM 201 Rubric was modified to create the QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation (Appendix J) to correlate with the course instructor's assessment and capture the students' self-assessment of their oral communication skill and confidence. Similarly, to Cameron and Dickfos (2014), the twelve items on Part 1. Questions about your speech reflect the items on the course instructor-rated QEP SCOM 201 Rubric. The four items on Part 2. Questions about your Career choice rates the students' perception of satisfaction with their choice in major, availability of university-wide resources, and if the oral communication assignment and career resources increased SUNO's overall ability to prepare them to succeed after graduation in their chosen career path. The scales were designed as a 3-point Likert scale: Disagree (1); Neutral (2); and Agree (3).

The QEP Task Force gained confidence in the design of the rubric based on the resultant high rate of inter-rater reliability and validity examined in comparing of the dimensions to other established and successful oral communication rubrics. A training manual was developed (Appendix L) to ensure continuous, reliable, and comparable data results for analysis on which to depend for program evaluation and improvement. As a quality control measure, 25% of the presentations will be recorded and reviewed by members of the QEP Task Force, which will later become the QEP Advisory Committee and one faculty member from the student degree major (content specialist) the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric. These practices are like those in studies using a team review composed of an expert in the discipline and one in communication (Fowler and Jones, 2015) and evaluating a percentage of speeches for review (Dunbar, Brooks, and Kubicka-Miller, 2006).

Micro (Formative) Assessments

Measure: Oral presentation assignment scores

During the semester, the students will complete a 4-5-minute Informative speech assignment. The Informative speech should specifically address the student's chosen major, career aspirations, and challenges the student needs to prepare for in the chosen field. The course instructor will use the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric to evaluate the Informative speeches (SLO#1 and SLO#2). 75% of students will indicate Meets (2) or Exceeds (3) Expectations through faculty evaluation using the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric. A similar benchmark was set in a successful graduate business course embedded with specific course materials, assignments, and activities to develop oral communication skills (Bagwell, 2017).

Measure: Satisfaction survey scores

Students will be exposed to opportunities to practice oral communication in a formal and informal setting, such as campus-based career days, where students can demonstrate career-appropriate communication skills that articulate their knowledge, experiences, skills, and qualifications to diverse audiences. At the end of such events, students will complete a survey evaluating their experience. Overall, at least 75% of the students will express satisfaction with the events and activities.

Macro (Summative) Assessments**Measure: Self-reflection survey scores**

Students in the COMM210 QEP section will evaluate changes in their oral communication knowledge, skills, and dispositions by engaging in reflective self-evaluation student surveys as a pre-test before instruction and delivery of the Informative speeches and post-test (at the end of the semester). Pre- and post-student QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation scores will be entered into [Microsoft®](#) Office Excel to calculate descriptive and quantitative results. Significance from the paired samples t-test is set at an alpha level of .05. The enrolled students' descriptive data capture demographic data (gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ages, and majors). It is expected that students will indicate statistically significant improvement on this measure through self-report on the QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation.

Measure: Number of oral communication and career-based events and activities

Students will be exposed to opportunities to practice oral communication in formal and informal settings, such as campus-based career days where students can demonstrate career-appropriate communication skills that articulate their knowledge, experiences, skills, and qualifications to diverse audiences. SUNO will document at least two (2) additional or enhancement of existing campus opportunities for students to practice oral communication skills both formally and informally per year of implementation.

Measure: Number of courses taught across disciplines including an oral communication student learning outcome and scored using a rubric

Students will be exposed to formal and informal opportunities to practice oral communication in multiple curricula across disciplines. SUNO will document at least a 10% increase over the Fall 2019 survey results in the number of faculty who included oral communication as a Student Learning Objective in their course, required formal oral presentations, evaluated oral presentations using a rubric, and included informal oral communication opportunities.

Measure: Number of faculty participating in professional development

The QEP will document the support two faculty members per year to attend conferences related to their pedagogy and learn best practices for implementing oral communication strategies and develop assessment rubrics. The QEP will also document the development of learning modules on its Learning Information Management System, currently Moodle, for interested faculty.

Measure: Qualitative measure of university-wide constituents

An annual focus group open to faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members will generate qualitative data suggesting an improvement in students' overall oral communication skills and in their ability to articulate their career goals using discipline specific terminology.

Measure: External Data Comparison

Examining multiple data sets provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness on the employment rate of SUNO students as a measure of Post-Graduate Success and a national survey of student engagement as a measure of Oral Communication skill. Job Placement Data and Employment Rates by Degree Levels will be summarized and compared to previous years to show expected growth.

Data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness from The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) measures college students' learning and engagement in Canada and the United States. SUNO administers the NSSE to first-year and senior-level students every spring semester. The QEP Task Force will compare SUNO student responses for engagement items; specifically, student-perceived gains in how their experience at SUNO has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in speaking clearly and effectively and how the data compares to other public Louisiana Universities and Carnegie class data.

PILOT STUDY

Enhancing students' oral communication skills for career success is the focus of the QEP and the centerpiece of the assessment plan. Assessment of the University's QEP is centered on the three student learning outcomes (SLOs). In Fall 2018, the QEP process was practiced and adjustments made. In Spring 2019, a formal pilot program was conducted to test the effectiveness of the QEP's SLOs.

The QEP COMM210.02 required revisions in the syllabus to include career-focused Informative speech presentations, the use of the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric for assessment and a statement of informed consent. The pilot study was approved by Southern University at New Orleans Institutional Review Board (Appendix M) and students were informed of the use of the course for evaluating the outcomes of SUNO's QEP in their syllabi.

End of semester survey results of the QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation expect that students in COMM210 QEP section with a career-focused Informative speech will

(1) score in the Meets Expectations or Exceeds Expectation by the instructor using the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric

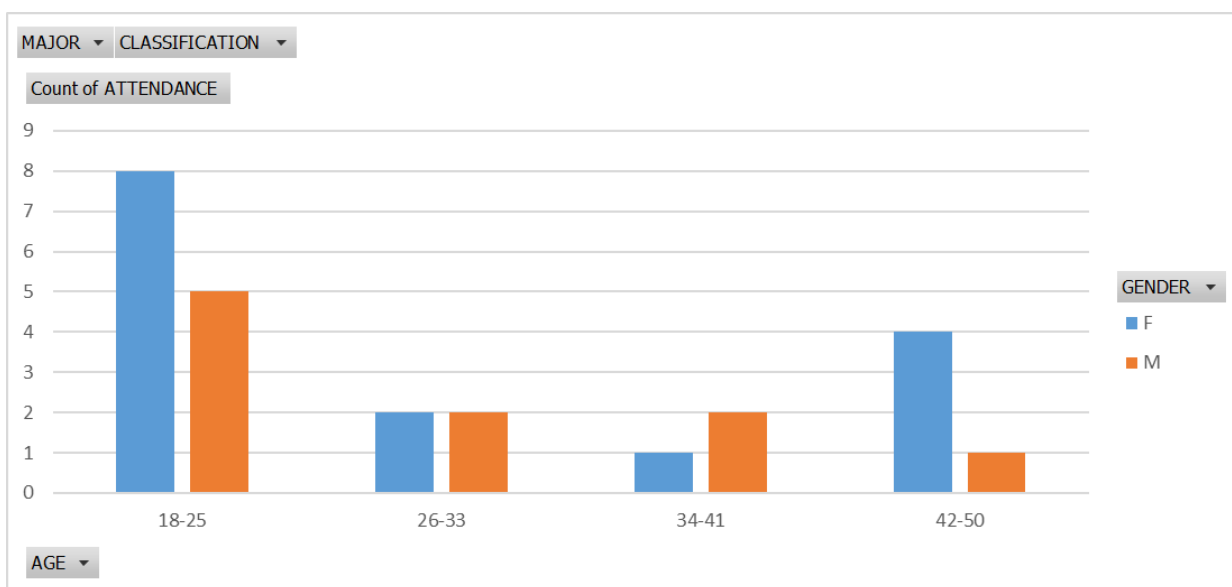
(2) report significantly greater confidence in their overall communication skills; in their ability to articulate their career goals using discipline-specific terminology; and as well as more confidence in their preparation for careers after graduation at the end of the course than they did before instruction.

