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COUNTDOWN TO ONSITE VISIT:

We have now submitted all required documents to SACSCOC and are less than TWO MONTHS from the onsite visit!

- The Compliance Report was submitted March 1, 2011.
- The Focused Report and QEP were submitted August 22, 2011.
- The visit is **OCTOBER 11-13, 2011.**

The submissions of these documents to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the onsite visit are formal steps in the process of applying for reaffirmation.



SACSCOC - The onsite visit

SACSCOC site visit is October 11-13, 2011

Be on campus during the visit.
Know about our QEP.
Know the mission of the College.

Guess who's coming to campus?

A group of SACSCOC evaluators will comprise the visiting team this fall. It might be helpful to remember that these evaluators are our peers.

They are administrators and faculty from institutions outside of Florida but within the SACSCOC region. They are from institutions that have to meet the same requirements for reaffirmation. When they arrive, a few things will happen.

- They will first meet off campus to discuss our Compliance Report that was submitted in March and evaluated by a different group of peers. They will also review the Focused Report (our response to the SACS evaluation of our Compliance Report).
- They will tour our campuses and meet with administrators to discuss details of our programs.
- They will interview faculty, staff, and students about our QEP.

Will I be interviewed?

There are two types of interviews: planned and impromptu.

You may get a call soon asking you to participate in a panel interview—that would be a planned interview!

Anyone who is selected for this task will know in advance and will have the opportunity to learn the types of questions that may be asked by the team.

Visiting team members may also stop anyone... in the library, in the hall, in the cafeteria... anywhere! That would be impromptu—we do not know if or when this will happen, but it could happen, so be ready!

If you are stopped without notice, the team may ask you a little bit about our QEP. But not to worry! YOU will have the answers!

Find your “need to know” information on page 4.



Mission of the College

Palm Beach State College, founded in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, is a diverse, comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County. Integrally linked to the community through strong partnerships, the College provides associate and baccalaureate degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.

Palm Beach State College's mission is to create and sustain a dynamic teaching and learning environment that provides a high-quality, accessible, affordable education, preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.

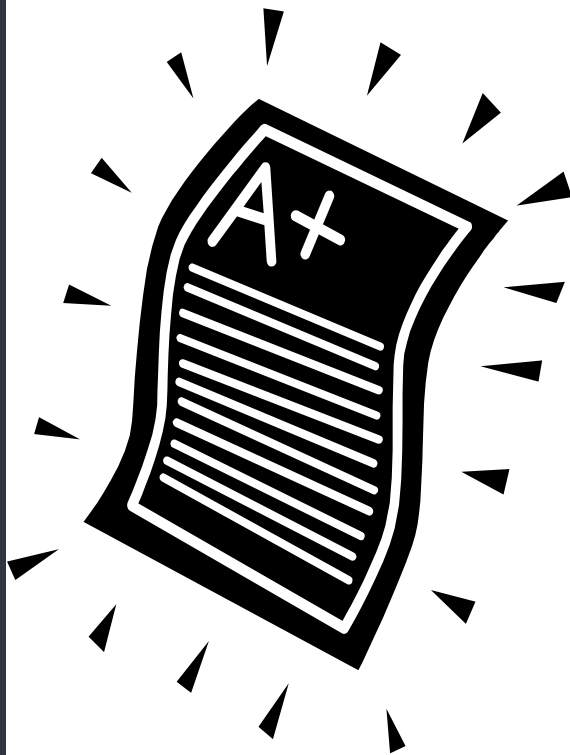
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ACCREDITATION AND THE REAFFIRMATION PROCESS,
PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/sacs.xml>

Assessment

Gen Ed Assessment

It's that time of year again—when the College's attention turns to assessing its general education learning outcomes. This fall, 41 sections of randomly selected courses will participate in the administration of two types of assessments. The first is our internally developed instrument called "Scenarios". This is an essay-writing approach that measures all six of our general education learning outcomes and is graded by the College's General Education Assessment Committee. The other method is the ETS Proficiency Profile. This is a standardized exam that measures critical think-

ing, communications and quantitative reasoning. If you are a faculty member and one of your classes is part of the randomly-selected sample, you will be asked to give up one hour of class time to allow us to administer one of these exams. The testing period is from September 20th to October 18th, which will give you a wide margin of time to determine when it would be most convenient to have your students take one of these exams. We appreciate your cooperation; your participation is vital to our success!



