
Durham Technical Community College
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
P3CONNECT



Presented: November 1-3, 2016
SACSCOC On-Site Visit

By Durham Technical Community College
1637 E. Lawson Street | Durham, North Carolina 27703



DURHAM TECH

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I. Executive Summary

Durham Tech's mission is to "champion learning and success, deliver outstanding teaching and service, and develop career skills for today and tomorrow." P3Connect, our proposed Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), seeks to provide students with an integrated network of services and learning opportunities that will empower them to evaluate their interests and abilities, set academic and career goals, develop the necessary skills, and advance toward their career goals.

P3Connect emerged directly out of a 2013-2014 strategic planning effort that resulted in a revised college mission, vision statement, purpose, and goals. The process of developing a new strategic plan involved focus groups with stakeholders across campus, from students to academic departments, to staff, to the Board of Trustees. In the new strategic plan, the issue of students' clear pathways to careers emerges in almost every goal, but especially in Goal 2, where providing all students with clear career pathways is particularly important: "Students will have access to career pathways for all programs at the college. These pathways will link a student's previous educational experience with the college's offerings in a clear, understandable way. Using an interactive online course planning system and the support of well-trained advisors, students will receive the information needed to create a completion plan, individualize their pathway, monitor progress toward goals, experience work-based learning, connect to postsecondary transfer options, and obtain meaningful employment opportunities." P3Connect attempts to put in place the college services and infrastructure to make attainment of this goal possible for all Durham Tech students.

Made up of a diverse team from all areas of the college, the QEP Topic Selection Team examined a broad range of data from within the institution and sought input from all groups on campus. From conversations, surveys, and institutional research, two interrelated topics emerged: critical thinking and career planning. Ultimately, through a process of narrowing the topic, the two were combined, so that the focus became one of providing students with the information and critical thinking skills needed to make informed choices about their academic and career plans.

The QEP Development Team, a group that continued to represent all areas of the college, researched best practices, considered Durham Tech's own institutional effectiveness data, and consulted with diverse groups on campus. They began by identifying the specific problems that the plan seeks to address:

1. Students are enrolling into academic programs without understanding their interests, skills, and goals.
2. Students need college support in developing and implementing their academic and career plans.

The team then set goals that matched each of these problem statements and developed both student learning and college outcomes to address each goal:

Goal 1: Increase access to informed advising.

SLO 1.1: Students will self-assess their abilities and interests.

SLO 1.2: Students will demonstrate academic program knowledge.

CO 1.1: College will provide academic and career planning resources and support.

CO 1.2: College will provide students with data to support self-assessment.

Goal 2: Increase awareness and access to career planning resources.

SLO 2.1: Students will utilize the college's academic and career support resources.

SLO 2.2: Students will develop an academic plan informed by their career goals.

CO 2.1: College will provide career counseling services.

CO 2.2: College will provide academic and planning activities in and out of the classroom.

CO 2.3: College will provide professional development for faculty and staff.

Achieving these goals has the potential to significantly impact all Durham Tech students. By creating an environment with a stronger focus on academic and career development, the college can more easily create clear pathways, collect and distribute data for informed career decision-making, and integrate support through academic and career counseling services. As a result, the college will be better positioned to help students set clearer goals, persist in their pursuit of a credential, more deeply engage in the learning process, and transition successfully to a four-year institution or career upon graduation.

The key aspects of the plan include the following:

- Provide improved application, orientation, advising, and first-year experience resources to help students discern their career goals and then set matching academic goals.
- Expand student participation in ACA 122, our College Transfer Success Course, where students have the opportunity to critically assess their strengths, goals, and career options.

- Expand use of Self-Service, our student information and registration software, to document students' academic and transfer goals in ways that are accessible for both students and professionals supporting them during their time at Durham Tech.
- Develop professional career resources, including hiring a professional Career Services Director and establishing a Career Services Center.
- Expand work-based learning and service-learning opportunities for students and increase curriculum student access to career resources offered in our non-credit division.

The plan seeks to improve student learning by helping them make career choices based on information and data, providing clear pathways, and planning for completion and transition to the workforce. The plan seeks to improve the college environment by providing more comprehensive, accessible, and integrated academic and career planning resources to students. Additionally, a global objective of the plan is to experience an increase in student persistence from fall to fall as a result of improved advising and counseling services, access to academic and career planning resources, and additional engagement opportunities for students.

Durham Tech will use a variety of success metrics to guide efforts to improve in these areas. The overall success of the plan will be determined by an increased number of students entering the correct program from the very beginning, using the academic and career planning resources, and attaining their academic and career goals.

At the time of P3Connect's submission to the SACSCOC On-Site Committee (September 2016), the responsibility for overseeing the plan and its continued development was transitioned from the Development Team to the Implementation Team. The Implementation Team will continue developing the plan while incorporating changes and recommendations from the new Director, Career Services and Transitions /QEP. These changes will be highlighted during the November 2nd P3Connect presentation. Prior to submission for final approval (June 2017), the team further strengthened the plan by incorporating feedback received during the On-Site process.