(3) report significantly greater confidence in their overall communication skills; in their ability to articulate their career goals using discipline-specific terminology; and as well as more confidence in their preparation for careers after graduation than students in traditionally taught section of course COMM210 Non-QEP Section.

Data Analysis

Descriptive data of the students enrolled in COMM210 for the pilot study resulted in demographics (gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ages, majors) representative of the population of the university at large. This demonstrates that the choice of COMM210 to implement strategies to enhance oral communication was appropriate to reach the greatest number of students across multiple majors at SUNO.

In the QEP section: Of the total number (N=25), 10 were male and 15 females; 5 freshmen, 9 sophomores, 7 juniors, and 4 seniors. The students were distributed by ages 18-25 (13 students); 26-33 (4 students); 34-41 (3 students); and 42-50 (5 students). Students majored in Child Development and Family Studies, General Studies, Computer Information Systems, and Psychology (1 each); Business Administration and Math (2 each); 3 Public Administration students, Educational Studies and Social Work (4 each) and 6 in Criminal Justice.



In the non-QEP section: Of the total number (N=30), 9 were male and 21 females; 7 freshmen, 8 sophomores, 8 juniors, and 7 seniors. Age distributions were not calculated. Students majored in General Studies, Public Administration, Computer Information Systems, Health Information Management Systems, Biology and Elementary Education (1 each); 2 students in Educational Studies; 4 in Child Development and Family Studies; Criminal Justice, Business Administration and Social Work (6 each).

Percentages of each of the nine items on the QEP COMM210 Rubric (organization, content, language, terminology, passion, voice, fillers, dress, and eye contact) were calculated by entering the scores into [Microsoft®](#) Office Excel. Pre- and post- student QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation scores were entered into [Microsoft®](#) Office Excel to calculate descriptive and quantitative results. To identify differences of the groups with or without QEP enhancements, a T-test: two-sample assuming equal variance was conducted. Significance from the paired samples t-test was set at an alpha level of .05. To find out which of the groups has a significant different mean, the Bonferroni approach was used to perform the post hoc test (t-test: two-sample assuming equal variances).

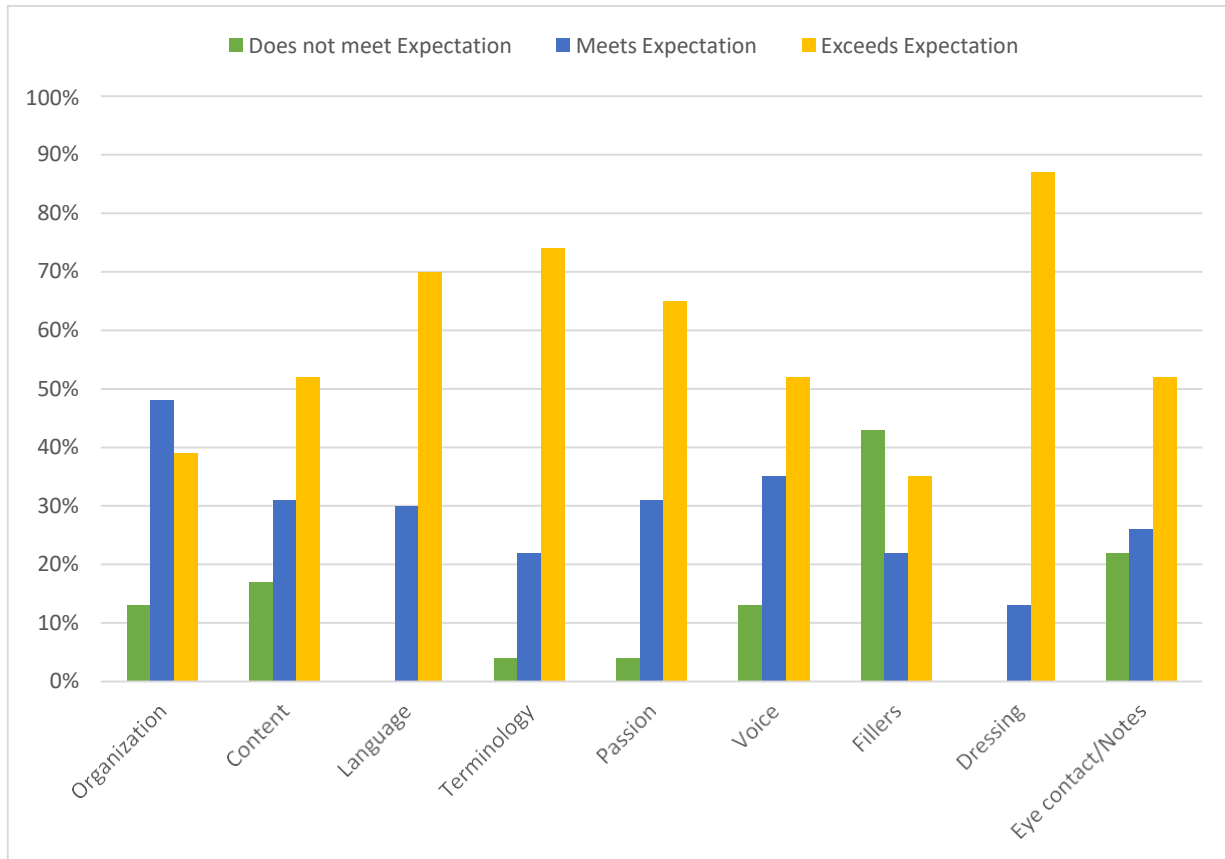
Results

As a key activity in attaining SLO#1 and 2, students presented an Informative speech on topics related to their career choice mid-semester. Table 10 and Figure 2 below contain the results of the course instructor’s scores using the QEP SCOM 201 Rubric as evidence of effective public speaking skills.

Table 10: Results of Spring 2019 QEP SCOM 201.02 Informative speech assessment (N=23)

Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	Dimension	Sub-dimension	Does not meet Expectation	Meets Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	
1. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills (organization, content, and delivery).	Organization		13%	48%	39%	
	Content		17%	31%	52%	
	Verbal delivery	Language			30%	70%
		Terminology		4%	22%	74%
2. Confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology	Confidence	Passion	4%	31%	65%	
		Voice	13%	35%	52%	
		Fillers	43%	22%	35%	
	Nonverbal delivery	Dressing			13%	87%
		Eye contact/Notes		22%	26%	52%

Figure 2: Results of Pilot-Test Assessment QEP SCOM 201.02 Informative speech assessment



In addition to the direct assessment of student learning, a QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation was administered as a pre-course (before instruction) and post-course (end of semester) student self-assessment in the QEP enhanced QEP COMM210.02. A comparison in scores on the QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation was then made between the post-course scores of the QEP SCOM 201.02 and the non-QEP COMM both section COMM210.05. The results are presented in Tables below.