WEAVEonline

At the same time our general education assessment is underway, so is a new cycle of assessment for all our program areas. This year, however, we are transitioning from the use of MS Word templates to an online assessment management system called WEAVEonline. This software tool will allow all programs to enter and manage their assessment data in a uniform manner and it will allow for tracking of data over time. Training on this software program has already begun. Two sessions for deans and associate deans have been conducted and training sessions for program managers and faculty are being scheduled for the fall semester.

MORE ABOUT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT, PLEASE VISIT:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/LearningOutcomes.xml>

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

QEP DEFINITION OF CRITICAL THINKING: *using the skills needed to explore, evaluate, express, and engage in purposeful reasoning in order to reach sound conclusions, decisions, positions, and/or solutions. (definition reached by College-wide consensus, September, 2010)*



Explore, evaluate, express, engage...

How do **you** encourage or require students to explore, evaluate, express, and engage? How do you know they are doing it? Share your story with us!

Spring workshops will focus on identifying *what* critical thinking is, *how* we currently teach it, and *what assignments* might be used to measure how well students are applying critical thinking skills. So this fall, the QEP faculty leadership team is looking for course-specific examples to include in those spring workshops. If you have an example to provide, let us know – we want to showcase Palm Beach State instructors!

If you have an assignment that you believe requires critical thinking and you'd like to see better results, join our team! We're looking for those among us who want to find better strategies to teach critical thinking, but might need a little boost. If you have an instructional or assessment idea you'd like to try, or you need help finding one for the course you teach, give us a call! Contact info is below.



QEP kicks off in 2012— but what about NOW?

SACSCOC team members may randomly stop faculty, staff, and even students on campus to ask them about the QEP. So what if they do that when they visit us? What if they stop you?

For now, this is your “need to know” info!

A QEP is plan to improve student learning and our QEP focuses on critical thinking.

Of course, if you know more than that, terrific, but the team will not expect constituents at large to understand details of the plan.

If you want to know more, just in case, visit the website or feel free to call with questions. Information is below.

Key QEP components

- Curriculum development
- Workshops for students, staff, and instructors
- Student peer mentoring
- Events
- Projects
- Resource centers
- Collaboration groups
- Conferences

Key QEP dates

Spring 2012

- Workshops for faculty, staff
- Resource centers established

Fall 2012

- Workshops for faculty, staff, and students

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE QEP, PLEASE VISIT OR CALL:

<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/QEP.xml> ~ 561-868-3325

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Look who we caught doing great work!

SI training organizers:
Desiree' Hamilton
Robin Deluca
Alex Eng
Vicky Rodriguez

SLC training organizers
Lake Worth:
Steve Arterburn
Bette Miller
Gina Rose
Dana Hamadeh
Barbie Edgar
David Simms
Sharon Webb
Lisa Newton
Espe Noble
Mayetta Lee
Lyam Christopher
Debra Singleton

SLC training organizers,
Palm Beach Gardens:
Cathy Seyler
Jesse Rogers
Marjie Simon
Wesley Wells
Florence Williams

SI and tutor training serves as model for QEP workshops



Supervisors of Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders and Student Learning Center (SLC) tutors on the Lake Worth and Palm Beach Gardens campuses created day-long training programs to kick-off the fall term.

These training sessions have long been a part of their “welcome back” week. However, new this year was the common theme of critical thinking and a format to be commended.

Organizers worked hard to help SI leaders and tutors begin to understand *what* critical thinking is and how they can use it while working with students. In all three cases, the training highly resembled a formal conference in that both “keynote” and breakout sessions were offered.

The conference style design was intentional. The SLC training on LW campus, held August 18th, was even called the *2011 SLC Critical Thinking Conference*.

The QEP was a focus in each training. Seasoned tutors, SI leaders, and faculty, did a wonderful job presenting breakout sessions.

Steve Arterburn, instrumental in pulling together both the SI and SLC training on Lake Worth campus had this to say about the quality of their training conference. *“The SLC labs are in business not just to support students’ success in the courses they currently take, but also to encourage their development as lifelong learners with strong critical thinking skills that they apply to their academic coursework, careers, and personal lives.*

North campus SLC manager Cathy Seyler has been an important player in QEP development. Consequently, she saw the vital connection between critical thinking and the mission of the SLC to create independent learners. She says that she and her staff planned sessions that would “encourage the tutors to begin thinking critically about *how* they tutor and *what* their **objectives** are as tutors.”

These training sessions are excellent examples of future QEP workshops. The sessions included collaboration, discussions regarding the nature of critical thinking, and a showcase of Palm Beach State talent. All of these are goals of the QEP workshops.

Well done SI and SLC in Lake Worth and Palm Beach Gardens!

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE QEP AND CRITICAL THINKING, PLEASE VISIT:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/QEP.xml>