Table 11: QEP SCOM 201.02 Pre-vs Post-course evaluation

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.49125	2.683125
Variance	0.052065	0.038489583
Observations	16	16
Pooled Variance	0.045277292	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	30	
t Stat	-2.550487303	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00805031	
t Critical one-tail	1.697260887	

P(T<=t) two-tail	0.01610062
t Critical two-tail	2.042272456

Table 12: QEP SCOM 201.02 Post-course evaluation vs Non QEP SCOM 201.05 Post-course evaluation

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.683125	2.656875
Variance	0.038489583	0.040009583
Observations	16	16
Pooled Variance	0.039249583	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	30	
t Stat	0.37476306	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.355236494	
t Critical one-tail	1.697260887	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.710472989	
t Critical two-tail	2.042272456	

Table 13: QEP SCOM 201.02 Pre-course evaluation vs Non QEP SCOM 201.05 Post-course evaluation

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.49125	2.656875
Variance	0.052065	0.040009583
Observations	16	16
Pooled Variance	0.046037292	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	30	
t Stat	-2.183313004	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.018484818	
t Critical one-tail	1.697260887	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.036969636	
t Critical two-tail	2.042272456	

Analysis

F-value (3.97883863) greater than the F-critical value for the alpha level selected (0.05) means that one of the three groups has a significantly different mean. The p-value of pre-course vs post-course for SCOM 201.02 (Table 11) is less than alpha level selected (alpha = 0.05). This means that the pre and post-course evaluation for SCOM 201.02 (Table 12) and pre-course evaluation for SCOM 201.02 and post-course evaluation for SCOM 201.05 (Non QEP Instruction) (Table 13) have less than 5% chances of belonging to the same group. Whereas post-course QEP SCOM 201.02 and post-course Non QEP SCOM 201.05 table 15) is much greater than the significant level.

Conclusion

This statistically suggests that the QEP instruction in SCOM 201.02 had a significant positive effect on the students, as seen from their self-reflection assessment and evaluation. Competence as rated by the instructor overwhelmingly met or exceeded expectations. If the assessments continue to provide evidence of improved student learning outcomes, it is anticipated that activities related to the QEP can be expanded and incorporated in all degree-granting programs beyond the five-year plan.

Online Pilot

A pilot of an online course was attempted in Spring 2020. COMM210 is offered online regularly, so there was only one modification to the pilot study in delivering the student survey. The instructor posted the following announcement to the Moodle course shell:

*The [SUNO QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation](https://sunoir.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0C9Yx0xRAJBULLb) survey is now available for dissemination via Moodle. The survey is scheduled to close one week from today, end of day, January 31st, 2020. Students may click on the link and/or cut and paste as needed:
https://sunoir.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0C9Yx0xRAJBULLb.*

Of the 27 students enrolled, 21 completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 78%. Students uploaded their career focused Informative speeches mid-semester as assigned. However, beginning in March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic necessitated unprecedented challenges to students academically and personally. Although the data were collected, the return of post student survey responses was very low preventing an assumption of equity in the pre-post comparison within the course and between the pilots. However, the attempted online pilot did confirm the feasibility of the online process to deliver the QEP enhanced assignments and produce data with the same expected results as when piloted in the on-campus class.

IX. Marketing Plan

To promote widespread interest and feedback, the QEP Task Force designed a logo (Appendix N) and image with the following theme: *SUNO SPEAKS! Communicating our values to the marketplace*; and established a website at www.suno.edu/QEP to augment its messaging and ensure access to QEP information and activities. The kick-off of the QEP marketing began with an introductory PowerPoint presentation on the QEP at the University Conference in August 2018. The semi-annual University Conference is mandatory for all administrators, staff, and faculty and is open to students and visitors. All participants receive a university-sponsored bag and promotional contents, e.g., pens. The QEP included in their package a “SUNO Speaks” lapel pin and a survey (Appendix O). To engage the audience and promote participation, everyone who completed and returned the survey entered a contest to receive a free QEP T-shirt. The specific written comments and suggestions (N=24) were also useful in guiding the QEP development process by knowing what faculty and staff are currently doing to enhance student oral communication skills.

During New Student Orientation and Registration, also held in August 2018, a similar survey was administered to students requesting them to submit in writing, “Who is your favorite public speaker?” The goals were the same: for a chance to win a QEP designed t-shirt, the survey was meant to engage the students and promote the QEP development process. The QEP received 102 student responses, with Michelle Obama receiving the largest number of votes. All responses were tabulated and were used to compile a video of their favorite public speakers that ran on a SUNO TV loop on monitors in major buildings across the campus. Running the video was intended as a message to the students that the QEP Task Force engaged them in the QEP development process. Moreover, the QEP Task Force hoped that listening to their favorite public speakers would model to them effective oral communication skills. The QEP Task Force randomly chose five students and five faculty or staff at its monthly meeting on August 31, 2018. Winners were notified by email on October 8, 2018. A sampling of additional marketing activities is presented below.



Dates	Activity	Audience
Spring 2018	Progress report at the Joint Meetings of SACSCOC Leadership Team and Subcommittee Chairs	SACSCOC Leadership Team and Chairs
Fall 2018 Spring 2019 Spring 2020 Fall 2020	PowerPoint presentation on the QEP at the University Conference. (Development, Mission, Goal and Objectives of the QEP)	Administrators, guests, faculty, staff, and students
Fall 2018	Administration of survey to faculty “What are you doing to enhance student oral communication skills?”	Faculty/staff
Fall 2018	Administration of survey to students “Who is your favorite public speaker?”	Students
Fall 2018	Publication of winners of the faculty and student contest	Online email message to faculty, staff and students
Fall 2018 Spring 2019 Spring 2020	PowerPoint presentation of the QEP (Development, Mission, Goal and Objectives of the QEP) at the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business and Administration, and Education & Human Development and School of Social Work Town Hall meetings; distribution of QEP t-shirts and pins to students, faculty and staff present	Faculty, staff and students
Fall 2018	Presented Status of QEP at SACSCOC Leadership Team Meeting	SACSCOC Leadership Team (Administration, faculty, and staff)
Fall 2018	Publication in Chancellor’s Report, SUNO Moving Forward	Online email attachment to faculty, staff and students; submitted to the SU Board of Supervisors.
Starting in Fall 2018	Theme of the QEP and Video recordings of some of the best speeches from student’s favorite public speakers run on monitors in major buildings across campus.	Faculty, staff, students, and visitors
Starting in Fall 2018	Display of QEP banner at building entrances, beginning in Administration Building.	Faculty, staff, students, and visitors
Spring 2019	Publication in the Pontchartrain Park Patriot Vol.4 No. 11	Local community
Spring 2019	Pens, pins and flyers purchased for distribution at events	Administrators, guests, faculty, staff, and students
Fall 2019	QEP Quick Facts flyers and buttons delivered to Chancellor in preparation for his meeting with the Mayor of New Orleans	Local community leaders

Spring 2020	Announcement at the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network January Luncheon	Local business community
Spring 2020	Oral presentation of the QEP (Development, Mission, Goal and Objectives of the QEP) at the College of Social Work Faculty meeting; distribution of survey and QEP t-shirts and pins	Faculty and Staff

The successful implementation of the QEP will require involvement from all University stakeholders. At the end of each semester, results and data analysis will be made available to students, faculty, and other university stakeholders to provide feedback on QEP activities. Students will continue to be engaged through campus events, contests, and Town Hall meetings. Feedback from faculty will also be solicited at Faculty Senate meetings or the bi-annual University Conference in the form of surveys. The QEP Task Force will develop monthly and annual written updated reports for review by the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the University's SACSCOC leadership team. Other university staff, alumni, and the public will also receive updates about the QEP through regular publication materials through the Office of Public Relations, Community newsletters, and the university's website. Feedback will also be solicited through the QEP webpage.

X. QEP timeline

The QEP Task Force developed an earlier timeline for the successful submission of the QEP and subsequent implementation upon approval by SACSCOC that required adjustment due to SACSCOC suspension due to finance standards (sanction removed Summer 2020), an extension to submit the Compliance Certification Report (Fall 2020), and issues related to the coronavirus 19 pandemic (beginning in March 2020). The revised timeline is shown below:

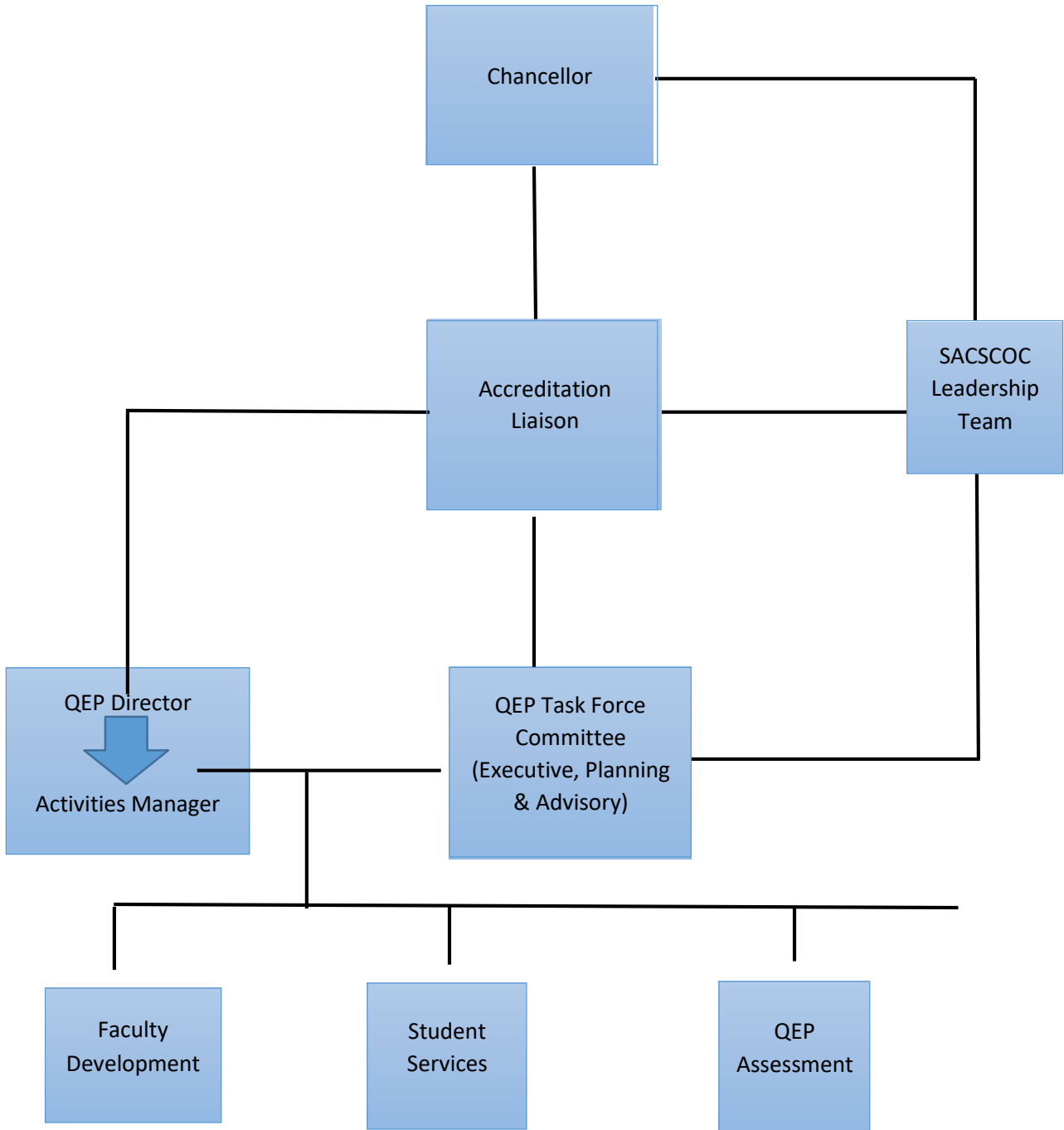
Academic Year	Activities
2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitation for QEP topic from stakeholders • QEP workshop to acquaint university community on need and purpose of a QEP
2017-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed QEP Task Force • Held monthly QEP Task Force’s meetings • Examined topic proposals and developed survey • Examined data including internal and external assessments and held focus group • Specified scope of the QEP • Identified principal elements of the QEP • Developed marketing plan for the QEP • Developed the QEP web page on university website
2018-2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented theme and scope to university community • Literature reviewed, researched best practices • Identified course and faculty for pilot study • Developed QEP Oral Communication Assessment Rubric (Appendix I) for instructor and self-assessment for student • Requested IRB approval to run pilot • Faculty trained on QEP Rubric for reliability • Ran QEP pilot test/collected baseline data • Analyzed baseline data • Continued to market QEP • Completed early draft of the QEP document
2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examined QEP implementation and assessment plans • Continued QEP marketing efforts across campus • Continued development of the QEP document • Prepare final QEP document for submission to SACSCOC • Prepare for SACSCOC visit
2021 – Pending SACSCOC approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue administration of QEP in COMM210, increasing number of course offerings • Gather assessment data • Monitor progress of QEP and student learning outcomes, adjusting as necessary • Develop and distribute annual report • Adapt and implement oral presentations into other general education courses



XI. Organizational structure of the QEP

The university created an 8-member QEP Task Force that is steered by a chair. The QEP Task Force is responsible for bringing all the subcommittee activities together to ensure the QEP goal and objectives' successful. At the implementation of the QEP following the SACSCOC on-site visit, the QEP Task Force will be restructured to become a QEP Advisory Council. The QEP will be housed in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The day-to-day running of the QEP will be the QEP Director's responsibility, who will report directly to the Accreditation Liaison. The critical components of the QEP organizational structure are described below and presented below.

- The Chancellor – Responsible for all academic activities at the university
- SACSCOC Leadership Team – Coordinate all SACSCOC related activities for the university.
- Accreditation Liaison – Supervises the activities of the QEP; serves as the primary contact between the Chancellor/SACSCOC Leadership Team and the QEP Director and other personnel working on the QEP activities.
- QEP Director – Reporting directly to the Accreditation Liaison, the QEP director is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and assessment of the QEP.
- QEP Advisory Committee – otherwise known as the QEP Task Force, established from a broad-based representation of major Colleges and School, and institutional departments, including faculty, staff, and students will have an advisory role and will work with the QEP Director to monitor the program and activities needed to complete and document the progress of the QEP over the five years of the project. The QEP Task Force will also make recommendations for strengthening and enhancing the plan.



XII: Budget and Resources

The University's Leadership Team has identified both human and financial resources needed for the implementation of the QEP. The University is committing to the execution of the QEP, one hundred eighty-eight thousand eight hundred forty six dollars (\$188,846.00.00) per year from Year One (2021-2022) through Year Five (2025-2026). Salaries and stipends consume most of the requested funds, which total \$116,000 plus \$43,846 in fringe benefits (39.85%=Teac/43.74%=State).

The day-to-day running of the QEP will be the responsibility of a permanent QEP Director, who will report directly to the Accreditation Liaison. At the implementation of the QEP following the SACSCOC on-site visit, the QEP Task Force will be restructured to become a QEP Advisory (Executive) Council.

The budget also includes funds to promote two-faculty development and engagement initiatives each academic year. To ensure successful implementation and administration of the QEP, funds have been made available in the budget to provide stipends for faculty teaching QEP COMM210 or assisting in the development, data analysis or other activity to realize the QEP's goal. Additionally, funds are available for two faculty members per year and QEP administrators to attend conferences that highlight the successful implementation of the QEP and improving the teaching of oral communication skills within the classroom. Compensation and release time is also being accorded to the Chair of the Advisory Committee and other teaching personnel under the QEP. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IR) will house the QEP and assume responsibility for maintaining all QEP assessment data.

Budget Narrative

1. Chair, QEP Task Force (Academic year stipend/\$10,000) – This individual will work on an on-going basis with the Accreditation Liaison, SACSCOC Leadership Team, and the QEP Director and staff to accomplish the following tasks:

- Ensure effective operation of the QEP Task Force.
- Gather input in implementing, assessing and revising the QEP.
- Provide monthly reports to the QEP Director, Accreditation Liaison and others as required.
- Prepare and submit all related requests as required by the Title III Program Executive Director.
- Work collaboratively with the academic departments to structure curricular and program revisions, faculty development efforts, assessments and other QEP requirements.
- Identify and select instructional support staff to teach the QEP Communication Courses.
- Monitor the implementation of the QEP.
- Ensure that assessment results are reviewed and appropriately interpreted and disseminated.
- Coordinate subsequent revisions and alignment required for a successful QEP.
- Periodically bring together all QEP subcommittees to work as a unit.
- Review subcommittee membership composition and participation and recommend changes.
- Perform other duties specific to QEP topic development, marketing, publicity and acceptance.

2. QEP/Career Services Director (100%/\$56,000) – Works as a link between the campus community and the administration to:

- Gather input in implementing, assessing and revising the QEP.
- Prepare and submit all related requests as required by the Title III Program Director.
- Work collaboratively with the academic departments to structure curricular and program revisions, faculty development efforts, assessments and other QEP requirements.
- Identify the most effective strategies to ensure job placement and to analyze and report data to appropriate agencies.
- Implement a viable service model that addresses the career services needs of online students.
- Provide individual and group career counseling and job placement.
- Assist in developing cooperative education, internship and externship programs.
- Maintain an up-to-date career resources library.

- Provide career development related workshops, e.g. resume writing, interviewing for a job (both online and in person), appropriate dress attire, communicating effectively in the workplace, things you should not do in an office/work related environment.
- Monitor the implementation of the QEP.
- Identify and select instructional support staff to teach the QEP Communication Courses.

3. **Counselor/Administrative Assistant (100%/\$35,000)** – The Activities Manager will oversee and manage all office procedures and other tasks as assigned to support the QEP Director, as well as the QEP Task Force Chair and subcommittees.

- Identify the most effective strategies to ensure job placement and to analyze and report data to appropriate agencies.
- Conduct the annual graduate employment survey.
- Implement a viable service model that addresses the career services needs of online students.
- Provide individual and group career counseling and job placement.
- Assist in developing cooperative education, internship and externship programs.
- Administer and interpret career interest inventories
- Provide career-related seminars for interested students
- Maintain an up-to-date career resources library.
- Provide career development related workshops, e.g. resume writing, interviewing for a job (both online and in person), appropriate dress attire, communicating effectively in the workplace, things you should not do in an office/work related environment.

4. **Stipends for faculty.** Stipends will be awarded to faculty members for QEP course development, teaching or other services in the implementation of the QEP (e.g. developing surveys and analyzing data). Each will be awarded a stipend in the amount of \$2,500 per semester (Fall and Spring) at a total annual cost of \$5,000.

5. **Stipends for students.** Stipends will be awarded to two students to serve as an advisor to the development and implementation of the QEP; including organizing town hall meetings and directing a student Communication Club. Each will be awarded a stipend of \$2,500 (Fall and Spring) at a total annual cost of \$5,000.00.

5. **Multi Media Specialist** (\$5,000) – This individual will assist with photography and video documentation of student presentations each semester and acquire the appropriate technology to ensure the efficiency of services to online students. Duties will also include creating online surveys for data collection, faculty development modules on the Learning Management System (currently Moodle), and media content for marketing purposes. This individual will also be tasked with the responsibility of updating the QEP webpage as requested.

6. **Travel and Training.** A total of \$10,000 is annually allocated to support travel of two faculty members, as well as QEP Director and Chair, to attend conferences and workshops. This amount will also cover on campus and virtual opportunities for faculty to enhance their pedagogy and evaluation methods through guest speakers, brown bag presentations, email blasts, and online course modules on the Learning Management System (currently Moodle).

7. **Supplies and Marketing Materials.** A total of \$4,000 is allocated annually to cover the cost associated with office supplies and marketing materials, such as banners and lapel pins.

8. Other: \$15,000 is allocated for miscellaneous costs associated with the implementation of the QEP; including consultant fees, prizes for engaging faculty and students, technology (alumni employment tracking services) resources related to oral communication and career success, and meeting expenses.

QEP Budget Allocation

QEP BUDGET 2021 - 2026							
Category		Year 1 2021 - 2022	Year 2 2022 - 2023	Year 3 2023 - 2024	Year 4 2024 - 2025	Year 5 2025 - 2026	Totals
Personnel	%Time						
QEP Chair	Stipend	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
QEP/Career Services Director	100%	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$280,000
Counselor/Admin. Asst.	100%	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$175,000
Stipend for program support staff (2 faculty and 2 students) @ \$2,500/year	Stipend	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Multimedia Specialist	15%	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Fringe Benefits		\$46,238	\$46,238	\$46,238	\$46,238	\$46,238	\$231,190
Supplies		\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$20,000
Other/Event costs(refreshments)Contractual/Consultant, Software		\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$75,000
Travel and Training		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Yearly Totals		\$191,238	\$191,238	\$191,238	\$191,238	\$191,238	\$951,188

XIII. References

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Appendices

Appendix A: NACE Survey

Nace Survey is several pages long. Below is the link for inspection.

<https://www.nacweb.org/research/survey-instruments/>

Appendix B: BigInterview --<https://resources.biginterview.com/>

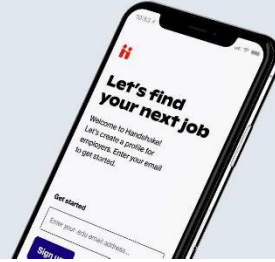
and **Handshake:**

How to get hired on Handshake

Create a free account

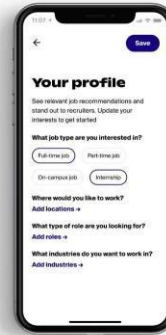
Handshake is where employers hire college students and new grads. Enter your .edu email address to get started.

[Sign up](#)



Full-time. Part-time. Paid internships.

Handshake has the latest jobs from employers hiring at your school



Fill out your profile

You'll receive personalized job recommendations and get recruited by employers who want to hire students like you.



Find jobs for you
Receive personalized job recommendations



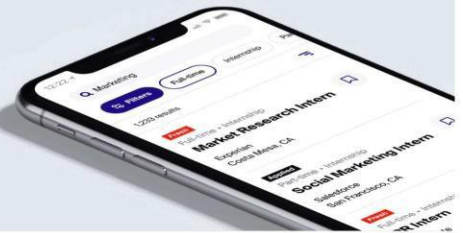
Attend virtual recruiting events
Stand out to employers during virtual fairs and events



Get hired
Apply to jobs meant for students like you

Apply to the right jobs for you

Learn about jobs and employers through student reviews and exclusive virtual events. Apply in as little as two clicks.



Appendix C: QEP Call for Proposal Email

***** PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE*****

This is a general correspondence of the Southern University at New Orleans.

Attention Students, Faculty and Staff,

Every 10 years, as part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), SUNO has the opportunity to develop a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve an area of student learning or student success in a significant way through a university-wide, multi-year initiative. As a member of our University community, you are invited to participate in the topic selection process for our next QEP.

During the course of the first five-years of the reaffirmation process (2010 - 2015), the university developed and implemented a QEP titled; ***E-Focused! Enhancing Student Learning in Online Courses by Improving Institutional Readiness*** in which the university tried to address student readiness for online learning by focusing on their technical competence in introductory Biology and English courses. In the report that was submitted to SACSCOC, the University described its goals and intended outcomes, impact on student learning and/or the environment supporting student learning and described what the institution has learned because of the QEP experience. This report was approved without any further recommendation.

With SACSCOC approval of the institution's previous QEP without any further recommendations, the development of another five-year Quality Enhancement Plan is a key component of SUNO's 2020 SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation process.

Please submit your ideas or proposals electronically to gep@suno.edu using the attached [suggestion card](#) or submit a hard-copy to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Bashful Administration Building, Room 126. All submissions are due by 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 4, 2016.


Note: Suggestion boxes will be placed around campus in major campus units and colleges for you to drop in your suggestions/proposals.

THIS TRANSMISSION IS PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL: The material in this email transmission is either private, confidential, privileged or constitutes work product, and is intended only for the use of the individual(s) named above. If you are not the intended recipient, be advised that unauthorized use, disclosure, copying, distribution, or the taking of any action in reliance on this information is strictly prohibited.

Appendix D: QEP Task Force Meeting Dates

Academic Year	Meeting Dates	Major Topics
Fall 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 31, 2017 • September 11, 2017 • September 26, 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Selection Survey Results • Topic Selection Survey Results • Topic Selection
Spring 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 9, 2018 • February 23, 2018 • March 23, 2018 • April 6, 2018 • April 20, 2018 • May 23, 2018 • June 5, 2018 • June 20, 2018 • July 17, 2018 • July 30, 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Selection • Topic Selection • Focus Group Results • Implementation and Marketing • Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) • Assessment/Marketing/Budget • SLOs/Implementation/Marketing • Rubric/Budget/Marketing/Implementation • Rubric/Marketing/Budget/SLOs • Marketing/Implementation/Budget
Fall 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 31, 2018 • September 14, 2018 • October 5, 2018 • October 26, 2018 • November 16, 2018 • November 26, 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing/Implementation • Marketing/Implementation • Marketing/Implementation • Rubric Reliability • Reliability/Student Rubric/Implementation • Reliability/Student Rubric/Implementation
Spring 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 1, 2019 • March 1, 2019 • April 5, 2019 • May 3, 2019 • June 3, 2019 • July 1, 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SASCO Dec meeting/Student Survey • Data Results of Student Survey • 2019 Pilot Study • Data results/Pilot Study • Data Results/QEP Report • Data Results/Literature Review
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 23, 2019 • September 13, 2019 • November 15, 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised timeline • Trio Director/QEP training manual • College Deans/Spring 2020 Pilot

Appendix E: QEP Topic selection survey

Class Climate	QEP TOPIC SELECTION		SCANTRON
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS	FALL 2017 University Conference		
2020 SACSCOC REAFFIRMATION INITIATIVES	Monday, August 14, 2017		
Mark as shown:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Please use a ball-point pen or a thin felt tip. This form will be processed automatically.	
Correction:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Please follow the examples shown on the left hand side to help optimize the reading results.	

We need your input! What should Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) do to improve student learning and academic success? As part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation reaffirmation process, SUNO is required to develop and implement a system for improving student learning in any discipline that is vital for the overall success of students. There were twenty-five (25) suggested topics related to QEP from solicitation in FY 2016-2017. These have been grouped into eight (8) themes.

1. Please rank from 1 to 8 with 1 being the most desired and 8 being the least desired QEP topic:

- _____ **Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum**
- _____ **Oral Communication**
- _____ **Writing Communication**
- _____ **Post-Graduation Success**
- _____ **Student Mentorship**
- _____ **Improving Students' Analytical Skills**
- _____ **Technology Enhanced Student Advisement and Retention**
- _____ **Infusing Real World Business Operations into the Classroom**

2. Classification:

2.1

Faculty
 Alumni

Staff
 Other (Please Specify) _____

Student

Thank You for participating in the QEP topic selection process.

Return to:

Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Bashful Administration Building, Room 126
By August 28, 2017



Appendix F: Focus Group Flyer

**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT
PLAN (QEP)
FOCUS GROUP**

WHEN

**Friday, March 9th
11am – 1pm**

WHERE

**Lake Campus Multipurpose
Building
Room 609**

WELCOMES

**Students
Faculty
Staff
Employers
Community Partners**

INPUT ON

**Oral Communication
skills needed for
student success**

**COMMITTEE
MEMBERS**

**Dr. Diane Bordenave (chair)
Dr. David Alijani
Mr. Benjamin Ashu
Mr. Peter Bonnee
Mr. Norbert Davidson
Dr. Douglas Marshal
Ms. Ada Kwanbunbumpen
Dr. Igwe Udeh**

Appendix G: Focus group responses

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

QEP Focus Group

Friday, March 9, 2018

11:00 a.m.

Feedback

- **Students**

- **What does “oral communication” mean to you?**
 - Oral Communication means being able to speak to people and convey a message regardless of any prior relationship
- **Discuss deficiencies in oral communication**
 - You and your peers
 - Lack of interpersonal (face-to-face) conversations because of technology.
- How has SUNO prepared you to become a better oral communicator?
- What is a bigger problem when looking toward your future and starting a career?
Interpersonal conversations or public speaking skills?
 - both

- **Faculty**

- **What feedback have you received in regard to our students’ abilities to speak?**
 - I don’t like to speak before a crowd/audience
 - Students demonstrate an inability to clearly articulate thoughts when asked to do so in class.
 - Students are unable to explain or describe problems/concept verbally
 - Students tend not to incorporate buzz words, or incorrectly incorporate discipline buzz words into their informal communication
- **What strengths and weaknesses have you seen in regard to students' oral communication skills?**
 - Weakness**
 - Lack of reading assignments
 - Use of slang language
 - Lack of presentation confidence

- Lack of interview skills
- Lack of confidence when speaking in formal or semi-formal setting
- Students are able to incorporate key concepts in the discipline during formal public speaking assignments. However, these buzz words disappear when students are given an unplanned or impromptu opportunity to address the same topic
- Student often speak the way they write (very informal)

Strength

- None

○ **Does your course have a formal oral communication aspect? How important is it?**

- Yes, this carries a lot of weight in the class participation and project report phases. Class participation is a part of interpersonal communication piece and formal project report is a part of Public Speaking phase
- Yes, but it is probably less important that it should be
- Yes, class presentations. It is important to help prepare students for their Professional career and the workforce
- Yes, oral presentation on selected topics related to subject area (group and individual)

• **Staff**

○ **What have you noticed about the oral communication skills of students on campus?**

- Most student do not enunciate well; they have broken English and a limited vocabulary.
- Some have limited listening skills, so they do not properly engage a topic
- Students struggle with articulating their ideas
- Students have trouble formulating thoughts and speak in fragments
- Student lack usage of College level vocabulary in their casual discussions
- Student do not practice proper grammar, they are not aware of voice reflections, and do not have extensive vocabulary.

○ **How could SUNO better prepare those students to communicate well?**

- Faculty and staff should correct students politely and encourage them to practice oral skills in a nurturing environment while being understanding

- Offer speaking workshops

- Work with English department to develop SLOs in this area
- Develop a university-wide assessment rubric for oral communication
- Incorporate SCOM 201 in all disciplines
- Provide opportunity for inter disciplinary speaking engagements, round table discussions etc.

Comment:

- A focus on grammar and syntax appears important to developing public speaking confidence.

OFFICE OF CAREER PLACEMENT SERVICES

FOUR YEAR CAREER



"Preparing our students for the workforce of

FRESHMAN YEAR: *Awareness* – First Year

Explore the What Can I Do With This Degree? This series is posted on [vStar](#)

gathering information on careers you are interested in pursuing.

Visit the Office of Career Placement Services

Explore career choices by using the Handshake, Monster, and Indeed, and create personal contacts to set up informational interviews.

Let Career Services help you transition your resume from high school to college.

Learn appropriate attire for recruitment events. Purchase a portfolio, a business professional suit and the Career Closet on Campus.

Participate in the Freshman Interviewing Skills Workshop sponsored by Business and Industry Partners (1st Semester).

Attend career fairs and other events (Log onto www.sun.edu/careerservices to view our upcoming events.)

SOPHMORE YEAR: *Exploration*

Join student organizations and professional associations related to your intended career field.

Use our Job Search Tutorials to learn about resumes, cover letters, thank you notes and interviewing.

When developing your resume, include transferable skills from all work experiences you have had.

Update your resume regularly with each new job you hold and/or student organization you join.

Continue exploring occupations through our Web site, the Internet, newspapers, magazines and books.

Visit the Office of Career Services.

Meet with career office personnel to develop a comprehensive search strategy for finding work experience.

Schedule a mock interview to prepare you for future interviews.

Start to clarify and confirm your career choices by gaining career-related work experiences.

Pursue internships and co-ops through respective Colleges and School of Social Work.

JUNIOR YEAR: *Experience*

Sign up for Professional seminars and workshop (mock interviews, etc.) facilitated by business and industry partners.

Decide if graduate or professional school is necessary to reach your career goals. If it is, start planning at the beginning of your junior year and attend the Graduate & Professional School portion of the Career Expo in the fall.

Conduct research to determine the types of entry-level positions for which you might qualify.

Schedule an appointment to have your resume(s) and cover letter(s) critiqued.

Learn more about appropriate attire for recruitment events. Purchase a business professional suit and shoes.

Visit the Office of Career Placement

Consider completing an internship or co-op to gain experience and build your resume.

Fine-tune your interview skills by scheduling a mock interview with our career professional team.

Attend career fairs and other special related events.

SENIOR YEAR: *TRANSITIONS*

Use Interfolio to store and distribute your letters of reference and transcripts.

Interfolio has been the best way to collect, manage, and showcase academic and professional credentials for applications to move into positions of higher education, post-graduate study, and other opportunities.

Visit the Office of Career Placement.

Schedule a Mock Interview to prepare for full-time job or graduate/professional school interviews.

Identify full-time job opportunities.

Participate in the On-Campus Interviewing Program.

Tailor your resume and cover letter to each full-time position for which you apply.

Use your personal network to identify opportunities. Use Social Media in a professional manner.

Send thank-you notes to employers with whom you interview and to your references.

Attend career fairs and other programs sponsored by the Office of Career Placement.

Join the Southern at New Orleans Alumni Association as a new alumnus! Support the University with your talent, time and preparedness.

Appendix I: Faculty Survey on Oral Communication Course Content



Dear Colleagues,

To collect supporting baseline data for our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic, *enhancing oral communication skills for career success*, the QEP Committee is asking all faculty members to complete the following table for all undergraduate courses you are teaching in Fall 2019.

This survey will help us to enhance and monitor our efforts **campus-wide** for the QEP’s Student Learning Outcome #3; which aims to allow students to practice oral communication skills through increased formal and informal opportunities including media.

Please fill in the course number and then indicate “yes” or “no” to the questions for each course you are teaching. The first line is just an example. Thank you in advance for your support.

Course Number	Is oral communication a Student Learning Objective (SLO) or part of a SLO in this course?	Is a formal student oral presentation required in this course?	Is a rubric used to evaluate/grade a student oral presentation in this course?	Are there opportunities for informal oral communication in this course? (Give example(s))
CDFS 453	No	Yes	No	Yes (Small group discussions)

Do you believe oral communication skills are important to a student's career success after graduation?

_____Yes _____No

Would you like more information or training on incorporating oral communication in your course(s)?

_____Yes _____No

Name: _____ Department: _____

Appendix J: QEP Oral Communication Assessment Rubric

Southern University New Orleans Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) COMM 210 Rubric

Evaluator: _____ Section: _____ Date: _____

Goal: *Enhance Student Oral Communication Skills for Career Success*

Dimensions	Sub-Dimensions	Does not meet Expectation	Meets Expectation	Exceeds Expectation
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Organization		Not organized, poor or nonexistent transitions <input type="checkbox"/>	Organized, slightly hard to follow transitions <input type="checkbox"/>	Well-organized, excellent transitions <input type="checkbox"/>
Content		Minimal relevant content, minimal references, and several inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate relevant content, adequate references, and few inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent relevant content, excellent references, and no inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal Delivery	Language	Inadequate grammar and pronunciation and poor sentence structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Good grammar and pronunciation and good sentence structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent grammar and pronunciation and excellent sentence structure <input type="checkbox"/>
	Terminology	Lack of discipline specific terminology <input type="checkbox"/>	Use of discipline specific terminology <input type="checkbox"/>	Use of relevant discipline specific terminology <input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence	Passion	Unable to communicate motivating factors for career choice <input type="checkbox"/>	Communicates motivating factors but unable to connect personally to career choice <input type="checkbox"/>	Communicates motivating factors and connects personally to career choice <input type="checkbox"/>
	Voice	Speaks in low volume and/or monotone <input type="checkbox"/>	Speaks with satisfactory variation of volume and inflection <input type="checkbox"/>	Speaks with fluctuation <input type="checkbox"/>
	Fillers	Uses excessive fillers or pauses (ahs, uhms, ers) <input type="checkbox"/>	Uses limited fillers or pauses <input type="checkbox"/>	Uses no distracting fillers or pauses <input type="checkbox"/>
Nonverbal Delivery	Dress	Inappropriately dressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriately dressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Professionally dressed <input type="checkbox"/>
	Eye contact/Notes	Displays minimal eye contact with audience and reads mostly from notes <input type="checkbox"/>	Displays direct eye contact with audience and occasionally refers to notes <input type="checkbox"/>	Consistent eye contact with audience and seldomly refers to notes <input type="checkbox"/>
Totals				

This document was adapted and modified using multiple resources on fundamental methods of Oral Communication assessment.

Some sources include:

www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/OralCommunication.pdf
<https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/cba/students/Documents/Oral%20Communication%20Evaluation%20Form.pdf>
[Rubric for Capstone Presentation](#)

Appendix K: QEP Oral Communication Self-reflection Evaluation

Mark as shown: Please use a ball-point pen or a thin felt tip. This form will be processed automatically.
 Correction: Please follow the examples shown on the left hand side to help optimize the reading results.

1. Instructions

Please note that the intention of this survey is for the user to reflect upon his or her history of public speaking up to this point. Please consider your past experiences speaking in other classes, at work, or in the community/religious organizations

2. About you

- 2.1 Gender Male Female
- 2.2 Classification Freshmen Sophomore Junior
 Senior
- 2.3 Age Group 18 - 25 26 - 33 34 - 41
 42 - 50 50+
- 2.4 Major

3. Questions about your speech (rating)

	1-No/Disagree	2-Sometimes	3-Yes/Agree
3.1 My presentations are well organized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Transitions in my presentations are easy to follow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 The content of my presentations is relevant to my area of study (Major)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 The content of my presentations contains accurate information from credible references	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5 My grammar and pronunciation are excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6 I use terminology relevant to my major	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7 My speaking volume is appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8 I use no distracting fillers or pauses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.9 I dress professionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.10 I maintain eye contact with the audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.11 I seldom refer to my notes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.12 I feel very confident when presenting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Questions about your Career choice

4.1 Resources are available at SUNO for preparing me to succeed in my chosen career after graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Giving an oral presentation in class on my choice of major helps to prepare me for my career after graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 I believe that I am being prepared to succeed in my chosen career after graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4 I am satisfied with my choice of major	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix L: QEP Training Manual for Scoring QEP SCOM 201 Rubric

Getting Started

- The purpose of this manual is to train potential QEP Taskforce committee members and outside individuals who may be recruited to review and critique student speeches.
- Please watch the video and keep score with the rubric provided.
- At the conclusion of the speech check this guide to see why the communication expert rated the speech and established this master code

Speech One

Link to speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZNppsrEZbc>

Organization: Meets Expectations

- This speech has a clear thesis and preview of main points which establishes a clear structure. It is a little confusing with the pictures that she shows because the online audience cannot tell what is on the screen.
- Transitions are present but sometimes they are unclear.
- The conclusion is quite good as it revisits the main points.

Content: Does Not Meet Expectations

- This speaker did not cite any sources.

Verbal Delivery, Language: Exceeds Expectations

- This speaker utilizes excellent grammar and sentence structure.

Verbal Delivery, Terminology: Meets Expectations

- The speaker Utilizes **career-specific** terms like “MCATS” and “rotations” but does not explain them to the audience.

Confidence, Passion: Meets Expectations

- The speaker expresses some motivating factors but does not make much of a personal connection.

Confidence, Voice: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker was extemporaneous and spoke with fluctuation in her voice.

Confidence, Fillers: Meets Expectations

- This speech contains some long and unnatural pauses as well as some verbal fillers such as “um” and “uh.”

Nonverbal Delivery, Dress: Meets Expectations

- The speaker is dressed appropriately but is not adhering to a particularly formal dress code.

Nonverbal Delivery, Eye Contact/Notes: Meets Expectations

- The speaker maintains fairly consistent eye contact. However, she should be using note cards. Her eyes are drawn to the computer and TV and diverted away from the audience.

Speech Two

Link to speech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=EUQx_zmj1Wg

Organization: Does Not Meets Expectations

- While there is a clear thesis of his speech there is no preview of the upcoming main points. There is an overall lack of transitions.

Content: Meets Expectations

- This speaker utilizes career specific terminology but did not cite any sources.

Verbal Delivery, Language: Exceeds Expectations

- This speaker **used** Excellent Grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure.

Verbal Delivery, Terminology: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker uses career-specific terminology often throughout this speech.

Confidence, Passion: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker shows strong enthusiasm for his career

Confidence, Voice: Meets Expectations

- The speaker has excellent grammar and good volume but speaks very fast.

Confidence, Fillers: Meets Expectations

- This speech contains some “ums” and “uhs” in a very short amount of time, but not too many.

Nonverbal Delivery, Dress: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker's dress is appropriate for the occasion. He is dressed as medical professional and this is a good use of dress as a prop.

Nonverbal Delivery, Eye Contact/Notes: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker maintains clear and consistent eye contact without the utilization of notes.

Speech Three

Link to speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3q6zGkRH6M>

Organization: Exceeds Expectations

- This speech contains a clear thesis and preview of main points as well as very strong transitions.

Content: Exceeds Expectations

- This speaker cites sources and all of her information sounds credible and accurate.

Verbal Delivery, Language: Exceeds Expectations

- This speaker used Excellent Grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure.

Verbal Delivery, Terminology: Meets Expectations

- The speaker uses some career specific terminology.

Confidence, Passion: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker shows strong enthusiasm for her career.

Confidence, Voice: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker uses excellent grammar, good volume, and speaks at a reasonably paced rate of speech

Confidence, Fillers: Meets Expectations

- This speech contains only one filler.

Nonverbal Delivery, Dress: Exceeds Expectations

- The **speaker's dress is appropriate** for the occasion. She is dressed professionally.

Nonverbal Delivery, Eye Contact/Notes: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker maintains clear and consistent eye contact. She uses notes in a way that does not cause a distraction for her or her audience.

Speech Four

Link to speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-Gj7kD5joU>

Organization: Meets Expectations

- This speech contains a clear thesis and preview of main points. Transitions could be clearer.

Content: Meets Expectations

- This speaker has an abundance of content with no inaccuracies but does not cite his sources.

Verbal Delivery, Language: Exceeds Expectations

- This speaker **used** Excellent Grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure.

Verbal Delivery, Terminology: Exceeds Expectations

- The speaker utilizes **discipline-specific** terminology throughout the speech.

Confidence, Passion: Meets Expectations

- The speaker is clearly interested and connected to the field but isn't overly excited about.

Confidence, Voice: Meets Expectations

- The speaker **had** good volume and fluctuation but sounds like he is reading. Not conversational.

Confidence, Fillers: Exceeds Expectations

- This speech contains no fillers.

Nonverbal Delivery, Dress: Does Not Meet Expectations

- The speaker is inappropriately dressed for a professional presentation.

Nonverbal Delivery, Eye Contact/Notes: Does Not Meet Expectations

- The speaker is wearing a hat that hides his eyes. He is also constantly looking at his notes. Although he tries to look out to his audience it looks more habitual rather than an attempt to make a genuine connection with the people in the room.

Appendix M: Approval for QEP by Institutional Review Board (IRB)



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS
6400 PRESS DRIVE
Leonard S. Washington Memorial Library
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70126
(504) 286-5225 or 286-5227

Leonard S. Washington Memorial Library

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

To: Diane Bordenave, PhD
Chair, QEP
Southern University at New Orleans

From: Shatiqua Mosby-Wilson, Chair
SUNO Human Subjects Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SMW', is placed over the name of the sender in the 'From' field.

Re: IRB Application for Human Subjects Approval -
QEP-Enhancement of Student Oral communication Skills

cc: SUNO IRB Human Subjects Committee Members
Dr. Sonya Gao, English
Dr. Alvin Bopp, Chemistry
Dr. Mostafa Elassar, Physics
Dr. Gayle T. Wykle, Social Work (retired)
Dr. David Alijani, Computer Information Science
Rev. Aubrey Watson, Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran
Shatiqua Mosby-Wilson, JD, Director SUNO Library

This is to advise you that your application with all necessary supporting documents was received and reviewed as an expedited application Thursday, October 25, 2018. A review of your application and supporting documents show that you have adequate provisions to protect human subjects in your study.

Your Project is approved by the SUNO IRB Human Subjects Committee. Please understand that this approval is for the exact protocol presented in the application and accompanying materials and is valid for one year. If other members of your team desire to have direct contact with the subjects, please have them to complete the Human Subjects Training and submit the certification to our office. This approval expires October 24, 2019. You may submit a renewal application 30 days prior to the expiration. At mid-year, federal requirements direct that there be an interim review. We will contact you regarding the mid-year review.

A copy of this letter with the IRB Application and attachments is being sent to Dr. Adegboye who has final authority in IRB matters. If his office has questions or concerns they may revoke this approval at anytime by sending you written notice. In addition, as per requirements stated in the Code of Federal Regulations, CFR, that Committee Members must be informed of expedited review decisions, a copy of this letter is being sent to the Committee.

Best wishes in your research.

Enc. Application, Proposal, Human Subjects Certificate for Dr. Bordenave, Survey Instrument.

Appendix N: Approved QEP Logo



Appendix O: QEP T-Shirt Engagement Contest - Faculty



REPLIES WANTED

IN RESPONSE TO A SURVEY TAKEN AT THE
2017 SUNO UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE
AMONG FACULTY AND STAFF,
AS WELL AS CAMPUS-WIDE AMONG STUDENTS,
THE SUNO QEP COMMITTEE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE
THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN'S TOPIC:

“EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION FOR CAREER SUCCESS”

***What Are You Doing to Enhance Student
Oral Communication Skills at SUNO?***

***Please print replies below or respond via email to qep@suno.edu by
September 1, 2018 to be entered into a drawing to win a QEP T-Shirt.***

